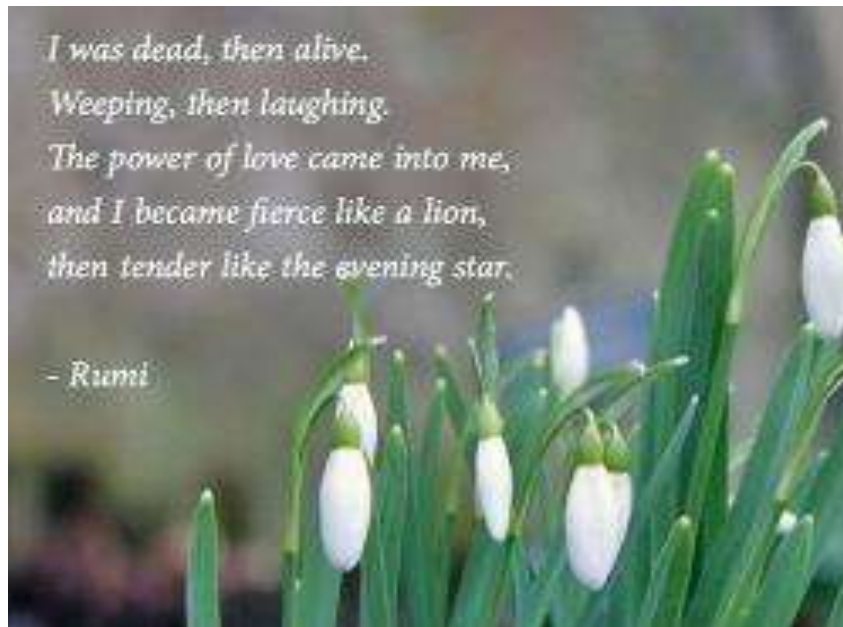




Sufism and Mysticism

Publishing Date: 23.09.2023

Sufism is a spiritual and deep way of life lived within the framework of the exoteric and inward provisions of Islam. The characteristics of Sufism are determined by the Quran and the Sunnah and are related to purity of heart, self-discipline and good morals.

In the West, Sufism is perceived as "theosophy", meaning the movement that teaches the secrets and laws of the universe and life, and the ways to manage

them, or as "mysticism", which indicates the inner spiritual aspect of any religion, and is expressed as "Islamic mysticism". However, over time, it was understood that there were significant differences between Sufism and mysticism, and as a result, Islamic Sufism began to be expressed with the word "Sufism".

Mysticism has been defined as man's spiritual experience of reaching the truth, infinity and unity behind visible objects, and as a doctrine that expresses this experience. According to this definition, Sufism can be seen as close to mysticism. Although Indian mysticism, Neo-Platonic mysticism, or Jewish and Christian mysticism seem to include many aspects of Sufism at first glance, when examined carefully, it is easily understood that there are obvious differences in the basis and systematics of Sufism. For this reason, the concepts of Sufism and mysticism are used differently in Western literature.

Since Islam is a heavenly religion, similarities have sometimes been tried to be drawn between Christian mysticism and Sufism. Comments such as "Sufism is Islamic philosophy" and "It is the mystical experience of Islam" were made. However, priesthood is the most important point where Christian mysticism and Sufism differ. Being a priest requires breaking away from life and people in order to reach God. On the other hand, in Sufism, mixing with the public is especially envisaged. If necessary, it is recommended to be patient with the tortures that will come from them and discipline your soul in this way. The periods of seclusion and isolation in Sufism cover a temporary period that does not extend to the whole of life.

The concept of "fena" (giving up one's self and all worldly affairs) in Sufism has been misinterpreted and compared to Nirvana in Indian mysticism. Melting and disappearing into Nirvana is the goal of Indian mysticism. Fena in Sufism has a different meaning. By becoming the level of fena, the Sufi does not reach his main goal, on the contrary, he approaches his greatest duty. Because after the level of fena, he completes his path and passes to the level of beka (to be eternal). At the end of this, he mixes with the people and begins his duty of guidance.

In the understanding of Sufism, there is love and fear of Allah. According to Islam, there is mutual love between servants and Allah. God loves His servants just as the servants love God. In order for Allah Almighty to love His servants, the servant must obey the Prophet (pbuh).

"And among the people are those who regard things other than Allah as equals to Him, and they love them as if they loved Allah. However, those who believe have stronger love for Allah. "If only those who did wrong would realize, when they see the torment, that all power belongs to Allah and that Allah's punishment is truly severe." (Baqara, 2/165)

"Say, if you truly love Allah, follow me and Allah will love you and forgive your sins. Because Allah is very merciful and forgiving." (Ali Imran, 3/31)

"O you who believe! Whoever of you turns back from his religion, let him know that Allah will soon bring a people who will love Allah and Allah will love them. They are gentle towards believers, and honorable and severe towards unbelievers. They strive in the way of Allah and do not fear the condemnation of any critic. This is a blessing from Allah. He gives it to whomever He wishes. Allah is the possessor of great benevolence and knows everything very well." (The Table, 5/54)

Anyone who tries to study Sufism will find himself in front of a variety of works representing different movements and approaches. Most of these studies cause the subject to become even more closed and incomprehensible, rather than making it easier to understand and understand. We can collect these approaches in two main parts:

- Approaches of non-Muslim researchers,
- Approaches of Muslim researchers.

There are many approaches among non-Muslim researchers and they can be expressed as follows:

- The approaches of Western scientists who are experts in Islamic studies and orientalists,
- Approaches of Western scholars of comparative religions.

There are some shortcomings in these studies of Westerners that they cannot see due to the difference in vision-culture and method-thought systems. These deficiencies are things that harm our Islamic heritage. For this reason, Muslims should handle these studies with a scientific and constructive criticism method. This has actually been done by some scientists and researchers. However, western writings had a great influence on Muslims and continue to do so today. The work done by Westerners is characterized by the spirit of elevation arising

from their belief in the superiority of the Westerners or the white man. This situation affected Muslims negatively. Orientalists worked to find foreign sources for all the beauty in Islamic thought and civilization and have made serious efforts to deny the originality of the Islamic mind in the writing of Islamic history as philosophy, culture and civilization.

Their studies in the field of Sufism were based on the assumption that there was no love between God and His servant. For this reason, they were trying to find sources in Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and other various religious philosophies, apart from the Quran, the Sunnah and the lives of the righteous predecessors, which form the basis of this love. Research and studies in the Islamic world have, for the most part, still not been free from the negative effects of these orientalist studies.

The source of some of these distortions is their ignorance of Arabic and Islamic culture knowledge and thus their blind imitation of previous studies. In addition, the most important element of the western methodological thinking system on which a western scientist relies is their adoption of an evolutionary perspective in the research of the sciences and philosophies of Islamic history and civilization. Instead of trying to sincerely examine the Islamic heritage from the inside, they tried to apply it to Islamic phenomena by accepting the western example as a scientific example. This prevents the researcher from carefully understanding the phenomenon he wants to understand and leads to unfair conclusions.

Muslim researchers are also different and we can classify them approximately as follows:

- Sufi scholars or researchers who have adhered to the path of Sufism,
- Researchers who have no previous attitude towards Sufism,
- Those who have hostile attitudes towards Sufism and see it as a latecomer to Islam and the Islamic society.
- Muslim western researchers.

The writings of Sufi researchers are considered as expressions of their experiences and the field in which they are experts. Therefore, these writings are basically the true representatives of Sufism. They are writing about something whose concepts and terms they clearly understand. The feature of this class is that they read Sufism from within and do not reflect western concepts into

Sufism. They rely on primary sources and take them as a basis and benefit from their experiences or the experiences of those who are Sufi. These researchers generally ignore comparing Sufism with its counterparts in other cultures, and do not care about looking at foreign sources that they do not believe in.

One of the things that creates ambiguity in the study of Sufism and its comparison with its counterparts in other religions is the acceptance of Sufism as the same thing as mysticism, which means darkness or mystery, or closed and secret, without taking into account the great and subtle differences between them. As it is known in the history of Islam, Sufism is, firstly, a sincere turn to Allah based on the Quran, the Sunnah and the lives of the righteous Salafis, and secondly, the experiential and moral dimension of the Islamic Sharia, in other words, the Sunnites, who are interested in the deeds of the heart as opposed to the outward deeds that the science of fiqh is interested in. It is one of the sciences. Although mysticism is basically related to Greek paganism, it does not necessarily adhere to a specific religious framework.

It is wrong for any researcher to study mysticism based on what he knows about Sufism, or to study Sufism based on what he knows about mysticism. However, especially in our age, we see that researchers use these two terms, Sufism and mysticism, interchangeably, without making any distinction between them. Therefore, knowing the differences between these two terms is an essential starting point for every scientific study on Sufism.

Prof. Dr. Din Muhammed writes in his book "Sufism and Mysticism":

"Sufism emerged as a term expressing scientific interest in the spiritual and moral dimensions of Islamic life in the second century or perhaps the first century of the Hijri. Then, explaining the dimensions of the term Sufism in question that regulates the steps of this practical life, analyzing the depths of the soul, the methods of struggling with it and purifying it, the spiritual ascension of man, the ways of getting closer to God and the different indicators and manifestations of this rapprochement, the doctrinal foundations of the hanif (believe in one God) religion and It began to be institutionalized and standardized in order to be a sign of the science that speaks within the framework of the principles represented in the constants of religion. As the history of Islamic civilization witnesses, the science of Sufism has become one of the most important Islamic sciences, along with the sciences of creed and fiqh.

Islamic customs developed and those who were interested in the science of belief were called mutakallim/ilm-i kalamci, those who were interested in the science of fiqh in the narrow sense were called fakih, and those who were interested in the science of the states of the heart were called sufiyye.

The influence of the materialistic view on many people in the Islamic world, especially the cultured, elite class. This materialist view sees caring for the soul and spirit as futile, talking about God and the afterlife as a dream in waking life, a religious view of life and religious living as reactionary, virtue and nonsense.

The predominance of this view in an environment filled with the logic of modernity and extreme materialism has made those affected by this view ashamed of being described as dull, backward and far from scientific logic, even if they are interested in things related to the unseen, spirituality or anything that has any connection with religion. Therefore, they started to move away from them. In fact, these issues have become foreign to the table of thought, unfamiliar in some societies, and strange in the minds of many people. They concentrated on political, economic, scientific and technical aspects, which are among the issues that interest modern people, rather than studying Islam.

For this reason, some universities and scientific institutions in the Islamic world have turned away from teaching the science of Sufism. Some academic circles, on the other hand, have made efforts to move in the same direction in the shadow of social events that tend towards moral collapse and spiritual barrenness. These are the best evidence of the impact of the materialist view on contemporary Islamic thought and the reality of Muslims.

Therefore, an ordinary Muslim who has no direct connection with authentic Sufism and true Sufis is left with nothing but incorrect or even distorted information about Sufism in terms of history, concept and truth. Although scientific writings and researches have tried to approach the people of Sufism and Sufism fairly, to reveal its truth, and to codify its history with many rich and magnificent productions in successive centuries, the activities and attacks of the enemies of Sufism have prevented these writings and scientific studies from reaching their goal. However, this does not make it palatable for students and researchers to imitate those who do not follow the correct scientific research methods and the enemies of Sufism and to be dragged behind these distorted forms. Both Muslim and non-Muslim Sufi researchers - not the Sufi scholars -

have not correctly understood what the Sufis wrote due to the differences in the reasons that pushed them to this research and the prejudices or the difficulty of the Sufi language. These represent obstacles to knowing the truth and methods of Sufism in the midst of the abundance of Eastern or Western research and views.

What is Sufism?

We can say that Sufism is Islam itself in terms of truth and practice, and that the science of Sufism is together with the science of tawhid and fiqh on the path to Islam. In Kuşeyri Treatise, the definitions of Sufism of some of the famous Sufis are given.

Beyazid-i Bestami describes Sufism as follows: Sufism means abandoning the people and remaining unconscious at the door of God. Don't you see this word of Allah? *"Then run to Allah. "Surely, I am a clear warner sent to you from Him."* (Al-Dharyat, 51/50) Then, Allah gave the following news from the mouth of the Prophet (pbuh): *"Say: I am not an upstart prophet. I don't know what will be done to me or you. I only follow what is revealed to me. I am only a clear warner."* (Ahqaf: 46/9)

Shibli: Sufism is sitting with God, carefree and without anything else on the mind.

Tusteri: Sufism is the submission of the outward to the Sharia while the inward agrees to observe God.

Muhammed Ghazali also says: But there is a Sufism that grows on the wings of faith, Islam and goodness and develops with good food from knowledge and deeds. This Sufism had the power to paint human emotions with sincere servitude, to dedicate them to the things that please Allah, and to feel His presence and witness deeply. Even though people deny their situation, their inner consciousness made the people of Sufism happy. One of them even said: Being imprisoned is seclusion, being exiled is a journey, and being killed is martyrdom.

Since the apparent provisions of Almighty Allah are known only through fiqh, there is no Sufism without it. There is no fiqh without Sufism, as there is no action without true direction. Since both of these cannot be true without faith, they can only be true with faith. Faith, fiqh and Sufism must all coexist because of their

inseparability in judgment (See [Three Beauty: Faith, Knowledge, Sufism](#)). This is like the inseparability of souls and bodies. As a matter of fact, just as the soul has no existence anywhere other than the body, the body cannot be perfect without the soul.

Imam Malik (ra) says: A person who does not learn fiqh but is a Sufi becomes a heretic, and a person who is a faqih (expert in the canon law of Islam) but not a Sufi becomes a sinner. The one that brings these two together has reached its realization.

What is Mysticism?

Although the word mysticism is used to express certain religious experiences and appearances seen in some religions and resembling mystical states and situations, its essential meaning is largely different from the sufism we have talked about so far. It can be said that the reason for this similarity is that spiritual or religious experience is a common experience in human life.

Margaret Smith, who wrote a truly valuable work on the early history of mysticism in the Near and Middle East and presents the situation of this phenomenon in the Christian world until the sixth century, in her book "Studies in Early Mysticism in the Near and Middle East (London, The Shaldon Press, 1931) In its first lines it says: "The term mysticism is historically linked to Greek occult rituals. A mystic is a person who has been given secret knowledge of divine secrets and is obliged not to reveal them." Accordingly, it is as if mysticism is nothing but gnosticism. Margaret Smith confirms the same view by making an important addition in another research titled "The Nature and Meaning of Mysticism" (The Nature and Meaning of Mysticism, New York, Image Book, 1980): "The term mysticism comes to us from Greek and derives from a root which means to hide and cover." Mystics, on the other hand, are people who enter the field of sacred, inner knowledge related to divine secrets and are obliged to remain silent in the face of these. So, we can give the name "Mystical" to any secret ritual in which only special students and those who enter that path can participate."

In the late periods, when the term mysticism, which comes from this Greek root, began to be used in religious circles such as Judaism and Christianity, it did not

retain its original meaning, which was clear in terms of signification, but was added to it and became a closed term, the meaning of which researchers disagreed about.

In short, we see that the term mysticism has developed to refer to a religious spiritual experience that is different from general religious life. This closeness is an Alexandrian legacy that Christianity inherited from the experience and writings of the Jewish philosopher Philo (20 BC, 40 AD). It is indeed difficult to draw a sharp distinction between the manifestations of the Greek arcane groups and gnosticism and mysticism in the legacy of Philo, a sincere Platonist. His legacy is filled with special gnosis (knowledge) about God, spiritual ecstasy, praise of symbolism and esoteric interpretations of sacred texts. His belief in Plato is equal to his belief in the Jewish holy books with their esoteric interpretations, that is, Jewish Gnosticism.

No matter what, the concept of mysticism in Christianity has continued to preserve its linguistic meaning and to describe things that are secretive, mysterious, closed, or above or in conflict with rational perception. By the sixth century, this concept, as many researchers thought, became the flag of man's effort to understand the divine secret and lift the curtain on its truths.

The entire goal of the Christian mystic is limited to the effort to live with and reach the knowledge of the secret of the holy trinity in a state of deep contemplation, isolation and spiritual immersion.

Anyone who knows the history of Christianity will notice that these emerging spiritual movements are completely new phenomena in Christian society. This society was not familiar with such a religious experience before the 12th century. The impression of the Spanish Mother Teresa and St. John of the Cross, and before them the French Richard Saint Victor and the German Meister Eckhart, is reflected in the influence of Muslim Sufis and especially Cüneyd-i Baghdadi, Zünnûn-u Mîsrî, Beyazid-i Bestami and Ibn Arabî. A quick look at the legacy of Islam will show the volume, extent and depth of Islamic influence. Indeed, there is not the slightest doubt that Spanish mysticism was an influence of the obvious influences of Islamic mysticism on Christian mysticism. One sign of this is that this genre is essentially different from all other types of mysticism in the past. It is not possible to attribute this to a coincidence. Spanish orientalist Asin Palacios also holds this view. This influence is understood by everybody.

Western researchers examined Sufism according to the mystical example and understood it in the light of what is known about mysticism. Many modern Muslim scholars followed them without discussing their assumptions and methods. Jews, Christians, Buddhists and Hindus also followed them. For example, Hindu researcher Arvinda Sharma noticed that the word mysticism has no relevance to Hindu scientific classifications. But this does not mean - as he says - that there is no possibility of using it to express the Hindu content. He clearly stated that in his research he used the term as defined in Webster's dictionary. Webster explains this concept as follows: The belief that it is possible to obtain direct knowledge of God or the ultimate spiritual truth through direct intuition and insight, which is different from the usual mental and emotional perception. This definition in Webster makes the term mysticism completely synonymous with gnosticism, which is in no way compatible with the meaning implied by the term Sufism.

Prof. Dr. Din Muhammed says the following on this subject in his book "Sufism and Mysticism":

"According to what we have said Mysticism has three meanings: the original meaning, the meaning that developed in the hands of the Christian church fathers, and finally the modern and contemporary uses.

The original meaning is:

- Secret knowledge specific to the Greek gods,
- Secrets of rituals in Greek paganism.

Its second meaning, developed in the hands of the church fathers, is the spiritual experience of knowing the secrets of the holy trinity. Or, to be more precise, "A closed and rare conscious state associated with clerics and priests.

The third meaning is:

- Hypnotism,
- Spirit summoning,
- Closed psychological states,
- Dreams,
- Irrational closed thinking,

- An unclear view of the world,
- Foretelling the future,
- Magic.”

From what has been said so far, we can understand that the term mysticism is in no way a synonym for the term Sufism. It is wrong to translate it as Sufism. If Christians – and Jews, Hindus and Buddhists followed suit – used the word to describe their spiritual experiences, that is something to do with them. Islamic spiritual life does not accept such a naming. Because it is registered with the Quran and the Sunnah and is connected with them in terms of beginning and conclusion. It can only happen within the framework of those two. Therefore, Sufism is Sufism, mysticism is mysticism.

Differences Between Sufism and Mysticism

Using the book of Prof. Dr. Din Muhammed and the article of Prof. Dr. Mustafa Tahralı, published in Kubbealtı Academic Magazine in 1981, we can summarize the differences between Sufism and mysticism with the following items.

1) The existence of Sufism can only be imagined within the framework of Islam and its clear, specific beliefs and religious/legal rules. Sufism is nothing more than the practical application of Islamic teachings and the realization of the station of ihsan. Mysticism does not have to be religious. Likewise, it is not tied to a specific belief or legal framework. Therefore, mysticism itself resembles an independent religion. If mysticism remained a spiritual dimension of religion, it would be possible to mention some points where it meets Sufism. However, in reality there is no such thing. Some modern studies on religions tend to accept mysticism as the "highest form" of religious life, independent of the authority of religion. Istikra (investigating and following the mystical phenomenon one by one through deduction) shows that each mystic acts in line with his/her own unique ideas, without bowing to the rules of a particular religion and the commandments of the sharia.

2) While Sufism confirms the standard of Islam in everything attributed to it, mysticism has no existence anywhere other than the mystic himself. Therefore, if the mystic rejects something, it is undesirable, if he accepts it, it is acceptable (desired).

Although some Jewish and Christian mystics are diligent in emphasizing their affiliation with Christianity and Judaism and express their experiences in terms of their religion, they are like mystics in other religions or other experiences that are not based on a specific religious framework. They use the terms in question with a personal and private use and with contents that are not necessarily derived from their religion or are not necessarily compatible with their tenets.

3) The goal of Sufism is to get closer to Allah and to surrender completely to Him by training and purifying the soul so that it submits to the Lord of the worlds. This submission is measured by the criterion of Sharia Muhammadiyah. The goal of mysticism is either "gnosticism" (secret, special knowledge about God) or union with God, the absolute, "universal soul" with the difference of names and purposes.

4) Sufis, like mystics, talk about unity and use this term in some of their writings. But this unity is not the same unity that the mystic aims for. When he says mystical unity, he means a true unity (with God) either through penetration, going upstairs, or liberation from material prison. Hindus liken this union to the merging of the wave with the sea. Sufis, on the other hand, use this word in a figurative sense, referring to the state of appearing and fena. It is the ecstasy of the Sufi as a result of divine blessings.

5) Sufism is based on divine revelation as the main source and comprehensive criterion and thinks that the divine word has an external and an internal side that do not conflict or contradict each other. Sufis do not believe in an esoteric that is against the apparent, and they do not limit themselves to an apparent that is against the esoteric. On the contrary, they believe that it is necessary to combine them and that each complements the other.

Mystics, on the other hand, exceed the limits in the inner and neglect the outward, and on the contrary, they fight with it. Therefore, it is possible for us to accept mystic as "esoteric" in its full terminological sense and to translate the word mysticism as Batinism (esoterism). In the end, Gnosticism is nothing more than an obvious and exaggerated Batinism.

6) According the origins of Islam, Sufism is built on belief in Allah and the Last Day and on morality, in accordance with the traditions of the Quran and the Sunnah. As for science, it sees itself only as the jurisprudence of the hearts. Therefore, within the Sufi framework, a dissolution in moral teachings or

independence from the rules of halal-haram, acceptable-not wanted, and praise-blame in religion cannot be imagined.

Although mysticism - even in its developed sense - embraces moral commitment in reality, it does not deal with this issue at the theoretical level. However, the system of seeing good and bad is so lost that we can say that mysticism is a religion independent of all religions or a movement that does not care about the theological and legal principles that everyone who follows the relevant religion adheres to. Here Sufism differs completely from mysticism. Sufism exists only within the framework of sharia, and as soon as it leaves this framework, it turns into atheism. In this context, what is reported from the great Sufis such as Bestami and Cüneyd is known to everyone.

7) There are two things that characterize mysticism: Passivity and lack of method. In mysticism, one can never know where one will start and where one will go. There is nothing ambiguous or blurry in Sufism. On the contrary, there are many certain things. Mysticism is passive, Sufism is active. In mysticism, the individual has only to accept what comes to him. The individual has no involvement in this matter. For this reason, the individual is open to all kinds of influences here. This is where the real danger for the person lies. In mysticism, a person does not have the "doctrinal" preparation necessary to make any distinction between these influences.

8) In Sufism, it is not possible for a person to commit to Sufism on his own. Sufism can only be achieved through a sheikh. The Sheikh conveys the spiritual influence to the disciple during initiation. Thus, a spiritual enlightenment occurs in the disciple. Thanks to this spiritual influence, the disciple has the nucleus of the progress he will achieve in the future. He develops this seed with his future work. Adherence to the sect is the first condition for affiliation to Sufism. In fact, committing to Sufism means committing to a sect.

As for mysticism: There is neither a sheikh nor a regular order to be affiliated with. For this reason, it is very difficult to distinguish real mysticism from fake. The mystic is an isolated, exceptional and unconventional type. Even he doesn't know what happened. In any case, there is something about the mystic and mysticism that is beyond any control. Therefore, there is no means of recognition to recognize a mystic. Moreover, a mystic does not have a genealogy, that is, a

lineage. For this reason, it is difficult to determine who is truly a mystic and who is a fake.

9) Although there is no "sequence" in mysticism, there is an uninterrupted sequence in all Sufism and it is necessary. Great importance is attributed to this in Sufism. The origin of this system is superhuman. While mentioning the series of sects in Islamic Sufism, Gabriel (a.s.) and then Hz. Prophet (pbuh), they indicate this non-human aspect of their lineage. In this respect, we can say that the essence and basis of Sufism is non-human. Some ezkars (chants), evrads (well known prayers and portions of the Koran) , etc. specific to the sects. The principles are also non-human, that is, they are not determined and made up according to the whims and desires of individuals.

10) There is a doctrine and oral teaching in Sufism and it is given to the disciple through the sheikh. The Sheikh is the master and the guide and controls the spiritual development of the disciple. But the disciple does the work. In the end, the disciple achieves through his work. This study has been adjusted according to the abilities of each disciple. In order for the dhikr and teachings that are current in the sects to show their effect, they must be inculcated by the sheikh into the disciple. A dhikr that is not given by the Sheikh or made without permission has no effect on the disciple.

In mysticism, there is no teaching given by the master. In fact, if there is no guide, there is neither teaching nor disciples subject to this teaching. It is also obvious that where there is no teaching, there will be no edifying and edifying doctrine.

11) Adherence to Sufism shows three successive stages:

A – It is the individual's ability to have some qualities that include some inherent opportunities, which we can call talent. This is almost like the first item on which subsequent spiritual studies will take place.

B - Giving spiritual influence and blessing to a person by joining a sect. In this phase, which we call becoming a potential state, the disciple is given a light to develop the possibilities he has within himself and to put them in order.

C - Inner, spiritual work done with the help of some external support and helpers (sheikh, dhikr, asceticism, etc.), which we call putting into action. Thus, the devotee gradually rises from one level to another until he reaches the ultimate goal, unity, salvation, that is, until he realizes the Unity of Existence.

There is no such gradation in mysticism. To become a mystic, it is enough to have a special talent. However, this talent is completely different from the Sufi talent, and even contrary to it in some aspects. To become a mystic, nothing other than this ability is needed.

12) In Sufism, each sect has a special technique, that is, etiquette and procedure. Naturally, anyone who wants to join a sect must be of a nature that can comply with these procedures and etiquette and obtain actual and real benefit from these rules. Sects only accept such people. Those with different creation, temperament or qualities are accepted by another order that suits their character. For example, in Sufism, there are sects that accept only men, and there are also sects that accept both men and women. Sufi sects have almost disappeared in the West since the late Middle Ages and have lost much of their spiritual level. In fact, their Sufi character has become unknown even to their own members. Mysticism has never had anything to do with these Sufi organizations in the West and does not have anything to do with it today. Although technical rules exist in every Sufi organization, they do not exist in mysticism.

13) The presence of a certain admonition and ritual determined in Sufi orders is one of the main differences that distinguishes it from mysticism. There is no fixed ritual in mysticism. This situation can be immediately understood from the character of mysticism, which we call exceptionalism and unconventionality.

Although there are some rites in mysticism, these are general things that are external to the religion and can be performed by everyone. Moreover, in mysticism, the connection to these worships and prayers (rites) is not absolutely essential. In Sufism, there is no sect without certain admonishments, rules and procedures.

14) Some mystics can only rise to the level of 'ilm al-yaqin (accurate information), as it is called in Islamic Sufism, through the prayers they make. However, the people of Sufism pass the degree of ayne'l-yaqin (as if seen) and reach Hakka'l-yaqin (science of which there is no doubt) through the dhikr and struggle they perform. Thus, the opportunity to become a Perfect Human Being is achieved.

In mysticism, there is neither the possibility nor the goal of becoming a "perfect human being". Mystics, like all the people of the external world, always aim for salvation (salut), that is, to enter Heaven. However, for the people of Sufism, the

last and highest goal is Liberation. In other words, an ultimate goal of abandoning this world and the afterlife with everything within, wishing only for Allah, getting rid of all kinds of existence and duality, achieving Unity with God. What mystics call meeting God has nothing to do with this.

15) Every Sufi study and investigation is inherently deep and internal. Mystical states, on the contrary, are about ecstasy, that is, coming out of oneself. For example, a person can establish contact with angels without getting rid of his human attributes, but this cannot be considered a progress in terms of Sufism. However, there can be progress only if the devotee can attain the rank of angel for himself. Sufi states and levels are not something unknown that comes from beyond the clouds without knowing why and how, like mystical states. On the contrary, Sufi states and authorities are based on positive scientific laws and sound technical principles.

16) By adopting Sufism, a person acquires a state and blessing that he will always maintain. No one can undo this situation later. Mystical states occur temporarily, even very suddenly and furtively. This state leaves no trace on the mystic. The mystic comes out of the same state he entered and may never find that state again. This situation can be explained by the external character of mystical states. In Sufism, there is a depth in the states of the devotee, that is, it is related to the depths of the person's soul.

17) There is a hierarchy in every subject in Sufism. Each devotee occupies a place according to the spiritual knowledge and degree he has. This gradation can be explained with the example of a pyramid. These grades gradually become narrower from the base to the top. There is no hierarchy in mysticism. We can give the following examples from Sufism: Forties, Sevens, Threes and the Pole; disciple, devotee; disciple, caliph, sheikh; like common, emotions.

18) Suffering has become a kind of habit among mystics, and this seems to be actually important in mysticism. Suffering does not have a special or privileged place in Sufism. Only in some special cases can it serve as an opportunity or a starting point for the development of hidden possibilities in humans. It is also possible that this starting point or occasion is something completely different from a Sufi perspective. The initial motivations of various Sufis appeared to be different from each other. Although the reasons that push a person to Sufism are different, they are completely accepted as a mercy of Almighty Allah.

Conclusion

Although there may be similarities in some manifestations of Sufism - the attempt to approach the higher angels and the expression of man's gaze on wide spiritual horizons are among the most important - it is obvious that it is something other than mysticism. For this reason, it is not acceptable to translate mysticism, whether religious or non-religious, into Arabic as Sufism and to call Sufism mysticism.

The term Sufism refers only to Islamic spiritual life. For similar ones in other religions, if there is no special term for this in the religion to be examined, the terms "religious experience", "spiritual experience" or "teemmül" (thinking thoroughly) should be used, depending on the nature of the experience.

A correct scientific method is to examine each religious phenomenon in its own terms, in terms of being religious phenomena, and within the framework of the religion that reveals it. Therefore, Sufism should be read and examined as a Sufism that complies with the known limitations within the framework of Islam. The term Sufism has been stable as a science and a title of life and experience for more than 13 centuries. Therefore, no scientific justification can make it necessary to turn away from this term and turn to another term that will confuse the mind, create confusion and distract the researcher from the subject.

As for the term mysticism, it should be left to those who are willing to express their religious experience with it, such as Christians, Jews and Hindus. However, we should also know that mysticism is not Sufism in the sense we know Sufism.

For your comments and criticisms: oryanmh@gmail.com

[Home Page](#) [Articles](#)