

Emergence of Sufism and Moderate Sufism



Salahuddin Mohd. Shamsuddin¹, Tonang Hasan Lubis²

^{1,2}University Dharmawangsa, Medan, Sumatra, Utara Indonesia.

ABSTRACT: Sufism calls for a return to the teachings of Islam, and to hard work, construction and reconstruction that is accomplished with the blood of the heart. It calls for strengthening and educating the self, and reforming the souls according to divine law, and condemns the weakness, dependence, laziness, and escaping from shouldering the responsibilities, and confronting the problems of life, which seeks that the person who believes in the One God, the Almighty, the Powerful, the Mighty, who created the most honorable creature in the entire universe, and who has lost his selfhood, credibility, his humanity and status long ago, due to some false and misleading ideas of Sufism, specifically the idea calling for the annihilation in God instead of remaining by loving God, based on the doctrine of "Pantheism" which says, "there is no reality for this material world, including the man," and the saying "you should die before you die." However, the doctrine of Pantheism has some considerations. We must know first what Sufism is? When we search for this word, we see that it is not in the Qur'an or in the Prophetic hadiths, just as we do not find a Muslim in the first and second century since the rise of Islam called a Sufi, and Muslim in the first century of Islam liked to be called a believer due to his faith, piety, and self-purification. Where did this word come from? We only have to say that Sufism was taken from Soof: wool, so it is said that he is a Sufi if he wears woolen cloth, and what we rely on most for this is linguistic derivation. Many people took this opinion, including Al-Suhrawardy, the author of the book (Awarif Al-Ma'arif), Al-Tusi, the author of the book (Al-Lam'), and Ibn Khaldun, author of (Introduction).

KEYWORDS: Sufism - Asceticism - Monotheism - Pantheism - Unity of witnesses.

1. ORIGIN OF THE WORD "SUFISM"

Zaki Mubarak, in his book "Islamic Sufism in the Literature and Ethics," quoted a speech published by Mustafa Abdul Razzaq in the magazine (Al-Ma'rifa) about the derivation of the word "Sufism". We thought it would be useful to return to it to know its ancient origin to see which opinion is more likely than the various opinions, which carry four opinions regarding the derivation of the word Sufism from its ancient origin (1), it is as follows:

- A. This word (Sufism) is attributed to the word "Soof".
- B. This word is attributed to the word "Suffah".
- C. Sufism is derived from the word Safa in Arabic.
- D. Sufism is attributed to the word (Sophia), which means knowledge and wisdom in Greek.

The one who said this fourth and final opinion was Al-Bairuni, and the orientalist Von Hammer also supported him, but this fourth last opinion is incorrect.

The second opinion is that it is taken from the word Şuffah or Soof and is merely an assumption and not based on any evidence.

As for their saying that it is derived from Şafa, the linguistic derivation denies that because the ascription is Şafawi and not Sufi.

Likewise, the attribution to Şuffah - which is a place in Medina city where ascetics gathered - so the attribution to it is Şuffi, not Şufi.

We have no choice now except to say that Sufism was taken from Soof, means the wool in Arabic, so it is said that he became a Sufi if he wore the woolen cloth, and what we depend on most in this is linguistic derivation. (2) This was taken by the opinion of many, including Al-Suhrawardy, the author of the book (Awarif Al-Ma'arif), Al-Tusi, the author of the book (Al-Lam'), and Ibn Khaldun author of the book (Introduction).

Most Muslim scholars have agreed that the word Sufism is Arabic and is derived from Soof, and mentioned in many pre-Islamic literature, as NOLDCHER states, meaning staying away from the trappings of the world... but it became specialized, and its scope narrowed after the Islamic era and began to be used to refer to that group called Sufis. (3)

Emergence of Sufism and Moderate Sufism

2. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ASCETICISM (THE FAITH) AND SUFISM

Ibn Khaldun said: "Sufism is one of the legal sciences emerging in the religion of Islam, and its origin is devotion to worship, devotion to God Almighty, and turning away from the adornments of the world. Asceticism is to be far from what is accepted by the majority, such as pleasure and prestige, and seclusion from the other people in solitude for worship. This was widespread among the Companions and predecessors, and when the interest in the world became widespread in the second century and after it, and the people tended to mix with the world, those who resorted to worship were designated as Sufis or becoming Sufis". (4)

From here we see that the origin of Sufism is the asceticism that means that it is the seeds of asceticism and distancing oneself from the people, and that it went through many stages, the first of which was austerity and aversion to the world.

If the asceticism is the basis of Sufism and its first seeds, then what is the difference between the asceticism and Sufism? In fact, there are some differences between the asceticism and Sufism, including:

A. The difference in the purpose.

The ascetic worships out of hope of Paradise promised to his Lord and out of fear of the fire that has been prepared for the unbelievers. As for the Sufi, he worships God solely to worship Him, to love Him alone, and to related to Him. Rabi'a al-Adawiyya (5) says: "My God, if I worship You out of fear of Your Fire, then burn me in Hell, and if I worship You out of desire of in your paradise, deprive me of it, and if I worship you out of your love, do not deprive me of your eternal beauty, O my God." (6)

B. The difference in the thinking

The ascetic is surrounded by the majesty of God Almighty, feeling his punishment, standing before him humbly, trembling with fear, and his tears flowing in awe and reverence. As for the Sufi, he is gentle in his love of God, so much so that we can say that there is a kind of affection between him and God, as between the lover and the beloved. Asceticism is widespread in every religion, every era, and every place, and Islamic Sufism is a special tendency generated by some certain factors. It grew and nurtured under the banner of Islam and was subject to the factors of emergence and advancement, and its most prominent feature was that the one who follows it carries out God's will and provision - as is the case with the ascetic - and for this reason we find the Sufi in a state of spiritual reassurance and psychological radiance. The conclusion is that the asceticism is the bridge through which Sufism expresses itself, it is the first nucleus, and the first movement. (7) Ali Subhi responded with convincing proofs to the opinions of the Orientalists and those who followed them who said that "Sufism is a non-Islamic science." (8) The scholar Reynold A. Nicholson was unique among the Orientalists in paying attention to this aspect of the history of Islam - the aspect of Sufism - because he saw it as the most specific and most prominent aspect of the spiritual life of Muslims. His first research on the problem of "the emergence of Sufism" appeared in the Royal Asian Journal in 1906 AD under the title: "A Historical View of the Origin and Development of Sufism." He divided it into two parts. In the first section, he presented the theories developed by the researchers before him regarding the nature of Islamic Sufism and its origins. Then he mentioned his own theory. In the second section, he mentioned seventy-eight definitions of Sufism in Arabic and Persian. Nicholson explained the difference between Asceticism and Sufism in Islam. He attributed the asceticism to the nationalist factors within Islam and to the widespread feeling of isolation and escaping from the world, its noise, and its woes among Muslims in the first century. He stated his opinion on the extent of the influence of Christianity and other foreign factors on the asceticism and said in the end that Islamic asceticism is the result of Islamic factors at its core. As for Sufism, it traces its origins to some external factors to Islam, which took effect since its beginning in the third century AH. Nicholson believes that the most important of these factors is Late Neoplatonism, which was popular in Egypt and the Levant, until the era of Dhul-Nun al-Misri and Ma'rif al-Karkhi. Therefore, he makes Dhul-Nun al-Misri the focus of his research in this article and provides many historical supports about Dhul-Nun al-Misri's life and his upbringing. It is inferred that Dhul-Nun was aware of the common Greek wisdom of his time. He writes about how the late Greek cultural movement reached Muslims. Finally, he says that Sufism, in its theoretical aspect, is taken from Neoplatonism. Nicholson summarizes his opinion on this issue by saying: "In the third century AH, Sufism appeared in a new image that was completely different from its predecessor (meaning the image of asceticism), and it is an image that cannot be explained as the result of the development of spiritual factors from the core of Islam itself." He said: "But I am certain that if we look at the historical circumstances that surrounded the emergence of Sufism in its precise sense, it is impossible for us to trace its origin to an Indian or Persian factor, and we must consider it a product of the union of Greek thought and Eastern religions or more precisely, a product of the union of Neoplatonic philosophy and the Christian religion, and the Gnostic doctrine." (9) As for the practical aspect, Sufism, in his view, is influenced by Indian and Persian philosophy, and his evidence for this is Abu Yazid al-Bustami. (10) We note that there is a clear shift in Nicholson's theory in the article that he published in the year 1921 AD in the circle of Knowledge and Ethics entitled: (Sufism), in which he explicitly acknowledged the status of the Islamic factor among the factors that contributed to the emergence of Sufism, as he says: "In short, Sufism in the third century, like Sufism in any of its eras, emerged as a result of various factors that had their combined effect on it: by these factors I mean theoretical research into the meaning of the monotheistic doctrine of Islam, asceticism, Christian mysticism, the doctrine of Gnosticism, and Greek, Indian, and Persian philosophy. Then it seems to him that searching for a single origin for Sufism is wrong way and a waste of time, so he rejects every theory that says there is a single origin, including his theory of the Greek origin. He says: "Issue of the emergence of Sufism in Islam has so far been treated incorrectly, so many of the early researchers went to say

Emergence of Sufism and Moderate Sufism

that this great movement, which derived its life and strength from all the classes and peoples that made up the Islamic Empire, can explain its origins in an accurate scientific way by returning it to a single origin, such as the Indian Vedanta or Neo-Platonic philosophy or by setting hypotheses that explain part of the truth, not the whole truth.(11)Nicholson believes that the Islamic teachings themselves, and the Muslim Sufis' interpretation of the doctrine of monotheism in a particular way that made them like those who advocated the doctrine of pantheism, all of which had an impact in shaping theoretical research in Islamic Sufism. These are the common claims that say: The most important characteristic of Islamic Sufism is the belief in the unity of existence, and that every Islamic mystic believes in this belief. Nicholson denied the belief in the unity of existence, even on the authority of Al-Hallaj, whose saying (I am the truth) that was attributed to him, and on the authority of Omar Ibn Al-Farid, whose saying (I am it) that was attributed to him, meaning (the divine truth), and even on the authority of Abu Yazid Al-Bustami, whose saying (Glory be to me, and my greatest affair) was attributed to him, and Nicholson believes that the doctrine of pantheism has not appeared in Islamic Sufism in its true form except since the time of Ibn Arabi, who died in the year 638 AH, and that "all the ideas that were described as alien to Muslims and the product of a foreign, non-Islamic culture, are the product of asceticism and Sufism that They grew up in Islam and were Islamists at its deep heart."(12)In Nicholson's view, the Sufi does not adhere to the doctrine of pantheism if he speaks of the transcendence of God, no matter how many statements he makes that feel like an analogy. If he considers the aspect of transcendence, he witnesses God in everything and at the same time considers Him above everything: as this is the unity of witnesses, not the unity of existence. We must say that Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi (13) is the founder of the doctrine of pantheism in Islam, as he spoke of both the transcendence and analogy, and he did not neglect for a single moment to link one to the other. Ibn Arabi took the meaning of transcendence and analogy to the meaning of absoluteness, definition, and restriction. For him, God is transcendent, that is, He is absolute in Himself and does not limit a specific designation from the infinite designations in which He appears at every time. It is similar in the sense that in His attributes and names He is apparent in the form of every definite entity, restricted in His appearance by the requirements of the forms in which He appears. Exaltedness and similitude are two aspects of one truth or two legal matters, otherwise (the exalted truth is the likened creation) there is no difference between them except in one characteristic, which is the necessity of existence, which is unique to the truth. (14)We must point out that there is a group that supports Ibn Arabi in Tanzīh and Tashbih and a group that opposes him, and among those who supported him were Sheikh Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardy, Majd al-Din al-Firouzabadi, Qutb al-Din al-Hamwi, Salahuddin al-Safadi, Fakhr al-Din al-Rāzi, Jalāl al-Din al-Suyuti, Abd al-Razzāq al-Qaāshani, and Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulsi, and people like them are people of knowledge, virtue, understanding and insight. Those who explained his book (Fuṣṣ al-Ḥikam) and published his doctrines and theories of Sufism were headed by Wahid al-Din al-Kirmani, Sadr al-Din al-Quni, Mu'ayyid al-Din al-Jundi, Fakhr al-Din al-Iraqi, Daud bin Mahmood al-Qaysari, and Nur al-Din Abd al-Rahman al-Jami. Among those who disagreed with him were Ibn Taimiyyah, who died in 728 AH, Ibn Khaldun, who died in 808 AH, Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, who died in 852 AH, and Ibrahim al-Biqa'i, who died in 858 AH. Al-Biqa'i wrote some books against Sheikh Muhyiddin bin Arabi, such as: (The Prophet's Warning Against Ibn Arabi's Infidelity) and (Warning the servants of the people of Al-Ba'ad with the heresy of atheism. Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti also wrote his book (The Prophet's Warning in the Acquittal of Ibn Arabi), which supports Ibn Arabi's doctrine. Likewise, in his book, al-Suyuti responded to Ibrahim al-Biqa'i. (15)

3. THEORY OF EMANATION AND THE LINK BETWEEN THE NATURE AND POST-NATURE TO FĀRĀBĪ

There is a strong and beautiful logical link between the "Nature and Post-Nature" in the Fārābian system to emphasize the unity of the universe, the interdependence of its parts and the beauty of its construction. Fārābi raises this subject as an unproven subject as it does not require any proof, because it is one of the parties to the binary mental division of the asset, he puts the existing asset as a first reason when it is existed, "it is necessary to all of the other assets to be existed from its existence – that do not exist by the human will and choice - as they are existed, some of them can be seen by the scenes and some are known by the proof." Thus, the existence of the occurring assets is joint to which must be existed like the evidence is associated with the claim, so there is no separation between them. As for the issuance of assets from Him (God), it is that "the existence of what is existed from him is because of His overflowing side for the existence, which is a cause for the existence of any other thing, and that the issuance of the other thing is depended to His existence," because that one who must be existed is by the definition one simple complete free from all kinds of the imperfection. He does not need in its existence to any material or anything else...and who is not material called a mind and a parting by the definition, (i.e., a pure mental picture). Hence, a one and simple mind like Him overflows from His presence also. (16) As well as the first chapter of the same book and "civil policy" to get a clear idea of Al-Farabi's conception of the universe. Although these two books repeat each other, but are complementary, one explains some ambiguities in the other. This is the first mind in the chain of heavenly minds, which exists from that who must be existed. Here, at this point, Ptolemy's astronomical system intervenes to transform the "logic" into an ontology and to blend the nature with the "metaphysics" in such a way that each of them interprets the other and completes it. Thus, this first mind realizes itself and its beginning (= It is God that must be existed). So, many things exist according to this consideration, and from this considerable abundance, which is due to the multiplicity of reasoning, many things exist on the ontological level. Such as: Which is realized by His Divine Self, overflowing with a celestial sphere (or astronomy) as a star or soul at once, without a distinction between them only that the soul is the principle

Emergence of Sufism and Moderate Sufism

of the movement of astronomy. Then the second mind overflows by the thinking of first mind. This second mind thinks about itself, so that another celestial sphere overflows with a star and a soul, which thinks about itself and its soul so that another mind can be present, and so on to the tenth mind that is overflowed by the ninth mind, which is the moon ball. Passing through the first sphere in the sky, the planetary ball, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, the Moon, (17) and at this tenth mind the "paradoxical things that are in essence minds and what is thought by the mind ends". As well as, at the moon also "the presence of the celestial bodies end, that are moving in a circle naturally." Moreover, the earthly souls and the common first form of all the bodies emit from the tenth mind. This cytoplasm is transformed by the movement of the orbits, forming the four elements (the water, air, fire, and dust) that make up the terrestrial beings. Thus, when an object is formed in this way, the tenth mind overflows the image that suits it. Therefore, it is called the Image grantor, as well as the effective or active mind. Hence, the body takes on an excessive shape on its corpuscle, then it becomes an object, (such as: Inanimate, plant, animal, human being).

4. MATERIAL AND IMAGE

So, all the terrestrial beings consist of a material and image. The human being is one of them, with his material, his body, and his own image: The soul overflowed by the effective mind and image grantor when the material of the body in the womb was ready to accept it. The human souls have a set of powers: Developmental powers (nourishing, educational, breeding power that are shared by the plants, animals, and humans). On the other hand, there are impulsive powers (lustful and angry) that are shared by the animals and humans. The cognitive forces (the sensible and imaginal), for the human and the animal. Despite the multiplicity of these powers, the soul is one cannot be separated by the fragmentation of its functions, but it is complemented by its reality by the cognitive power. This is on the one hand and on the other the forces of the soul are all linked to the body, and therefore the soul, as a formed unit of these forces, depends in its existence on the body.

Fārābi gives the utmost importance to the cognitive force, which is the mind, and he means in a special way the theoretical mind and puts it in three grades as follows:

- ❖ The primitive mind, which he also calls the mind by force, and "is the soul or a part of the soul or a force of the soul or something else: This soul itself is prepared or ready to extract the essences of all things and their images, without their materials, making them all a picture of them". (18)
- ❖ The mind is the same as the primitive mind has stored the knowledge extracted from the material, those knowledges that have become the knowledges, they were knowledges by the force before the extraction.
- ❖ The learned mind, which is the same as the mind by act in which the extracted knowledge from the material is stored, and which can recognize the knowledge without the material originally, i.e., the abstract images such as the heavenly minds. This learned mind is the highest ranking that can be reached by the human mind. It is a rank that nothing else can be "between this mind and the active mind. Therefore, it is eligible to receive knowledge directly from the active mind." This is the level of the philosopher, which is equivalent to, but surpasses the status of the Prophet to Fārābi, as the philosopher receives the knowledges from the active (effective) mind by his own mind, while the prophet receives them from by his imagination that are inspired by the mind of the philosopher from the active mind or God reveals them to the imagination of the Prophet. Thus, "God (Almighty) reveals to him (= the man) by the mediation of the active (effective) mind, so what is revealed by God Almighty to the active mind is revealed to the passionate mind by the active mind through the mediation by the learned mind, then to his power of the imagination. So, he becomes a wise philosopher because of what is revealed to his mind and understands everything completely, and he becomes a Prophet and a warner about what will be going to happen because of what is revealed to his power of the imagination and tells what kind of the accidents is now happening, and this man is on the fullest rank of the humanity and the highest degree of the happiness. (19)

5. CONCLUSION: (MODERATE SUFISM)

No doubt that there is something common in Sufism among all nations, which is that there are emotional means to reach the truth, and the knowledge of the tangible and intelligible is not sufficient to know the truth and its essence. Rather, there are visible senses and hidden senses, and the hidden senses reveal some important aspects that the apparent senses and rational sciences do not reach. The greatest means of knowing the truth is love, which is considered the source of insight and knowledge. Thus, man comes to know himself and the entire universe, and it also brings him to the path of knowing God Almighty. Sufism is not a theory of life, but rather a way of life, and from here the view of the Sufi changes as he looks at everything from his own perspective. There is a vast difference among the perceptions of people of different religions and beliefs of Sufism. Indeed, there is a difference between Sufis who adhere to one religion, and each Sufi has a special color. Some of them are attracted, some of them escape from the world and love solitude and isolation, and some of them want to influence the souls of others with their esoteric knowledge, and some of them choose the path of annihilation in exchange for the survival, and some of them do not care about the apparent rulings of Sharia law when the explicit clash occurs between the apparent and the hidden, such as Rabi'a Al-Adawiyah, Al-Hallaj, Ibn Arabi and others, and there are special terms among the Sufis; Such as truth, law, method, purpose, goal, observation or revelation, etc. There is also a difference in the concepts of these terms as well.

Emergence of Sufism and Moderate Sufism

Islamic Sufism that we agree with is a commitment to everything that was reported from the Messenger of God (may God bless him and grant him peace) in terms of words, deeds or narrations, and a commitment to the Book of God, and comes out of interfering with issues of faith and respecting the unseen reality, because they emanate from the Almighty Truth.

Islamic Sufism is the pinnacle of true servitude to God, submission to His commands, avoiding His prohibitions, and combating heresies, whims, misguidance, and paganism.

Islamic Sufism adheres to pure, the absolute pure monotheism, and flawless monotheism, and is wary of everything that touches the pure monotheism, such as polytheism, disbelief, and atheism, whether apparent or hidden.

As some poets say:

“In the hand is the cup of Sharia and in the other hand is (the severe) hammer of love, but not all of us know how to act with both at the same time to balance the behavior.”

REFERENCES

- 1) Mubarak. Zaki. (No date). Islamic Sufism in Literature and Ethics, vol. 1, p. 41.
- 2) Kilani. Qamar. (No date). On Islamic Sufism. P. 12.
- 3) Ibid. Pp. 12-14.
- 4) Ibn Khaldun. (No date). Introduction, p. 261.
- 5) Al-Manawi states that she died in the year 180, and Ma Sinyon believes that she died in the year 195/810 - and Dr. Qasim Ghani mediates between them and chooses the year 185 for her death, but Ibn Khalikan specifies her death as the year 135, and likewise Ibn al-Imad in the book “Al-Shadharat” also mentioned the possibility of her death in the year 185/801, but He did not support this possibility. It is most likely that she died after the year 155, that is, after the arrival of Sufyan al-Thawri in Basra. She is the most famous person who embraced Sufi love. See (The link between Sufism and Shiism). P. 324.
- 6) Qamar Kilani: On Islamic Sufism, its concept and development, p. 14.
- 7) Ibid. Pp. 12-14.
- 8) In Sufi Islamic Literature. Pp. 237-246.
- 9) Reynold Nicholson. (1969). Introduction to the book (On Islamic Sufism). Cairo: Translated into Arabic by Abu Al-Ala Afifi.
- 10) Ibid.
- 11) Reynold Nicholson. (1999). Introduction to the book (On Islamic Sufism).
- 12) Ibid.
- 13) He is Al-Hussein bin Mansour Al-Hallaj. He was born in the town of Tour, northeast of Madinat Al-Bayda. We find two contradictory accounts of his lineage. The first traces him back to Ayoub Al-Ansari, the great companion, and makes him a pure Arab. The other says that he is the grandson of a Magian from Persia. See: Al-Hallaj - Martyr of Islamic Sufism - P. 32.
- 14) Reynold Nicholson. (1999). Introduction to the book (On Islamic Sufism).
- 15) Muthanna. Muhammad. (No date). Iqbal and Sheikh Al-Akbar. India: House of Classification and Authorship - Mubarak four - Azam Karah - pp. 7-8
- 16) Al-Farabi. Abu Nasr. (1969 AD). “Opinions of the People of the Virtuous City”. P. 38. As well as the first chapter of the same book and “Civil Politics” to form a clear idea of Al-Farabi’s conception of the universe. Although the two books repeat each other, they are nevertheless complementary. One of them explains some of the mysterious aspects in the other.
- 17) The heavenly intellects are ten, if we remove from them the necessary of existence (God), which is intellect and if we consider it as the beginning of the series, those minds will become eleven. This is what Al-Farabi did in his book: “Opinions of the People of the Virtuous City”.
- 18) Al-Farabi. Abu Nasr. (undated). A message in the mind. P. 12.
- 19) Al-Farabi. Abu Nasr. (1959 AD). Opinions of the people of the virtuous city. Investigated by Nasri. Peer. Nadir. (No date). Beirut: Catholic Press. P. 104.



There is an Open Access article, distributed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution – Non Commercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits remixing, adapting and building upon the work for non-commercial use, provided the original work is properly cited.