

# Tasawwuf and Sharia

## Shafiq ur-Rahman

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**All praises are due to Allah.** We praise Him, seek His help, and ask His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil in our souls and from our wrong actions. Whoever Allah guides, no one can mislead. And whomever Allah misguides, no one can guide. I testify that there is none worthy of worship except Allah. He is One, having no partner. And I testify that Muhammad is His servant and messenger. May Allah bless him and give him peace, with his family and Companions. Verily the best speech is the Book of Allah. And the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad (*sallallahu alaihi wa sallam*).

With this opening invocation, I turn my attention to Tasawwuf - a realm of the Islamic sciences that is easily misunderstood without qualified instruction. Any discussion and/or comments on Tasawwuf must be backed by the knowledge of scholars in this field. Tasawwuf is one of the several Islamic sciences (*ulum*). Like most of the other Islamic *ulum*, it was not known by name, or in its later developed form, during the time of the Prophet (*sallallahu alaihi wa sallam*). This does not make it less legitimate. There are many Islamic sciences that only took shape many years after the Prophetic age; principles of jurisprudence (*usul al-fiqh*), for example, or the hadith methodology (*ulum al-hadith*). The essence of Tasawwuf is purely Islamic. To make this point, I will, in sha Allah, limit myself to reproducing opinions of scholars and taking extracts from several authentic sources.

I begin with a description of Tasawwuf in a recently published comprehensive work on Islam, The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Modern Islamic World, edited by Professor John L. Esposito, Oxford University Press, Oxford, May 1995, 4 vols.: "in a broad sense, Sufism can be described as the interiorization and intensification of Islamic faith and practice. The original sense of sufi seems to have been 'one who wears wool.' By the eighth century the word was sometimes applied to Muslims whose ascetic inclinations led them to wear coarse and uncomfortable woolen garments. Gradually it came to designate a group who differentiated themselves from others by emphasis on certain specific teachings and practices of the Quran and the sunnah. By the ninth century the gerund form tasawwuf, literally 'being a sufi' or 'sufism,' was adopted by representatives of this group as their appropriate designation.

Understood as Islam's life-giving core, sufism is co-extensive with Islam. Wherever there have been Muslims, there have been sufis. If there was no phenomenon called 'sufism' at the time of the Prophet, neither was there anything called '*fiqh*' or '*kalam*' in the later senses of these terms. All these are names that came to be applied to various dimensions of Islam after the tradition became diversified and elaborated. In looking for a Quranic name for the phenomenon that later generations came to call sufism, some authors settled on the term *ihsan*, 'doing what is beautiful,' a divine and human quality about which the Quran says a good deal, mentioning in particular that God loves those who possess it. In the famous Hadith of Gabriel, the Prophet describes *ihsan* as the innermost dimension of Islam, after Islam ('submission' or correct activity) and iman ("faith" or correct understanding)." [vol. 4, pp. 102-104.]

The link between Ihsan and Tasawwuf is reiterated in the English translation of Sahih Muslim by Abdul Hamid Siddiqi in a footnote to the above hadith: "*Ihsan* means beneficence, performance of good deeds, but in the religious sense it implies the doing of good deeds over and above what is just and fair. It is indicative of the intense devotion of man to his Creator and Master and his enthusiasm for virtue and piety. What is implied by the term tasawwuf in Islam is nothing but Ihsan. The aim of Ihsan is to create a sense of inner piety in man and to train his sensibilities in a way that all his

thoughts and actions flow from the fountainhead of the love of God." [vol. 1, pp. 3-4.]

In his work, *The Cultural Atlas of Islam*, Macmillan Publishing Co., New York, 1986, Professor Ismail R. al Faruqi, a modern Islamic scholar and activist, devoted a chapter to sufism. The introduction to the chapter states: "Tasawwuf, or the donning of wool, is the name given to a movement that dominated the minds and hearts of Muslims for a millennium, and is still strong in many circles of the Muslim world. It nourished their souls, purified their hearts, and fulfilled their yearning for piety, for virtue and righteousness, and for closeness to God. It grew and rapidly moved to every corner of the Muslim world. It was responsible for the conversion of millions to Islam, as well as for a number of militant states and socio-political movements." [p.295.]

In his work, *The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam*, HarperCollins, New York, Cyril Glasse describes Tasawwuf as "the mysticism or esotericism of Islam." He writes: "The word is commonly thought to come from the Arabic word *suf* ('wool'): rough woolen clothing characterized the early ascetics, who preferred its symbolic simplicity to richer and more sophisticated materials. The essence of sufism is purely Islamic. Sufism is found everywhere in the Islamic world; it is the inner dimension of Islam, from which the efficacy and force of Islam as a religion flow. Historically, the sufis have been grouped into organizations called *tawa'if* (sing. *ta'ifah*), or *turuq* (sing. *tariqah*, 'path'), the latter word being used more commonly in the later period, from the time of the Qadiriyyah order. *Tariqah* is now also a technical term for esotericism itself. *Turuq* are congregations formed around a master, meeting for spiritual sessions (*majalis*), in *zawiyahs*, *khanaqahs*, or *tekkes*, as the meeting places are called in different countries. These spiritual meetings are described in the words attributed to the Prophet: "Whenever men gather together to invoke Allah, they are surrounded by Angels, the Divine Favor envelopes them, Peace (*as-sakinah*) descends upon them, and Allah remembers them in His assembly."

Sufism may take many forms, but it always contains two poles: doctrine and method. Doctrine can be summarized as intellectual discrimination between the Real and the unreal, the basis for this being found essentially in the *shahadah*: "there is no god but God" or "there is no reality but the Reality." Methods can be summarized as the concentration upon the Real by the "remembrance of God" (*dhikr Allah*), the invocation of the Divine Name (*dhikr* means "remembrance", "mention", "invocation"). Both doctrine and method must, however, be complemented by perfect surrender to God and the maintenance of an equilibrium through the spiritual regime, which is Islam. In scholastic terms this is a movement from potency to act - in effect to the realization of the Oneness of God (*tawhid*), which is the goal of sufism. The Qur'an often underlines the importance of invocation in words such as these: "Remember God standing and sitting. . ." (3:191); " . . . Those who believe and do good works, and remember God much. . ." (26:227); and "Surely the Remembrance of God is Greatest" (*wa ladhikru-Llahi akbar*) (29:45). The principle of reciprocity between God and man is expressed by God's revealed words: "Therefore remember Me; I will remember you" (*fadhkuruni adhkurum*) (2:152).

All spiritual method also necessarily involves the practice of the virtues, summarized in the concept of *ihsan*, the surpassing of self, which a Sacred Hadith defines thus: "Worship God as if you saw Him, for if you do not see him, nevertheless, He sees you." To this, the sufis add: "And if there were no you, you would see," and make the summation of mystical virtue the quality of "spiritual poverty" (*faqr*). By *faqr* they mean emptying the soul of the ego's false "reality" in order to make way for what God wills for the soul. They seek to transform the soul's natural passivity into re-collected wakefulness in the present, mysteriously active as symbolized by the transformation of Moses' hand. Humility and love of one's neighbour cut at the root of the illusion of the ego and remove those faults within the soul that are obstacles to the Divine Presence. "You will not enter paradise," the Prophet said, "until you love one another." The disciple should live in surroundings and in an ambience that are aesthetically and morally compatible with spiritual interiorization, in the sense that "The Kingdom of God is within you." The need of such supports for the spiritual life can be summed up in the Hadith: "God is beautiful and He loves beauty." [pp. 375-8]

In his [Al-Maqasid](#), Imam Nawawi, the great Shafi'i scholar, discusses sufism at great length. His conclusions may be summarized as follows: "The basic rules of the way of sufism are five:

1. **having godfearingness privately and publicly,**
2. **living according to the sunna in word and deed,**
3. **indifference to whether others accept or reject one,**
4. **satisfaction with Allah Most High in scarcity and plenty, and**
5. **turning to Allah in happiness or affliction.**

The foundations of all of these consist of five things:

1. **high aspiration,**
2. **keeping Allah's reverence,**
3. **giving the best of service,**
4. **keeping one's spiritual resolves, and**
5. **esteeming Allah's blessings.**

The principles of sufism's signs on a person are also five:

1. **seeking Sacred Knowledge in order to perform Allah's command;**
2. **keeping the company of sheikhs and fellow disciples in order to see with insight;**
3. **forgoing both dispensations from religious obligations and figurative interpretations of scripture, for the sake of cautiousness;**
4. **organizing one's time with spiritual works to maintain presence of heart; and**
5. **suspecting the self in all matters, in order to free oneself from caprice and be safe from destruction.**

One reaches Allah Most High by

1. **repenting from all things unlawful or offensive;**
2. **seeking Sacred Knowledge in the amount needed;**
3. **continuously keeping on ritual purity;**
4. **performing the prescribed prayers [*fard*] at the first of their times in a group prayer (and praying the confirmed *sunnas* [*sunna mu'akkada*] associated with them);**
5. **always performing eight *rak'as* of the nonobligatory midmorning prayer (*al-duha*), the six *rak'as* between the sunset (*maghrib*) and nightfall (*'isha*) prayers, the night vigil prayer (*tahajjud*) after having risen from sleeping, and the *witr* prayer;**
6. **fasting Mondays and Thursdays;**
7. **reciting the Qur'an with presence of heart and reflecting on its meanings;**
8. **asking much for Allah's forgiveness (*istaghfar*);**
9. **always invoking the Blessings on the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace); and**
10. **persevering in the *dhikrs* that are sunna in the morning and evening.**

These include, among others, the following verses of the Qur'an:

1. **Al-Bakarah: 285-6,**
2. **At-Tauba: 129,**
3. **ar-Rum: 17-19,**

4. **Surah Ya-Sin,**
5. **Al-Hashr: 21-24,**
6. **Sura Al-Ikhlās,**
7. **Sura al-Falaq, and**
8. **Sura al-Nas.í [pp. 85-92]**

Let me turn to another scholarly work of the Muslim world and the most recognized and authentic English translation of Quran by Abdullah Yusuf Ali: "The soul of mysticism and ecstasy is in the Quran, as well as the plain guidance for the plain man which a world in a hurry affects to consider as sufficient." Preface to first edition of *The Meaning of the Holy Quran*, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Amanat Corporation, Maryland, 1991, p. xi. "Then came philosophy and the mystic doctrine of the Sufi schools. The development of the science of kalam (built on formal logic), and its further offshoot, *the Ilm al-aqa'id* (the philosophical exposition of the grounds of our belief) introduced further elements on the intellectual side, while *ta'wil* (esoteric exposition of the hidden or inner meaning) introduced elements on the spiritual side, based on a sort of transcendental intuition of the expositor. The Sufi mystics adhered to the rules of their own Orders, which were very strict. But many of the non-Sufi writers on *ta'wil* indulged in an amount of licence in interpretation which has rightly called forth a protest on the part of the more sober Ulama." *Commentaries on the Quran, The Meaning of the Holy Quran*, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, p. xv.

The origin of sufism was also discussed by a great scholar of sufism, Ali Ibn Uthman al-Hujwiri, in his book *Kashf al-Mahjub* (English translation by Reynold A. Nicholson, Luzac and Company, London, 1976): "Some assert that the sufi is so called because he wears a woolen garment (*jama'i suf*); others that he is so called because he is in the first rank (*saff-i awwal*); others say it is because the sufis claim to belong to the *Ashab-i Suffa*, with whom may God be well-pleased! Others, again, declare that the name is derived from *safa* (purity)." [p. 30]. He then describes *Ashab al-Suffa* or *Ahl al-Suffa* (the People of the Veranda) in the following words: "Know that all Moslems are agreed that the Apostle had a number of Companions, who abode in his Mosque and engaged in devotion, renouncing the world and refusing to seek a livelihood. God reproached the Apostle on their account and said: 'Do not drive away those that call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking only to gain His Face' (Qur'an 6:52). . . . It is related by Ibn Abbas that the Apostle passed by the People of the Veranda, and saw their poverty and their self-mortification and said: Rejoice! for whoever of my community perseveres in the state in which you are, and is satisfied with his condition, he shall be one of my comrades in Paradise." [p. 81]. The *Ahl al-Suffa* included, among others, Bilal ibn al-Rabah, Salman al-Farisi, Abu Ubayda ibn al-Jarrah, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, Khabbab ibn al-Aratt, Abdullah ibn Umar, and Abdullah ibn Masud (*RadiyalLahu anhum*)" [p. 81].

No discussion of Tasawwuf would be complete without mentioning the work of Imam al-Ghazzali. In his essay on Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Professor Muntansir Mir writes: ". . . Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali, medieval Muslim theologian, jurist, and mystic. Few individuals in the intellectual history of Islam have exerted influence as powerful and varied as did Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali. When he died at the age of fifty-two, he had attempted, with an exceptionally perspicacious mind and a powerful pen, a grand synthesis of the Islamic sciences that has ever since evoked the wonder and admiration of scholars, both Muslims and non-Muslims. He gained distinction in the court of the Seljuk vizier Nizam al-Mulk, and at the age of thirty-four he was appointed professor at the Nizamiyah College at Baghdad. After teaching there for several years, al-Ghazzali suffered a crisis of confidence. Losing faith in the efficacy and purpose of the learning he has acquired and was now disseminating, he searched for the truth and certitude that alone could set his moral doubt at rest. He left his position at the Nizamiyah, withdrew from practical life, and spent eleven years in travel, meditation, and reflection. When he returned he had found the object of his search - in sufism. The details of al-Ghazzali's quest for knowledge that would give certitude are found in his autobiography, *Al-munqidh min al-dalal* (Deliverer from Error). Al-Ghazzali tells us that, of the four

groups of people who claimed to be in possession of the truth, only the sufis, who walked the right path, because they combined knowledge with action, had sincerity of purpose, and actually experienced the serenity and contentment that comes from direct illumination of the heart by God.

Al-Ghazzali's critique of the philosophers, the esotericists, and the theologians constituted the critical aspect of his work, but there is a constructive aspect to it also; in fact the two aspects are closely linked. In a sense the principal motif of all al-Ghazzali's work is spiritualization of religious thought and practice; form must be imbued with spirit, and law and ritual with ethical vision. Taking salvation in the hereafter as the final goal, and therefore the ultimate point of reference, he set out to identify and analyze the aids and impediments to that goal. This resulted in his best-known work, *Ihya ulum al-Din*, an attempt to integrate the major disciplines of Islamic religion - theology and law, ethics and mysticism. Here as in other works, al-Ghazzali seeks to demystify Islam. He maintains, for example, that in order to be a Muslim it is sufficient to hold the beliefs that have been laid down by God and his Prophet in the Quran and sunnah, and that knowledge of the complex arguments advanced by the theologians is not requisite of faith. The essence of religion is experience, not mere profession, and the sufis are the ones who are able to experience the realities that theologians only talk about. [vol. 2, pp. 61-63].

Recently one of the leading Muslim journals in US, the American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences, [a joint publication of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS) and the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT)], vol. 12, no. 4, Winter 1995, published a paper titled "Al Ghazali between Philosophy and Sufism" [authored by Professor Yasin Ceylan]. The author describes al Ghazali's experience with sufism in these words: "Al Ghazali embarked on his investigation of four different schools of thought that were influential in his time - Batinism, theology, philosophy, and Sufism - in order to find truth in them. The first three did not satisfy him, while Sufism provided him the truth for which he had been searching. There have always been notable Sufis of varied backgrounds throughout the history of Islamic thought. Whereas most of them received the traditional education, some had so much interest in logic and philosophy that they pursued these fields in depth. However, none of them penetrated into these sciences as far as al Ghazali, who acquired an intimate knowledge of both philosophy and theology. Al Ghazali himself discloses why he was frustrated by philosophy in his quest for truth and why he choose to adopt Sufism instead. His account may be summed up as follows: His disillusionment with philosophy was derived from its destructive effect on the fundamentals of religion, while his attraction to Sufism was rooted in the fact that ethical refinement and the purification of the soul were necessary conditions in this discipline." [p. 584] "Al Ghazali mentions three fundamental features related to his mystical experience: a) the purification of the soul from those evils and worldly desires that hinder moral perfection; b) those spiritual dispositions or explorations that occur after the process of purification reaches the level of maturity (described as extraordinary intellectual intuitions); and c) that these dispositions are not explicable through reason." [p. 587]

In his work, The Cultural Atlas of Islam, Professor Ismail R. al Faruqi writes, "Reaffirming his view that Tasawwuf is both knowledge and action, al-Ghazali chastised those who sought to reach the mystical experience in a hurry. He also rejected the sufi claim that in the mystical experience one reaches God through fusion into or unity with the divine Being. Such a claim he regarded as blasphemous. The true perception of God is always perception of the presence of the transcendent as a commanding being; knowledge of Him is never a knowledge of His self but of His will. Al-Ghazali therefore could not countenance the preaching of Mansur al Hallaj who went about Baghdad claiming that through the mystical experience he and God had become one. By reaffirming that Islam implies action, al-Ghazali meant to repudiate those sufis who preached monkery and withdrawal from society, any form of asceticism or mortification, or nonobligation to observe the rituals and all other laws of the shariah. Al-Ghazali thus made Tasawwuf respectable and conformant with the shariah and spirit of Islam.

Thus al-Ghazali built his system on God as starting point and foundation, unlike the philosophers who started with senses or reason. He anchored reason in iman, whence it drew its ultimate postulates; and then gave it the freedom to be as critical as it wished. Without such anchoring, reason is fallible and untrustworthy. God is knowable through His works, His order and design of nature, His ubiquitous providence - all of which reason is capable of discerning in tentative but not definitive form. Between God and the world stands the realm of *malakut* and *amr*, by which al-Ghazali meant the realm of values constituting the ought of all that is or will be, a realm that is absolute, a priori and transcendent (*malakut*), as well as normative and imperative (*amr*). Knowledge of it is *yaqin* (apodeictic certainty) and such knowledge is the ground of all other knowledge. Al-Ghazali, we may concede, taught the primacy of axiological knowledge, which relates man to God, over the knowledge of the world, which would be faulty and groundless without the first." [pp. 300-1]

Contrary to beliefs often held in the West, to set out on the path of sufism it is absolutely necessary to be a Muslim, for sufism's methods are inoperative without this religious affiliation, and may even prove destructive to the individual who lack the protective and normative devotion of the religion of Islam, which is its vehicle. Ahmad Zarruq, the fifteenth century Maliki scholar and hadith specialist, states: "So there is no sufism except through comprehension of Sacred Law or Shariah, for the outward rules of Allah Most High are not known save through it, and there is no comprehension of Sacred Law or Shariah without sufism, for works are nothing without the sincerity of approach, as expressed by the words of Imam Malik (Allah have mercy on him): 'He who practices sufism without learning Sacred Law or Shariah corrupts his faith, while he who learns Sacred Law or Shariah without practicing sufism corrupts himself. Only he who combines the two proves true.'" (*Iqaz al-himam fi sharh al-Hikam*, Ibn Ajiba, Ahmad ibn Muhammad, and Ahmad ibn Muhammad Ibn Ata Illah, Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi wa Awladuhu, Cairo, 1972, pp. 5-6).

Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi, one of the most influential and prolific of contemporary Muslim scholars, echoed the same view. In his seminal introduction to Islam, *Risalah-yi Diniyat* (later translated as *Towards Understanding Islam*, Khurshid Ahmad, The Islamic Foundation, U. K., 1980 and The Message Publications, Islamic Circles of North America [ICNA], New York, 1986), he defined Shariah as "the detailed code of conduct or the canons comprising ways and modes of worship, standards of morals and life, laws that permit and prohibit and rules that judge between right and wrong." [p. 95] He then explained how *Fiqh* and Tasawwuf complement each other in Shariah. He writes: "Fiqh deals with the apparent and the observable conduct, the *fulfilling* of a duty in practice. The field which concerns itself with the spirit of conduct is known as Tasawwuf. For example, when we perform *salat*, Fiqh will judge us only by the fulfillment of physical requirements such as cleansing, facing towards the Kabah and the timing and the number of *rakaahs*. Tasawwuf, on the other hand, will judge our prayers by our concentration, devotion, purification of our souls and the effect of our prayers on our morals and manners. Thus, the true Islamic Tasawwuf is the measure of our spirit of our obedience and sincerity, while Fiqh governs our carrying out commands to the last detail. An *Ibadah* devoid of spirit, though correct in procedure, is like a man handsome in appearance but defective in character and an *Ibadah* full of spirit but defective in execution is like a man noble in character but deformed in appearance. The above example makes clear the relation between Fiqh and Tasawwuf. Tasawwuf, in the true sense, is an intense love of Allah and Muhammad (blessings of Allah and piece be upon him) and such love requires a strict obedience to their commands as embodied in the Book of God and the Sunnah of His Prophet. Anyone who deviates from the divine commands makes a false claim of his love for Allah and His messenger." [p. 97]

This point was further emphasized by Professor Muhammad Abul Qasim in his book, *Salvation of the Soul and Islamic Devotions*, Kegan Paul International, London, 1983. He succinctly summed up the mutual relation of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and sufism. He writes: "The Quran teaches that the means to salvation in the Hereafter on the human side are belief or faith (*iman*) and action (*amal*): salvation cannot be achieved without these two means. Both of them are mentioned in most of the verses

of the Quran containing references to salvation; in a few verses, however, only faith is mentioned explicitly, but action is implicit in them. That faith and action are the requirements of salvation on the human side is also the teaching of the prophetic tradition which is but an elaboration of what is briefly taught by the Quran. The prophetic tradition presents us with details of faith and action as means to salvation. Closely following this teaching of the Quran and Tradition, Islamic jurisprudence, theology and sufism have unanimously agreed that faith and action are the only two means to salvation. In working out the details of these means, however, they differ slightly among themselves. Thus jurisprudence accepts the outward meanings of the teachings of the Quran and Tradition, without feeling the need to explore their deep, inward meanings. Sufism, in addition to outward meanings, looks for inward meanings; it also adds material learnt from experience but not inconsistent with the Quranic teachings." [p. 29]

"Sufis put a great emphasis upon the Quranic teaching that faith and action are both needed if a man is to ascend from the rank of lower animals to that of those who behold the beauty of the glorious face of God." [p. 30] "Islam is a religion which enjoins moderation or the mean state of all affairs. In Islam there is place neither for too much of hardship nor for too much of lavishness, neither for excess nor for deficiency. Moderation is considered by Islam to be the most reasonable course of action and to enable man to achieve that at which the Islamic religion aims. A man has an outward aspect and an inward aspect, and moderation is to be observed in relation to both. His outward aspect is mainly the concern of Islamic law (*fiqh*) and hence in this field one often finds the prescription of moderation and middle course. The inward aspect of a man is mainly dealt with in sufism and Islamic philosophy and hence in these two disciplines also we find that moderation or the mean is taught emphatically." [Footnote no. 14, p. 54]

In fact, true sufis perform obligatory prayers and other duties (*fard*) which the Shariah has placed on them, and observe the sunnah of the Prophet (*sallallahu alaihi wa sallam*) which he has recommended. They never think that they can any time dispense with the Shariah. Those who violate the Shariah and commit sins are rather impostors, who use sufism to justify their evil deeds. There is general agreement among sufis that the only way to know what things are legal or illegal, and what acts are right or wrong is the Quran, the Sunnah of the Prophet (*sallallahu alaihi wa sallam*), the *ijtihad* of qualified jurists (*mujtahidin*), and their consensus (*ijma*). These are also the means for knowing the degrees of obligation, whether a thing is obligatory (*fard/wajib*) or forbidden (*haram*), commendable (*mandub*), undesirable (*makruh*), or permissible (*mubah*). The inspiration (*ilham*) or the *kashf* of the sufi has no rule in this regard, neither in determining the legality or otherwise of things, nor in fixing the degree of their obligation. Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, the great seventeenth century Indian sufi and religious reformer, states the common view in the clearest terms: "It is commonly agreed that in determining the rules (*ahkam*) of the Shariah, what counts is the Quran, the Sunnah of the Prophet, the *qiyas* of a qualified jurist (*mujtahid*) and the consensus of the Ummah. No other principle apart from these four is to be taken into consideration to determine the legality of rules. Inspiration (*ilham*) does not determine whether something is right or wrong, and the *kashf* of a sufi does not establish the degree of a rule, whether it is obligatory or desirable. The saints (*awliya*) have to follow, like an ordinary Muslim, the opinions of the *mujtahids*. Their revelations (*kushuf*) and inspirations (*ilhamat*) do not elevate their status and relieve them from following the judgments of the jurists (*fuqaha*). . . . They have to follow the judgments of the jurists (*mujtahidin*) in matters of *ijtihad*." [Maktubat Iman Rabbani, vol. II, p. 1041]. In the above statement, Sirhindi uses the term *waliyat* in the sense of nearness and intimacy with Allah *Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala*.

This vital Islamic science of sufism has been consistently expounded by the greater Muslim scholars of all time. The overwhelming majority of the Muslim scholars were actively involved in sufism. In fact, almost all the great luminaries of medieval Islam: al-Suyuti, Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, al-'Ayni, Ibn Khaldun, al-Subki, Ibn Hajar al-Haytami; *tafseer* writers like al-Baydawi, al-Sawi, Abu'l-Su'ud, al-Baghawi, and Ibn Kathir, *aqidah* writers such as Taftazani, al-Nafasi, al-Razi: all wrote in support of sufism. Ibn

Khaldun, Muslim statesman, jurist, historian, and scholar of the fourteenth century, devoted a long section of in his monumental work, *al-Muqaddimah*, to discuss the science of sufism. He writes: "Sufism belongs to the sciences of religious law that originated in Islam. It is based on the assumption that the practices of its adherents had always been considered by the important early Muslims, the men around Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) and the men of the second generation, as well as those who came after them, as the path of true and right guidance. The sufi approach is based upon constant application to divine worship, complete devotion to God, aversion to false splendor of the world, abstinence from the pleasure, property, and position to which great mass aspires, and the retirement from the world into solitude for divine worship. These things were general among the men around Muhammad (*sallallahu alaihi wa sallam*) and the early Muslims. Then, worldly aspirations increased in the second (eighth) century and after. At that time, the special name of sufis (*Sufiyah* and *Mutasawwifah*) was given to those who aspired to divine worship.

The sufis came to represent asceticism, retirement from the world, and devotion to divine worship. They developed a particular kind of perception which comes about through ecstatic experience. When the sciences were written down systematically and when the jurists wrote works on jurisprudence and the principles of jurisprudence, on speculative theology, Quran interpretation, and other subjects, the sufis, too, wrote on their subject. Some sufis wrote on the laws governing asceticism and self-scrutiny, how to act and not act in imitation of model (saints). Al-Ghazzali, in *the Ihya ulum al-Din*, dealt systematically with the laws governing asceticism and the imitation of models. Then, he explained the behavior and customs of the sufis and commented on their technical vocabulary. Thus, the science of sufism became a systematically treated discipline in Islam. Before that, mysticism had merely consisted of divine worship, and its laws had existed in the breasts of men. The same had been the case with all other disciplines, Quran interpretation, the science of tradition, jurisprudence, the principles of jurisprudence, and other disciplines." Ibn Khaldun's *al-Muqaddimah*, translated from the Arabic into English by Franz Rosenthal, 3 Vols., Princeton University Press, Princeton, N. J., 1967 [vol. 3, pp. 76-81].

Even Shaykh Ibn Taymiyah and his theological successors, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the founder of Wahhabism, and Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya, could not at their time avoid being associated at one point with sufi *tariqah*. In his book, "Natural Healing with the Medicine of the Prophet," (English translation of Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya's *Tibb an-Nabbi*), Pearl Publishing House, Philadelphia, 1993, the translator, Muhammad al-Akili, writes: "Later on, he (Ibn al-Qayyim) pursued his quest for knowledge at the hands of renowned masters and scholars of his epoch, as well as he studied the works and teachings of sufi masters known in his time." [p. xi] "He (Ibn al-Qayyim) compiled a large number of studies besides his own books, including: 1. *Tahthib Sunan Abi Dawoud* (Emendation of *Sunan Abi Dawoud*); 2. *Al-Kalam al-Tayyib wa-al-'Amal al-Salih* (The Essence of Good Works and Deeds); 3. Commentaries on the book of Shaikh Abdullah al-Ansari: *Manazil-u Sa'ireen* (Stations of the Seekers), which is considered the epitome of knowledge of sufi books; and *Zad al-Ma'ad* (Provisions of the Hereafter).'" [p. xiii]

Ibn Taymiyah's views on Tasawwuf have been discussed in greater detail in the book titled "*Sufism and Shariah : A Study of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi's Effort to Reform Sufism*" by Dr. Muhammad Abdul Haq Ansari, The Islamic Foundation, U. K., 1986. Dr. Ansari quoted from three well-known works of Ibn Taymiyah, *Majmu Fatawa Shaykh al-Islam*, compiled by Abd al-Rahman b. Qasim and his son Muhammad, Riyadh, 1398 A. H, 39 vols., *Majmu'at al-Rasa'il wa el-Masa'il*, compiled by Rashid Rida, Cairo, 4 parts in 2 vols., and *Al-Furqan bayn Awliya Allah wa Awliya' al-Shaytan*, edited by M. Abd al-Wahhab Fa'ir, Beirut, Dar el-Fikr. Dr. Ansari writes "The popular image of Shaykh Ibn Taymiyah, which early Western writers on Islam in modern times have considerably helped to build up, is that he criticizes sufism indiscriminately, is totally against the sufis, and sees no place for sufism in Islam. Nothing of this, however, is correct. Ibn Taymiyah, to be sure, is a most thorough and most incisive critic of sufism; and his criticism is not limited to a few philosophical doctrines or some popular



practices, as some writers have held, but covers the entire field of sufi thought and life. But he is certainly not indiscriminate; at times, he is bitter, but on the whole sympathetic. And far from saying that sufism has no place in Islam, he moves to define the perimeters of an Islamic sufism. Ibn Taymiyah's general attitude to sufism is disclosed in this passage: 'Some people accept everything of sufism, what is right as well as what is wrong; others reject it totally, both what is wrong and what is right, as some scholars of kalam and fiqh do. The right attitude towards sufism, or any other thing, is to accept what is in agreement with the Quran and the Sunnah, and reject what does not agree'" [*Majmu Fatawa Shaykh al-Islam*, vol. 10, p. 82].

Ibn Taymiyah applies this principle of judicious criticism to sufi ideas, practices and personalities. He divides the sufis into three categories. In the first category of sufis whom he calls *mashaikh al-Islam, mashaikh al-Kitab wa al-Sunnah and a'immat al-huda*, [*Majmu'at al-Rasa'il wa al-Masa'il*, vol. 1, p. 179, and *Majmu Fatawa Shaykh al-Islam*, vol. 10, pp. 516-7 and vol. 11, p. 233] he mentions Fudayl b. Iyad, Ibrahim b. Adham, Shaqiq al-Balkhi, Abu Sulayman al-Darani, Maruf al-Karkhi, Bishr äa-Hafi, Sari al-Saqati, al-Junayd b. Muhammad, Sahl b. Abd Allah al-Tustari and Amr b. Uthman al-Makki. Later sufis whom he places in this category are: Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, Shaykh Hammad al-Dabbas, and Shaykh Abu al-Bayan. These sufis, Ibn Taymiyah says, were never intoxicated, did not lose their sense of discrimination, or said or did anything against the Quran and the Sunnah. Their lives and experiences conformed with the Shariah (*mustaqim al-ahwal*) [*Majmu Fatawa Shaykh al-Islam*, vol. 10, pp. 516-7].

The second category consists of those sufis whose experience of *fana* and intoxication (*sukr*) weakened their sense of discrimination, and made them utter words that they later realized to be erroneous when they became sober [*Majmu Fatawa Shaykh äI-Islam*, vol. 10, pp. 220-1]. Some of them also did things [*Majmu Fatawa Shaykh äI-Islam*, vol. 10, pp. 382, 557] under intoxication of which the Shariah does not approve, but sooner or later they became sober and lived well. In this category Ibn Taymiyah mentions the names of Abu Yazid al-Bostami, Abu al-Husayn al-Nuri and Abu Bakr al-Shibli. But he neither censures their experience of *fana* and *sukr*, nor condemns what they said or did in that state. Instead, he offers apology for them on the ground that they were intoxicated (*sukran*), and had lost control over reason. [*Majmu'at äI-Rasa'il wa äI-Masa'il*, vol. 1, p. 168; *Majmu Fatawa Shaykh äI-Islam*, vol. 10, pp. 382, 557].

His criticism is directed to the third category of sufis who have believed in ideas and expounded doctrines which contradict Islamic principles, or who have indulged in practices which are condemned by the Shariah. The first sufi in this group is al-Hallaj [*Majmu'at äI-Rasa'il wa äI-Masa'il*, vol. 1, pp. 81, 83; *Majmu Fatawa Shaykh äI-Islam*, vol. 11, p. 18]. . . . Next to al-Hallaj, the sufis who draw strong criticism from Ibn Taymiyah are the ones who expound the doctrine of One Being ([wahdat al-wujud](#)), such as Ibn äI-Arabi, Sadr äI-Din äI-Qunawi, Ibn Sab'in and Tilimsani. . . . Ibn äI-Arabi, who is the central figure in this context (of *wahdat äI-wujud*), Ibn Taymiyah subjects him to detailed criticism. He is, however, fair to recognize that of all the exponents of *wahdat äI-wujud* he is closer to Islam, that many of his ideas are correct, that he distinguishes between the Manifest (*al-Zahir*) and the objects of manifestation (*mazahir*), and accepts the commands and the prohibitions (of the *Shar'*) and other principles as they are. He recommends many things in *suluk* which sufi leaders have prescribed concerning good behavior and devotion. This is why a number of people draw upon his writings in their *suluk* and benefit from them, even though they do not know their real import. [*Majmu'at äI-Rasa'il wa äI-Masa'il*, vol. 1, p. 176]

Ibn Taymiyah does not oppose the *tariqah* of the sufis as such, neither their concentration on some approved ways, nor adoption of new ones, provided they do not fall into the category of unauthorized innovation (*bid'at*). He does not object, for instance, to the experience of *fana* and union; what he requires is that one should not make it the goal of sufism, or entertain mistaken ideas about it. He would not object to intensification of some approved forms of *dhikr*, or reliance on some methods for purifying the soul, with the neglect of others, provided it is within the limits of the

Shariah [*Majmu'at ël-Rasa'il wa ël-Masa'il*, vol. 4, pp. 86-87]. A sufi may, for instance, withdrew temporarily to a cloister (*khalwah*) [*Majmu'at ël-Rasa'il wa ël-Masa'il*, vol. 4, pp. 84-6, 92-3], provided he observes the *salat* in assembly and the Friday prayer, and renders his essential obligations. Ibn Taymiyah would insist that these practices should not change or alter the values of things which the Shariah normally attaches to them [*Majmu Fatawa Shaykh ël-Islam*, vol. 11, pp. 398-400]. "There is no way to God", he says, "except following the Prophet externally and internally" [*Al-Furqan bayn Awliya Allah wa Awliya' ël-Shaytan*, p. 145].

It is worthwhile to note that Al-Hallaj was executed in Baghdad in 922 for saying "Ana al-Haqq" ("I am the Truth," i.e., God), and his former teacher, al-Junayd, was among those who gave the verdict that he should die. [See Abu Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami, in *Tabakat al-Sufiyya*, Edited by Nur al-Din Shariba, Maktaba al-Khanji, Cairo, 1986, pp. 307-8, for details.]

It is proper to discuss how Tasawwuf played a significant role in shaping two Islamic movements - the Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*) and the Tablighi Jamaat. In his essay on Muslim Brotherhood in The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World,, Professor Nazih N. Ayubi wrote: 'Founded in Ismailiyah, Egypt, in 1928 by Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949), the Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*) is the parent body and the main source of inspiration for many Islamist organizations in Egypt and several other Arab countries, including Syria, Sudan, Jordan, Kuwait, Yemen, and some north African states.' [vol. 3, pp. 183-7]

In his essay on Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World, Professor Denis J. Sullivan writes: 'Hasan al-Banna was born in October 1906 in Buhayrah Province, northeast of Cairo. His father was imam and teacher at the local mosque. By his early teen years, al-Banna was committed to sufism, teaching, organizing for the cause of Islam, nationalism, and activism. As an organizer, he worked with various societies. At the age of twelve, in his hometown of Mahmudiyah, he became the leader of the Society for Moral Behavior and soon thereafter, a member of the Hasafiyah sufi order. At age thirteen, he was named secretary of the Hasafiyah Society for Charity, whose goals were to preserve Islamic morality and resist Christian missionaries. Ahmed al-Sukhari, head of the order, later helped al-Banna develop the idea of the Ikhwan. Combined with the extracurricular influences of sufism, the thought of Muhammad Rashid Rida and the Salafiyah movement, nationalism, and his father's instruction, al-Banna developed a diverse intellectual basis for his own mission.' [vol. 3, pp. 187-191]

'Al-Banna was involved with the tariqah (of sufi shaykh, Hasanayn al-Hasafi) for twenty years and maintained a respect for this strict style of sufism throughout his life. It appears to have influenced his organizational thinking in terms of the methods of instruction in his Muslim Brotherhood and the daily rituals required of its members.' [vol. 4, p. 115]

In his essay on Tablighi Jamaat in The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World, Professor Mumtaz Ahmad, writes: 'The Tablighi Jamaat of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent, also variously called the Jamaat (Party), Tahrik (Movement), Nizam (System), Tanzim (Organization), and Tahrik-i Iman (Faith Movement), is one of the most important grassroots Islamic movements in the contemporary Muslim world. From a modest beginning in 1926 with dawah (missionary) work in Mewat near Delhi under the leadership of the sufi scholar Maulana Muhammad Ilyas (1885-1944), the Jamaat today has followers all over the Muslim world and the West. Its 1993 annual international conference in Raiwind near Lahore, Pakistan, was attended by more than one million Muslims from ninety-four countries. In fact, in recent years the Raiwind annual conference has become the second largest religious congregation of the Muslim world after the Hajj.

The pietistic and developmental aspects of the Tablighi Jamaat owe their origin to the sufi teachings and practices of Shaykh Ahmed Sirhindi, Shah Wali Allah, and the founder of the Mujahidin movement, Sayyid Ahmad Shahid (1786-1831). These sufis,

who belonged to the Naqshbandiyah order, considered the observance of the Shariah integral to their practices. It is in this sense that the Tablighi Jamaat has been described, at in its initial phase, both as a reinvigorated form of Islamic orthodoxy and as a reformed sufism. Maulana Ilyas, an Islamic religious scholar in the tradition of the orthodox Deoband seminary in the United Province and a follower of the Naqshbandiyah, . . . . .

In matters of religious beliefs and practices, the Tablighi Jamaat has consistently followed the orthodox Deoband tradition and has emphasized taqlid (following the established schools of Islamic law) over ijthad (independent reasoning). It rejects such popular expressions of religions as veneration of saints, visiting shrines, and observing the syncretic rituals associated with popular sufism. The Jamaat can thus be considered an heir to the reformist-fundamentalist tradition of Shah Wali Allah, with its emphasis on reformed sufism and strict observation of the sunnah of the Prophet.' [vol. 4, pp. 165-169]

In his book, *The Faith Movement of Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1972, M. Anwarul Haq dwelt a great deal on the life, work, and thought of Maulana Muhammad Ilyas, with an exclusive focus on the sufi origin of his movement. More evidence on the link between Tasawwuf and Tablighi Jamaat can be found in *‘Faza'il-e-A'maal,'* Muhammad Zakariya, Waterval Islamic Institute, Johannesburg, South Africa, 1994. *Faza'il-e-A'maal*, a revised edition of *Tablighi Nisab* (Islamic Teachings), is a collection of treatises by a scholar of hadith (Shaikhul Hadith), patron, and close relative of the founder of the Tablighi Jamaat, Maulana Muhammad Ilyas. The book is part of the instruction readings of the Jamaat. I will present a few excerpts from this book: *‘Requisites of good salaah suggested by sufis: The sufis write: There are twelve thousand virtues in salaah, which can be achieved through twelve points. If a person is to acquire full benefit from salaah, then, he must take care of these points. Sincerity is of course essential at every step. These points are as follows: 1. knowledge, 2. Wudhu, 3. Dress, 4. Time, 5. Qiblah, 6. Intention, 7. Takbeer Tahreemah, 8. Qiyaam, 9. Qiraat, 10. Ruku, 11. Sajdah, and 12. Qadah.’* [pp. 95-97] *‘Salaah of few Sahaabah, Taabiees and sufis:’* [pp. 98-103] *‘An Important Note: According to the sufis, salaah is in fact a supplication to and speech with Allah, and therefore needs through concentration.’* [p. 103]

With all this, we observe a contradiction. Why is it, if sufism has been so respected a part of Muslim intellectual and political life throughout our history that there are, nowadays, angry voices raised against it? Apparently there are two reasons. First, there have been deviant manifestations of true devotional sufism. In his work, *The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam*, Cyril Glasse describes this issue as follows: *‘An offshoot of popular devotional sufism seeks reassurance above all in psychic phenomena, communication with spirits, or jinn, trance dancing, magic, prodigies such as eating glass, piercing the body with knives, and so forth. In psychic powers and extraordinary mental states it finds proofs of spiritual attainment. It has given rise to the European use of the word fakir (which comes from the word for an authentic sufi disciple, a dervish, or faqir, literally a ‘poor one’) to mean a market-place magician or performer, and has attained notoriety not only among Western observers, but also in Islamic societies.’* [p. 380]

‘Abd al-Karim Jili, the fourteenth century scholar of Sacred Law or Shariah, describes such an experience: *‘My brother, Allah have mercy on you, I have traveled to the remotest cities and dealt with all types of people, but never has my eye seen, nor ear heard of, nor is there any uglier or farther from presence of Allah Most High than a certain group who pretend they are accomplished sufis, claiming for themselves a lineal spiritual tradition from the perfected ones and appearing in their guise, while they do not believe in Allah, His messengers, or the Last Day, and do not comply with the responsibilities of the Sacred Law or Shariah, depicting the states of the prophets and their messages in a manner that no one with a particle of faith in his heart can accept, let alone someone who has reached the level of those to whom the unseen is disclosed and who have gnostic insight. We have seen a great number of their luminaries in cities in Azerbaijan, Shirwan, Jilan, and Khurasan, may Allah curse them*

all.' (Idah al-maqsud min wahdat al-wujud, ʿAbd al-Ghani al-Nabulsi, Matba'a al-'Alam, Damascus, 1969, pp. 17-18).

Second, there is the emergence of what is known as 'folk' sufism. Some people are baffled by the dress, terminology, or demeanor of the sufis. They imitate the sincere sufis externally without experiencing spiritual struggle or self-discipline. Rather, they pounce upon and quarrel over wealth that is unlawful, doubtful, or from rulers, rending each other's honor whenever they are at cross-purposes. In his Concise Encyclopedia of Islam, Cyril Glasse describes it and contrasts it with true devotional sufism in the following words: 'Metaphysical' sufism, as taught by the great spiritual masters, is different from 'folk' sufism. In some countries hundreds of thousands of disciples have at times been attached to a single master, more than could possibly have had a true vocation for an integral spiritual path. A kind of sufism has evolved which reflects a popular idea of spirituality. As happens in every civilization, this popular spirituality confuses piety (augmented by great zeal and a multiplication of ritual practices) with pure spiritual intuition and lustral, transcendent knowledge. Needless to say, folklore hawked as the 'wisdom of idiots' may be exactly that, but it has nothing to do with sufism of any kind, nor is it a 'self-development' divorced from its religious framework. Metaphysical, or true, sufism is a spiritual way at the heart of Islam. Its starting point is discrimination between the Real and the unreal, its method is concentration upon the Real, and its goal is the Real. In the words of a Sacred Hadith: 'My servant does not cease to approach Me with acts of devotion, until I become the foot with which he walks, the hands with which he grasps, and the eye with which he sees.' Bayazid al-Bistami said: 'For thirty years I went in search of God, and when I opened my eyes at the end of this time, I discovered that it was really He who sought me.' [p. 380]

The rightly guided sufis very strongly oppose and condemn practices such as excessive veneration of saints, calling upon saints for aid or protection, praying to saints, annual celebrations and feasts at the grave of a saint (ʿurs), and observing the syncretic rituals. It is stressed that the excessive veneration of a saint would probably lead to the worship of something other than Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala - to polytheism or associating partners with Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala (shirk) and that showy attractions during feasts are definitely contrary to shariah and should therefore be prohibited. A person who prays to a saint is probably attributing to the saint powers that should only be attributed to Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala. Professor William C. Chittick writes, 'Although the great sufi authorities set down many guidelines for keeping sufism squarely at the heart of the Islamic tradition, popular religious movements that aimed at intensifying religious experience and had little concern for Islamic norms were also associated with sufism. Whether or not the members of these movements considered themselves sufis, opponents of sufism were happy to claim that their excesses represented sufism's true nature. The sufi authorities themselves frequently criticized false sufis.' [The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World, vol. 4, p. 104]. It is noteworthy that more recently hundreds of volumes have been published in the West on sufism and most of these were written by people who have 'adopted' sufism to justify teachings of questionable origin, or who have left the safeguards of right practice and right thought - Islam and iman - and hence have no access to the ihsan that is built upon the two.

Scholars have strong warning for these pretenders to sufism. Imam Ghazali says: 'When anyone claims there is a state between him and Allah relieving him of the need to obey the Sacred Law or Shariah such that the prayer, fasting, and so forth are not obligatory for him, or that drinking wine and taking other people's money are permissible for him - as some pretenders to sufism, namely those 'above the Sacred Law or Shariah' (ibahiyyun) have claimed - there is no doubt that the imam of the Muslims or his representative is obliged to kill him. Some hold that executing such a person is better in Allah's sight than killing a hundred unbelievers in the path of Allah Most High.' (Hashiya al-Shaykh Ibrahim al-Bajuri, Dar al-Fikr, Beirut, 1925, Abu Shuja' al-Asfahani, Ahmad ibn al-Husayn, Ibrahim ibn Muhammad al-Bajuri, and Muhammad ibn Qasim al-Ghazzi, Dar al-Fikr, Beirut, 1925, vol. 2, p. 267).

ʿIzz ibn ʿAbd al-Salam, a Shafi'i scholar and mujtahid Imam, writes: 'If one sees

someone who can fly through the air, walk on water, or inform one of the unseen, but who contravenes the Sacred Law or Shariah by committing an unlawful act without an extenuating circumstance that legally excuses it, or who neglects an obligatory act without lawful reason, one may know that such a person is a devil Allah has placed there as a temptation to the ignorant. Nor is it far-fetched that such a person should be one of the means by which Allah chooses to lead men astray, for the Antichrist (al-Dajjal) will bring the dead to life and make the living die, all as a temptation and affliction to those who would be misled (al-Iman al-'Izz ibn Abd al-Salam wa atharuhu fi al-fiqh al-Islami, Ali Mustafa al-Faqir, Mudiriyya al-Ifta' li al-Quwat al-Musallaha al-Uduniyya, Amman, 1979, vol. 1, p. 137). Al-Junayd, 'the master of all the sufis' (Shaykh al-ta'ifah) was once told, 'There is a group who claim they arrive to a state in which legal responsibility (such as salaah, siyam) no longer applies to them.' 'They have arrived,' he replied, 'but to hell' (Iqaz al-himam fi sharh al-Hikam, Ibn Ajiba, Ahmad ibn Muhammad, and Ahmad ibn Muhammad Ibn Ata Allah, Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi wa Awladuhu, Cairo, 1972, p. 210).

Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi reiterates the same view : 'It is the misfortune of the Muslims that as they sank in knowledge and character with the passage of time, they also succumbed to the misguided philosophies of nations which were then dominant. They partook of these philosophies and patched Islam with their perverted ideas. They polluted the pure spirit of Islamic Tasawwuf with absurdities that could not be justified by any stretch of imagination on the basis of the Quran and the Hadith. Gradually, a group of Muslims appeared who thought and proclaimed themselves immune to and above the requirements of the Shariah. These people are totally ignorant of Islam, for Islam cannot admit of Tasawwuf that loosens itself out of the Shariah and takes liberties with it. No Sufi has the right to transgress the limits of the Shariah or treat lightly the primary obligations (Faraid) such as daily prayers, fasting, zakah and the hajj.' [Towards Understanding Islam, p. 97]

I have stated views of scholars on sufism as faithfully as I could. These opinions of scholars are a real testimony to the Islamic character of the sufism. I hope that this presentation will remove many wrong notions that people have about sufism. It will not be difficult now for anyone to see that sufism, properly conceived, has a rightful place in Islam. And Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala knows best. I ask Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala for His forgiveness. May Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala guide us all to what is correct and pleasing to Him. Aameen!

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