

Sufism

A short survey.

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Sufism

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Introduction

Sufism is liberal Islam, with a colouring of Vedanta. Sufism is Islamic in origin. Sufism is the religion of love with *Madhurya Bhava*, with the concepts of the lover and the Beloved.

Sufism is not considered as an integral part of orthodox Islam. Other scholars have traced an Indian origin of the movement. Indian mysticism and Christian mysticism have affected the later developments of Sufism. Indian Sufism is a blend of Persian Sufism and Hindu mysticism.

Sufistic Saints

Lal Shahbaz, Mansoor, Shams Tabriez, Sachal, Rohal, Dalpat, Shah Inayet, Shah Latif, Bulleh Shah, Hafiz, Rumi and Jami were all Sufistic mystics.

The Sufistic saints are as liberal and catholic as the Vedantic Sannyasins. They are mystic saints. They are devotional. Their utterances or sayings have a wonderful directness, freshness, spontaneous loveliness and charm.

The Sufi mystic sees the Lord in all. He experiences cosmic vision. He beholds his Beloved everywhere and in all objects. He has no sense of possession. He is free from egoism, lust, greed, anger and pride. He is perfectly passionless and enjoys perfect peace and poise. His state is beyond description. He is like the Jivanmukta, or liberated sage. He calls the heart as the palace of the Beloved. He does not care for dogmas or doctrines, creeds or sects. He has attained *Para Bhakti* or supreme devotion.

Doctrines

Asceticism is an essential feature of Sufism. The Sufi consecrates all his acts,—physical, mental and spiritual,—to the will of God. Unity of God, brotherhood of man and self-surrender to the Lord are the most vital doctrines of Sufism.

In Sufism God has form. The Sufis recognise His formless aspect too.

Tasawwuf (Sufism) combines ecstasy and service of man. A Sufi wants to remain in the world and serve humanity, but to be above worldliness.

The Sufi language of ecstasy describes the divine experience in a variety of ways such as sweetness, intoxication, perfume, sleep and death. Wine is a symbol of divine intoxication.

In Sufism, Beauty leads to Love and Love to Bliss. All duality melts. The Lover and the Beloved become one. The Sufi strives to attain Absolute Beauty, Absolute Love and Absolute Bliss.

For a Sufi, music is a means to ecstasy. Music plays a very important part in Sufi religious exercise. Sufis worship beauty.

‘Nasut’ means the finite human qualities. ‘Lahut’ means the infinite qualities of God. Survival of individuality is ‘baqa.’ ‘Fana’ means complete annihilation of the lower self or the mystical realisation of union with God. It means dying alive or the sublimation of the ego by annihilating it.

Sadhana

Concentration, meditation, obedience to a Guru (Pir), poverty, discipline, fasts, penances, Japa or recitation of the sacred word (Zikr), the use of rosary, rhythmic and controlled breathing, prayer, universal love, non-injury, detachment, introspection, dispassion, purity of heart and self-control are the means to attain God or the Beloved through divine grace.

The Sufi aspirant looks in a mirror and concentrates on the *Trikute* or the space between the two eye-brows in his own reflection in the mirror.

It is very difficult to practise the Bhava of the lover and the Beloved. This sort of Sufistic Sadhana proves dangerous in the case of unregenerate, passionate practitioners and leads to corruption. They mistake the intoxication caused by the drink of wine for Divine Intoxication and indulge themselves in drinking and sensuality. The aspirant should remain under the strict guidance of a Guru during his Sadhana period.

Words Of Wisdom

Prayer carries us half-way to Allah; fasting, takes us to the door of His palace; charity gains us admission.

He needs no other rosary whose thread of life is strung with beads of love, service, charity and renunciation.

Righteousness is not that you turn your faces towards the east or the west, but a righteous man is one who believes in God, the last day, the angels, the Book and the prophets, who does charity to the poor, who is steadfast in prayer.

Happy are the believers, who humble themselves in prayer and who keep aloof from vain words, who do charitable acts, and who restrain their appetites.

Your God is one God, there is no God but He, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

Do good, because God loveth those who do good.

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