



Teosofia: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Mysticism

Vol. 12, No. 1, 2023, pp.75-98

e-ISSN: 2540-8186; p-ISSN: 2302-8017

DOI: 10.21580/tos.v12i1.14504

A Critical Analysis of the Response of Ilorin Sufi Scholars to Anti-Sufi Uprising in the Seventies in Nigeria

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Article History:

Received: 3 March 2023

Accepted: 9 June 2023

Published: 12 June 2023

How to cite this article:

Gambari, Yusuph Dauda.

“A Critical Analysis of the Response of Ilorin Sufi Scholars to Anti-Sufi Uprising in the Seventies in Nigeria”

Teosofia: Indonesian

Journal of Islamic

Mysticism 12, no 1

(2023): 75-98.

<https://doi.org/10.21580/tos.v12i1.14504>

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Journal of Islamic

Mysticism.

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Abstract: Sufism has been trailed by different criticisms for a long period. Different Muslim communities across the Muslim world have experienced anti-Sufism drives but launched in Nigeria in the seventies as it was inaugurated and coordinated by Shaykh Abubakar Mahmud Gumi, who acted under the guise and influence of *Wahhābiyya-Salafiyya*. As a result, Sufis across communities started responding by either preaching or writing. Sufi scholars in Ilorin, a border community between the North and South, were among the early responders to anti-Sufism who took to writing. Therefore, this paper is a critical analysis of the contents of *Rafq̄ al-Shubuhāt*, written as a response to anti-Sufi waves in the city. An exegetical method of research was adopted to determine the appropriateness of the Sufi scholars to the anti-Sufism campaign in the metropolis. The findings revealed that most of the *Salafiyya*'s claims are unfounded and lack the proof to establish their genuineness, while the responses of the Sufi are not only appropriate but are also laced with evidence from the Qur'an, *Ḥadīth*, and submissions of different scholars, some of whom were *Salafiyya* scholars. The book is therefore recommended for the defence of Sufism in contemporary times.

Contribution: This study contributes to revealing the efforts to tackle the anti-Sufism movement initiated by Sufis scholars in Ilorin Nigeria, by writing a book entitled *Rafq̄ al-Shubuhāt*, as a counter-opinion.

Keywords: *bid'ah*; *izālah*; Ilorin; Wahabism-Salafism; Sufism

Introduction

The history of Sufism in Nigeria could be broadly divided into two, making the 1970s the distinction. Sufism existed in the country before the seventies without a noticeable challenge or observable difference among the Muslims about it. This could be credited to the influence of Shaykh Uthman Ibn Fūdī (d.1817), a staunch Sufi of the Qādiriyyah Order responsible for the Islamic Jihad of the 19th century in the country. Another personality whose efforts and influence consolidated Sufism in the country was Sir Ahmadu Bello (d.1966), the Sardauna of Sokoto and a northern political leader. The influence of Shaykh Ibrahim Niass (d.1975), a central *Tijāniyyah* figure with impacts across the globe, was also significant in the spread and consolidation of Sufism in Nigeria.

The late sixties ('60s) to 1979 witnessed essential turning points, such as when Sardauna and Shaykh Ibrahim Niass kicked the bucket. It was also when anti-Sufism started courtesy of Shaykh Abu Bakr Mahmud Gumi (d.1992). He took inspiration from Saudi Wahhabism and launched attacks against Sufism in the country when he published his famous book *'Aqīdat al-Ṣaḥīḥa bi Muwāfaqati al-Sharī'a* (The Correct Faith with the Approval of Islamic Law) culminated in the formation of *Jamā'atu Izālat al-Bid'ah wa Iqāmat al-Sunnah* (A Group to Remove Heresy and Establish the Prophetic Tradition). These developments ignited unrest across the North between Shaykh Gumi's students and disciples, who organized themselves under *Izāla* (a group to remove heresy) to challenge, condemn, and attack the Sufis and the Sufis who stood to defend themselves.

Sufi scholars across communities started to mobilize themselves to wrestle down their opponents. The two groups had debates, arguments, and even physical attacks. Some took to writing to explain, defend, and refute accusations of Shaykh Gumi against *Taṣawwuf* (sufism). This paper, therefore, intends to critically examine the written and compiled work by Ilorin Sufi scholars to curb the anti-Sufi actions in the city, especially as they are being coordinated across the northern communities by Shaykh Gumi. It is titled: *Rafḍ al-Shubuhāt an Mā fi al-Qādiriyya wa al-Tijāniyya min al-Shaḥāhāt* (Rejecting the Doubts about the Superficialities in the *Qādiriyya* and *Tijāniyya*). It is imperative to evaluate the scholarship of the early Sufi scholars of Ilorin and expose the present Sufis and non-Sufis to the efforts of their predecessors to allow them to borrow a leaf from them, especially now that there is another wave of anti-Sufism in the city courtesy of *Salafīyya* (Salafism) scholars from Saudi Arabia.

Literature Review

Sufism has been trailed by different criticisms over the years, right from its evolvement as a distinct practice in Islam, especially after the period of *Salaf* (the first three generations of Muslims). Al-Ṣāliḥ¹ writes to discredit Sufism and dissociate it from Islam, traces the origin of Sufism, and submits that it (Sufism) has no specific source, even as it is evident from the various accounts of the Sufis. He concludes by stating that Sufism accommodates several belief systems, like Christianity and Buddhism, and philosophies like Hellenism and those of Persians and their methodologies, alien to the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, and the practices of the *Salaf*.

Ishaq² also condemns Sufism at length, citing references from both the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and exonerates both Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyya from Sufism, bringing partial evidence from their works. Equally, Sufyān al-Thawrī and Fuḍayl Ibn 'Iyāḍ in the submission of the writer, are scholars of *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamā'a* (Sunni) and not Sufi in any way and the duo had nothing to do with it (Sufism).

Ḥarīth Al-Muḥāsibī, in his view, was a moderate Sufi whose proper disposition to Sufism was not projected by the Sufis after him. In furthering the condemnation and disassociation of Sufism with Islam, the writer links *Tablīghīya* to Sufism, stating that they shared almost the same ideology and that the founder of *Tablīgh* (Tablighi Jamaat), Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas, was a Sufi. He further equates and links the two sects (Sufism and *Tablīgh*) to *Khawārij* (Kharijites).

However, Yusuph³ conducts his studies on how Sufism was criticised by *Salafīyya* scholars for its doctrines and practices, stating that Sufi lacks legitimacy in Islam. He proves that the *Salafīyya* scholars' claims, like Ibn Baz, Al-Uthaymin, and Al-Albani, are between overgeneralization and misinterpretation of Sufi works. Al-Malik,⁴ In his work, they have compiled various pro-Sufi views of selected classical scholars like Ibn Taymiyyah

¹ Saleh As-Saleh, "Sufism: Origin and Development," AbdurRahman.Org, 2005, <https://abdurrahmanorg.files.wordpress.com/2014/08/sufism-origin-and-development-dr-saleh-as-saleh.pdf>.

² Aboo Aamir Al-Atharee Ishaq, "All of Sufism Is Misguidance," <https://simplysalafiyah.com>, 2013, <https://simplysalafiyah.com/ebooks.php?start=40>.

³ Dauda Gambari Yusuph, "An Examination of the Selected Salafīyyah Scholars Discourse on Sufism" (University of Ilorin, 2018).

⁴ Shaykh Abd al-Hafiz Al-Makki, *Mawqif Aimmat Al-Harakat Al-Salafīyyah Min Al-Tasawwuf Wa Al-Sufīyyah* (Cairo: Dar as-Salam, 2001).

(d.1328CE/728AH), Al-Dhahabi (d.1348CE/748AH), Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyya (d.1349CE/757AH), Ibn Kathir (d. 1378AH/774CE), Ibn Rajab Al-Ḥanbali (795AH) and Ibn Abdul-Wahhāb (d.1792CE) among others scholars that the present day *Salafīyya* advocates relied on in their anti-Sufism propaganda. He demonstrated their favorable disposition to Sufism in this work.

Thanawi,⁵ in his work, compiles about three hundred and thirty (330) *aḥādīth* (plural of *ḥadīth*; a corpus of the sayings or traditions of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH) on Sufi doctrines and practices from different collections of *ḥadīth* purposely to defend the subject matter (Sufism) since the anti-Sufi scholars often use *ḥadīth* to negate some of its principles and practices. The author not only brings traditions that support Sufism in doctrine or practice alone but also brings others that the Sufis overrun with an attempt to modify them. Olayiwola⁶ highlights the imbroglio between the Sufis and the *Salafiyūn* in Nigeria as one of the significant Islamic rifts requiring urgent attention as neither of the two sides is ready to back down. The work discusses intra and inter-discords surrounding Sufism in Nigeria and how those factors have negatively affected Muslims.

Kaura⁷ discusses the efforts of Shaykh Uthman Danfodio, a Sufi and a *Qādirī* (a member of *Qādirīyya* sufi order) on *Jihād* (struggle on behalf of God and Islam), who established the Sokoto Caliphate. He documents the Shaykh's active role in the formation and consolidation of the political administration of the Caliphate and how he combined physical *Jihād* with mystical practice. He concluded that if not for the Sufi background and deep-rootedness in its doctrines, the Jihadists might have derailed, and the Caliphate may not be sustained for long.

Hassan⁸ surveys Islamic organisations, Movements, and Ideologies in Nigeria and their interactions. According to him, Sufism predates every movement in Niger and states that *Qādirīyya* and *Tijāniyya* orders are the main Sufi groups in the country. He provided a historical account of how each of the

⁵ Mawlānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī, *A Sufī Study of Ḥadīth*, trans. Shaykh Yusuf Talal Delorenzo (London: Turath Publishing, 2010).

⁶ Abdul Fattah Olayiwola, *Islam in Nigeria: One Crescent Many Focuses* (Lagos: Sakirabe Publishers, 2007).

⁷ J. M. Kaura, "Relevance of Qadiriyya Sufism in the Jihad and Its Moderative Effect on the Leadership of the Sokoto Caliphate," in *Conference Marking the Installation of the 19th Sultan of Sokoto* (Sokoto: Usmanu Danfodiyo University, 1996).

⁸ Ibrahim Haruna Hassan, *An Introduction to Islamic Movements and Modes of Thought in Nigeria* (Evanston: Northwestern University Library, 2015).

orders came into being, though with the submission that *Qādiriyya* was the first to reach the country before the *Tijāniyya*. He equally stated that *Tijāniyya* has been influenced the most because it has tentacles across the country, including the Igboland. Hassan is similarly unequivocal in saying that both orders predated the advent of Salafism in Nigeria, which is attributed to Shaykh Gumi.

Method

This paper uses epistemological research to gather pertinent information from various sources, particularly primary sources of Islam, PhD theses, *Tafāsīr* (books of Qur'anic interpretation), and similar materials. It adopts this method to evaluate the contributions of Ilorin Sufi scholars in addressing anti-Sufism in the city and to determine the validity of their arguments and submissions by comparing them to classical Sufi teachings, using references from the Qur'an or authentic *Sunnah* of the Prophet and other relevant sources as the yardsticks. This analysis will showcase the proficiency of the Ilorin Sufis in understanding and defending their practices

Background to *Rafī al-Shubuhāt*

As previously stated, the book was written in response to the anti-Sufism uprising from the North, especially the text of *'Aqīdat al-Ṣaḥīḥa*, which was full of criticisms against Sufism. It was written by Shaykh Gumi and published in Saudi Arabia in 1972. The book has caused much damage to Sufism as it re-orientated many Muslims and gave them reasons to eschew Sufism. The Ilorin Sufi scholars raised to defend Sufism. The first step was the formation of *Lajnatu Jamā'at al-Ṣūfiyya* (the Committee of Sufi Group) under the coordination of the two eminent Sufi scholars of both *Qādiriyya* and *Tijāniyya* orders. Namely, Al-Ḥajj Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Al-Nufāwī Al-Qādirī (d.1982), from the *Qādiriyya*. He was known as Shaykh Maimasa⁹ and Al-Ḥajj Alī Abū Bakar Jabata Al-Tijānī (d.2009), also famous as Alfa Jabata, from the *Tijāniyya*.

Quadri explains that during the reign of the 9th Emir of Ilorin, Al-Hajj Ibrahim Zulu-Gambari (d.1992), precisely in 1978, there was a rumble between the Sufis and *Izāla* preachers at the Sango area of Ilorin, which Emir had to give the preachers an easy exit from the city. He (Emir) set up a committee to forestall future occurrences and coordinate Sufi activities in the town, named *Lajnatu*

⁹ This name shall be adopted in the content of this article.

Jamā'at al-Ṣūfiyya.¹⁰ Sambo's account of the formation of the *Lajna* (the Committee) holds that Shaykh Adam (d.1992) called the Sufis' attention in Ilorin to strange development against Sufism and the need for them to be proactive.¹¹ This was to step up his intense criticism against Shaykh Gumi, whom he accused of disintegrating Nigerian Muslim *Umma* (community) with his *da'wa* (the act of inviting people to Islam) and sabotaging the efforts of Sardauna to spread Islam and unite the Muslims across the North and South of Nigeria.¹² The two accounts corroborate that everything relating to the *Lajna* happened in Ilorin and the palace.

Having been inaugurated, the first assignment was to author a book with contents that are geared towards explaining issues as raised in the '*Aqīdat al-Ṣaḥīḥa* and other anti-Sufi outreach. In the opening remarks to the book, Shaykh Maimasa narrates how the 9th Emir of Ilorin appointed him to attend various meetings of *Jamā'at Nasiri al-Islam* (JNI) in Kaduna on four occasions as a delegate to deliberate on matters of *ḥajj* (pilgrimage), *ṣaum* (fasting), *niṣāb* (Quantum of Zakat) and the likes. This indicates his familiarity with the activities of JNI. It should be mentioned that after the compilation, it was given to Shaykh Adam to proofread and for his printing press to carry out the exercise. Shaykh Maimasa also states that each *zāwiyya* (corner) of both blocs was asked to contribute money for the printing, which was obliged accordingly.¹³

A Survey of *Rafī al-Shubuhāt*

It is a pamphlet of about thirty-two (32) pages. It was printed and published by Islamic Cultural Press, Agege, Lagos State, Nigeria. The book opens with a twelve-line poem by Shaykh Hamzah Salman Agbarigidoma, an eminent Sufi scholar in Ilorin (d.2001). The poem is an awakening call on the Sufis to challenge the infiltration of Ilorin by anti-Sufi preachers with strange tendencies geared towards dismantling Sufism lampooned Sufi saints. He re-affirms his commitment to Sufism, stating that it is a path of the Qur'an and *Sunna*, as

¹⁰ Yasir Anjola Quadri, "A Study of the Izalah, a Contemporary Anti-Sufi Organisation in Nigeria," *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies* 17, no. 2 (1985): 95–108.

¹¹ Abdul Qadiri Sambo, "Shaykh Adam Abdullahi Al-Ilori: His Life and Works" (University of Ilorin, 1981), 106.

¹² Sambo, 104.

¹³ Muhammad Ibrahim An-Nufawi and Ali Abubakar Jabata, *Raf Ash-Shubuhāt 'amma Fi Al-Qadiriyya Wa Tijaniyya Min Ash-Shatahat* (Lagos: Islamic Cultural Press, 1978).

successfully practised by many saints of Allah. He warns people against listening to those preachers and calls for the emulation of the righteous Sufis saints.¹⁴

This is followed by Shaykh Adam's forward message to the book. The content is geared toward displacing anti-Sufism campaigns. Shaykh Adam, in this introductory passage, established the centrality of Sufism to Islam, stating that it (Sufism) is not only righteous and credible but is also built on the principles of the Qur'an, *Sunna*, and the teaching of the *Salaf* through *tazkiyya* (soul purification), *zuhd* (asceticism), *'ibāda* (worship) and spiritual retreats. Its elimination from Islam, therefore, is equivalent to subtracting half out of the Qur'an, *Sunna*, and the precepts of the Companions from the religion.¹⁵

Shaykh Adam condemns anti-Sufism drives across ages, arguing that both Imam Mālik and Shāfi'i were well disposed to Sufism in their days. He explains further that the former emphasized the need to combine Sufism with Islamic scholarship, and the latter has severally recounted his gains from being in the company of Sufis.¹⁶ Shaykh Adam also displaces the popular arguments that Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbali and the *Ḥanābila* School were the sworn enemies of Sufism. He stated how Imām Aḥmad attended Al-Muhāsibī's lectures, which were said to be full of sincerity and purity. Also, he condemned Al-Muhāsibī for his indulgence in scholastic theology (*Ilmu al-Kalām*) and not Sufism. As for the *Ḥanābila*, Shaykh Adam argues that Shaykh Abd al-Qādir, the founder of the *Qādiriyya* order, was a prominent *Ḥanābila* scholar, and the famous Ibn Taymiyyah was another *Ḥanābila* scholar who noted the credibility of Sufism and righteousness of Sufis in his works, except few Sufis who mixed philosophy with their practice of Sufism.¹⁷

Shaykh Adam's refutation of anti-Sufis claims continues by stating that the contemporary anti-Sufi scholars among the *Wahhābiyya* advocates like Shaykh Ibn Baz (d.1999), Shaykh Ibrahim Al-Ashaykh (1990), among others, not extreme but criticized philosophical incursions in Sufism and ignorant Sufis.¹⁸ He argues that a group cannot exist without having different characters. So, as there are weak, ignorant, and pseudo-Sufis, it is the same among the *Salafīyya* advocates. He, therefore, advises the *Salafīyya* advocates to be soft with Sufis

¹⁴ An-Nufawi and Jabata, 1.

¹⁵ An-Nufawi and Jabata, 4.

¹⁶ An-Nufawi and Jabata, 4.

¹⁷ An-Nufawi and Jabata, 6.

¹⁸ An-Nufawi and Jabata, 6.

and apply more knowledge and wisdom in their preaching.¹⁹ He argues further that the impacts of Sufis in Africa are well pronounced in the spreading, propagating, and consolidating of Islam across the land. He mentions Shaykh Al-Maghilī, Shaykh Uthman Ibn Fūdī, Shaykh Mukhtar Al-Kunti, and Al-Kānīmī, among others, as significant actors in these regards, and that what is essential is to build on their legacies.²⁰ Shaykh Adam finally justifies some of Shaykh Gumi's claims on ignorance and the prevalence of *bid'a* (heresy) among the Sufis. He, therefore, admonishes the Sufis to seek knowledge and adhere strictly to the principles of the Qur'an and *Sunna* and to be moderate in their practices vis-a-vis *tawassul* (intercession) and *istighāthah* (seeking assistance),²¹ among others.

***Al-Wilāyah* (Sainthood)**

Sainthood is one of the pillars and essence of Sufism. It is the ultimate desire of every Sufi, and achieving it marks the success of a spiritual journey or experience. Saints have protected friends of Allah who enjoy His guardianship.²² It is a concept embedded in the Qur'an and *ahādīth* of the Prophet. The Qur'an states that the saints of Allah live above fear and grieve (Q. 10:62, among others). In one *ḥadīth*, the Prophet was reported to have confirmed the promised protection by Allah for whoever attains the lofty status of sainthood among the believers.²³ However, its attainment is premised on steadfastness in compulsory acts combined with supererogatory actions.

One of the charges of Shaykh Gumi, among other *Salafīyya* scholars, against Sufism and Sufis is the veneration of saints. The *Salafīyya* scholars usually predicated their arguments on Q.2:170, where the Qur'an condemns adherence to the practice of one's precursors to the detriment of Islamic teachings, and Q.9:31, where Allah states how the Christians worship Isā ibn Maryam. The response of Shaykh Maimasa to the first verse, as contained in *Rafḍ al-Shubuhāt*, indicates the *Salafīyya* scholars' misinterpretation and misapplication of the Qur'anic verse. This is because the verse is relevant to *Kuffār* (the infidels) and not the Muslims. Shaykh Maimasa further neutralizes

¹⁹ An-Nufawi and Jabata, 6.

²⁰ An-Nufawi and Jabata, 7.

²¹ An-Nufawi and Jabata, 8–9.

²² Dauda Gambari Yusuph, "A Discourse on the Sufi's Concept of Sainthood (*Al-Wilāyah*) Concerning Ḥadīth Thirty-Eight (38) of An-Nawawī's Forty Ḥadīth," *A Journal of Islamic Sciences and Muslim Development* 1, no. 1 (2020): 184.

²³ Sahih 'l-Bukhari, No.6502

the *Salafīyya* arguments by proving that Allah allows the followership of pious predecessors. He cites the Qur'an 12:37-38; Yusuf said he abandoned the path of the unbelievers for one of his believing forefathers to buttress that point. These responses seem appropriate as they are in tandem with the explanations and submissions of both Al-Qurtubi.²⁴ and Ibn Kathir²⁵ in their respective celebrated *Tafsīr*. Also, the verse (Q.2:170) does not contextualize sainthood or saint worshipping, and imitation of the rightly guided predecessors is allowed in Islam.

The second verse (Q.9:31), which anti-Sufi scholars used to establish saint worshipping, is equally debunked by explaining that the verse, according to Al-Qurtubi²⁶ and Ibn Kathir,²⁷ both of whom rely on an authentic report from At-Tirmidhī,²⁸ does not connote worship but accepting religious instructions from the monks without referencing the scripture. Shaykh Maimasa draws a further inference from the followership of *Salaf* (Muslims of the first three generations), *Madhāhib* (schools of thought), and an Imam in *Ṣalāt* (prayer). In each of these instances, followership does not translate to worshipping those precursors but worshipping Allah according to their understanding, explanations of the rules of worship from the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, and demonstration. This is technically called *ijtihād* (the independent reasoning). This response is equally apt, as Sufis do not worship saints, but Allah, according to how and how a saint worshipped Him, which was acceptable to Allah.

Shaykh Maimasa further faults the arbitrary declaration of Sufis as *kuffār* by *Salafīyya* and anti-Sufi scholars. References were made to several *aḥādīth* of the Prophet, including the one that declares whoever faces the same *qibla* (the direction of the Kaaba to which Muslims turn at prayer), observes *ṣalāt*, and consumes the slaughters of Muslims is a Muslim.²⁹ Another is the story of Usāma bin Zayd, who killed a *kāfir* who pronounced *shahāda* (witnessing the oneness of Allah and prophethood of Muhammad PBUH) in the battle or war front. The Prophet condemned him for such action.³⁰

²⁴ Shamsu ad-Din Al-Qurtubi, *Tafsīr Al-Qurtubi*, vol. 2 (Cairo: Darul-Kutubi al-Misriyyah, 1964), 210.

²⁵ Ismail Ibn Kathir, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathir*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Daru Tibah, 1999), 480.

²⁶ Al-Qurtubi, *Tafsīr Al-Qurtubi*, 8:120.

²⁷ Ibn Kathir, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathir*, 4:135.

²⁸ At-Tirmidhi, No.3095

²⁹ An-Nufawi and Jabata, *Raf Ash-Shubuhāt 'amma Fi Al-Qadiriyya Wa Tijaniyya Min Ash-Shatahat*, 14.

³⁰ An-Nufawi and Jabata, *Raf Ash-Shubuhāt 'amma Fi Al-Qadiriyya Wa Tijaniyya Min Ash-Shatahat*.

Shaykh Maimasa's arguments mean that nothing justifies Shaykh Gumi and his followers' arbitrary declaration of the Sufis as *kuffār*. Scholars of Islam have, over time, discussed the question of *takfīr* (accusing someone of an infidel) and set the conditions thereof. These include establishing proof, awareness of transgression, the voluntariness of action, and the absence of misinterpretations.³¹ There is nothing to develop the confirmation of these before the Muslims are declared as *kuffār*.

***Bid'a* (Heretical Innovation)**

Bid'a is one of the most misunderstood concepts among the scholars of Islam. It is a central allegation of Shaykh Gumi and *Salafīyya* against Sufis. They declare Sufism as a *bid'a* in Islam and Sufis as *kuffār*. They, therefore, decline *ṣalāt* behind the Sufis.³² According to Al-Shāṭibī, *bid'a* is a concoctive religious act paralleled to *Sharī'a* and designed to worship Allah for reward.³³ In other words, *bid'a* is an act of worship not legislated in *Sharī'a*. Al-Albānī defines it as sayings, deeds, and creeds contradicting the *Sunnah* of the Prophet.³⁴

Various Sufi doctrines and practices like *Tawassul*, *Istighātha*, congregational *dhikr* (remembering Allah), and others are categorized as *bid'a* by anti-Sufi scholars. As conceived by Shaykh Maimasa, *bid'a* is complementary to the definitions and explanations above. He defines it as an act of worship that lacks credence from the Qur'an, *Sunnah*, and the consensus of the scholars.³⁵ They are, however, definite in discarding the conception of *bid'a* as any new religious matter that developed after the demise of the Prophet.³⁶

Another area of disparity in their discussions on *bid'a* is in the division of it. This is driven by the last part of the ḥadīth of Irbad ibn Sariyya, which suggests that every innovation is misguidance.³⁷ Contrary to the submissions to *Salafīyya* scholars like Al-Albānī and Al-Karafi, among others, *bid'a* is indivisible, while

³¹ "التكفير" ضوابط، <https://islamqa.info/>, 2007, <https://islamqa.info/ar/answers/85102/ضوابط-التكفير>.

³² Quadri, "A Study of the Izalah, a Contemporary Anti-Sufi Organisation in Nigeria," 98.

³³ Abu Ishaq Ibrahim bin Musa ash-Shatibi, *Al-I'tisam* (Saudi Arabia: Darul-Ibn Affan, 1992), 50.

³⁴ Muhammad Nasir al-Din Albani, *Ahkam Al-Jana'iz Wa-Bid'auha* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Islami, 1986), 242.

³⁵ An-Nufawi and Jabata, *Raf Ash-Shubuhah 'amma Fi Al-Qadiriyya Wa Tijaniyya Min Ash-Shatahat*, 16.

³⁶ An-Nufawi and Jabata, *Raf Ash-Shubuhah 'amma Fi Al-Qadiriyya Wa Tijaniyya Min Ash-Shatahat*.

³⁷ Abu Dawud, No.4607

the Sufis, as represented by Shaykh Maimasa, an Ilorin scholar in this discourse, divide it into various parts. Shaykh Uthman ibn Fūdī and Izzu' d-Din Abdus-Salam, among other scholars who divided *bid'a* into multiple positions, are relied upon by the Sufis.

Details of the division according to Izz al-Dīn, who divides it into three given, without example except the third one. Namely, *bid'atun ḥasanatun* (good innovation), *bid'atun qabīḥatun* or *sayyiatun* (bad innovation), and *bid'atun mubāḥatun* (permissible innovation). In his explanations, *Sharī'a* commands good innovation but was never practised by Muslims of early generations. The bad one is whatever is forbidden in *Sharī'a*, which early Muslims did not practice. Permissible innovation is allowed in *Sharī'a* but not practiced by early Muslims.³⁸

An instance of a permissible *bid'a* is cited from drumming with a *bandir*. This is premised on *duff*, approved by the Prophet for *Nikāh* (marriage ceremony) and was used to welcome him to Madinah during his migration from Makkah.³⁹ Reference is also made to Aisha, the Prophet's wife, who was reported to have gathered ladies to sing and beat *Mizmār* (a musical instrument). When her father (Abubakr) attempted to stop them, the Prophet overruled him.⁴⁰ The Prophet is also reported to have applauded Abu Musa for inheriting the flute from Prophet Dawud when he praised him (Prophet) with his melodious voice.⁴¹ Despite the prohibition of musical instruments in Islam, the instances given enable the acceptability of *bandir*, which is used to aid concentration in *dhikr*.⁴²

***Mutashābihāt* (Allegorical issues)**

These refer to discussions around symbolic, metaphoric, or parabolic issues, as stated in Q.3:7, where Allah broadly divides verses of the Qur'an into two. Namely, *muḥkamāt* (clear-cut or categorical) and *mutashābihāt* (allegorical or ambiguous) verses. The discussions around the verses of the second category expanded to cover the attributes of Allah (*Ṣifātullāh*) and His Being, hence the question of *tajāsīm* (anthropomorphism). In the same verse, the Qur'an equally mentions *ta'wīl* (interpretation), which connotes unravelling the

³⁸ An-Nufawi and Jabata, *Raf Ash-Shubuhāt 'amma Fi Al-Qadiriyya Wa Tijaniyya Min Ash-Shatahat*, 17.

³⁹ An-Nufawi and Jabata, *Raf Ash-Shubuhāt 'amma Fi Al-Qadiriyya Wa Tijaniyya Min Ash-Shatahat*.

⁴⁰ An-Nasa'I, No.1593

⁴¹ Al-Bukhari, No.5048

⁴² An-Nufawi and Jabata, *Raf Ash-Shubuhāt 'amma Fi Al-Qadiriyya Wa Tijaniyya Min Ash-Shatahat*, 17.

meaning of the metaphoric verses in the Qur'an and, by extension, other allegorical issues in Islam.

It is important to remark on the background to the inclusion of discussions about allegorical issues by Shaykh Maimasa in his response to the anti-Sufi movement in the city. Just as there are contentions among *madhāhib fiqh* (schools of thought in Islamic law), there is also a replication between the two famous schools of 'aqīda: *Athariyya* and *Ash'ariyyah*. The former is the conglomerate of the scholars who hold that allegorical verses should be accepted without question, rejection, or comparison. To the scholars of the latter school, there is a permissibility to interpret those ambiguities and find meanings for them. These divisions were manifested locally as the Sufis are *Ash'ariyya*, while the Salafis Gumi are adherents of the *Athariyya* school.

Discussing *mustashābihāt*, Shaykh Maimasa establishes the importance of firmly believing in the ambiguities and that it constitutes *kufir* for one to reject them. He maintains a middle course between the *Athariyyah* and *Ash'ariyya* by arguing that not every ambiguity requires interpretation or abstinence. Among the instances of *mustashābihāt* that need not be interpreted is the Qur'an, which mentions hands, eyes, faces, and the like. He cited the *ḥadīth* that states how Allah descends to the first heaven in the third part of every night as another instance.⁴³ The story of Musa and Khidr is the evidence cited to prove the need to interpret some of the metaphorical expressions in Islam. It is explained that the knowledge of Musa is exoteric, while that of Khidr is esoteric. Therefore, whatever requires such interpretation should be done within the acceptable limits in *Sharī'a*.⁴⁴

***Shaṭaḥiyya* (Ecstatic Utterance)**

This refers to words uttered by the Sufis with outer discrepancies with *Sharī'a*. Such words must, therefore, be kept from their external meaning. It occurs due to *fanā'* (spiritual annihilation), which is an obliteration of human qualities for divine qualities resulting from *dhikr* and other devotions.⁴⁵ *Shaṭaḥiyya* is an expression made by a Sufi who has reached the peak of his spiritual journey, though he has not perfected his union with Reality.⁴⁶ Sufis are known for producing some strange utterances like *Subḥānī* (praise be to Me),

⁴³ An-Nufawi and Jabata, 19.

⁴⁴ An-Nufawi and Jabata, 18.

⁴⁵ Yusuph, "An Examination of the Selected Salafīyyah Scholars Discourse on Sufism," 150.

⁴⁶ John Renard, *The A to Z of Sufism* (Toronto: Scarecrow Press, 2009), 274.

Jallajalā hī (how majesty I'm), and *Mā fī Jaybī illā Allah* (nothing is in my pocket except Allah), among others, during their mystical experiences.⁴⁷ *Shaḥ* has attracted diverse reactions from different *Salafīyya* scholars, especially in modern times. Many Sufis have explicitly been condemned for it. Discussions about ecstatic utterance formed the kernel of *Salafīyya's* criticism against Sufism in Ilorin, to which the Sufis equally responded to explain and defend themselves.

It is noted by a Sufi scholar in Ilorin while responding to the *Salafīyya's* anti-Sufi claims about some contents of *Fuyūḍātu al-Rabbāniyya* (God's outpourings). This *Qādiriyya* booklet contains their *awrād* (plural of *wird*; a regular litany and a mystical invocation practised by murids) and lines of poems from Shaykh Abdul-Qadiri, the founder of the order that *Shaḥ* is prominent among them. Some songs portray Shaykh Abd al-Qādir as an extraordinary being who had lived before his existence. He is alleged to have been with prophet Idris when he rose to heaven and lived together in *Janna (Firdaus)*. He was also with Prophet Isā when he spoke as a cradle. These expressions connote the preexistence of Shaykh Abdul-Qadiri before his real or actual existence.

Shaykh Maimasa explained these under ecstatic utterance, citing the *ḥadīth* of a man Imam Al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim reported as evidence to bolster their argument.⁴⁸ The *ḥadīth* narrates how a man lost his camel with his food in the desert and got tired, having tried all he could to find it to no avail. He slept under a tree out of loss of hope and frustration, only to wake up and see the camel together with his food items by his side. The man exclaimed.

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ عَبْدِي وَأَنَا رَبُّكَ، أَخْطَأُ مِنْ شِدَّةِ الْفَرَحِ "

'O, God! You are my servant, and I am your Lord. (It is a) mistake emanating from intense happiness.'⁴⁹

The above *ḥadīth* indicates that the man places himself as Allah, but not in Reality. Another reference is made from Imam Shafī'ī, who is also on record to have sung:

وَلَوْلَا خَشْيَةُ الرَّحْمَنِ رَبِّي ... لَقَلَّتِ النَّاسَ كُلَّهُمْ عِبْدِي

'If not for the fear of the most merciful, my Lord, I would have said every living human is my servant.'⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Yusuph, "An Examination of the Selected Salafīyyah Scholars Discourse on Sufism," 150.

⁴⁸ An-Nufawi and Jabata, *Raf Ash-Shubuhāt 'amma Fi Al-Qadiriyya Wa Tijaniyya Min Ash-Shatahat*, 20.

⁴⁹ Muslim, No.2747

⁵⁰ An-Nufawi and Jabata, *Raf Ash-Shubuhāt 'amma Fi Al-Qadiriyya Wa Tijaniyya Min Ash-Shatahat*, 22.

The above statement of Imam Shafī'ī, as documented by Al-Dhahabī,⁵¹ runs contrary to Qur'an 3:79, where Allah condemns people demanding worship of themselves due to special favors of Allah on them instead of calling on people to worship Allah.⁵²

It is explained further that Sufis combine the knowledge of *Sharī'a* and that of *ḥaqīqa* (reality) and are sometimes overwhelmed by the combination. Thus, it beclouded their rationality and provoked strange utterances. Abu Mansur Al-Ḥallāj declared, "I am the Truth" (*Anā al-Ḥaqq*).⁵³ Scholars differ on this pronouncement. Some spared or excused him and whoever is guilty of it. Some condemned and declared him or whoever makes such pronouncement as *kuffār* and ruled for their execution. Other evidence cited to defend ecstatic utterances by Shaykh Maimasa is the instance of *ḥadīth* 38 of An-Nawawi, where Allah states that at the height of spiritual attainment, He turns to the eyes, hands, and legs with which a saint sees, touches, and walks. This attests to the divinity of a man as a saint who can act or utter words beyond the ordinary comprehension of the masses.⁵⁴ They also make the Prophet's declaration of being a Prophet before the creation of Adam, the first man to be created, another example of ecstatic utterance because all know that Adam lived before him.⁵⁵

As hinted above, the works of many *Salafīyya* scholars are replete with discussions on *Shataḥāt*. Some of the evidence the Ilorin Sufis scholars relied upon is cited by the *Salafīyya* scholars, who excused those who uttered strange words. However, Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyya are noted in this regard. However, their premises for such an excuse are necessary as they are not pointed out by the Ilorin Sufis scholars in their reactions to those who criticized them. Ibn Qayyim submits that such a statement should be likened to utterances of annoyance, intoxication, and love, which may weaken the senses of rationality and trigger unintended or unguarded pronouncements.⁵⁶ Ibn Taymiyyah adds that except where unlawful substances, like liquor, occasion such, the person who

⁵¹ Shamsu ad-Din Ad-Dhahabi, *Siyar A'lām Nubalā'*, vol. 8 (Cairo: Darul-Ḥadīth, n.d.), 267.

⁵² An-Nufawi and Jabata, *Raf Ash-Shubuhāt 'amma Fi Al-Qadiriyya Wa Tijaniyya Min Ash-Shatahat*, 22.

⁵³ An-Nufawi and Jabata, 23.

⁵⁴ An-Nufawi and Jabata, *Raf Ash-Shubuhāt 'amma Fi Al-Qadiriyya Wa Tijaniyya Min Ash-Shatahat*.

⁵⁵ An-Nufawi and Jabata.

⁵⁶ Muhammad ibn Abubakar Ibn Qayyim, *Madārijū As-Sālikīn*, vol. 1 (Al-Maktabah As-Shamilah, n.d.), 178.

pronounces anti-*sharī'a* words cannot be declared as an infidel or be blamed for it.⁵⁷ This can be further bolstered in classical *fiqh* because a *ṭalāq* (divorce) pronouncement under duress or annoyance is invalid.⁵⁸

Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ (Al-Fātiḥ Invocation)

This is an essential recitation among the Sufis, especially the *Tijāniyya*, to seek Allah's blessings upon the soul of the Prophet. The *Salafīyya's* charges against *Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ* include its source or origination, which is said to be equivalent to revelation and the rewards that accrue to whoever recites it. According to *Jawāhir al-Ma'ānī* (Jewels of Meanings), Shaykh Ahmad Tijānī is quoted to have stated that a single recitation of it is equal to six recitations of the Qur'ān and that it (*Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ*) carries the reward of all forms of Ibadah.⁵⁹

Shaykh states further that the Prophet did not teach his companions *Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ* because he wanted it to be revealed to the world through the Seal of the Saints (*Khātim al-Awliyā'*) at the tail end of the world when religious values must have significantly been washed away. Hence, Shaykh declared himself as the Seal of the Saints. According to the Shaykh Gumi, the Prophet did not complete his mission⁶⁰ despite Q.5:3 and a corresponding *ḥadīth* from *Musnad* of Imam Ahmad.⁶¹ This indicates that the Prophet did not leave anything beneficial or unexplained to his *Umma*.

Therefore, *Salafīyya* scholars argue that since the only *Ṣalāt* that the Prophet taught to his Companions is *Ṣalāt al-Ibrāhīmiyya*, no other one can be rated above it. They, therefore, declared whoever recites *Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ* as an infidel because it presupposes that one professes a belief that the Prophet hid divine message and such superior to the Qur'ān.⁶²

Shaykh Jabata's response focuses on the second to the exclusion of the first. Justifying the esteem importance of *Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ* and in the bid to prove accuracy in its wordings, Shaykh Jabata explains the wordings of *Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ*

⁵⁷ Ahamd Abdul-Halim Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' Al-Fatāwā*, vol. 10 (Al-Maktabah As-Shamilah, n.d.), 340. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' Al-Fatāwā*, (Al-Maktabah As-Shamilah, Vol.10) 340

⁵⁸ Wahbah Al-Zuhayli, *Al-Fiqh Al-Islāmī Wa Adillatuhu*, vol. 9 (Al-Maktabah As-Shamilah, n.d.), 343.

⁵⁹ Ali Harazim Ibn Arabiy, *Jawāhiru Al-Ma'ānī* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 2001), 57.

⁶⁰ Abubakar Mahamud Gumi, *Al-'Aqīdatu Aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* (Beirut: Darul-Arabiyyah, 1972), 21.

⁶¹ Abdul-Aziz Abdullahi Ibn Bāz, *Majmū' Fatāwā*, vol. 3 (Al-Maktabah As-Shamilah, n.d.), 87.

⁶² Quadri, "A Study of the Izalah, a Contemporary Anti-Sufi Organisation in Nigeria," 90.

to demonstrate that none of them contradicts the Qur'an. This may not be too relevant because anti-*Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ* scholars did not contest its contents, but the origin and rewards as stated earlier. Also, Shaykh Jabata argues that the purported reward comes under the concept of *targhīb* (encouragement) to make it widely acceptable to people and that it should be taken as a *Shah* (ecstatic utterance), which should be understood beyond the letters.⁶³ Shaykh explains further that it is not proper for anyone to place anything above the Qur'an.⁶⁴ It is also argued that *Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ* possesses some miraculous spiritual power. The instances given include the common practice of using it for supplication, which has become a norm in society, and how Shaykh Ibrahim used it as an antidote to snakebite.⁶⁵

Having affirmed the inestimable value of the Qur'an as the best form of *dhikr*, Shaykh Jabata further explains that one can still get a better reward for *al-Ṣalāt* than reading or reciting the Qur'an. They highlighted two yardsticks, but generally, there are about four conditions for the recitation of the Qur'an to be acceptable and attract rewards in the sight of Allah. The first is the manner of recitation, in which they explain that the essence of reading the Qur'an is understanding its messages and applying them accordingly. To these conditions, the Prophet is reported to have said whoever recites a complete Qur'an in less than three days does not understand it.⁶⁶ The second is where one reads but fails to apply its messages; the Qur'an is said to be cursing the reader, as reported in a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet; though scholars doubt its status, they only agree on its message.⁶⁷ The third is that the reading must be with ablution, and the fourth is proper recitation regarding the letters and wordings. When one reads the Qur'an a million times outside these rules, it becomes a mere exercise. None of these applies to *Ṣalāt*.

They argue that what was said about the Qur'an, as indicated above, is a curse. At the same time, the *Ṣalāt* is the multiplication of rewards, as in a report where the Prophet said a *Ṣalāt* for him attracts tenfold tips and keeps increasing

⁶³ An-Nufawi and Jabata, *Raf Ash-Shubuhāt 'amma Fi Al-Qadiriyya Wa Tijaniyya Min Ash-Shatahat*, 25.

⁶⁴ An-Nufawi and Jabata, *Raf Ash-Shubuhāt 'amma Fi Al-Qadiriyya Wa Tijaniyya Min Ash-Shatahat*.

⁶⁵ An-Nufawi and Jabata, 26.

⁶⁶ An-Nufawi and Jabata, 26.

⁶⁷ Yusuph, "An Examination of the Selected Salafiyyah Scholars Discourse on Sufism," 224.

as long as one increases the number of rounds.⁶⁸ They finally noted that *Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ* is quite essential and unique that, if it were recited to the Prophet when he was alive, he would have expressed joy as he did to Ka'b Ibn Zahayri when he praised the Prophet. He was so excited to give him a special present (gift) that was never given to reciters of the Qur'an to him.⁶⁹

It should be noted that *Tijāniyya* scholars and writers have taken up the challenge on *Ṣalātu al-Fātiḥ* vis-a-vis the alleged rewards and preference over the Qur'an and *Ṣalāt al-Ibrāhīmiyya*. Yusuph explains that the status of *Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ* among them does not go beyond recommendation. It is not made compulsory; hence, one reads from *Jawāhir* and other authorities of *Tijāniyya* the following phrase:

والصلاة على رسول الله بأي صيغة كانت...فإن كانت بصيغة الفاتح لما أغلق فهي أفضل⁷⁰

'And to seek Allah's blessing for the messenger of Allah in whatever formula...but the best is *Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ*.'

This indicates the permissibility to adopt any *Ṣalāt* as may be convenient for one; the rule only reflects the preference. If it were seen to be as crucial as projected by the *Salafīyya*, the government would not have been flexible.

Also, it is essential to note that the Sufis do not make any attempt to replace *Ṣalāt al-Ibrāhīmiyya* with *Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ* in daily ritual obligatory *Ṣalāwāt* or *Ṣalāt al-Janāzah* (funeral prayer).⁷¹ In the two instances, reciting no other *Ṣalāt* except *Ibrāhīmiyya* is instructive. The members of the *Tijāniyyah*, by doing this, and according to Saleh,⁷² Appear to have distinguished between obligatory acts and the *Mustahab* (voluntary) in the sense that they recite *Ṣalāt al-Ibrāhīmiyya* in their *Ṣalāwāt* and not *Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ*. Suppose the Sufis intend to place *Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ* over and above Qur'anic or Prophetic instructions as it is understood in its arbitrary sense. In that case, they should have been reciting it in daily *Ṣalawāt Mafrūḍah* (compulsory) or write it in their works.

Furthermore, the stated reward that goes to whoever recites *Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ*, which is said to be equivalent to ridiculing the Qur'ān by Shaykh Ahmad Tijānī,

⁶⁸ An-Nufawi and Jabata, *Raf Ash-Shubuhāt 'amma Fi Al-Qadiriyya Wa Tijaniyya Min Ash-Shatahat*, 26.

⁶⁹ An-Nufawi and Jabata, 28.

⁷⁰ Ibn Arabiy, *Jawāhiru Al-Ma'ānī*, 73.

⁷¹ Abdul-Bari Ahmad Al-'Ashmāwī, *Matnu Al-'Ashmāwīyyah* (Al-Maktabah As-Shamilah, n.d.), 14.

⁷² Ibrahim Saleh, *At-Takfir* (Maiduguri, 1998), 90.

seems to have been addressed. This is anchored on the fact that if one reads *Jawāhir al-Ma'ānī* with rapt attention, especially the areas where those issues are mentioned on *Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ* vis-a-vis how the Qur'ān is conceptualized therein. A section of *Jawāhir al-Ma'ānī* quotes the Shaykh affirming the superiority of the Qur'an to other forms of *adhkār*, just like compulsory and voluntary acts. Qur'an, he states, is divine, and nothing stands shoulder equal with it.⁷³ Zachary explains further that the proper disposition of *Tijāniyyah* to both the Qur'an and *Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ* by default is that the Qur'an is like obligatory acts, while *Ṣalawāt* is non-obligatory and that no amount of *nāfilah* (supererogatory) can take the place of *farḍ* (compulsory). Therefore, these depict the *Salafīyya* scholars quoting *Jawāhir al-Ma'ānī* out of context.

Saleh's submission is another form of defence of the *Tijāniyya's* position and the security of the Qur'ān. He submits that the statement that accredits the outrageous rewards for the recitation of *Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ* and placing it above the Qur'an sounds illogical and untrue.⁷⁴ It does not emanate from Shaykh Tijānī but an importation by the detractors to cause distortions.⁷⁵ This can even be substantiated by another declaration from the Shaykh, who reported lysaid that his words and deeds should be scaled with *Shān 'a*. Whatever aligns with *Shān 'a* should be taken, while whatever is contrary should be rejected.⁷⁶

***Jawharat al-Kamāl* (Jewel of perfection)**

This is another essential recitation of the *Tijāniyya* order. It has the same status as *Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ* in terms of origin, manner of recitation, and reward.⁷⁷ There are other specifications regarding the recitation of *Jawharat al-Kamāl*. These include the obligation of being in a state of purity, specifically water ablution only.⁷⁸ Because it is said that the Prophet will be present wherever it is being recited, whoever wishes to see the Prophet while sleeping should endeavour to repeat it before sleep.⁷⁹

The same contentions against *Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ* vis-a-vis the origin and rewards were also put on the table against *Jawharat al-Kamāl*. Shaykh Gumi also

⁷³ Ibn Arabiy, *Jawāhiru Al-Ma'ānī*, 73.

⁷⁴ Saleh, *At-Takfīr*, 88.

⁷⁵ Saleh, 89.

⁷⁶ Yusuph, "An Examination of the Selected Salafīyyah Scholars Discourse on Sufism," 228.

⁷⁷ Ibn Arabiy, *Jawāhiru Al-Ma'ānī*, 58.

⁷⁸ Ibn Arabiy, 53.

⁷⁹ Ibn Arabiy, *Jawāhiru Al-Ma'ānī*.

adds the wordings of the *Jawharat al-Kamāl*, especially as regards *al-asqam* (الأسقم) and *al-muṭalsam* (المطلسم). The words were understood from their outer meanings, opposite the Sufis' usage. The former is taken as a sickness that connotes imperfection⁸⁰ as contrary to perfection, which was the intended meaning of the Sufis.⁸¹ The latter is equally carried as a talisman, which suggests that Sufism is magical as heretical to mystifying light as translated by Zachary.⁸²

The response of Ilorin scholars opens up with an explanation to justify the compulsoriness of water ablution before reading *Jawharat al-Kamāl*. They explain that it is taken from the general conditions for worship in Islam to enhance the blessing of Allah. The instance of Imam Malik was cited, who will not sit to learn or teach *ḥadīth* except with ablution.⁸³ They also explain the word *asqami* as the excellent form of *istiqāma* (uprightness).⁸⁴ The word *muṭalsami* is also defined as the hidden light of the Prophet, which speaks to his eternity.⁸⁵ They argue the possibility of this, though acknowledging its miraculous nature. With it, he returns *taslīm* to whoever says it to him in his grave.⁸⁶

As for the origin of *Jawharat al-Kamāl*, Shaykh Mubarak Ashile narrated that when Shaykh Ahmad Tijānī got to Egypt, he was sitting under a tree when he noticed a strange appearance who later turned out to be Prophet Muhammad. At the same time, he (Ahmad) was wakeful in broad daylight. He (Ahmad) then composed *Kalimat at-Tarḥīb* (welcome speech) in seven different tones, forming *Jawharat al-Kamāl*'s content.⁸⁷ The Sufis compared and justified this narrative with the circumstances surrounding the origination of *al-tashahhud* that is recited in *Ṣalawāt*.

As stated above, *Tijāniyya* scholars and writers have also written to explain one of the two contentious words (*asqami*) in *Jawharat al-Kamāl*. They have rendered different grammatical possibilities of the word *asqami* as

⁸⁰ Gumi, *Al-'Aqīdatu Aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah*, 16, 50–51.

⁸¹ An-Nufawi and Jabata, *Raf Ash-Shubuhāt 'amma Fi Al-Qadiriyya Wa Tijaniyya Min Ash-Shatahat*, 77.

⁸² Sayyid 'Alī Cisse, *The Removal of Confusion Concerning the Flood of the Saintly Seal Ahmad Al-Tijani (Kashif Al-Ilbas an Fayda Al-Khatm Abi' Abbas)*, trans. Zachary Wright, Muhtar Holland, and Abdullahi El-Okene (Fons Vitae, 2009), 296.

⁸³ An-Nufawi and Jabata, *Raf Ash-Shubuhāt 'amma Fi Al-Qadiriyya Wa Tijaniyya Min Ash-Shatahat*, 27.

⁸⁴ An-Nufawi and Jabata, *Raf Ash-Shubuhāt 'amma Fi Al-Qadiriyya Wa Tijaniyya Min Ash-Shatahat*.

⁸⁵ An-Nufawi and Jabata.

⁸⁶ An-Nufawi and Jabata.

⁸⁷ Yusuph, "An Examination of the Selected Salafiyyah Scholars Discourse on Sufism," 221.

superlative to *istiqāma*. A Professor of the Arabic Language, A.N. Suwayd and Al-Barkātī explain in the light of Sībawayh rules that *al-Asqami* in *Jawharat al-Kamāl* has its origin in *al-Aqwām* (uprightness), on the scale of *af'āl*. In another dimension, in his explanation, Ibrahim also came up with another shade of analysis in which the word *Asqami* is said to be an excellent form of *istiqāma* (uprightness) from *الفعل المزيد الرباعي* (the quadrilateral verb form with additional letters).⁸⁸ From these analyses, it is clear that the word *asqami*, as conceived by the *Tijāniyya*, has a place in Arabic grammar and does not mean sickness at all times.

An inference can be drawn from the Qur'ān, where a particular expression may carry two meanings, especially in the opposite sense, and geographical differences sometimes occasion it. The explanations that various exegetes render on the actual meaning of the Qur'ānic expression: *قروء* (Q.2:228) where it connotes the period of cleanliness according to *Hijaz* (Makkah) scholars or menstruation as submitted by *Kūfah* (Iraq) scholars⁸⁹ It can be used as a yardstick to substantiate the position of the Sufis. This, therefore, lends support to the conclusion of Quadri on the word *asqami*, as argued by Al-Hāfidh Al-Miṣrī that the usage of such expression for uprightness is prevalent in the Moroccan dialect.⁹⁰ This paper concludes that the *asqami* is in line with Arabic grammar, and a leaf can be borrowed from the scholars' explanations of the Quranic verse above. Therefore, the claims of the *Salafiyyūn* on the word *asqam* cannot stand.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed the efforts of early Sufi scholars in Ilorin in defending Sufism against the influx of anti-Sufi scholars into the city, especially in the seventies when the wind of anti-Sufism blew across the northern states, courtesy of Shaykh Abubakar Gumi. It replicated Nigeria's share of the global anti-Sufi campaign, launched by *Wahhābiyya* scholars and coordinated by the Saudi Arabian government. The response was rapid, apt, and timely. Hence, the advocacy did not have as many adverse effects on the people of Ilorin as it did elsewhere in the North. It depicted the scholarship and mastery of Sufism by the

⁸⁸ Abdullahi Ibrahim, "At-Tawwūr 'd-Dirāsāt 'l-'Arabiyyah Fi 'd-Diyār 'n-Nufawīyyah Binijiriyyah" (University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria, 2006), 101.

⁸⁹ Muhammad Ali Muhammad As-Shawkāni, *Fatḥ 'l-Qaḍīr*, vol. 1 (Al-Maktabah As-Shamilah, n.d.), 357.

⁹⁰ Yasir Anjola Quadri, "The Tijaniyyah in Nigeria: A Case Study" (University of Ibadan, Nigeria, 1981), 150.

Ilorin Sufi scholars; hence, most of their responses on Sainthood, Allegorical verses, ecstatic utterances, *Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ*, and *Jawharat al-Kamāl* are appropriate and are in tandem with the principles of Qur'an and authentic *Sunnah*, except the aspect of *bid'a*. Their explanations on *bid'a* fall short of scholarly illustrations to drive home their arguments. Therefore, the Sufis in Ilorin and beyond need to revisit this work and make it the driver of their defence of Sufism in the contemporary time against *Salafīyya* scholars in Ilorin and the entire Yorubaland.

Acknowledgement

We are thankful to the anonymous reviewers of Teosofia.

Funding

This research did not receive any financial support.

Author Contributions

Y.D.G. is the sole author of this article.

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