

Sufism a Gentle Introduction

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Introduction to some Terimonology

Sufism as a word has a lot of interpretation but people generally link the term to Islamic mysticism, Islamic ascetic Esoterism. Simply means muslims who practice mysticism or spirituality.

Tariqa - Path(ie. you're journey to attain Ultimate Truth through Spirituality.)

Or

Tariqa is the bridge between the inner and outer worlds.

Note

The ultimate goal of each tariqa is different usually to attain Wali or Haqiqa(Ultimate Truth).

Haqiqa - is subjective again depends on Tariqa but majority of them have same end goal.

Some people who follow *Ibn al-Arabi* believing in something like *Wahdatul Wujoood* or *Unity of Existence* which is completely *shirk* from Traditional *Sunni* point of view.

Murshid - Shaykh, Teacher, Spiritual Guide,

Murid - Student, Spiritual seeker, One who ready to travel his spiritual journey.

Tariqa

All true Sufi tariqas have a lineage that is traceable to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) through his son-in-law Hazreti Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) or Hz. Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him).

The idea is that how to do *zikr* (remembrance of Allah) and becoming wali of Allah or becoming united back to Allah according to Quran and Hadith and some secret practices that only known to prophet and his family members (*Ahl al-Bayt*) and his close friend and father in law *Abu Bakr*.

These methods were passed down through generations and are the foundation upon which the Sufi tariqas were later established.

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The various Sufi tariqas (Sufi orders; literally, paths) were established by their founders in response to the needs of different kinds of people. If a person is drawn to a particular school of Sufism, such as the Qadiri Tariqa or Mevlevi Tariqa, it is because that school has a flavor or character that addresses the particular needs of that individual. This can be thought of in the same light as vocational schools. If a person has a deep desire to become a chef of Chinese cuisine, he does not go to a master of French cuisine for training. Likewise, each spiritual seeker has a particular character that can be well served by a tariqa suited to his or her personality.

While everyone is welcomed as a guest, it is understood that a true shaykh will recognize the people who belong to him or her and can only accept his or her own spiritual “children” as murids (students of Sufism; lit., committed ones).

Among the true tariqas there is general agreement about the essential tenets of Sufism. There is no competition among the tariqas. No tariqa claims that they have the one true way, or that it is higher than other orders.

The Role of the Murhsid

Every true shaykh has been appointed to the task of teaching tasawwuf, known in the West as Sufism, by his own shaykh, who was previously assigned by his shaykh, and so on, in a line that stretches back to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Each of the several schools, or tariqas, of Sufism, is thus supported by its own ancestral lineage of spiritual teachers, called silsila. Every silsila is documented in writing, and each line of descent, though distinct, proceeds from the authoritative decree of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

In the act of initiation into a Sufi tariqa, the murid (Sufi student) makes spiritual connection not only with his own shaykh, but with the entire chain of shaykhs within the Sufi order to which his shaykh belongs. In taking hand with all of his shaykh’s spiritual ancestors, the murid makes a bond ultimately with the Prophet (pbuh) himself. This connecting with his silsila is what Sufis regard as “holding onto the rope” of Allah.

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