



Exploring The Relationship Between Sufism And Hadith: A Qualitative Analysis Of Key Narrations And Interpretations

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Abstract: This study aims to examine how Sufi scholars have utilized Hadith to develop a framework for their spiritual practices, which includes the pursuit of inner knowledge and the cultivation of spiritual states. Additionally, it aims to analyze key Hadith narrations that are central to the development of Sufi thought, such as those concerning the nature of God, the role of Prophet Muhammad, and the path to spiritual enlightenment. This study utilizes a qualitative research approach to comprehensively analyze key Hadith narrations in Sufi literature and explore the relationship between Sufism and Hadith. The methodology involves a thorough literature review of primary and secondary sources, including Hadith collections and commentaries, works of Sufi scholars, and relevant academic studies. Qualitative data analysis techniques, such as content analysis and thematic coding, are employed to identify key themes and patterns in the Hadith narrations and Sufi interpretations. The study demonstrates that the teachings of Sufism are rooted in the prophetic tradition and can be referenced in various Hadiths of the Prophet that discuss the practice of Sufism. The Hadiths emphasize the importance of worshipping God to the best of one's ability (*ihsan*), purifying oneself from things that can defile the heart and hinder the light of God (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), and practicing *zuhud* or detachment from excessive love for the material world. Sufis strive to find the basis of these Sufi teachings through esoteric interpretation of these Hadiths. This effort is not only essential for integrating Hadiths and Sufi teachings but also for seeking the Prophet's deepest insights and teachings.

Keywords: *Ihsan; Sufi hadiths; Sufism; Tazkiyat al-nafs; Zuhud.*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bagaimana para cendekiawan Sufi telah menggunakan Hadis untuk mengembangkan kerangka kerja bagi praktik spiritual mereka, yang meliputi pengejaran pengetahuan batin dan pengembangan kondisi-kondisi spiritual. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga bertujuan untuk menganalisis narasi-narasi Hadis utama yang penting bagi perkembangan pemikiran Sufi, seperti yang berkaitan dengan sifat Tuhan, peran Nabi Muhammad, dan jalan menuju pencerahan spiritual. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan penelitian kualitatif untuk menganalisis secara komprehensif narasi-narasi Hadis kunci dalam literatur Sufi dan mengeksplorasi hubungan antara

Sufisme dan Hadis. Metodologi penelitian ini melibatkan tinjauan literatur menyeluruh terhadap sumber-sumber primer dan sekunder, termasuk koleksi dan tafsir Hadis, karya-karya para cendekiawan Sufi, dan studi akademis yang relevan. Teknik analisis data kualitatif, seperti analisis isi, digunakan untuk mengidentifikasi tema-tema dan pola-pola utama dalam narasi-narasi Hadis dan penafsiran-penafsiran Sufi. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa ajaran tasawuf berakar pada tradisi kenabian dan dapat dirujuk dalam berbagai Hadis Nabi yang membahas praktik tasawuf. Hadis-hadis tersebut menekankan pentingnya beribadah kepada Allah dengan sebaik-baiknya (ihsan), menyucikan diri dari hal-hal yang dapat mengotori hati dan menghalangi cahaya Allah (tazkiyat al-nafs), dan mempraktikkan zuhud atau melepaskan diri dari kecintaan yang berlebihan terhadap dunia material. Para Sufi berusaha untuk menemukan dasar dari ajaran-ajaran Sufi ini melalui interpretasi esoterik terhadap Hadis-hadis tersebut. Upaya ini tidak hanya penting untuk mengintegrasikan Hadis dan ajaran Sufi, tetapi juga untuk mencari wawasan dan ajaran terdalam dari Nabi.

Kata kunci: Hadis Sufi; Ihsan; Sufi; Zuhud.

1. Introduction

Sufism, also known as Islamic mysticism, is a branch of Islam that focuses on the inner, spiritual dimension of the faith. Sufism emphasizes the cultivation of a personal relationship with God through practices such as prayer, meditation, and contemplation. Hadith, on the other hand, refers to the body of traditional reports and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad that are used to guide Islamic scholarship and religious practice. Hadith collections are an important source of Islamic law and theology, as they guide issues ranging from ritual practice to ethics and social behavior (Algar, 1989; Nasr, 2011).

While Sufism and Hadith may seem like distinct areas of Islamic scholarship, they are deeply intertwined. Sufi scholars have long relied on Hadith as a source of inspiration and guidance in their spiritual practices, and have often incorporated Hadith narrations into their teachings and writings. However, it is also important to note that there have been debates and controversies within the Islamic community regarding the compatibility of certain Sufi practices with the traditions recorded in the Hadith. Some Sufi practices, such as ecstatic dance (*sama'*) or the veneration of saints, have been criticized by some conservative Islamic scholars as conflicting with the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad.

One example of a controversial Sufi practice, as mentioned before, is ecstatic dance, also known as *sama'*. This practice involves participants swaying and moving rhythmically to music to achieve a state of spiritual ecstasy or trance. While some Sufi orders view *sama'* as a legitimate and beneficial practice, others have criticized

it as conflicting with Islamic traditions and values. Critics of *sama'* argue that it has no basis in the Hadith and that it may even be considered a form of innovation (*bid'ah*), which is strongly discouraged in Islamic theology. They also point to Hadith narrations that caution against excessive or uncontrolled behavior and argue that *sama'* may lead to the loss of self-control and spiritual excess.

Similarly, the veneration of saints, or the practice of seeking intercession with holy figures, has also been the subject of debate within the Islamic community. While some Sufi scholars view the veneration of saints as a way to honor and seek the blessings of those close to God, others argue that it conflicts with the monotheistic principles of Islam and encourages the worship of beings other than God. These controversies highlight the ongoing debate and discussion within the Islamic community regarding the appropriate role and interpretation of Hadith in Sufi practices, and the tension between preserving the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad and the development of new practices and beliefs within Islamic mysticism.

Other Sufi teachings, such as asceticism (*zuhud*), are also considered to encourage people to adopt an apathetic attitude toward social life. The doctrine of *zuhud* is believed to form the basis for the practice of *uzlah* (seclusion, self-isolating), which involves withdrawing from the responsibility of participating in building a shared life. Sufi teachings are also criticized for promoting the understanding of *wihdatul wujud* or the unity between God (*khaliq*) and His creatures (*makhluq*), the love of God which is expressed in behavior that often contradicts the Sharia, and other aspects (Banani, 2006; Hussain, 2014; Rizvi, 2010).

These criticisms are not unfounded, as there have been cases where Sufi teachings have been misinterpreted or taken to the extreme, resulting in practices that are not in line with Islamic teachings. However, it is important to note that these deviations are not representative of the mainstream Sufi tradition, which emphasizes the importance of adhering to Islamic law (*sharia*) and respecting the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. Moreover, Sufi teachings are not meant to be a replacement for Islamic law, but rather a complement to it. Sufi practices aim to purify the heart and cultivate a deeper understanding and love of God, which in turn leads to a more sincere and fulfilling practice of Islamic rituals and a more compassionate and ethical approach to one's interactions with others. Therefore, it is crucial to approach Sufi teachings with a balanced and informed perspective, recognizing their valuable contribution to the Islamic tradition while also being aware of potential pitfalls and misunderstandings.

Despite these criticisms, many Sufi scholars also argue that their practices are consistent with the fundamental principles of Islam and that they find support for their beliefs and practices within the Hadith. Some Sufi interpretations of Hadith

narrations may focus on the spiritual or mystical dimensions of the text, while others may emphasize the importance of personal experience and intuition in understanding and applying the teachings of the Prophet. The relationship between Sufism and Hadith is complex and multifaceted, and there is ongoing debate and discussion within the Islamic community regarding the appropriate role and interpretation of Hadith in Sufi practices. Through a critical analysis of key Hadith narrations in Sufi literature, we hope to shed light on some of these debates and controversies, as well as the rich history and tradition of Islamic mysticism.

This study will delve deeper into the relationship between Sufism and Hadith, exploring how Hadith has influenced the development of Sufi beliefs and practices throughout Islamic history. This study aims to examine how Sufi scholars have drawn on Hadith to create a framework for their spiritual practices, including the pursuit of inner knowledge and the cultivation of spiritual states. Furthermore, this study will try to analyze the key Hadith narrations that have been central to the development of Sufi thought, such as those concerning the nature of God, the role of the Prophet Muhammad, and the path to spiritual enlightenment.

Additionally, this study will explore the different interpretations of Hadith that have emerged within the Sufi tradition, from those that emphasize strict adherence to the Prophetic tradition, to those that prioritize inner experience and mystical insight. This study will also examine how Sufi scholars have approached the Hadith narrations that appear to contradict certain Sufi practices or beliefs, and how they have attempted to reconcile these apparent contradictions with the overall framework of Islamic mysticism. Through this exploration, the author hopes to gain a greater understanding of the complex relationship between Sufism and Hadith and to offer insights into the rich and multifaceted tradition of Islamic mysticism. By examining how Hadith has shaped Sufi thought and practice, this study aims to shed light on the enduring relevance and importance of this relationship in the contemporary Islamic world.

Previous studies have explored the relationship between Sufism and Hadith from a variety of perspectives. Some studies have focused on how Hadith has been used to support or challenge specific Sufi practices, such as the use of music and dance in spiritual rituals. Other studies have examined the role of Hadith in shaping broader Sufi beliefs and doctrines, including the nature of God, the purpose of human existence, and the role of the Prophet Muhammad in Islamic spirituality. While other previous research on the relationship between Sufism and Hadith has also focused on a variety of themes, including the use of Hadith in Sufi literature, the impact of Hadith on Sufi thought and practice, and the controversies surrounding certain Sufi practices that are seen as conflicting with the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad.

One particularly influential study in this area is Ibn Al-Arabi's "*Futuh al-Makkiyya*" (The Meccan Revelations), a seminal work of Islamic mysticism that draws heavily on Hadith to explore the nature of divine reality and the path to spiritual enlightenment. In this work, Al-Arabi (2002) uses Hadith to support his teachings on the importance of inner knowledge and the need to overcome the limitations of human perception to achieve a deeper understanding of God. Other notable studies in this area include Shahab Ahmed (2016) and Annemarie Schimmel (1975), both of which explore the role of Hadith in shaping Islamic mysticism and spirituality. These studies provide valuable insights into how Hadith has influenced the development of Sufi thought and practice throughout Islamic history, and offer important perspectives on the enduring relevance of this relationship in the contemporary Islamic world.

One important study is Ansari's study (1992), which examines the role of Hadith in shaping Sufi attitudes towards fasting and the spiritual benefits of this practice. Ansari (1992) draws on a range of Hadith narrations to explore the symbolism and significance of fasting in Sufi thought, and highlights how Hadith has been used to support and inspire Sufi practices throughout Islamic history. Another influential study is Ernst's study (1997), which provides a comprehensive overview of the history, teachings, and practices of Sufism, with a particular focus on the role of Hadith in shaping Sufi beliefs and attitudes. Ernst (1997) explores how Hadith has been used to support a range of Sufi practices, from meditation and contemplation to music and dance, and highlights the debates and controversies surrounding these practices within the Islamic community.

Other notable studies include Izutsu's study (1983), "Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts," which compares the teachings of Sufism and Taoism and examines the role of Hadith in shaping Sufi conceptions of the divine and the nature of reality. Additionally, Annabel Keeler's study (2006), "Sufi Hermeneutics: The Qur'an Commentary of Rashid al-Din Maybudi" explores how Sufi scholars have used Hadith to interpret and understand the Qur'an, and highlights the complex relationship between these two foundational sources of Islamic thought and practice.

These studies demonstrate the complex and multifaceted relationship between Sufism and Hadith and highlight the ongoing debates and discussions that continue to shape this relationship within the Islamic community. By building on these previous studies, this paper aims to contribute to this ongoing discourse and deepen our understanding of this important aspect of Islamic scholarship and religious practice. These previous research efforts also demonstrate the rich and complex relationship between Sufism and Hadith and provide important insights into how this relationship has shaped Islamic thought and practice throughout

history. By building on these previous studies, this paper aims to contribute to this ongoing conversation and deepen our understanding of the critical role of Hadith in the development of Islamic mysticism.

This study employs a qualitative research approach to holistically analyze key Hadith narrations in Sufi literature and explore the relationship between Sufism and Hadith. The methodology involves a comprehensive literature review of primary and secondary sources, including Hadith collections and commentaries, works of Sufi scholars, and relevant academic studies. The study also draws on qualitative data analysis techniques, such as content analysis and thematic coding, to identify key themes and patterns in the Hadith narrations and Sufi interpretations.

The paper's analysis is guided by a theoretical framework that emphasizes the importance of contextualizing Hadith narrations within their historical, cultural, and social contexts, as well as the need to recognize the diversity of Sufi interpretations and practices. The study employs a critical lens to examine how Hadith has been used to support and inspire Sufi practices and beliefs, while also recognizing the debates and controversies surrounding certain Sufi practices that are seen as conflicting with the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. This research methodology aims to provide a comprehensive and nuanced analysis of the relationship between Sufism and Hadith, and to offer insights into how Hadith has influenced the development of Sufi thought and practice throughout Islamic history.

2. Result and Discussion

The Relationship Between Sufism and Hadith

One important aspect of the relationship between Sufism and Hadith is the incorporation of key Hadith narrations into Sufi literature. Hadith, as the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad, are a crucial source of guidance and inspiration for Muslims, and Sufi scholars have drawn on this rich tradition to develop their teachings and practices. The discourse and practice of Sufism have several key narratives such as *ihsan*, *tazkiyat al-nafs*, *zuhud*, and other teachings that originate from the Quran. In addition to these key narrations, Sufi literature incorporates a wide range of other Hadith teachings and stories, which are used to support and illustrate various aspects of Sufi thought and practice. These Hadith narrations are often woven into the fabric of Sufi texts, appearing alongside Qur'anic verses, poetry, and other forms of spiritual discourse.

Some hadiths that are often referred to as the basis for Sufi practices, particularly related to teachings on *ihsan*, *tazkiyat al-nafs*, and *zuhud*, can be seen in the following Table 1:

Table 1. Hadiths with Sufi Themes

Themes	Hadiths
<i>Ihsan</i>	<p>According to Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), he said: “While we were sitting with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) one day, a man came to us whose clothes were exceedingly white and whose hair was exceedingly black; no signs of journeying were visible on him, and none of us knew him. He sat down close by the Prophet (PBUH), rested his knee against his thighs, and said, ‘O Muhammad, inform me about Islam.’ So, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, ‘Islam is to testify that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, to establish the prayer, to pay the Zakat, to fast Ramadan, and to make the pilgrimage to the House (Ka’bah) if you can do so.’ The man said, ‘You have spoken rightly.’ We were astonished to see that he had asked him and confirmed the correctness of his answers. He then asked, ‘Tell me about Iman (faith).’ The Prophet (PBUH) said, ‘It is to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the Last Day, and to believe in Divine Destiny, both the good and the evil thereof.’ The man said, ‘You have spoken rightly.’ He then asked, ‘Tell me about <i>Ihsan</i> (excellence in worship).’ The Prophet (PBUH) said, ‘It is to worship Allah as if you see Him; and if you do not see Him, He surely sees you.’ He then asked, ‘Tell me about the Hour (i.e., the Day of Judgment).’ The Prophet (PBUH) said, ‘The one questioned about it knows no better than the questioner.’ The man said, ‘Then inform me about its signs.’ The Prophet (PBUH) said, ‘The signs are that a slave girl will give birth to her mistress and that you will see the barefooted, naked, poor shepherds competing in constructing tall buildings.’ Then, the visitor left. I waited for a while, and then the Prophet (PBUH) asked me, ‘O Umar, do you know who that questioner was?’ I replied, ‘Allah and His Messenger know better.’ The Prophet (PBUH) said, ‘That was Jibril (the angel Gabriel). He came to teach you your religion.’” (Narrated by Muslim).</p> <p>From Abu Ya’la Shaddad bin Aus (may Allah be pleased with him), from the Prophet (PBUH) who said: “Indeed, Allah has prescribed <i>ihsan</i> (excellence in worship) in all things. So, if you kill, do so in a good manner; if you slaughter, do it in a good manner; let one of you sharpen his knife and make it easy for his animal (to be slaughtered).” (Narrated by Muslim)</p> <p>Abu Hurairah narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said: “Allah says: Whoever shows enmity to a friend (wali) of Mine, I shall be at war with him. My servant does not draw near to Me with anything more beloved than what I have made obligatory on him. And My servant continues to draw near to Me with voluntary works (sunan) so that I shall love him. When I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes, and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask [something] of Me, I would surely give it to him; and were he to seek refuge with Me, I would surely grant him refuge. And I do not hesitate about anything as much as I hesitate about [seizing] the soul of My faithful servant; he hates death and I hate hurting him.” (Narrated by Bukhari)</p>
<i>Tazkiyat al-Nafs</i>	<p>Abu Hurairah reported: I heard the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) say, “Verily, the first person to be judged on the Day of Resurrection is a martyr. He will be brought forth, and Allah will make him recognize His bounties, which he will recognize. Then Allah will ask him, ‘What did you do with them?’ He will reply, ‘I fought for Your</p>

cause until I was martyred.’ Allah will say, ‘You have lied. You fought so that it would be said of you: “He is brave,” and it has been said.’ Then a command will be given about him and he will be dragged on his face and cast into Hell. Then, a scholar of religion who taught others and recited the Quran will be brought forward. Allah will make him recognize His bounties, which he will recognize. Then Allah will ask him, ‘What did you do with them?’ He will reply, ‘I acquired knowledge and disseminated it and recited the Quran for Your sake.’ Allah will say, ‘You have lied. You acquired knowledge so that it would be said of you: “He is learned,” and you recited the Quran so that it would be said of you: “He is a reciter,” and it has been said.’ Then a command will be given about him, and he will be dragged on his face and cast into Hell. Next, a man who had been given an abundance of wealth will be brought forward. Allah will make him recognize His bounties, which he will recognize. Then Allah will ask him, ‘What did you do with them?’ He will reply, ‘I did not leave a single path by which You love money to be spent, but that I spent on it for Your sake.’ Allah will say, ‘You have lied. You did it so that it would be said of you: “He is generous,” and it has been said.’ Then a command will be given about him, and he will be dragged on his face and cast into Hell.” (Narrated by Muslim)

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, “Allah Almighty says: ‘I am as My servant thinks I am. I am with him when he makes mention of Me. If he makes mention of Me to himself, I make mention of him to Myself; and if he makes mention of Me in a gathering, I make mention of him in a superior gathering. If he comes to Me walking, I go to him at speed. If he comes to Me running, I run to him.’” (Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim)

From Abdullah bin Mas’ud, from the Prophet (PBUH), said, “A person who has even an atom’s weight of arrogance in his heart will not enter Paradise.” Then someone asked, “Indeed, someone likes to have nice clothes and good sandals.” He said, “Verily, Allah is beautiful and loves beauty. Arrogance is rejecting the truth and belittling people.” (Narrated by Muslim)

From Abdullah bin Mas’ud, from the Prophet (PBUH), said, “The one who has arrogance in his heart, even if it is as small as a particle, will not enter paradise.” Then someone asked, “Indeed, someone is pleased when he wears good clothes and good sandals.” He said, “Indeed, Allah is beautiful and loves beauty. Arrogance rejects the truth and humiliates people.” (Narrated by Muslim)

Zuhud From Jabir bin Abdillah, the Prophet (PBUH), once passed through a market, and entered a part of a village (near Medina), while people surrounded him. He passed by a small dead goat with small ears, then he took it and held onto its ear and said, “Who among you would like to buy this animal for one dirham?” The companions said, “We don’t want to buy the animal even with a small price, what can we do with it?” He said, “Do you like it if this animal belongs to you?” The companions answered, “By Allah, even if it was alive, it would have lived with a disability because it has small ears, what about if it’s already dead?” So he said, “By Allah, the world is more insignificant to Allah than this animal is to you.” (Narrated by Muslim)

From Abdullah bin Mas’ud, he said, “The Messenger of Allah (PBUH), used to sleep on a mat, and when he woke up, the mark of the mat was left on his side. So we said,

“O Messenger of Allah, what if we make a bed for you?” So he said, “What do I have to do with this world? In this world, I am like a traveler who seeks shade under a tree and then leaves it.” (Narrated by Tirmidhi)

The hadiths mentioned in the previous statement serve as a cornerstone for the development of Sufism, a mystical branch of Islam that emphasizes the purification of the soul, seeking closeness to God, and detachment from worldly desires. The concept of *ihsan*, which translates to “perfection” or “excellence”, encourages Muslims to worship Allah as if they can see Him and, even though they cannot, to believe that He sees and knows all things. *Tazkiyat* al-nafs, or the purification of the soul, emphasizes the importance of cultivating good character, sincerity, and humility. Meanwhile, the concept of *zuhud*, or detachment from worldly desires, calls for Muslims to not be overly attached to material possessions, wealth, and status. These main themes form the foundation of Sufism and are reflected in the practices and teachings of various Sufi orders throughout the Islamic world. Through these practices, Sufis aim to attain spiritual enlightenment and a closer relationship with Allah.

The Interpreting Hadith Narrations in Sufi Literature

The use of Hadith narrations in Sufi literature reflects the deep respect and reverence that Sufi scholars have for the Prophetic tradition, and highlights how this tradition has influenced the development of Islamic mysticism over the centuries. By analyzing and reflecting on these key Hadith narrations in Sufi literature, we can gain a deeper appreciation of the rich and complex relationship between Sufism and Hadith, and better understand the enduring relevance of this relationship in the contemporary Islamic world.

Sufi scholars have often turned to Hadith narrations as a source of inspiration and guidance in their spiritual practice and teachings. However, they do not always interpret these narrations in a literal or straightforward manner. Instead, they may provide mystical or allegorical interpretations of certain hadith narrations to illustrate spiritual principles and deepen their understanding of the divine. Sufi scholars have approached Hadith narrations as a rich source of spiritual wisdom and insight, and have sought to interpret and analyze these narrations in ways that deepen their understanding of the divine and their spiritual practice.

Sufis interpret Hadith narrations in a variety of ways, often incorporating mystical or allegorical interpretations. They may use these interpretations to illustrate spiritual principles or to deepen their understanding of the divine. One common approach to interpreting Hadith narrations in Sufi scholarship is through the concept of “*ta’wil*,” which refers to the mystical or allegorical interpretation of religious texts. Sufis may use *ta’wil* to uncover deeper meanings within Hadith

narrations, often emphasizing the spiritual significance of these texts over their literal meaning (Algar, 1989; Schimmel, 1975).

Sufis may also approach Hadith narrations as a source of spiritual guidance and wisdom, using them to inform their spiritual practice and deepen their connection to the divine. Some Sufi scholars may even view Hadith narrations as a means of direct communication with the Prophet Muhammad, whom they consider a spiritual guide and exemplar. Sufis approach Hadith narrations with a deep reverence for their spiritual significance, seeking to interpret and apply them in ways that deepen their understanding of the divine and enhance their spiritual growth.

The effort to seek the basis of Sufi teachings and practices from hadiths requires Sufi scholars to read and interpret the hadiths not only literally (exoterically) but also esoterically. Hadiths that speak of Sufi practices are believed to have not only a literal meaning (*dhohir*) that encourages people to worship well, draw closer to God, and distance themselves from worldly material interests, but also a hidden (*bathin*) meaning that can guide Sufi practices.

Scholars of the salaf have delved into the study of the exoteric dimension of hadiths. Some examples of their works include *Ikhtilāf Al-Ḥadīṣ* by Al-Syāfi'ī (1990), *Gharīb Al-Ḥadīṣ* by Abu Al-Qāsim 'Ubaid bin Sallām (1984), *Ta'wīl Mukhtalif Al-Ḥadīṣ* by Ibn Qutaibah (1999), *Tafsīr Gharīb Muwaṭṭa' Mālik* by 'Abd Al-Malik bin Ḥabīb (2001), *Al-Dalā'il fī Gharīb Al-Ḥadīṣ* by Al-Saraqūṣṭī, *al-Fā'iḳ fī Gharīb Al-Ḥadīṣ* by Al-Zamakhsyarī (n.d.), and *Anwār Al-Burūq fī Anwā' Al-Furūq* by Al-Qarāfī (n.d.), among others. Their objective was to shed light on hadith sentences that were challenging to comprehend and adjust them to the writing and discourse logic of their time. A thorough understanding of hadith sentences requires knowledge of their relationship to one another, linguistic and grammatical vocabulary, essential and metaphorical meanings, background, and contextualization with local culture and traditions. Without this comprehensive understanding, it is impossible to interpret hadith sentences accurately.

Salaf scholars have also engaged in seeking esoteric meanings in religious texts. In the field of tafsīr, for instance, Aḥmad bin Muḥammad bin Al-Mahdī Ibn 'Ajībah (1998), produced *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Majīd*, which involves interpreting Quranic verses in two dimensions simultaneously. The interpretation starts with the exoteric meanings related to sentence meaning, grammar, and explanations drawn from Quranic verses or hadith, among others. The interpretation then proceeds with the esoteric meaning that focuses on purifying the soul, cleansing the heart, the spiritual ascent of students (*murid* or *sālik*), and the views of Sufi scholars. The dual interpretation aims to combine contradictory meanings, bridge binary oppositions in the text, and reconcile the two poles of interpretation. Other scholars who employed similar methods include 'Alī bin Abī

Bakr Ibn Maimūn Al-Qurasyī Al-Maghribī (1980), Maḥmūd Maḥmūd Al-Ghurāb (1989), and Muḥammad bin ‘Alī Al-Ḥakīm Al-Tirmizī (1969). The former produced *Naḥw Al-Qalb Syarḥal-Ājurūmiyyah*, while the latter wrote *Raḥmah min Al-Raḥmān fī Tafsīr wa Isyārāt Al-Qur’ān* and *Taḥṣīl Naẓā’ir Al-Qur’ān*. In *Taḥṣīl Naẓā’ir Al-Qur’ān*, for instance, Al-Tirmizī (1969) highlighted that a single sentence can have multiple meanings stemming from interpretations of that sentence. He created a theme with specific keywords, which he then interpreted with various meanings, including esoteric ones, by linking them with verses of the Quran.

Sufis generally eschew literal interpretations of Hadith to derive deeper meanings (esoteric meanings) from them. For example, in interpreting the Hadith that reads: “*When I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes, and his foot with which he walks,*” Sufis interpret it in various ways, but a common interpretation is to view it as a metaphor for the concept of “annihilation in God” (*fana fi Allah*). According to this interpretation, when the Prophet Muhammad says, “*When I love him,*” he is referring to the state of being in which the individual’s ego or self is dissolved, and they are completely absorbed in the love of God. In this state, the individual’s actions become an expression of divine will, and they act as if they are an extension of God’s attributes, as described in the Hadith narration (Chittick, 2014; Algar, 1989).

Sufis may also interpret this Hadith as a call to action, emphasizing the importance of aligning one’s actions with the divine will and seeking to live in a state of complete devotion to God. By striving to embody the attributes of God, such as hearing, seeing, striking, and walking, the individual can come closer to the divine and deepen their spiritual practice. This Hadith narration is often interpreted by Sufis as a metaphor for the state of annihilation in God and the importance of aligning one’s actions with the divine will. By striving to live in a state of complete devotion to God, Sufis seek to deepen their spiritual practice and come closer to the divine (Ernst, 2010; Nasr, 2011; Schimmel, 1975).

Another important Hadith in the Sufi tradition reads: “*Allah Almighty says: ‘I am as My servant thinks I am. I am with him when he makes mention of Me. If he makes mention of Me to himself, I make mention of him to Myself; and if he makes mention of Me in a gathering, I make mention of him in a superior gathering. If he comes to Me walking, I go to him at speed. If he comes to Me running, I run to him.’*” Sufis interpret this Hadith as a statement about the nature of God and the importance of the individual’s spiritual state. Sufis view this Hadith as an invitation to cultivate a positive relationship with God by focusing on positive thoughts and intentions toward God. According to this interpretation, the way that an individual thinks about God shapes their experience of God. Thus, if an

individual thinks positively about God, God responds with positive attributes, such as love, mercy, and forgiveness. The Hadith also emphasizes the importance of remembrance of God (*dhikr*) and highlights that God is always present with those who remember Him. Sufis believe that remembrance of God is a powerful tool for spiritual transformation and that it enables the individual to develop a deep connection with the divine.

The Hadith highlights God's responsiveness to the individual's efforts to draw closer to Him. Sufis interpret this as an invitation to strive towards God with sincerity and dedication, knowing that God responds to those who seek Him with pure hearts and intention. This interpretation encourages the individual to pursue a spiritual path with enthusiasm and confidence, trusting in God's love and support along the way. Sufis also interpret this Hadith as a statement about the nature of God, the importance of positive thoughts and intentions, the power of remembrance of God, and the responsiveness of God to the individual's efforts to draw closer to Him.

Another important Hadith states, "*A person who has even an atom's weight of arrogance in their heart will not enter Paradise.*" When someone asked about liking nice clothes and good sandals, the Prophet replied, "*Verily, Allah is beautiful and loves beauty. Arrogance is rejecting the truth and belittling people.*" The exoteric interpretation of this Hadith is that arrogance is a major sin that can prevent a person from entering Paradise. It goes against the core values of Islam by rejecting the truth and belittling others. This interpretation emphasizes the importance of humility and the dangers of pride, encouraging Muslims to practice modesty and avoid arrogance. While The esoteric interpretation of this Hadith is accessible only to those with a deeper understanding of Islamic tradition. It teaches that the ultimate goal of spiritual practice is to purify the heart of all negative qualities, including arrogance. The "atom's weight of arrogance" symbolizes any negativity that remains in the heart despite one's efforts to purify it.

According to Sufi teachings, the heart is the seat of the soul, and its purification is essential for spiritual growth and enlightenment. Arrogance, along with other negative qualities such as envy and anger, is an obstacle to the purification of the heart. Thus, the Hadith emphasizes the need to purify the heart of all negativity to achieve spiritual enlightenment and attain closeness to Allah. The reference to "nice clothes and good sandals" in the Hadith can be interpreted as a warning against materialism and attachment to worldly possessions. Sufis believe that materialism and attachment to worldly possessions can distract us from our spiritual goals and lead us away from Allah.

The above-mentioned hadiths regarding key themes in Sufi practice (see Table 1) demonstrate that the Sufis from the outset based their belief in tasawuf

practices on the tradition taught by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This essentially shows that Sufi teachings are inherently compatible with Islamic teachings. In Sufi teachings, individuals are required to continuously purify themselves (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), particularly through improving their character, purifying their hearts from anything that may taint their sincerity in worship, and abstaining from anything prohibited by the religion.

The hadiths mentioned demonstrate that the foundation of Sufi beliefs is rooted in the teachings of the Prophet, which emphasizes the importance of continuously striving towards the purification of the self (*tazkiyat al-nafs*). This purification process includes not only the physical body but also the heart and mind, ensuring that one's worship and intentions remain sincere and pure. Sufi practices are aimed at improving an individual's character, helping them to become more compassionate, humble, and empathetic towards others. This aligns with the principles of Islam, which emphasizes the importance of treating others with kindness and respect. Additionally, Sufis are required to abstain from anything prohibited by Islam, demonstrating the compatibility of Sufi teachings with Islamic values. Sufism is not separate from Islam but a path towards a deeper understanding and connection with Allah.

In Sufi practice, individuals are also encouraged to adopt a state of *zuhud* or detachment from materialistic interests, dependence on wealth, and love for anything other than Allah. However, the state of *zuhud* does not necessarily require Sufis to perform *uzlah*, which promotes apathy towards everything that happens in the social environment. One can still adopt the state of *zuhud* while leading a good life, as long as they do not become trapped in excessive love for the world. The concept of *zuhud* in Sufi practice does not necessarily entail complete isolation from society. Instead, Sufis are encouraged to detach themselves from materialistic interests, wealth, and worldly pleasures, and focus on their love for Allah.

The state of *zuhud* does not require Sufis to withdraw from society completely, as it is important to live a good life and contribute to society in positive ways. However, Sufis are encouraged to maintain a balance and avoid excessive love for the world, as this can lead to distractions from spiritual growth and detachment from Allah. Sufis believe that *zuhud* helps individuals to achieve inner peace and tranquility, which is necessary for spiritual growth. By detaching themselves from the material world, Sufis can focus on their relationship with Allah, leading to a deeper understanding of the self and the universe. The concept of *zuhud* in Sufi practice encourages individuals to detach themselves from materialistic interests and focus on their relationship with Allah. Sufis don't need to isolate themselves from society completely, but rather to maintain a balance and avoid excessive love for the world. This state of detachment can lead to inner peace and spiritual growth,

helping individuals to achieve a deeper understanding of themselves and their relationship with Allah.

Sufi Teachings: Zuhud, Ihsan, and the Basis in Prophetic Tradition

The Sufi practice also encourages individuals to improve the quality of their worship (*ihsan*), particularly by getting accustomed to worshipping sincerely for the sake of Allah alone, hoping for goodness from Allah alone and not relying on anyone besides Him, and performing all religious teachings to the best of their ability as exemplified by the Prophet. Sufis believe that the quality of one's worship is just as important as the act of worship itself. It is not enough to simply perform the physical actions of worship; individuals must cultivate a deep sense of sincerity and devotion towards Allah. This involves having the right intention and hoping for goodness from Allah alone, without relying on anyone besides Him.

In addition to this, Sufis also believe in following the example of the Prophet in performing all religious teachings to the best of their ability. This involves not only the physical aspects of worship but also the inner state of the heart and mind. Sufis believe that through practicing *ihsan*, individuals can achieve a deeper connection with Allah and become better human beings. The concept of *ihsan* in Sufi practice emphasizes the importance of sincerity and devotion in worship. It encourages individuals to improve the quality of their worship by cultivating a deep sense of devotion towards Allah and following the example of the Prophet. Through this practice, Sufis believe that individuals can achieve spiritual growth and develop a deeper connection with Allah.

This study demonstrates that the teachings of Sufism have a basis in the prophetic tradition, which can be referenced in various hadiths of the Prophet that speak about the practice of Sufism, particularly focusing on the implementation of worship to the best of one's ability (*ihsan*), purification of the self from various things that can defile the heart and hinder the light of God (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), and the practice of *zuhud* or avoiding excessive love for the world and material life. The Sufis strive to find the basis of these Sufi teachings through esoteric interpretation of these hadiths. This effort is important not only for the integration of hadiths and Sufi teachings but also for seeking the deepest indications that the Prophet showed through his hadiths.

3. Conclusion

This study shows that the teachings of Sufism are rooted in the prophetic tradition, as evidenced by various hadiths of the Prophet that discuss the practice of Sufism. Specifically, the hadiths emphasize the importance of worshipping God to the best of one's ability (*ihsan*), purifying oneself from things that can defile the

heart and hinder spiritual growth (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), and practicing *zuhud* or detachment from excessive love for the material world. Sufis strive to understand the deeper meanings of these hadiths through esoteric interpretation. This effort is important not only for integrating hadiths and Sufi teachings but also for uncovering the Prophet's deepest insights and teachings.

This study highlights the significance of Sufism in Islamic tradition and the role it plays in helping individuals develop a deeper connection with God. By emphasizing the inner dimensions of Islamic practice, Sufism offers a pathway toward spiritual growth and a means of attaining a greater understanding of God and His attributes. The hadiths that discuss Sufism serve as a source of inspiration and guidance for those seeking to embark on this spiritual path. Moreover, the integration of hadiths and Sufi teachings is essential for a more comprehensive understanding of Islam. It helps to bridge the gap between the exoteric and esoteric dimensions of Islamic practice and highlights the interconnectedness of different aspects of the faith. Through this integration, Sufi teachings can be understood not as a separate branch of Islam, but as a deeply rooted and integral aspect of the faith.

This study demonstrates the significance of Sufism in Islamic tradition and its basis in the prophetic tradition. By interpreting hadiths in an esoteric manner, Sufis seek to uncover the deeper meanings of these teachings and apply them in their daily lives. The integration of hadiths and Sufi teachings offers a more holistic understanding of Islam and the role it plays in helping individuals develop a deeper connection with God.

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