



Tasawwuf As Accentuated In Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Thought

Dr. Afroz Ahmad Bisati^{1*}

^{1*}Associate Professor Department of Islamic Studies, Islamic University of Science and Technology, Awantipora (Pulwama), Kashmir-192122 (India).

Citation: Dr. Afroz Ahmad Bisati (2024),. Tasawwuf As Accentuated In Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Thought *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(4), 8445-8451, Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v30i4.2741

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Islamic scholars of all stripes have studied Tasawwuf since the commencement of the Last Revelation to Muhammad (SAW). Tasawwuf, an essential Islamic institution, has contributed significantly to the advancement of Islam throughout its history. Simultaneously, and throughout, Muslim scholars have severely criticized the institution of Tasawwuf, giving rise to two schools of thought: one that wholeheartedly supports everything related to it, while the other does the exact opposite.

However, a substantial body of Muslim scholarship has acknowledged Tasawwuf as a crucial Islamic institution and traced its theoretical roots to the Qur'an and Sunnah, while simultaneously criticizing and disproving many of the superfluous activities and beliefs that are connected to it. Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1877–1960 AD) is a Sufi philosopher who embodies this school of thought. Said Nursi criticizes people who reject Sufism outright while also denouncing the movement's centrifugal tendencies. The purpose of the study is to illustrate Said Nursi's perspective on Tasawwuf through his *Risale-i Nur*. The research employs a descriptive, analytical and comparative methodology.

Keywords: Sufism, Said Nursi, Islam, Qur'an, Sunnah, *Risale-i Nur*, Muhammad (SAW), Tasawwuf, *Mujaddid Alf-i Thani*, Imam Rabbani.

Introduction

For centuries, Sufism, also known as Tasawwuf¹, or "a quest for nearness to God," has been a prominent aspect of Islam and a subject of extensive study, inquiry, and practical application. Since the arrival of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in Arabia and the start of the final Revelation, Sufism has been studied by scholars of all stripes within the Muslim community. Islam's essential institution of Tasawwuf has been crucial to the religion's history, whether it be in the form of numerous conversions, maintaining the unity of its spiritual ethos, or safeguarding the spiritual integrity of its members. Two schools of thought have emerged as a result of the institution of Sufism coming under heavy criticism from Muslim scholars who are very cynical of its many ideas and background. One school of thought fully supports Sufism, while the other does the exact opposite.²

However, a substantial body of Muslim literature has acknowledged Sufism as a vital institution of Islam and traced its theoretical roots back to the Qur'an and Sunnah, while also criticizing and disproving many of the redundant rituals and beliefs that have been associated with it. Bediuzzaman Said Nursi is a Sufi philosopher who embodies this school of thought. Said Nursi criticizes anyone who deny Sufism outright while also denouncing the movement's centrifugal tendencies.

Said Nursi's idea should be viewed in light of his background, character, and way of life, all of which have unquestionably had a significant impact on him. In order to do the great and broad subject of Sufism justice, one must also read through all pertinent historical texts and Nursi's writings. Thus, what follows is a broad synopsis of Nursi's views on the Sufi institution itself as well as some of its internal dimensions.

Firstly, it is important to note that Said Nursi was not interested in developing a unique Sufi theory.³ Nevertheless, he offers a thoughtful perspective on this crucial Islamic institution. He has dealt with the fundamental ideas and precepts of Sufism with the heart and mind of a Sufi and an 'Alim, in addition to the major figures connected to the movement. Furthermore, Said Nursi was less interested in delving into the subtleties of Sufism and more focused on its core and spirit. Having said that, he, in contrast to many other

Sufi scholars, analyzes Sufism objectively, outlining its merits and drawbacks as well as its historical significance and contemporary relevance.

Nursi's initial attraction to Sufism stems from his spiritual yearnings. As Bilal Kuspinar so eloquently states, Nursi had experienced a period of doubt, particularly in his earlier years, as he searched for a means of discovering the truth. His heedless head, as he laments, had taken horrible and fatal blows during one of these busy occasions when he had been thinking about the phenomena of death. Eventually, such a pressing situation led him to search for a savior who could heal his psychological illness.⁴ And when he came upon the advice to "make the Tawhid your point of direction (*qibla*)," he discovered his savior in the figure of the famous saint-scholar of the Mughal era, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (971/1563-1034/1624), also known as Mujaddid Alf-i-Thani (the Renovator of the Second Millennium).⁵ Put another way, make one person above all else and submit to him; don't worry about anyone else. Nursi's soul was freed from a state of confusion and disarray by this guidance, and as a result, his heart was able to find peace and contentment in the knowledge that the true Tawhid—which is exclusive to the Qur'an—is the most sublime guide and the foundation for all Sufi path masters.

Despite his constant gratitude for all the Sufi schools that uphold the Prophetic Tradition and the spirit of the Qur'an, Nursi does not represent any of them.⁶ For him, reaching the truths is more important than simply following a certain Sufi route. In order to emphasize this, he quoted one of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi's famous sayings, referring to him as "the hero and sun of the Naqshbandi Order."⁷ I prefer to be unveiled to me (*inkishaf*) of a single matter concerning the realities or truths of faith to thousands of intuitions, ecstasies (rapturous states), and wondrous deeds and works (*karamat*).⁸ Meanwhile, Nursi also acknowledges the following reality, which Sirhindi has reiterated: The revelation and clarification of the realities about faith constitute the ultimate goal of all Sufi routes.⁹

After getting to know Sufism, he begins by defining it: Sufism, as well as the Sufi path as an institution, is the name of the spiritual route that initiates use to pursue knowledge of God and achieve complete comprehension of the veracity of their beliefs and the Qur'an. In this way, initiates are elevated to the level of the ideal person (*al-insan al-kamil*) at the conclusion of their spiritual journey and under the Prophet's Ascension.¹⁰ Its primary objective is to achieve gnosis (*ma'rifa*). Put another way, Sufism seeks to perfect man by allowing him to follow a protracted spiritual journey that culminates in the revelation of the truths found in the Qur'an. This voyage passes through the human heart, or "qalb," which Nursi refers to as the source and the center of the manifestation of the universe's countless realities. As per Nursi, there are several names for Sufism, including *tariqa* (a spiritual order or way), sainthood (being a friend of God), initiation, and adhering to a spiritual order or way.¹¹

The inner dimensions and psychological stations of the sufi path are then examined by Nursi, who adheres strictly to the conventional doctrines of earlier Sufi Shayukh. He expresses his opinions on a number of significant Sufi concepts and issues, including the relationship between prophethood and sainthood, the status of Companions, and *wahdat al-wujud* and *wahdat al-shuhud*.

Prophethood and Sainthood

Observing on the connection between sainthood and prophethood Nursi creates a natural bond between the two, enhancing each other's qualities. According to him, both sainthood and the Sufi way for the Shari'ah are evidence of the Prophethood.¹² Furthermore, through heart reflection and spiritual intuition at the level of certainty of sight (*'ayn al-yaqin*), the sainthood not only perceives but also validates all the enigmatic realities of Iman (faith) conveyed by the prophethood. Again, sainthood and the Sufi road stand for the enigmatic perfection of Islam and the path that leads to its lights, as well as the wellspring of human prosperity and growth, even if they are both proofs and evidences of the Prophethood and the Shari'ah.¹³ Nursi simultaneously upholds the idea that prophethood is greater to sainthood.¹⁴ Apart from its significant and exalted qualities and spiritual benefits, the Sufi path in particular is the most efficient way to strengthen the brotherhood within the Islamic community.

The Companions and the Saints

In answering a query about the Companions' status in relation to saints, Nursi first states that the Orthodox Muslim Community (*Ahl-i Sunnat wa al-Jama'at*) is in agreement that the Companions are superior to all people after the Prophet,¹⁵ and then provides a rationale for this belief. Using the sophisticated terminology of the Sufis, Nursi first equates the Prophetic discussion or companionship (*sohbat-i nabawiyyah*) to the elixir in this explanation.

Prophetic company is like an elixir; anyone who takes merely a minute to experience it can gain the illuminations of reality that are equal to years of mystical journey. Because there is a reflection and coloring in companionship. It is commonly known that the highest position in the Sublime Light of Prophethood can be attained by contemplation and surrender. This can be demonstrated by looking at the example of a Sultan's servant, who might become so powerful via the latter's subordination that even a monarch cannot become as great as them. Hence, the greatest saints are unable to equal the Companions because of this enigma. Even saints like Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, who encountered the most noble Prophet ﷺ while awake and were honored by his company in this world, are unable to attain {the level of the} the Companions, despite

having experienced the Prophetic fellowship numerous times while they were awake.¹⁶ Because the companionship and conversation between the Companions and the Prophet occurs through the light of Ahmad's prophethood (*Nabuwat-i Ahmadiyye*) as a Prophet (Nabi), while the saints' encounters with the most noble Prophet (may God's peace and blessings be upon him) occur through the light of Muhammad's sainthood (*Velayet-i Ahmadiyye*) following his death. Put another way, it is not because of the Prophethood itself but rather the sainthood of the Prophet (ﷺ) that the noblest Prophet appears to them and manifests in their visions. Despite this, as the Prophethood is greater to the Sainthood in every way, the former's company and conversation should be equally superior to that of the latter too.¹⁷

Thus, according to Nursi, the superiority of the Prophet's Companions to all saints rests on both the Prophet's unique office and his supreme personality.

Wahdat al-Wajud and Wahdat al-Shahud

The Qur'anic teaching that regards the universe as real and not imaginary at all contradicts with the two major Sufi philosophies, according to Said Nursi: *wahdat al-wajud*, which imagines the universe as pure non-existence to the extent that one is compelled to proclaim that there is no existent but He, and *wahdat al-shahud*, which holds that there is nothing witnessed but He and is the creed of those who uphold the unity of perception. Alternatively, if we consider it within the framework of Nursi's own principle that something should be understood in its existential sense, we are compelled to acknowledge the same truth that the Qur'an asserts, namely that everything in the universe is made up of real beings who serve as concrete mirrors for the manifestations of God's Beautiful Names and Attributes.¹⁸

Moreover, according to Nursi, the Unity of Being though is considered to be the most sublime station by its exponents stands in fact in the lowest rank,¹⁹ for it essentially reduces the being to the level of mere imagination; and in so doing, it equally reduces all the manifestations of God's attributes and names to the level of shadow-like realities, which is contrary to the truth as held in the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. That is to say, the Names of the Necessary Existent, such as all-Merciful (*Rahman*), Sustainer (*Razzaq*), Creator (*Khaliq*), etc., all necessitate in reality and actuality a true application and manifestation according to their respective function. All of these names are as real as the term existent. Besides, the Companions and eminent scholars as well as the Imams of the Prophet's family have reinforced this truth by unanimously declaring that the true natures or realities of things are permanent (*haqaiqat al-ashya-i thabitatun*) and that God the Almighty manifests Himself truly through all His names.²⁰

Nursi cautions that while all entities in the universe do exist, their existence in relation to God is too meek, dark, and shadowy; still, they are neither imaginary nor fancy at all as God grants them existence by His name, "Creator."²¹ In addition, God—who is completely and entirely beyond human comprehension—has a relationship to all entities, visible or unseen, in that He is their Creator. Islam bases its view of the relationship between the Creator and His creatures on six tenets, each of which necessitates the existence of contingent beings—as Nursi succinctly puts it. These ideas cannot in any way be based on fantasy or imaginary things. As a result, after returning from the realms of ecstasy (*istigraq*) and intoxication (*sukr*), anyone who is consumed with the unity of existence or witnessing should give up that state of unity in order to avoid acting in a way that is inconsistent with reality. This is why Nursi meticulously reverts the well-known declaration of *wahdat al-wajud*, *hama ust* (all is He), to its original form, *hama az-ust* (all is from Him), which may more accurately depict the close relationship between God and all other creatures.²²

Nursi's understanding of the Sufis' conceptions of the oneness of Existence gives more weight to his appraisal of *wahdat al-wajud*. Nursi asserts that while *wahdat al-wajud* is unquestionably a highly significant mystical path and condition, it is both imperfect and occasionally dangerous.²³ In spite of this, the majority of those who attained that level did not choose to leave due to its allure and enjoyment; rather, believing it to be the pinnacle of existence, they stayed there permanently. These individuals, akin to other Sufis and saints, embody truth and reality; they perceive the nuanced truths, particularly when in a state of ecstasy and intoxication. But Nursi continues, saying that until they reach the level of the Asfiya, who are sober and fully in control of themselves, they will not be able to understand what they see in their visions.²⁴

In addition, Nursi uses the illustration of two shepherds—one asleep and the other awake—to clarify the distinctions between the two aforementioned states. Because he was able to discriminate between the real world and the world of images, the waking person understood the other's dream in a way that made it perfectly accurate to reality. Similar to this, while in a state of ecstasy, the inhabitants of *wahdat al-wajud* may see a great deal of nuanced imagery from the realm of similitudes, which is similar to the real world. And they can say and even write exactly what they saw in their previous state when they get back to sobriety. But since they are unbalanced, they unwittingly mix the spiritual realm's imagery with the real things of the earthly world.²⁵

It is for this reason that the stages of witnessing (*shuhud*), Nursi declares, remains much inferior to that of faith in the Unseen.²⁶ Strictly speaking, all the intuitions, illuminations and unveilings that occur to the people of 'witnessing' are far behind the truths of belief of the sober saints and the true scholars who, as the heirs of the Prophet, rely on the Qur'an and Revelation. In short, all the mystical states, intuitions, visions, and illuminations, should be measured on the scale of the Qur'an and Sunnah.²⁷

Critique of the Critiques of Sufism

Following his discussion of some of the key tenets of Sufism, Nursi now openly defends the Sufi institution by harshly criticizing those who consistently express hostility toward the Sufi path. He mostly targets two categories among them: The first group consists of what he refers to as certain devious sects (*firaq-i dalle*) who have even gone so far as to deny Sufism because they are blind to its illuminating light. By doing this, they have caused others to suffer as well as themselves from losing out on this crucial path. However, Nursi is not very concerned or sympathetic to this group because it is somewhat obvious that they would reject Sufism due to their blindness. But what's really at risk—or, as he regrets, the most unfortunate group—are those who are solely affiliated with the Community of Orthodox Islam (*Ahl-i Sunnat wa al-Jama'at*). Nursi identifies two groups within this community: some literalist or externalist scholars (*zahiri-'ulama*) and some ignorant politicians (*ahl-i siyaset gafil*). These groups make every effort to block and destroy this vital source of inspiration and life by using the pretext that Sufi path adherents are abusive and misguided in their religious practices and that their beliefs are at odds with traditional Islamic doctrines.²⁸ As very few things, methods, or ways are impervious to errors and flaws, Nursi argues that it would be unjust to condemn a particular Sufi path based solely on a mistake made by one of its adherents.²⁹ Furthermore, the majority of these mistakes and faults are carried out by the inexperienced and inept novices of the Tariqat, not by the Masters or fully qualified, experienced disciples. Because of this, the Sufi path cannot be condemned due to the wrongdoings and evils associated with the actions of some orders and sects that have mistakenly adopted the name of the Tariqat, even if in actuality they continue to operate well outside the boundaries of Shari'ah. Therefore, one cannot generalize about what seems to be incorrect in, say, one specific Tariqat to the other Sufi schools.³⁰

The Place of Sufism within Islam

According to Nursi, Sufism comes in third rank after the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad's Sunnah. He asserts that protecting oneself from the standpoint of Iman is a prerequisite for embracing Sufism or Tasawwuf and that this is the sole path to eternal joy. Therefore, in his opinion, if the great Sufi Masters of the past were still living, they would make every effort to uphold the Islamic teachings and the truths of faith, such as Shaykh Abd al-Qadir Gilani (also known as Gawth al-A'zam, the founder of the Qadiri Order, 470/1077-561/1166), Shah Naqshband (Muhammad Baha-ud-Din Naqshband, the founder of the Naqshbandi Order, d. 791/1389), and Imam Rabbani.³¹ They are the source and the method of everlasting bliss. While many might join Paradise even in the absence of Sufism, no one may enter there without faith.³² If so, Sufism is like a fruit that man can dispense with, but Islam is like bread—a necessary food that man cannot exist without.³³ In the olden days, a person may elevate himself to the point of attaining the truths of belief through a forty-day or even forty-year spiritual journey; however, according to Nursi, with God's grace, if we can now find a means to gain those truths in forty minutes, we shouldn't ignore it.

The Scope and Relevance of Sufism in the Modern Age

"Islam is necessary; this is not the age of Sufism," Nursi said in response to a query about the religion. Through a period of spiritual turmoil, Nursi says that he investigated a number of options as part of his search, and "then I had recourse to the way of Sufism and studied it." I observed that although it required extreme caution, it was genuinely bright and effulgent. That kind of attitude was just for the very top members of the elite, stating that not everyone can follow this path at this time.³⁴ Crucially, he responded that he was always concerned with the truth and faith (*haqiqat and iman*) when he was accused of having taught in Sufism and even of founding a Tariqa.³⁵ Interestingly enough, Nursi finds little place for Sufism in contemporary times despite his ardent defense of the institution and everything it implies. This appears to be a common trend in the modern era, as evidenced by the opinions of numerous prominent modern scholars, like Rashid Shaz and Javaid Ghamidi, among others. Nursi has good reason to maintain this position; the Sufi route is a spiral road upward to the revelation of divine truths, but it is risky, illusory, and unsafe because it depends solely on the individual, who acts as their own judge and standard.

Opposed to it is the ideal of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and his *Risale-i Nur*, where he convincingly proves that the society is superior to the individual and that personal justice may not always coincide with the communal one. In his view the only truthful and trustworthy leader to the eternal abode is the god-inspired wisdom of the Holy Qur'an. It is the universal light, leading the straightway and the only thing flawless and complete, granting not only earthly justice and betterment but also absolution in the Day of Judgment. It is not merely a law, commanding moral life; it is an embodiment of justice—terrestrial and divine.

The ultimate point of all Sufi paths is the unveiling and elucidation of the truths concerning faith. But these truths are already revealed in the Qur'an so the role of Sufism is inferior one to that of the Shari'ah.³⁶

So, according to Nursi Sufism is the exotic fruit, which only gives extraordinary taste and pleasure, but the strong and basic belief (Iman) is what is the "bread", life- sustaining ingredient for the whole Ummah.

Qur'an-oriented Sufism—Nursi's alternative to Sufism in Modern Times

As previously mentioned, Nursi's original path is based on the Qur'an and progresses gradually in four steps, each of which can be briefly stated as follows:

In the first step, the initiate is required to comprehend the verse, *do not justify yourself*,³⁷ with a sincere

attempt to see himself as he is, and not higher than he is. For, as Bediuzzaman says, man due to his innate nature and disposition, always tends to love and praise himself, and only himself, not anything else; so much so that he acts as if he is devoid of all faults and mistakes, and thus defends himself unreservedly as though worshipping himself, as the Qur'an articulates: *Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire? Then would you be responsible for him?*³⁸ So, his excessive glorification of himself causes him to rely only on himself and further sacrifice everything to his own soul at the exclusion of others. It is therefore the initiate, at the outset, must strive for the full discernment of his weakness.

In the second step, man is demanded to maintain the awareness of himself by persevering the awareness of God in mind and heart, as is displayed in the verse: *And be not like those who forget God, and He therefore makes them forget their own selves.*³⁹ In other words, man's forgetfulness of God, as Nursi expounds, results in the forgetfulness of his own soul, and even to some extent, his selfishness, in such a way that, whenever he sees something unfortunate or inconvenient, say, for instance, death, he takes it in relation to others, while forgetting that he may also encounter it too; and in the case of pleasure, however, he acts quite conversely and thinks first of himself. He can be liberated from such evil habit that emanates originally from his evil-commanding soul (*nafs-i ammara*) through the continuous recollection of God.

In the third step, the initiate begins to see his own imperfection before the most perfect Being, God. He strives to act in contrast to the demands of his evil-commanding soul by attributing all his good qualities to God and all his defects and faults to himself, as this verse teaches: *Whatever good, (O man!) happens to you, (happens to you) from God; but whatever evil happens to you is from your (own) soul (from yourself).*⁴⁰ At this stage, he remains ever thankful to God, and instead of being boastful of himself, he turns to lead an extremely humble life; so much so that, as Nursi articulates, he finds 'his perfection to lie in imperfection, his ability in ability, and his wealth in poverty.'

The initiate completes his journey as soon as he attains to the thorough comprehension of the wisdom that lies in the following famous Qur'anic verse: *Everything (that exists) will perish except His (own) Face (or Countenance).*⁴¹ The full understanding of this profound verse, according to Nursi, will save the person from being deluded by the appearance of the things, and thus facilitate him to see them in their true reality. In other words, a thing, declares he, has two aspects, one in respect to itself (*mana-yi ismi*), the other in regard to its Creator (*mana-yi harfi*). In its first aspect, the thing is transient (*fani*), absent (*mefkud*), temporal (*hadis*), and nonexistent (*ma'dum*), whereas, in its second aspect, it is like a mirror, reflecting God's names; and in this sense, therefore, it becomes both a witness (*shahid*) and the witnessed (*mashud*), and both an existent (*mawjud*) and the heedful of the existent (*wajud*).⁴² A person at this stage will have completely given up his egotism, and thereby will be able to attribute all due existence to God, and then finally see that so long as he is a mirror of the manifestation of the true Donor of Existence, he procures an infinite existence.⁴³

Conclusion

In summary, the path that Nursi himself created and followed is based solely on the Qur'an and is safer, wider, shorter, and more accessible than the other well-known Sufi paths. It is brief because it only has four stages; it is also safer since it prevents the soul from speaking incoherently or shockingly; also, the soul, aware of its inadequacy, poverty, and incompetence, may not stray beyond its predetermined boundaries.

I believe that the most remarkable part of Nursi's spiritual path is the division of a thing into two components, which we can roughly translate as phenomenal (*mana-yi ismi*) and existential (*mana-yi harfi*). Nursi's Sufi path is largely closer to Ghazali's orthodox Tasawwuf because of this division, but it also sets him apart from Ibn 'Arabi's *wahdat al-wajud* (the Unity of Existence) and his counterpart's mystical thought, *wahdat al-shahud* (the Unity of Witnessing), albeit not particularly from Ahmad Sirhindi, his most esteemed teacher, who is recognized as a follower of the latter school of Tasawwuf.

Notes and References:

1. The term Tasawwuf is preferable to Sufism to some scholars, however in this paper they have been used interchangeably.
2. Different thinkers and movements have varied opinion about the institution of Sufism. Javaid Ahmad Ghamidi, of Pakistan, questions the whole edifice of Sufism. In a lengthy essay on Sufism in his *Burhan* Ghamidi argues that Sufism is a parallel doctrine to that of religion, that unity of being can't be corroborated from the Qur'an, that Sufi view of saint's access to divine truths puts the thesis of *khatm-i nabuwwat* in danger and that we can point out numerous statements in Sufi texts, including those on ethics and such notions as Tawhid of elites, that plainly contradict the Qur'an. He refutes to identify Tasawwuf with Ihsan. He states that great people have supported the view that it is a parallel religion – Ibn Tayyimia, Ibn Qayyim and Amin Ahsan Islahi. Maulana Mawdudi also was not a great supporter of Sufism although he made an attempt to categorize it when he says that "Tasawwuf is not one particular defined thing, but many different things have come to be known by this name. There is a Tasawwuf that we confirm, and support; there is a Tasawwuf that we reject and condemn; and there is Tasawwuf we

- want to reform and purify.” (*A Short History of the Revivalist Movement in Islam*). The Wahhabi (Arabia), Deobandi (Pakistan and India), Jamaat-i-Islami and Ahl-i Hadith all are anti-Sufi, whereas the Barelvis are ardent pro-Sufi.
3. Bilal Kuspinar.1995. “Nursi’s Evaluation of Sufism”, Istanbul. http://www.nur.org/en/islam/nurlibrary/Bediuzzaman_Said_Nursi_s_Evaluation_of_Sufism_187
 4. *Ibid.*
 5. Bediuzzaman Said Nursi. 2007. *Letters*. Pdf. New Jersey: The Light. 28th Letter.
 6. Sukran Vahide. 2005. *Islam in Modern Turkey. An Intellectual Biography of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*. State University of New York Press, p. 5.
 7. Bediuzzaman Said Nursi. Op cit., 5th Letter.
 8. *Ibid.*, 28th Letter.
 9. *Ibid.*
 10. *Ibid.*, 29th Letter.
 11. *Ibid.*
 12. *Ibid.*
 13. Although the Ummah and the Sufis in general have always held that the prophet is superior to the *wali*, but when comparing *wilayat* of a *nabi* with his *nabuwah*, many a sufi have extolled the former over latter. Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi contests the thought and asserts that the *nabi* is superior to *wali*, and even his *nabuwah* is superior to *wilayat* (Dr Afroz Ahmad Bisati. 2004. *Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi: A Study of his Thought and its Impact*. Srinagar Kashmir: Azad Publications, p. 122).
 14. The 24th and 31st Word.
 15. The 9th Flash, 2009, p. 48.
 16. Said Nursi. Op cit., 19th Letter.
 17. Bediuzzaman ¹ Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi is of the view that the Companionship of the Prophet (SAW) is superior to any other virtue or merit. And for that reason likes of Ovais Qarni and ‘Umr bin ‘Abdul ‘Aziz though match the Companions in their virtues, are inferior to them on account of latter’s association with the Prophet (SAW). Sirhindi, *Maktubat-i Imam Rabbani*, Vol I, Letter No 120.
 18. Bediuzzaman Said Nursi. Op cit., 18th Letter.
 19. Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi is of the same view. He had passed through three stages in his mystic experience. Beginning from *wujudiyyat* (unityism), he reached to *zilliyat* (adumbration) and then to *‘abdiyyat* (servitude). At this stage the error of *wujudiyyat* became clear to him and he realises that it is only a lowest stage of mystic experience and therefore he denounces it. Dr Afroz, op cit, p 136.
 20. Bediuzzaman Said Nursi. Op cit., 18th Letter.
 21. *Ibid.*
 22. Sirhindi propounds the same. “Although propounding dualism, Sirhindi however says that it (dualism) is not ultimate, for, although the world is not one with God (*ham ust*), it proceeds from God (*hama az-ust*). Sirhindi *Maktubat*, Vol II, letter 1.
 23. Bediuzzaman Said Nursi. Op cit., 18th Letter.
 24. *Ibid.*
 25. *Ibid.*
 26. Sirhindi opines the same. While explaining the essence of God he says “In short, God can never be apprehended through mystic experience. Therefore faith in unseen is unavoidable. Such a faith is possible only when in thought and imagination it becomes evident that God is unknowable, unapproachable and in-experienciable. (Sirhindi, *Maktubat*, Vol III, Letter No 17.)
 27. “To know anything besides His Beyondness etc., can be known through Divine guidance. The theologians ought to be followed as they frame their conception about the being and attributes of God from the Qur’an”, concludes Sirhindi. (Sirhindi, *Maktubat*, Vol I, Letter No 287).
 28. Bediuzzaman Said Nursi. Op cit., 29th Letter.
 29. *Ibid.*
 30. *Ibid.*
 31. *Ibid.*, 5th Letter.
 32. Sukran Vahide, op. cit., p. 223. Sirhindi has the similar view in the following words: ‘On the day of Resurrection, people will be questioned about their adherence to the Shari’ah, not about Tasawwuf. (Sirhindi, *Maktubat*, Vol. I, Letter No. 48)
 33. Bediuzzaman Said Nursi. Op cit., 5th Letter.
 34. Sukran Vahide, op. cit., p 167.
 35. His defence in court of Eskisehir would be enough to recall that he had no intention whatsoever for training in Sufism (*tariqat*), but instruction in the direct way to reality (*haqiqat*). (*Ibid*, p. 223)
 36. Bilal Kuspinar, op. cit.
 37. Al-Qur’an, 52/32.
 38. Al-Qur’an, 25/43, 45/23.
 39. Al-Qur’an, 59/19.
 40. Al-Qur’an, 14/79.
 41. Al-Qur’an, 28/88.

-
42. See for the similar division of the thing into two, based on the same Qur'anic verse, by Ghazali, *Mishkat al-Anwar*, ed. Abul-'Ala 'Afifi, Cairo: Dar al-Qawmiyya 1964, 55-6.
 43. This idea may be traced back to Ibn 'Arabi, who regards man as 'the very principle of the manifestation of God in the universe,' and also proclaims very eloquently, as does Nursi here, that man, the vice-regent of God, all-encompassing reality, is transient (*hadith*) in his form, and eternal (*azali*) in his essence. (See for detail Idem, *Fusus al-Hikam*, ed. Abul-'Ala 'Afifi, Beirut: Dar Kitab al-'Arabi, 1946, 50 ff; for English translation, refer to *The Bezels of Wisdom*, trans. R. W. J. Austin, New York: Paulist Press 1980, 51 ff.)
-