

A brief insight into the
Errors in Fazail-e-Amaal



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1.0 Introduction

We begin by affirming that indeed all praise is for Allāh. We praise him, we seek His help and we ask for His forgiveness. And we seek refuge in Allāh from the evils of our own selves and from the evils of our actions.

Whoever Allāh guides, no one can lead him astray, and whoever is led astray, there is no guide for him. I bear witness that there is no deity that has the right to be worshipped except Allāh – alone and with no partner – and I bear witness that Muhammad (ﷺ)¹ is His slave and Messenger.

“O you who believe, fear Allāh as He ought to be feared and do not die except as Muslims.” (Surah Aal `Imrān 3:102)

“O mankind, fear Allāh who created you from a single soul (Ādām), and created from that it's mate (Hawwā). And from both of them, He brought forth many men and women. And fear Allāh to whom you demand your mutual rights. Verily, Allāh is the All-watcher over you.” (Surah An-Nisā 4:1)

“O you who believe, fear Allāh and speak a word that is precise (i.e. truthful). He will rectify your deeds for you and forgive you your sins. And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger has indeed achieved a great success.” (Surah Al-Ahzāb 33:70-71)

Verily, the best of speech is the book of Allāh and the best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad (ﷺ). The worst affairs are the newly-invented matters in the religion, and every such matter is a despised innovation (Bid`ah). And every² innovation in the religion is misguidance, and every misguidance is in the hellfire.

This is a brief treatise presenting some of the errors found within the book *Fazail-e-Amaal*, which is also known as *Tablighi Nisaab*. This book has been spread far across the globe, not least because it is one of the educational books that has been used by the movement known as *Tablighi Jamaat*³. The book however, contains many errors which have been highlighted and exposed. Despite that, this book has not been taken out of circulation and can commonly be found in Islāmic bookshops. As a result, masses of people are still unaware of its errors.

¹ ﷺ – SallAllāhu `alayhi wasallam – a supplication to Allāh to grant His praise and security to Prophet Muhammad, and to protect the Prophet's message.

² Ref. Saheeh Muslim, Book 7, Hadith 55.

³ The “Tablighi Jamaat” has its foundations in Deoband, in India. The majority of their followers are of Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin, however nowadays they are common amongst the Muslim population in most parts of the world. It must be noted that the fact that *Fazail-e-Amaal* has been used by the Tablighi Jamaat cannot be taken as an indication that anyone who is involved with them holds the beliefs that are contained within the book.

In-shā Allāh, some of the erroneous teachings from *Fazail-e-Amaal* will be highlighted below in order to warn Muslims and with the intention of education and reform. This treatise is intended to be brief and is aimed at providing an insight to those who do not have time for a detailed study. Therefore, its scope will be limited to outlining a few of the errors within *Fazail-e-Amaal*. It will not cover all the errors or go into a detailed study of the creed of the Sufi's or any other group. However for those who are interested in this, references to useful material will be provided in the "Further Reading" section.

2.0 Misguiding Stories

The book *Fazail-e-Amaal* is a compilation of several smaller books, and it has an inconsistency in its publishing in that not all the sub-books are present in all published versions of the main book. Consequently, page number references to the stories may not be very useful to the reader, but where applicable the chapter number or title will be provided, which will make it easier to track, should the reader wish to verify the stories. Most of the sub-books within *Fazail-e-Amaal* (i.e., *Fazail-e-Hajj*, *Fazail-e-Zikr*, *Fazail-e-Durood*, *Fazail-e-Namaaz*) are also available online as free e-books – see the “References” section of this paper for the website address – so this should make it even easier for the reader to verify the stories in-shā Allāh.

We will start with *Fazail-e-Hajj* and look at story no.3 in the chapter⁴ titled “*The Farewell Hajj of Rasullullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam)*”. Some errors to note in this story are:

1. Blessing is sought through the medium of the “righteous servants” of Allāh and du`ā is made to be in the protection of their shade in the hereafter⁵.
 - Our response: may Allāh bless those who ask His help alone without taking His creation as intermediaries and we ask Allāh to protect us in the hereafter in the shade of His throne.
2. It is implied that prostrating on thorns and heated needles is a virtuous act. It is also implied that abstaining from looking up to the sky is a virtuous act, if done due to feeling ashamed of one’s sins.
 - Our response: we seek forgiveness with Allāh for our sins and we do not impose on ourselves any hardships and any acts of worship that Allāh did not legislate and which His Messenger (ﷺ) did not implement.
3. Regarding stories in general.
 - Our response: we prefer to take guidance from stories of the prophets (‘alayhimus salām) and there is no shortage of authentic stories, lessons and morals in the book of Allāh and the Sunnah of the final Messenger (ﷺ).

Find below the relevant text of the story from *Fazail-e-Hajj* for cross-reference against the errors mentioned above:

“Hazrat Bishr al Haafi R.A. says: "On the plain of Arafat I once saw a man weeping uncontrollably and in this state he recited a few lines thus: "How Great is Allah" free from all faults; even though we should

⁴ The chapter heading is required to identify the story, as the story numbers re-start at every new chapter. The author begins the stories in this chapter by writing:

“And now having come so far I wish to end this book with a few incidents from the lives and Haj of the saintly elders of Islam that these may be examples and warnings to us all.”

⁵ One may counter-argue and make excuses that the blessing implied is via their knowledge-sharing, but this argument does not stand if one reads the context of the full story.

express thanks to Him **by performing sujud on thorns and heated needles**, then too we shall never be able to praise Him for one tenth of His favors. No, not one hundredth of one hundredth thereof...."

...Hazrat Bishr R.A. says: "Thereafter I lost sight of him I inquired from people as to who he was and was told it was Hazrat Abu Ubaid Khawaas R.A. one of the great saints." It is said about him that **for seventy years he never lifted his face up to the sky** and when asked the reason he said: "I am ashamed, how can I lift up this sinful face to such a great Benefactor?"

It is something to ponder about that such obedient servants of Allah can be so humble and that in spite of their continuous life in Ibaadat, they can still be so ashamed of themselves before Allah, while the real sinners have no shame. May Allah not deprive us on the day of Qiyaamah from looking at His Holy Countenance and **bleed us and benefit us through the blessings of His righteous servants**. And may Allah cause us to tread in their shadow in this world and to **be in the protection of their shadow in the hereafter.**"

Going forward (to ensure this paper is not too long), only a small section of the stories will be quoted (i.e. only the relevant sentence or paragraph). Just enough information will be presented to highlight the points and assure the reader of the context of the text.

2.1 Inauthentic explanation of Qur'ān

In *Fazail-e-Hajj*, under the section heading "*Farewell Hajj of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam)*", story no.4 provides an explanation of a Qur'ānic verse, which has no evidence from the Sunnah. See below excerpt from the story:

"He said: "When I started this journey **I took with me five letters as food** for the way. They are the Holy words of Allah: Kaaf, Haa, Yaa, Ain, Suaad. I asked : "What do you mean?" He replied: "Kaaf stands for Kaafi... Haa means Haadi... Yaa stands for Mo'addi... Ain stands for Aalim... Suaad stands for Saadiq..."

The explanation of Surah Maryam, verse one, provided in this story is a made-up one and should not be propagated, as we should not interpret Allāh's book according to our desires.

2.2 The false notion that some people are allowed to oppose the Sharee'ah

The above story about the man who took the "*five letters as food*" also propagates the false notion that some people are allowed to oppose the Sharee'ah. This story shows the main character deliberately going against the guidance the Prophet (ﷺ) in performing the Hajj.

1. This man, who is claimed to be a "*friend of Allāh*", travelled for Hajj with no means of conveyance, no provisions and no water:

When the story's narrator asked, "**Where are your provisions for the journey?**" He replied, "**It is under His guarantee.**" Thus, confirming that he had deliberately set out in this state. This is not the method of reliance on Allāh that the Prophet (ﷺ) taught, for the servant of Allāh should prepare himself with adequate provisions and put his trust in Allāh.

2. He refused to say the Talbiyyah (i.e., saying “*labbayk Allāhumma labbayk...*”), which is an act of Hajj:

He said, “*I fear that on reciting 'Labbaik' a reply from on high may be heard 'Laa Labbaik, Laa Saadaik' 'your cry is not heard and we do not turn to you in pleasure'.*”

3. Instead of offering a sacrificial animal that is required as per the rites of Hajj, he offered himself for sacrifice:

He said, “*...O Lord, people have brought their animals to sacrifice for Thee. Lord, I have nothing except my life, which I offer to Thy door.*”

However, he did not do all this as acts of defiance rather he did it seeking a means to achieving closeness to Allāh. So if we then conclude that he was acting out of lack of knowledge, then his story should not be propagated as a story of morals and wisdom. Later on in this story, after this man had died (since he offered his life as a sacrificial offering for the Hajj) he visited the narrator in a dream and said he has earned more reward with Allāh than the martyrs of the battle of Badr! He explained: “*They died at the swing of the swords of infidels while I died by the sword of Allah's love.*”

Thus, the sincere reader can see that this story is clear misguidance on many levels. If someone was to believe that this man’s actions were correct, but only for him, because he had achieved a higher status or “higher knowledge”, then we have to warn them and remind them: what knowledge can be higher than that which the Prophet (ﷺ) has imparted? The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) himself testified: “*I have not left a single thing which brings you closer to Paradise and distances you from hellfire except that I have commanded you with it and I have not left a single thing which brings you closer to hellfire and distances you from Hellfire except that I have prohibited you from it.*” (Recorded by Ibn Khuzaimah and Ahmad)⁶.

2.3 Knowledge of the future: time of death

In *Fazail-e-Hajj*, under the heading “*Farewell Hajj of Rasulullah (Sallallaho Alaihi Wassallam)*”, story no.55 tells of two people who had fore-knowledge of the time of their deaths:

1. Hafiz Yousuf “wrote numerous letters” on the morning of his death euphemising that he would die on that day:

“*In almost all of them he wrote among other things 'Today I am going on a journey.' We all thought that he meant a journey to Bhopal where he often spent some time. No one else had the courage to ask him the truth of it. That same day after having performed Asr salaah, when we left the masjid; he remained behind, as was his custom. We had not gone far when someone came to call us saying that Hafiz sahib had passed away.*”

⁶ See also Saheeh At-Targheeb wat-Tarheeb (1/93/35) and the Tafseer of Surah Al-Kahf, verse 17 (Ibn Katheer – ref. [3]).

2. Also, according to this same story the disciple of Abu Yaqoob Sanusi also knew the time of his death:

"Once in Mecca one of my mureeds came to me and said: 'Respected Sir, **I shall die tomorrow at the time of Zuhr...**' ...The next day at the time of Zuhr, he entered the mosque, performed tawaaf and after a short while he passed away."

2.4 Confusing notion of death regarding the righteous

The above-mentioned story also presents a confusing notion of death when it relates to "righteous" people. Later in this story, the disciple of Abu Yaqoob Sanusi comes back to this worldly life after death:

"When he was placed in his grave, his eyes opened and in surprise I said: '**Are you alive again after death?**' he replied: 'I am alive and everyone of the devoted lovers of Allah is alive.'"

In a similar vein, in story no.28 (in the same section), Najmuddin Asfahaani explained an incident where he "burst out laughing" at the "funeral of a saint" because the saint made a remark in a state where he was already dead:

"...After the people had buried the dead, one of them read the 'talqeen' to him. The shaikh who was not in the habit of laughing, burst out laughing... he said: 'when the reciter read the 'talqeen' **I heard the buried person say:** "Look, the dead one is busy instructing the living one.'"

In *Fazail-e-Namaaz*, under the heading "*A Few Stories from the Lives of the Pious*" story no.13 claims that a dead man got up and started praying inside his grave and, despite people witnessing that, they still buried him:

"Abu Sanaan (Rahmatullah alaih) narrates, 'By Allah! I was among those present at the burial of Thaabit Banaani. Just after he had been placed in his grave, one of the bricks from the side fell off. I peeped into the pit to find to my great amazement, that Thaabit was offering his salaah.'"

There are many other stories in this book which bend the reality of death. In *Fazail-e-Sadaqat*⁷, a dead person is said to have terrified the people who came to wash him by laughing whilst in his dead state:

"Ibn ul-Jalaa, who is a well-known Sufi Shaikh, says that when his father died and his body was laid on wooden board for washing, he (the father) began to laugh. The people who had come to wash his body were terrified (to see **a dead man laughing**) and ran away. After a while, one of his father's friends came and bathed him."

⁷ *Fazail-e-Amaal* (Eng. Trans.), Chapter 6, p.599, (2nd South African Impression 1414-1993, published by Waterval Islamic Institute) – taken from Ref. [1].

Also, in *Fazail-e-Sadaqat*⁸, a dead man is said to be smiling and talking:

“...when **the dead man opened his eyes, smiled at him and said**: ‘Abu Saeed, don’t you know that the friends of Allah (those who love Him truly) do not die; they are just transferred from this world to the next.’”

Let us reject these false notions of death presented in the above-mentioned stories from *Fazail-e-Amaal* and reflect on what Allāh said concerning the Prophet (ﷺ):

“And We did not grant to any human immortality before you (O Muhammad) then if you die, would they live for ever?” (Surah Al-Anbiya 21:34)

Once people die, they are cut-off from the life of this world and their soul enters the life of the Barzakh – this is a life that is different from this worldly life, so no one will be talking or smiling at anyone in this world once they have tasted the worldly death.

2.5 A man claims he already knows that he has the power to intercede with Allāh

In *Fazail-e-Sadaqat*⁹, there is a story of a man who dies (but, again, a confusing notion of death is presented where the dead are able to speak), then as he is buried he says to the one who is burying him:

“I shall intercede for you on the Day of Resurrection, by virtue of the distinction granted to me by Allah.”

2.6 The claim that a man received written revelation from Allāh

In *Fazail-e-Hajj*, under the heading “*The Farewell Hajj of Rasulullah (Salallahu Alaihi Wassallam)*”, story no.15 claims that a man received writing from Allāh on a piece of paper sent down from above:

“Hazrat Zun Noon Misri R.A. says: "One day I saw a young man performing ruku and sujud at the Ka'bah numerous times. I asked him: "Young man, I see you continually busy with much salaah?" He answered: "I beg permission of Allah to return home and here await His answered." Just then I saw a **piece of paper falling from above** which landed on the ground near him. **On it was written: 'This is from Allah**, the Mighty the Forgiving to His true and grateful servant. Return homewards while your previous and future sins are forgiven.'”

The man in the above story from *Fazail-e-Hajj* lived in a time after it had already been confirmed that Muhammad (ﷺ) is the last prophet and there will be no prophet after him. So it is odd that a man who is not a prophet supposedly received written revelation from Allāh and no prophet is recorded to have received revelation in that manner. Allāh informs us in Qur’ān how He sent

⁸ Ibid., Chapter 6, p.610 – taken from Ref. [1].

⁹ Ibid., Chapter 6, p.609 – taken from Ref. [1].

revelation to His prophets (‘alayhimussalām): to Muhammad (ﷺ), He sent angel Jibreel (‘alayhissalām), and on occasions He also inspired revelation into the Prophet’s heart; and to Musā (‘alayhissalām), Allāh spoke from behind a partition:

“And it is not for any human being that Allāh should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a partition or that He sends a messenger [i.e., angel] to reveal, by His permission, what He wills. Indeed, He is Most High and Wise.” (Surah ash-Shurā 42:51)

2.7 A man is smacked by a miraculous hand

In *Fazail-e-Hajj*, under the heading “*The virtue of Mecca and the Holy Kaabah*”, there is a story about a mysterious / miraculous hand that came out of the Ka`bah and smacked a man whereby one of his eyes fell out:

“Once a most God-fearing and righteous stranger performed tawaaf. During tawaaf he heard the voice of a woman also in tawaaf. He stared in her direction. A **hand come out of the Ka’ba** at the Ruknul Yamāni and smacked him so hard that his one eye fell out. A **voice from the direction of the door** of the Ka’ba said: ‘How is it that you perform tawaaf around **my house** and yet you stare at someone else? This blow is the punishment for that. If in future it happens again we shall take greater revenge.’”

The above story, like many of the stories in *Fazail-e-Amal*, has no authentic chain of narration. This type of Divine intervention seems unrealistic since far greater evils and oppression have been perpetrated at the Ka`bah, where no such intervention have been recorded. For example, in the pre-Islamic days the idols used to be placed inside the Ka`bah. Furthermore, some the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) were tortured in the vicinity of the Ka`bah, and the Prophet (ﷺ) himself was attacked whilst prostrating in front of Ka`bah (see Saheeh Al-Bukhārī, Book 4, No. 107). Indeed Allāh addressed these crimes at the most appropriate time and manner; He is the Most Wise, best disposer of all affairs.

2.8 Inauthentic narration about prophet Ādam’s (alayhissalām) repentance

In *Fazail-e-Zikr*, chapter 2 has a false narration regarding prophet Ādam (alayhissalām). It claims that Ādam (alayhissalām) supplicated to Allāh in the name of Muhammad (ﷺ):

“O Allah! I beg Thy forgiveness **in the name of Muhammad** (Sallalloho alaihe wasallam).” “Who is Muhammad?” came the enquiry through Divine revelation. He replied: “When you had created me. I saw the words ‘la ilaha illallah Muhammad rasullullah’ written on Your Arsh, and since then I believed that no human being is superior to Muhamad (Sallalloho alaihe wasallam), whose name appeared along with Yours.” In reply, it was revealed, “He is to be the last of all the prophets, and will be your descendant. If he were not to be created, you would not have been created.”

The true story of prophet Ādam’s (alayhissalām) repentance is in the Qur’ān. After Ādam and Hawwā (alayhimussalām) disobeyed Allāh (due to being tricked by the devil), they were expelled

from paradise and sent down to earth. However, Allāh did not leave them without guidance, rather He revealed Words to them showing them the correct method by which they should repent to their Lord:

“Then Ādam received from his Lord Words. His Lord pardoned him (accepted his repentance). Verily He is the One Who forgives (accepts repentance), the most Merciful.” (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:30-39)

Those Words for repentance are preserved in the Qur’ān for us all to supplicate to Allāh (in His name alone) to forgive our sins, and they are:

“Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You forgive us not, and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be of the losers.” (Surah Al-A’rāf 7:11-25)

2.9 Sight of unseen spiritual matters

In *Fazail-e-Namaaz*, under the heading “*The Rewards of Salah*” there is a story which claims that Imām Abu-Haneefah (rahimahullāh) could physically see spiritual matters of the unseen (*Al-Ghayb*):

“...he could tell from the water falling down from the limbs of the person performing wudhu as to which sins had been washed off therewith.”

2.10 Exaggeration regarding staying in Wudhoo

In *Fazail-e-Namaaz*, under the heading “*A Few Stories from the Lives of the Pious*”, towards the end of the section the author mentions the following stories:

1. The claim that a man remained in a state of Wudhoo for twelve days. This is contrary to nature, as it means that this person did not relieve his body of any fluids, liquids or gasses for twelve continuous days. The story also claims that he did not lie down for fifteen years: “...continuously for twelve days he has been offering his salaah with the same wudhu. For fifteen years, his back had not touched the bed. He would also go without food for days together.”
2. The claim that for a continuous period of thirty to fifty years, Imām Abu-Haneefah (rahimahullāh) “offered his Fajr prayer with the wudhu for Isha. He would go to sleep only for a few minutes in the afternoon saying, ‘It is sunnat to sleep in the afternoon.’” This story seems implausible from an Imām of the Sunnah, as the Sunnah does not recommend that one should never sleep at night. Also, Islām commands that one should spend time in the intimacy of one’s spouse (which would, of course, require one to renew one’s Wudhoo). Secondly, the story is highly unrealistic as it is unnatural for a person to survive on *a few minutes sleep* per day for a continuous period of at least thirty years, as claimed.

3.0 Incorrect Beliefs Concerning the Prophet(ﷺ)

3.1 Exaggeration regarding the Prophet's(ﷺ) grave

In *Fazail-e-Hajj*, under the heading “*The Manner of Performing the Ziyaarat*”, there is a great deal of exaggeration regarding the Prophet's (ﷺ) grave, to the point that it is exalted higher than Allāh's throne:

“**His grave is more exalted** than any part of the earth and the portion adjacent to his Holy body is even more exalted than the Ka'bah itself; more even **than the throne (arsh)**, the kursi; even more than any other place in heaven and on earth.”

3.2 The belief that the Prophet(ﷺ), despite his death, is still aware of his nation

In *Fazail-e-Hajj*, under the heading “*The Manner of Performing the Ziyaarat*”, the author quotes from Ibn Ameerul Haaj Rah's book 'Madkhal' and claims that that the Prophet (ﷺ), despite his death, is still aware of his nation:

“Indeed one should have the idea in mind that: "Here I stand in his presence as if he is still alive, because as for the knowledge of the position and condition of his Ummat and their intentions are concerned, Rasulullah Sal'am **knows of it now in death as he knew about the Ummat in his lifetime.**"”

This belief presented in *Fazail-e-Hajj* is contrary to the teachings of the Prophet (ﷺ). Let us consider the following Hadeeth of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ), who confirmed that he will not know the state of his nation and what they will do after his death. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“I will be ahead of you in reaching my fountain (al-Kawthar), and whoever will come to it, will drink from it, and whoever will drink from it, will never become thirsty after that. There will come to me some people whom I know and they know me, and then a barrier will be set up between me and them." Abu Sa'īd Al-Khudri added that the Prophet further said: ‘I will say those people are from me.’ It will be said, ‘**You do not know what changes and new things they did after you.**’ Then I will say, ‘(let them be) far removed (from mercy), far removed (from mercy), those who changed the religion after me!’” (Saheeh Al-Bukhārī¹⁰ and Saheeh Muslim¹¹).

¹⁰ Saheeh Al-Bukhārī, Book 92, No. 4.

¹¹ Saheeh Muslim, Book 43, No. 31 to 35, 37, 39, 40 to 42 and 56.

3.3 The belief that the Prophet (ﷺ), after his death, taught supplications to a saint

In *Fazail-e-Durood*, under the heading “*Stories Pertaining to Conferring Blessings and Salutations*”, the author quotes from Ibn Fakhri’s *Al-Fajr al-Munir* and relates a story where the Prophet (ﷺ), despite his death, taught a supplication to a “saint” and prescribed that it be read 1,000 times:

“He said, ‘I was travelling in a boat which began to sink. Suddenly, I was overcome by drowsiness and in this state, **I saw the Messenger of Allah. He taught me these blessings** and then instructed that all aboard the boat should confer them one thousand times. We barely recited it three hundred times that the boat was saved from sinking.’”

The Prophet’s (ﷺ) guidance is complete, he left the world after telling us all that we need to know about our religion, so there is no need for him to come back and prescribe any further supplications to any saint. The Prophet (ﷺ) himself testified:

“I have not left a single thing which brings you closer to paradise and distances you from hellfire except that I have commanded you with it and I have not left a single thing which brings you closer to the hellfire and distances you from paradise except that I have prohibited you from it” (Ibn Khuzaimah and Ahmad).¹²

3.4 The belief that the Prophet (ﷺ) pushed his hand out from the grave on request of a mystic

In *Fazail-e-Hajj*, under the heading “*The Manner of Performing the Ziyaarat*”, story no.13 claims that the Prophet (ﷺ), after being buried for centuries, pushed his hand out from his grave because a “mystic” (Ahmad Rifa’ee Rah) requested to kiss it. Furthermore, the story claims that approximately 90,000 people witnessed this event:

“Indeed was the **hand of Rasulallah Sal’am stretched from the grave** and in the presence of an estimated 90 thousand visitors did Sayyed Ahmad kiss it.”

Surely, Ahmad Rifa’ee Rah was not more beloved to the Prophet (ﷺ) than his companions (radiAllāhu `anhum), yet none of the companions ever reported any incident of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) hand coming out for them. The companions had the correct belief (Aqeedah) regarding the Prophet (ﷺ) and those Muslims who maintain the sound Aqeedah will know that the above story cannot be true. Imagine: 90,000 people supposedly witnessed such an unnatural event, yet it did not make it into the history books of the Arab peninsula!

¹² See also Saheeh At-Targheeb wat-Tarheeb (1/93/35) and the Tafseer of Surah Al-Kahf, verse 17 (Ibn Katheer – ref. [3]).

3.5 The belief that the Prophet (ﷺ) spoke from his grave

In *Fazail-e-Hajj*, under the heading “*The Manner of Performing the Ziyaarat*”, story no.16 claims that the Prophet (ﷺ) spoke from his grave:

“In Madina there lived a woman from the Hashimi family whose servants used to ill-treat her. She went with her complaints to Rasulallah Sal'am where she poured out her heart. **From the grave was heard this reply: "Do you not prefer to follow my excellent example.** Have patience as I patiently preserved" She said: "After hearing that voice all my grief disappeared and all the servants who used to annoy me passed away.””

3.6 The belief that the Prophet (ﷺ) helped people when they supplicated to his grave

In *Fazail-e-Hajj*, under the heading “*The Manner of Performing the Ziyaarat*”, story no.23 claims that the Prophet (ﷺ) gave a piece of bread to a “saint” (Ibn Jalaa) after he sought help at the grave of the Prophet (ﷺ).

““O Rasulallah Sal'am I suffer great hunger. I am now your guest." Thereafter sleep overtook me and in a vision I saw **Rasulallah Sal'am gave me a piece of bread.** I ate half of it and when I woke up I found myself with the other half of that piece of bread still in my hands.”

Similar incidents are also found in the same chapter:

1. Story no.21 claims that a man received money after he supplicated at the grave of the Prophet (ﷺ):

“My father then went to the grave of Rasulallah Sal'am where he made duaa for the whole night, sometimes at the grave and sometimes at the mimbar, begging for a way out of his predicament. In the latter part of the night he heard a voice coming to him from the darkness near the grave saying: "O Abu Muhammad, take this." My father stretched forth his hand and a bag was given to him. In it were eighty gold coins!””
2. Story no.25 claims also that a man received money after he complained at the grave of the Prophet (ﷺ):

“I have seen Rasulallah Sal'am and he gave me a few dirhams. When I opened my hands I found a few dirhams there.”
3. Story no.26 claims that a man complained at the grave of the Prophet (ﷺ) after he was hit by another man, then after the complaint, the oppressor was immediately paralysed and died three days later.

““O Rasulallah Sal'am see what is done to me in your esteemed presence!' immediately after the complaint the servant was paralyzed and fell down. People who were nearby picked him up and took his home where after three days he died.”

Asking from the dead at their grave goes against the sound creed and it is Allāh alone that we must ask for help, as mentioned in the very first Surah of the Qur'ān:

"It is You we worship and You we ask for help." (Surah Al-Fātihah 1:5)

Also, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Whoever dies while still invoking anything other than Allah as a rival to Allah, will enter Hell (Fire)." (Saheeh Al-Bukhārī, Book 65, No. 4497)

The companions (radiAllāhu `anhum) of the Prophet (ﷺ) had the correct belief and knew that it was not possible to gain the physical help the Prophet (ﷺ) after his death, therefore they never asked at his grave despite facing many trials after his (ﷺ) death.

When it comes to physical assistance, a person may ask for a living person's help who is clearly able to help them. In a Hadeeth reported in Saheeh Al-Bukhārī, when a woman asked the Prophet (ﷺ) what she should do if she needed help after the Prophet's (ﷺ) death, he (ﷺ) instructed her to go and seek assistance from a living and able Muslim. He did not advise her to seek assistance at his (ﷺ) grave:

"A woman came to the Prophet who ordered her to return to him again. She said, 'What if I came and did not find you?' as if she wanted to say, 'If I found you dead?' The Prophet said, 'If you should not find me, go to Abu Bakr.'" (Saheeh Al-Bukhārī, Book 62, No. 11)

This Hadeeth clearly shows that after his death the Prophet (ﷺ) cannot be sought for assistance, and therefore the woman was advised to approach Abu-Bakr as-Sideeq (radiAllāhu `anhu).

3.7 The belief that the Prophet(ﷺ) returned after his death upon a boy's supplication

In *Fazail-e-Durood*, under the heading "*Stories Pertaining to Conferring Blessings and Salutations*", story no.46 claims that the Prophet (ﷺ) returned many centuries after his death upon a boy's supplication for his mother:

"I went for the Pilgrimage (Hajj) with my mother. My mother passed away during the journey. Her face turned black and her stomach bloated whereby I realised that she had committed a grave sin. As I lifted my hands towards the sky to beseech Allāh, I saw **a cloud coming from Tihāma (Hijāz) from which a man appeared. He passed his hand over my mother's face** making it luminous **and over her stomach**, causing the swelling to disappear. I asked him, 'Who are you? You have alleviated me and my mother of this great affliction.' He replied, 'I am your Prophet (Sallallahu A'lihi Wassalam), Muhammad.'"

The above story also attributes to the Prophet (ﷺ) something that he remained pure from during his lifetime. From the purity of the Prophet (ﷺ) is that he never touched a woman who was not

his close family member, not even to shake hands in accepting the pledge of allegiance. `Aisha (radiAllāhu `anha) narrated:

“The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) never touched a woman with his hand. He would only take a vow from her and when he had taken the (verbal) vow, he would say: ‘You may go, I have accepted your fealty.’” (Saheeh Muslim, Book 33, No. 131)

Despite the clear evidence in this Hadeeth, the above story from *Fazail-e-Durood* alleges that the Prophet (ﷺ) touched a woman’s face and stomach!

3.8 Confusion between dream and reality

In some of the stories in *Fazail-e-Amaal* there seems to be a confusion and lack of separation between dream and reality, where the Prophet (ﷺ) is said to appear in dreams but leaves the dreamer with a tangible gift which is still present after waking. Here are some examples of this:

1. In *Fazail-e-Durood*, under the heading “*Stories Pertaining to Conferring Blessings and Salutations*”, story no.48 is about a man who is given some bread by the Prophet (ﷺ) in his dream but he still has it in his possession even after he wakes:

“The Noble Prophet(Sallallahu A’lihi Wassalam) granted me a piece of bread. I ate one half in my dream and found the other half in my hand when I woke up.”

2. Another incident within story no.48 tells of a man who, in his dream, receives two hairs from the Prophet’s (ﷺ) beard and when he woke up he still had those hairs in his hand:

“...The Noble Prophet(Sallallahu A’lihi Wassalam) ensured him that he will recover and granted him two hairs from his blessed beard. When my father woke up, he found both hairs in his hand and he granted me one of these hairs.”

3. In the same section, stories no.13 and 38 are about a man who saw the Prophet (ﷺ) in his dream but “awoke to find that his house was filled with the fragrance of musk.” Another matter that was strange about this story is that the man claims that in his dream the Prophet (ﷺ) wanted to kiss his mouth but he offered his cheek to the Prophet (ﷺ) instead. It was not the Prophet’s (ﷺ) habit to kiss any man upon greeting him, let alone in the mouth, but the dreamer claims:

“The Noble Prophet(Sallallahu A’lihi Wassalam) then came towards me and said, ‘Bring forward that mouth which confers blessings upon me in abundance so that I may kiss it.’ **I felt ashamed to present my mouth before the blessed mouth** of the Noble Prophet(Sallallahu A’lihi Wassalam) and so I turned my cheek towards him. The Noble Prophet(Sallallahu A’lihi Wassalam) then kissed me on my cheek. I suddenly woke up overcome with anxiety and this caused my wife who was lying next to me to suddenly awake too. The whole upper chamber was emanating with the beautiful fragrance of musk and this fragrance remained on my cheek for eight days.”

3.9 Confusion regarding the Prophet's (ﷺ) death

The stories in *Fazail-e-Amaal* (some of which have been mentioned above) show much confusion regarding the Prophet's (ﷺ) death. In some of the stories, the Prophet (ﷺ) is physically alive inside his earthly grave; in others he (ﷺ) is able to escape his earthly grave and make a physical appearance to help those in need; yet still in other stories, he (ﷺ) appears in dreams but leaves the dreamer with a tangible gift which the dreamer still retains after waking.

Let us clarify how the Prophet's (ﷺ) companions (radiAllāhu `anhum) understood his death. After the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), his friend Abu-Bakr (radiAllāhu `anhu) is reported in Saheeh Al-Bukhari¹³ to have said: "by Allāh in Whose Hands my life is, Allāh will never make you taste death twice." Then he went out and said "Whoever worshipped Muhammad, then Muhammad is dead, but whoever worshipped Allāh, then Allāh is alive and shall never die." And he recited Allāh's statements:

"(O Muhammad) Verily you will die and they also will die." (Surah Az-Zumar 39:30)

"Muhammad is no more than a Messenger; and indeed many Messengers have passed away, before him, If he dies or is killed, will you then turn back on your heels? And he who turns back on his heels, not the least harm will he do to Allāh and Allāh will give reward to those who are grateful." (Surah Aal `Imrān 3:144)

We have already mentioned in this paper that once a person dies, he leaves the life of this world and enters the life of the Barzakh, which is different from this worldly life. A person will experience either comfort or punishment in this state, depending on whether he is righteous or not, until he is resurrected on the Day of Judgement. Our Prophet (ﷺ) is worshipping Allāh in his noble state in the Barzakh. The salutations of the believers will be conveyed to him (ﷺ) by the angels, who are allowed to traverse the known world as well as the world of Barzakh. We ask Allāh to bestow His praise and security to Muhammad (ﷺ) and to protect the Prophet's message from any kind of confusion or deviation.

3.10 The belief that there is a religious path better than that chosen by the Prophet (ﷺ)

In *Fazail-e-Hajj*, under the heading "*Farewell Hajj of Rasulullah (Sallalloho Alaihi Wassallam)*"; the final section of the chapter discusses *Tawakkul* – reliance on Allāh – and claims that there is a higher path of *Tawakkul* to the one that was chosen by the Prophet (ﷺ).

"...the highest degree of *tawakkul* is to become like the corpse under the hands of the person who washes it before burial. Such corpse makes no movement of its own. When ones relationship with Allah reaches this stage, it does not even become necessary to beg anything of Allah because Allah Himself sees to all ones needs without one having to ask: just as the person performing *ghusl* of the dead sees to the needs for

¹³ Saheeh Al-Bukhārī, Book 62, No. 19.

the dead one. **At this stage we have an anomaly which is that Rasulallah Sal'am himself always prepared his means** (asbaab). The answer to this is that Rasulallah Sal'am chose that himself because he was the exemplar of this ummat. Had he chosen the third and highest degree of tawakkul, it would have been very hard for his ummat to emulate him.”

The claim in *Fazail-e-Hajj* is that the Prophet (ﷺ) chose a lesser path to make it easier for his followers, but this is only conjecture as the Prophet (ﷺ) did not inform his followers that any other way of Tawakkul exists that is higher than his example. Therefore, there can be no doubt that whatever path the Prophet (ﷺ) chose is the one that Allāh wants us all to follow. Allāh (subhānahu wa ta'āla) said:

"There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allāh an excellent example for anyone whose hope is in Allāh and the Last Day and who remembers Allāh often." (Surah Al-Ahzāb 33:21)

".. And take whatever the Messenger has given you; and refrain from what he has forbidden you. And fear Allāh; indeed, Allāh is severe in penalty." (Surah Al-Hashr 59:7)

"Say, [O Muhammad], "If you should love Allāh, then follow me, so Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins..." (Surah Aal `Imrān 3:31)

"And We did not send any messenger except to be obeyed..." (Surah An-Nisā 4:64)

"And whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him and follows other than the way of the believers - We will give him what he has taken and drive him into Hell, and evil it is as a destination." (Surah An-Nisā 4:115)

4.0 Mystical Powers Attributed to the Sufis

4.1 The belief that some Sufis have knowledge of the hereafter

In *Fazail-e-Durood*, chapter 5, story no.8 is about a scribe from Lucknow (a city in India), who is assured of the hereafter by a Sufi saint:

“He would begin his daily work after writing blessings on a sheet of paper he had reserved for this very purpose. At the time of his death, he was overcome with fear of the Hereafter saying, ‘What will become of me after I depart this world?’ On saying this, a *majdhūb* (saint constantly engaged in the remembrance of Allāh) appeared and said, ‘Why are you so worried? **The sheet of paper [upon which blessings were written] is with the Noble Prophet (Sallallahu A’lihi Wassalam) and is being adorned.**’”

In *Fazail-e-Zikr*, under the section heading “*Ayaat mentioning Kalimah Tayyabah*”, there is mention of the Sufi concept of *Kashf*, which refers to seeing something distant, absent or from the unseen in the state of wakefulness. By means of this concept, the story claims that a Sufi can have fore-knowledge of the hereafter:

“There used to live near us a young man who was known to be blessed with the power of *Kashf (divine manifestation of unseen thing), even in respect of Paradise and Hell*, but I hesitated to believe it...”

After initially being skeptic, the story’s narrator later confirms:

“...it was established that the young man was truly blessed with the power of *Kashf*.”

4.2 The belief that some Sufis can read minds

In *Fazail-e-Hajj*, under the section heading “*Farewell Hajj of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam)*”, story no.21 tells of a beggar who reads the thoughts of Abu Saeed Khazaaz:

“Hazrat Abu Saeed Khazaaz R.A. relates that when he entered, the Masjidul Haraam once, he saw a fakir with torn clothes begging. He then thought by himself. “it is men such as these that become a burden and a nuisance to others.” **As these thoughts passed through his mind, the fakir looked towards him and recited** this verse: “Surely Allah knows that which is in your hearts; so fear Him.” He felt ashamed at his thoughts and repented. As he walked away the fakir called after him in this verse: “He accepts the repentance of His servants and forgives all sins.”

In *Fazail-e-Zikr*, under the section heading “*Ayaat mentioning Kalimah Tayyabah*”, there is again the claim that some Sufi’s can read minds. The narrator in this story silently, in his heart, makes the decision to give the reward of some of his *zikr* to his companion’s mother, but the companion hears this as soon as it is done:

“I thought of bestowing one of my complete seventy thousand recitations of the kalimah in favour of his mother so that the truth of what the young man said could be tested. **I quietly did so in my heart, without telling anybody else about it. But as soon as I did this, the young man felt relieved** and said. ‘O Uncle! My mother has been relieved of the punishment of Hell!’”

4.3 The belief that a person can save another person from hell

Another point in the above-mentioned story from *Fazail-e-Zikr* is the claim that a pious person can save another person from hell by transferring their good deeds to them. Whereas, Allāh said in the Qur'ān:

“...whatever (wrong) any human being commits rests upon himself alone; and no bearer of burdens shall be made to bear another's burden.” (Surah Al-An`ām 6:164)

4.4 The belief that some Sufis can see Allāh

In *Fazail-e-Zikr*, under the heading “*Ahadith on Virtues of Third Kalimah*” there is a story about a man who claims that he sees Allāh. The narrator of this story, Shibli, confronted this man and asked:

“They say that you claim to see Allah.” He yelled a shriek and said, “O Shibli, I swear by Him, who has made me mad in His Love and Who keeps me wandering restlessly sometimes near Him and at times away from Him, **if I were to lose sight of Him even for a while, my heart would burst into pieces** on account of the pangs of separation.” He said this, and ran away reciting the following couplet: Your appearance is constantly before my eyes, your remembrance is always on my tongue, your abode is in my heart, then where can you hide from me.”

The story above may be alluding to the Sufi concept of *Fanaa'*, which is the claim that once the Sufi becomes assiduous in the remembrance of Allāh, he reaches the stage of annihilation where he feels free of every barrier that could stand in the way of his viewing the ‘Remembered One’. However, as this paper is not on Sufism *per se*, let us continue by affirming that the correct belief is that people cannot see Allāh in the life of this world¹⁴:

“Vision perceives Him not, but He perceives all vision; and He is the Subtle, the Acquainted.” (Surah Al-An`ām 6:103)

Even the Messengers of Allāh were unable to see Allāh, the Almighty, in this life. This is illustrated in the Qur'ān, when Musā (‘alayhissalām) requested to see Allāh:

“And when Musā arrived at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said, “My Lord, show me Yourself that I may look at You.” Allāh said, “You will not see Me, but look at the mountain; if it should remain in place, then you will see Me.” But when his Lord appeared to the mountain, He rendered it level, and Musā fell unconscious. And

¹⁴ The people of paradise will have the reward of seeing Allāh in the Hereafter:

“Some faces, that Day [of Resurrection], will be radiant, looking at their Lord.” (Surah Al-Qiyāmah 75:22-23)

when he awoke, he said, “Exalted are You! I have repented to You, and I am the first of the believers.” (Surah Al-A’raf 7:143)

4.5 The belief that some Sufis can hear Allāh

In *Fazail-e-Hajj*, under the heading “*The Manner of Performing the Ziyaarat*”, story no.9 claims that a Sufi saint listened to Hadeeth directly from Allāh:

“Over there you see those who listen to Hadith from the mouth of Abdur Razzak (slave of the Sustainer), while over here you see him who **listens to hadith directly from the Razzak (Allah)**”

4.6 The belief that it is possible for a person to see paradise in this life

In *Fazail-e-Zikr*, under the heading “*Ahadith on Virtues of Third Kalimah*”, there is a story about a man who claims he was presented paradise in this life but he refrained:

“When Hadhrat Mumshaad Dinwari (Rahmatullah alaih) was about to die some one prayed to Allah for the grant of such and such blessings to him in Paradise. He smiled, and said, "For the last thirty years, the **Paradise with all its blessings has been appearing before me**, but I have not even once diverted my attention from Almighty Allah towards it."

4.7 State of ecstasy of a Sufi saint

In *Fazail-e-Hajj*, under the section titled “*The Farewell Hajj of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam)*”, story no.40 describes the state of ecstasy of a Sufi saint and we hope the reader will agree that this is not praiseworthy behaviour whilst doing Tawāf¹⁵:

“One saint relates: "I saw Hazrat Shaikh Samnoon R.A. once, swinging from side to side in ecstasy while performing tawaaf..."”

4.8 Perfect Sufi synonymous with madman

In *Fazail-e-Hajj*, under the section titled “*The Farewell Hajj of Rasulullah (Salallahu Alaihi Wassallam)*”, story no.1 narrates that Zun Noon Misri observed a man with odd behaviour and said: “I followed him and thought within myself that this man must either be a perfect sufi or a madman.” We hope the reader will agree that appearing like a madman is not a praiseworthy characteristic.

This story also mentions that this man supplicated Allāh by taking intermediaries: “O Allah I beg of You through those saintly ones and Your Nabis that You grant me to drink the wine of Your love...” We have already mentioned before that one should ask Allāh alone, without taking intermediaries in one’s supplication.

4.9 The devil corroborates the virtue of the Sufis

In chapter *Fazail-e-Zikr*, under the heading “*Ahaadith on Zikr*”, there are many stories of individuals who saw the devil in their dreams. The strange thing about these dreams is that the devil is *completely naked* in their dreams:

1. “Hadhrat Junaid (Rahmatullah alaih) is stated to have seen **Satan stark naked in a dream.**”
2. “Masoohi (Rahmatullah alaih) has also written about a dream. On **seeing Satan in naked condition**, he asked him whether he did not feel ashamed of being naked in the midst of men.”

In these stories, the devil corroborates the virtue of the Sufis; the devil is reported to have said:

“Real men are those who made me ill’, and he pointed to the group of Sufis.”

¹⁵ *Tawāf*: circumambulation of the Ka`bah whilst remembering Allāh and supplicating to Him.

5.0 Conclusion

This paper has provided only a brief insight into *Fazail-e-Amaal* and there remains within that book plenty more misguiding stories and incorrect beliefs. Whilst we do not deny that there may also be some good content within that book, but the nature of its errors and the availability of alternative authentic books makes *Fazail-e-Amaal* entirely redundant. It is hoped in-shā Allāh that the brief insight provided in this paper is sufficient to convince the reader to stay away from *Fazail-e-Amaal* and the beliefs contained therein.

Firstly, the paper has shown by way of examples and references that, whilst the stories within the book may have been put there with the intention to inspire, there is a real danger that they may mislead and misguide. As far as stories are concerned, there is a multitude of truly inspiring stories in the Qur'an and in the Hadeeths of the Prophet (ﷺ). So there is no real need to refer to *Fazail-e-Amaal* for stories of inspiration.

Secondly, the paper has presented some excerpts from *Fazail-e-Amaal*, which highlights some of the false beliefs being propagated concerning the Prophet (ﷺ). We must believe in the Prophet (ﷺ) the way that his noble companions (radiAllāhu `anhum) believed in him, as they are our examples after him and their relationship with him reached a level of human perfection.

Thirdly, the paper has presented some examples of the exaggeration of praise and capabilities attributed to the Sufis. This paper limited its scope to *Fazail-e-Amaal* and therefore it did not provide any details on Sufism – so for information on this, the reader should take note of the books on the Further Reading section below.

For further details about even more errors in *Fazail-e-Amaal*, the reader can refer to the book noted in Ref [1] below; this book is also available free online – see the “References” section for the website address. The e-books for *Fazail-e-Amaal* (in English) are also available free online if the reader wishes to verify the stories mentioned in this paper – see Ref [5] below for the website address.

6.0 Further Reading

Al-Madkhalee, Muhammad ibn Rabe' ibn Haadee. The Reality of Sufism in Light of the Qur'aan & Sunnah. (The ebook is available free online from islamsmessage.com)

Khan, Ali Hassan. A Critical Analysis of the Sufi Creed of the Elders of Deoband and the Tablighi Jamaah. (This book is available [to buy] from al-hidaayah.co.uk)

7.0 References

- [1] AbdulKayum, Sajid. The Jamaat Tableegh and the Deobandis: A critical Analysis of their Beliefs, Books and Dawah. First Edition - November 2001/Ramadaan 1422.
(The e-book is available free online from ahya.org)
- [2] Al-Hilali, Muhammad Taqi-ud-deen and Khan, Muhammad Muhsin. Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an.
- [3] Ibn Katheer, Isma'il Ibn 'Umar. Tafseer Al-Qur'an Al-'Adheem.
- [4] Khan, Muhsin. Saheeh Al-Bukhaari English Translation (Kitab Jamee Al-Saheeh of Imam Muhammad bin Isma'il Al-Bukhaari).
- [5] *Refuted book: Kandhalwi, Muhammad Zakariyah. Fazail-e-Amaal.*
(Content of sub-books in *Fazail-e-Amaal* are available free online from sites.google.com/site/straypaths:
 - [Fazail-e-Hajj](#)
 - [Fazail-e-Zikr](#)
 - [Fazail-e-Durood](#)
 - [Fazail-e-Namaaz](#))
- [6] Saheeh International. The Qur'an: English Meanings.
- [7] Siddiqui, AbdulHamid. Saheeh Muslim: English Translation of the Saheeh Collection of Imam Muslim ibn Al-Hajjaaj Al-Nisaburi.

Appendices

Appendix I Overview of Sufi Ideologies and Concepts

Hulool

This is the ideology of divine incarnation and can be classified into two types:

- The first is the *specific Hulool*; the claim that Allāh can be incarnated in the Sufi saints. Amongst the most daring Sufis who held to the concept of incarnation was Al-Husayn ibn Mansoor Al-Hallaj, who was executed for his heresy in 309 AH (922 CE). Deobandi-scholar Ashraf Ali Thanvi reported that: "Someone asked al-Hallaj: 'Since you are Allah, to whom do you prostrate?' He (al-Hallaj) answered: 'I have two states, one outward and the other inward. My outward self prostrates to my inward self.'" (Malfoozat Hakim al-Ummat)¹⁶
- The second type is the *general Hulool* and it is the claim that Allāh, in His Essence, is everywhere.¹⁷

Wahdatul-Wujood

This is the concept that all in existence is a single reality, and that everything we see is only aspects of the Essence of Allāh. Under such concept, the presence of creation is an illusion or an imagination. The chief claimant of this belief was Ibn 'Arabi al-Haatimi at-Taa'i, who died in 638 AH (around 1235 CE).

Fanaa'

This is the concept of *annihilation*; the claim that once the Sufi becomes assiduous in the remembrance of Allāh, he acquires sufficient tranquillity of heart to experience a delusion which helps him pass through following stages. First he is bewildered, then intoxicated with love of the Remembered One, and finally he passes through the stage of annihilation (*Fanaa'*), in which he becomes fully absorbed to the point of becoming unaware of himself or the objects around him. Every existing thing seems to vanish, and he feels free of every barrier that could stand in the way of his viewing the Remembered One and nothing else.

¹⁶ Malfoozat Hakim al-Ummat - biography of Ashraf Ali Thanvi - by Muhammad Iqbal Qurayshi, vol.1, p.251 – taken from Ref. [1].

¹⁷ Allāh is above the heavens, above His `Arsh (Throne), and separated from His creatures and His creatures are separated from Him. His knowledge encompasses all things; He is the Supreme, far removed from every imperfection and impurity.

"And He is Allāh above the heaven, and on the earth He knows your private and public affairs. And He knows what you achieve." (Surah Al-An`ām 6:3)

Kashf

This literally means "unveiling"; in Sufi terms it refers to mystical disclosure whereby Sufis claim to perceive and witness all of the realities of existence as well as those of the *Ghayb* (unperceived realities).¹⁸

Sufi Hierarchy of Sainthood

Sufi belief is that there is an unseen realm, in which “saints” control the affairs of mankind.

- *Al-Qutb* - at the top of the hierarchy of saints is one who is called the *Al-Qutb Al-Akbar* (great pole or axis) or *Al-Ghawth* (source of help), and he runs the affairs of the entire realm.
- *Al-Awtaad* - meaning "tent pegs"; these are the four Sufi saints that are 'holding the earth'.
- *Al-Abdaal* - are the seven other Sufi saints who each control one of the seven continents of the world (*abdaal*, from the word *badalahu* – because when one of them dies, another takes his place).¹⁹

¹⁸ The Sufi concept of *Kashf* is present in many stories within Fazail-e-Amaal, some examples are::

Fazail-e-Namaaz: chapter heading "The Rewards of Salaat" under "Hadith – 6".

Fazail-e-Zikr: chapter 2 "Ahadith on Virtues of Kalirnah Tayyabah" under "Hadith No. 17"; chapter 3 "Ahadith on Virtues of Third Kalimah" under "Hadith No. 12" – here it states: "there are hundreds and thousands of incidents proving beyond any doubt that those who are blessed with *Kashf* can see hidden things".

¹⁹ The *Abdaal* can be found in In Fazail-e-Hajj, under the heading "The Manner of Performing the Ziyarat", story no.9.