



# Analysis of the Limitations of Karomah from the Perspective of Sufis and Theologians

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**Abstract:** In every era, whether classical or modern, the world will still be filled with groups who are hated and loved by Allah. Guardians are a group of servants who receive the gift of karamah which is a form of love from Him. The term karamah wali has been deeply embedded in the life of the Muslim community from the past until today. This article will examine the concept of karomah and its limitations according to the views of Sufies such as al-Junayd, Abu Yazid al-Busthami and al-Qusyairy, from theologians such as al-Isfirainy, al-Laqqany and Al-baijury. This article will also touch a little on guardianship. Although the term "karamah" is not explicitly mentioned in the Koran, various verses imply it. privileges and grace that Allah gives to His righteous servants. As enshrined in the Koran such as QS. An-Naml:40 and QS. Ali Imran:37 Etc. Which in Islamic tradition is then interpreted as a blessing for the saints. And the research method used in this study is the library research method in this study, we collect data or information that is truly real, which is related to the main topic of the problem studied in this study. And with a historical textual approach. The results of the study show that the word wali is indeed clearly embedded in the Qur'an and As-Sunnah, however, there are differences of opinion among scholars regarding blessings and the limits of blessings themselves. Which There are two schools of thought regarding the limits of blessings, the first opinion of the majority of scholars asserts that: There is no specific limit to blessings, just like miracles. The second opinion says that blessings are limited, and the unlimited is only miracles.

**Keywords:** Charisma; Limitations; Sufi scholars; Theology

## Intoduction

In Islamic lore, we are likely familiar with the term "wali" (guardian) and its associated "karamah." "Karamah," or what we more familiarly call "sacred," has become sensitive content. In today's digital age, claims about karomah events have become extremely strange for many, even to the point of utter chaos. Certain traditional communities frequently raise the topic of karomah, and these communities often consider the discussion of karomah a religious heritage that, in their view, is crucial for public discussion. On various social media platforms, for example, we are presented with numerous narratives about karomah from scholars in various regions. All of this ultimately leads to endless polemics within society at large. Those opposed to these

stories claim that stories about karomah tend to be discussed too often in religious assemblies, thus becoming biased. This has fueled skepticism among those who prioritize a rational and scientific approach.

Some parties also believe that the reason for the narrative about sacredness that spread so quickly throughout the motherland is none other than mystical logic (Malaka, 2025) which has been deeply rooted in society from time to time, and all of that is easily exploited to manipulate the general public. Stories about something beyond human capabilities are indeed very closely linked to our society, so it is not surprising that books about karomah are so popular in the market, even though these stories are considered quite strange and unreasonable by scientists and modern people who usually think rationally. The miracles of the saints, for

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example, are found in the book *The Story of Wali Songo* (Ridwan, 1995). Based on the social facts above, that is what became a strong motivation for the author to re-examine everything related to the issue of karomah. This article attempts to answer questions about karomah. For example, what is the meaning of karomah, can the miracles of the prophets become karomah for the saints, or are there limits to karomah for the saints.

## Method

The research method used in this study is qualitative research with a comparative study type. According to Sugiyono, qualitative research is a method used to investigate natural object conditions (as opposed to experiments), where the researcher is the key instrument, data collection techniques are triangulated (combined), data analysis is qualitative, and qualitative research results emphasize meaning rather than generalization.

The data collection technique in this study utilized a literature review technique. According to Arikunto (2010), a literature review is a method of collecting data by seeking information through books, newspapers, magazines, and other literature. In this study, the researcher collected data by studying and reviewing reference books, scientific journals, articles, websites, and other published materials, both printed and electronic (Arikunto, 2010).

It should be emphasized that this study has several limitations that require consideration, including the limited data sources available and the limited data collection period. Therefore, we will not discuss the issue of sainthood in depth. This study focuses solely on the issue of Karomah. So the results obtained should be seen as a partial picture that opens up space for further research to gain a more comprehensive understanding.

In Islam, blessings are an important concept in the Ahlussunnah wal-Jamaah tradition, referring to extraordinary events bestowed by Allah upon a guardian. Several previous studies provide insight into the concept of this guardianship.

The first article, "The Concept and Character of a Guardian of Allah" in Surah Yunus, Verse 62 (Fery, 2023) attempts to clarify the general public's perception of a guardian. Therefore, this article only discusses who a guardian of Allah is and their characteristics. This article confirms that guardians truly exist and are mentioned in the Quran. It discusses who they are and who is bestowed the title of beloved of Allah, without touching on the limitations of blessings. The second article, "The Esoterics of Islamic Education in the Charisma of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jailani," was written by Ngatoillah Linnaja and Robingun Suyud El Syam from the Al-Qu'an Science University in Wonosobo. The Journal of Educational

Inspiration (ALFIHRIS) Vol. 2, No. 2, 2024. This study highlights one figure and only highlights the educational value of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jailani's charism. Due to his profound knowledge in various fields and his outstanding charism, a study of his charism is necessary to prevent the emergence of a cult of personality. This study aims to demonstrate its novelty and analyze the esoterics of Islamic education in the charism of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jailani.

The third is "The Concept of Sainthood According to Sheikh Abdul Qadir Al-Jailani." Written by Mahya, Mimi Jamilah. In the Journal of Communication between Islamic Higher Education Institutions 20.2 (2021): 309-326. This article examines the concept of sainthood according to Sheikh Abdul Qadir Al-Jailani, who was nicknamed Sulthanul Awliya in his time, with special emphasis on references contained in his three books, *Sirrul Asrar*, *Al-Fathur Rabbani* and *Futuhul Ghaib*. Several topics of discussion regarding walayah or guardianship.

## Result and Discussion

### *Wali*

Before delving into the deeper discussion of karamah, it would be wise to discuss who this karamah is intended for, as karamah and the guardian are inseparable. In Surah Yunus, verse 62, Allah SWT states: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said. Meaning: "Remember, verily, on the friends of Allah, there is no fear, nor shall they grieve..."

In a hadith narrated by Imam Bukhari: Abu Hurairah (may Allaah be pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "Indeed, Allaah, the Almighty, said, 'Whoever is hostile to My friends, I have declared war on him.'" (Bukhari, 6502).

Al-Qusyairy interpreted a friend as a servant who consistently performs obedience, uninterrupted by trials in the form of disobedience, and who always receives guidance to remain in obedience. At-Taftazani said that a friend is a servant who truly knows Allah (Aarif billah) and who consistently performs obedience. From the verses and hadith above, the book of Isa confirms that The words of the Wali are clearly stated in the Quran and As-Sunnah.

### *Karomah*

According to Abul Qasim al-Qusyairy, the definition of karamah itself is something that fundamentally contradicts human customs in general. It can also be considered a reality of the nature of Allah's saints regarding the meaning of truth in certain situations (Amanullah, 2003). This karamah can also be

considered something very special bestowed by Allah SWT upon His chosen ones (Al-Qusyairi, 2017).

In the above verse, Allah emphasizes that Allah's saints have no worries whatsoever, nor do they grieve. Ibn Kathir stated that the worries referred to in this verse are about events that will occur on the Day of Judgment and sadness for the world in which they live. The saints do not worry about the Day of Judgment because Allah has fundamentally strengthened their hearts and faith, and they are aware that Allah will never break His promise to His pious servants. And sadness in this world regarding wealth will not affect His lovers in the slightest.

### *The Limits of Karomah*

#### *Real Facts Based on the Qur'an and Hadith*

Basically, the Koran does not mention the word Karamah explicitly in its verses, but the concept of the glory given by Allah to His servants is clearly displayed in various verses in the Koran. If we want to see how long the concept of karomah existed, then we will find information in the verses of the Koran that explain this concept. as the story in the Koran tells how one of the Prophet Sulaiman's ministers was able to bring about the throne of Queen Balqis in just the blink of an eye. As explained in the Koran in surah An-naml 40.

"A person who has knowledge from the holy book said: I will meet you with (the throne) before your eyes blink..."

Imam At-thobary called the person's name Balikha (Al-Razi, 1995) or Aashof bin as stated by At-taftazaniy. He was a Minister or secretary of the Prophet Sulaiman.

In surah Ali Imran 37 we can see how Prophet Zakariyya was amazed when he found food on the side of his mihrab. "Every time Zakariyya entered his mihrab, he found food, saying: O Maryam, where did you get all this, Maryam answered; all of this is from Allah. In fact, Allah gives sustenance to whoever He wills..."

We will also find history about karomah among friends, namely Amirul mukmunin Umar bin Khattab as in the history of Abu Sheikh in Adzomah, it is said that when he was on the pulpit he suddenly said: O sariah, go up the mountain. Suddenly the warlord Sariah bin Zanim, who was in Nahwand at that time, heard the voice of Umar who was in Medina (Pramasto, 2020).

Indeed, we will find few stories about karomah from the history of friends, if we compare them with the tabiin period or after, let alone adults now. an-Nabhani in answering this phenomenon quoted the words of Imam Ahmad bin Hambal who was once asked the reason why many karomahs appeared after the time of the companions, even though they were the people who most deserved this gift, Imam Ahmad answered: Because the faith of the companions was too strong, and

did not need reinforcement to strengthen it. This is different from the period after which requires karomah to strengthen it.

From the verses and narrations above, we can see that the word Karomah is not clearly mentioned in the Koran, but the concept is clearly stated in it or in the history of the Companions. Maybe all of this is the reason why the Muktazilah group does not recognize the existence of karamah because the word is not clearly stated and all the narrations that explain the karomah of the Companions are based on the Aahad hadith.

In this regard, theologians also differ in their opinions regarding karamah. Mu'tazilite theologians argue that if karamah, or something extraordinary from human nature, were to occur in someone other than a prophet, it would lead to confusion and ambiguity. We would be unable to distinguish between saints and prophets, as both can perform miracles. Those who deny karamah cannot be said to reject something mentioned in the Quran, because they acknowledge the khariq lil-adah of the prophets; they only reject the khariq lil-adah that occurs in people other than the prophets.

Meanwhile, according to Al-Yafi'i, Ahlussunnah leaders such as Imam Ash-ary, al-Baqillany, Abul Qasim al-Qusyairy, and Abu Bakr ibn Furak... Al-Haramain, al-Ghazaly, Fakhr Ar-razy, and al-Baidhawiy agree that karamah is something that is possible because there is no single indicator that makes it impossible, and anything that lacks an indicator of impossibility is possible. Because miracles are a manifestation of Allah's grace and mercy toward one of His servants (Al-Baijuri, 2021).

Karamah, as explained by At-Taftazaniy, is something beyond human normalcy, without any recognition of prophethood. Al-Baijuri adds, saying: "It arises from a pious servant who adheres firmly to the Sunnah of his Prophet and has the correct creed, whether that person recognizes himself as a guardian or not.

In his book, Iqazdul Himmam Syarah al-Hikam, Ibn Ajibah explains that charisma is divided into two types: hissyah and ma'nawiyah. Hissiyah is something that can be felt, such as flying and walking on water. Ma'nawiyah, on the other hand, is the lifting of the veil of negligence, kashaf (purity of heart), and ascending to the stage of Ihsan. Some of the characteristics of a servant with charisma include the lack of specific prayers to recite, the charisma applies only to pious and devout people, and someone with charisma never intentionally claims to possess it. This is in line with Ibn Furak's statement.

A similar statement is found from At-Taftazani, who explains that a prophet must announce to the public that he is a prophet, and at-Taftazani says, "but not for a saint."

In addition to Khawariq lil-adah or something that is beyond the normal human habits that are generally

owned by the saints, this khawariq can also be owned by ordinary people, there are 6 khawariq in total, as mentioned by the scholars of Ahlussunnah (Miracles: events that are beyond the normal human habits, which coincide with the appointment as a prophet, Irhash: occurs before the appointment as a prophet, which is the forerunner of Miracles, Karamah, Maunah: help for the awwam when they find a dead end, Istidraj: is a miracle that appears from the fasiq people to deceive them, Ihanah: a miracle that appears to Allah only as a reproach and insult for him.

Some add magic as the seventh part, but Al-Baijuri emphasized that magic is not Khawariq lil-Adah because magic can be learned.

*The charisma of the saints is multi-level*

Karamah has levels, such as quickly answered prayers, walking on water, flying through the air, making animals speak, bringing food, etc. As Ibn Ruslan stated: "And the saints have levels of karomah."

Essentially, karomah is not the sole measure of a saint's rank. Many of the Companions had no history of specific karomah, yet they were the most adept after the Prophets. In essence, karomah occurs only to fulfill a believer's needs, not for amusement. Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal emphasized that each time a person's faith increases, the karomah that occurs decreases, as did the Companions.

Sayyiduna Ali ibn Abi Talib said, "If Allah were to remove the veil (referring to the matter of sam'iyat), my faith would not increase in the slightest." Instead of saying he would become more certain, he actually said the opposite. And clearly, this was not just Sayyiduna Ali's belief; rather, all the companions possessed this belief at its maximum level. In Ar-Risalah, Al-Qusyairy emphasized that the invisibility of a saint's miracles does not undermine their credibility as saints. Zakariyya al-Anshory responded to al-Qusyairy's statement by stating that it is possible that a saint whose miracles are invisible is superior to one whose miracles are clearly visible. The saints would not feel at ease with the miracles that Allah bestowed upon them. In fact, they would worry that all these miracles were acts of istidraj from Allah, because in a hadith narrated by Imam Ahmad, the Prophet said:

"If you see Allah granting a servant worldly pleasures for a sin he committed, then know that it is Istidraj." Because the validity of a miracle does not automatically prove the truth of the person claiming it without clear evidence or strong indications that can confirm its truth, even if he walks on water, flies in the air, or has jinn and beasts grow within him, none of that can be used as a measure until we see how his life ends and to what extent he adheres to the Shari'a in His commands and prohibitions.

If so, we cannot immediately say that every miracle that comes from someone is a miracle until we know for certain that the person is a pious and pious person. As is said, when Abu Yazid Thayfur al-Bustami wanted to verify the truth of someone claiming to be a saint, Abu Yazid brought his friend along. Upon arrival, Abu Yazid was disappointed to see the man spitting towards the Qibla. Abu Yazid turned around and said, "That man is not trustworthy in the Prophet's Sunnah. How can we believe all his claims?"

Abu Yazid also said, "If you see someone who is blessed with a miracle as if flying in the air, then don't be fooled by such things until you see how he is in matters of enjoining good and forbidding evil and how he upholds the Islamic etiquette.

Therefore, Imam al-Junaid also said, "Our knowledge (Sufism) is strongly bound to the Book and the Sunnah." It is therefore no wonder that Imam Abdul Qadir al-Jilani said that Istiqomah is better than 1,000 miracles.

*Are the limits of the saints the same as the limits of the miracles of the prophets?*

Imam al-Isfirainy is of the opinion that everything that is a miracle for the prophets, should not (cannot) appear as karomah for the saints. Because the peak of karomah is the fulfillment of prayer quickly. Al-qusyairy also had the same opinion as his teacher. After determining that saints have various karomahs, he continued by limiting the karomahs owned by saints, saying that many karomahs have appeared recently (in his time and caused slander), and Al-Qusyairy added that it is not permissible (cannot) for saints to show karomahs such as changing inanimate objects into living animals or causing the birth of a child from an unmarried virgin like the Prophet Isa.

As we know, all of this will be slander and will harm the person, as happened when al-Qusyairy wrote this treatise, because at that time slander was rampant attacking Sufis, and finally he wrote the book to advise all Sufis at that time. And one of the mutaakhirin who follow this opinion is Ibnu Ruslan in his zubad, Ibnu Ruslan said: And karomah ends (cannot) on the birth of a child without a father. Same as Al-qusyairy's opinion on.

Then the opinion of Jumhur Ahlussunnah says that karomah has unlimited forms like the miracles of the prophets. As was the claim made by Az-zarkasyi and considered Al-Qusyairy's opinion to be weak. Even Al-Qusyairy's son, Abu Nasr, rejected his father's opinion and preferred to follow Jumhur's opinion. We also find a similar opinion from Imam al-Haramain in his book al-Irsyad and An-Nawawi in the shahih Muslim Syarah.

## Conclusion

After presenting the views of Ahlus Sunnah scholars regarding the concept of karamah, several important points can be drawn. First, the existence of karamah in the Qur'an and Hadith has been essentially affirmed, although not always explicitly stated. Second, the karamah bestowed upon saints has levels, just as miracles were bestowed upon prophets. Third, there are differences of opinion among Ahlus Sunnah scholars regarding the limits of karamah. The majority of scholars – and this opinion is considered stronger (rājih) affirm that karamah has no specific limits, as miracles do. Meanwhile, some Ahlus Sunnah scholars – and this opinion is considered weaker (marjūh) – view that karamah has specific limits. Although the opinions of Imams al-Isfarāyīnī and al-Qusyairī are considered weak by the majority of Sunni scholars, as expressed by Az-Zarkasyī, their views appear to be a breath of fresh air in quelling the growing controversy that has developed recently. Their courage in expressing opinions that differ from the majority is commendable. If all Sunni scholars agree that miracles have no limits, this could potentially be misused by certain individuals who view miracles solely as a means of preaching. They could reap significant profits, whether in the form of public sympathy, an enhanced image as a spiritual leader, or abundant material gain.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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