

Sufi Concepts

By rigid introspection and mental struggle the mystic tried to purify his baser self from even the smallest signs of selfishness, thus attaining *ikhlas*, absolute purity of intention and act.

Tawakkul (trust in God) was sometimes practised to such an extent that every thought of tomorrow was considered irreligious.

Sufi Concepts

- ☞ “Little sleep, little talk, little food” were fundamental; fasting became one of the most important preparations for the spiritual life.
- ☞ The central concern of Sufis was *tawhid* the witness that “There is no deity but God” or the ability to see God and creation as two aspects of one reality.
- ☞ *Dhawq*, direct “tasting” of experience

Muhammad

☞ “If thou hadst not been I had not created the worlds. ”

☞ Muhammad was said to be “Prophet when Adam was still between water and clay.”

☞ Muhammad is also described as light from light, and from his light all the Prophets are created.

☞ “I am Ahmad (=Muhammad) without ‘m’ (i.e., Ahad, One)”

A mystic

- ☰ A mystic may also be known as *wali* “one in close relation; friend.”
- ☰ There is a hierarchy of saints headed by the *qutb* (‘axis, pole’), title claimed by many Sufi leaders.
- ☰ The miracles of mystics are called *karamat* (‘graces’), not *mu‘jizat* (‘that which men are unable to imitate’), like the miracles of the Prophets.

A mystic

- 📄 A saint is one ‘whose prayers are heard’ and who has *tasarruf*, the power of materialising in this world possibilities that still rest in the spiritual world.
- 📄 The path (*tariqa*) begins with repentance.
- 📄 A mystical guide (*shaykh, pir*) accepts the seeker as disciple (*murid*).
- 📄 Disciple should be in the hands of master “like a corpse in the hand of the washer.”

Spiritual stations

- ☰ The mystic dwells in a number of spiritual stations (*maqam*).
- ☰ “Poverty in my pride.”
- ☰ Patience and gratitude belong to higher stations of the path.
- ☰ On his way to illumination the mystic will undergo such changing spiritual states (*hal*) as *qabd* and *bast*, constraint and happy spiritual expansion, fear and hope.

Union with God

- ☞ The way culminates in *ma'rifa* ('interior knowledge, gnosis') or in *mahabbah* ('love') which implies a union of lover and beloved.
- ☞ The final goal is *fana'* ('annihilation') according to "Take over the qualities of God."
- ☞ The *baqa'* ('duration, life in God')

The Mystical journey

☞ The mystic has reached *haqiqa* ('reality'), after finishing the *tariqa* ('path'), which is built upon the *shari'a* ('law').

☞ *Fana' fi al-shaykh* ('annihilation in the master')

☞ *Fana' fi al-Rasul* ('annihilation in the Prophet')

☞ *Fana' fi-Allah* ('annihilation in God')

☞ *Dhikr* ('remembrance')

Symbolism in Sufism

- ☞ The symbolism of wine, cup, and cupbearer, first expressed by Abu Yazid al-Bistami in the 9th century.
- ☞ “I saw my Lord in the shape of a youth with a cap awry.”
- ☞ Union was described as the submersion of the drop in the ocean, the state of iron in the fire, the vision of penetrating light, or the burning of the moth in the candle.

Symbolism in Sufism

- ☞ The mystery of unity and diversity was symbolised under the image of mirrors or as prism colouring the pure light.
- ☞ The symbol of the soul-bird in which the human soul is likened to a flying bird.
- ☞ The nightingale (soul) and rose (God's perfect beauty).
- ☞ From medicine healing of the sick soul and alchemy changing of base matter into gold.¹⁰

Symbolism in Sufism

☞ “Dawn between the darkness of the material world and the sun of Reality.”

☞ “Whithersoever ye turn, their is the Face of God.” (2: 109)

☞ “Am I not your Lord (*alastu birabbikum*).”

☞ “Heaven and earth do not contain me, but the heart of my faithful servant contains Me”.

☞ “He (God) created Adam in His image.”

Theosophical Sufism

- ☞ To al-Suhrawardi (d. 1191) is attributed the philosophy of *ishraq* (“illumination”).
- ☞ He claimed to unite the Persian (Zoroastrian) and Egyptian Hermetic traditions.
- ☞ The “Orient” (East) is the world of pure lights and archangels.
- ☞ The “Occident” (West) that of darkness and matter.

Theosophical Sufism

- ☞ Performing the traditional pilgrimage to Mecca, Ibn al-‘Arabi met there an accomplished young Persian lady who represented for him the divine wisdom.
- ☞ *Tarjuman al-ashwaq* (“Interpreter of Yearning”)
- ☞ *Al-Futuhāt al-Makkiya* (“The Meccan Revelations”) in which he expound his theory of unity of being.

Theosophical Sufism

- ☞ “I was a hidden treasure and wanted to be known.”
- ☞ God created the world by effusing a “theophany (a physical manifestation of deity) through God’s imaginative power.”
- ☞ The Prophet Muhammad is the universal man, the perfect man, the total theophany of divine names, the prototype of creation.

Exoteric Path

- 📖 *Zâhir* (the apparent)
- 📖 *Tanzîl* (revelation)
- 📖 They prefer the Book, the fast and prayer. Their main objective is to reach paradise.
- 📖 *Islâm* (submission)
- 📖 *Qawl* (verbal profession) and *`amal* (action)
- 📖 *Nazar* (discursive reasoning)

Esoteric Path

- 📖 *Bâtin* (the hidden)
- 📖 *Ta'wîl* (spiritual exegesis)
- 📖 They yearns for freedom. Their main objective is to be reunited with God.
- 📖 *Îmân* (faith)
- 📖 *Qawl, niyya* (intention) and *`amal*
- 📖 *`Aqlanî* (pure reasoning)