Chapter-2

Historical Background and Definition of Sufism
Formative Years

The formative years of Sufism were between 620 to 1100 AD. It was during this time the Sufi masters, known in Arabic as "Shaikhs," started to form the first Sufi fraternities. These early fraternities, and indeed some individual Sufis, met with great hostility and resistance from certain sections of the Muslim community; on points of interpretation of Islamic Theology and Law. Some early Sufis were even persecuted on account of their mystical utterances and beliefs. The most famous Sufi-martyr was AL HALLAJ of Basra in Iraq.

Nevertheless, individual Sufis achieved great eminence because of their piety and practices. The well-known among them are RABIA BASRI (a [female] Sufi Teacher), JUNAID, IBRAHIM ADHEIM, and HASAN BASRI.

Perhaps the most notable one was the great theologian and philosopher AL GAZALI who lived in Syria around 1100 AD.¹ His famous treatises, called the (Reconstruction of Religious Sciences) the (Kimiya-e-Sa’adat) and other works; set off to convince the Islamic world that Sufism and its teachings originated from the Qur'an and were compatible with mainstream Islamic thought and theology. It was AL-GAZALI who bridged the gap between traditional and mystical Islam. It was around 1000 AD that the early Sufi literature, in the form of manuals, treatises, discourses, and poetry, became the source of Sufi thinking and meditations.

¹. Mysticism: A study in the Nature and Development of Man’s Spiritual Consciousness (91911; paperback ed, 1956)
Orders and Lodges

Around 1200 AD Sufism was institutionalized into Sufi orders. Generally, the political atmosphere from North Africa to India was ‘ripe’ for the formation of Sufi orders. Under the patronage of kings and sultans, prominent Sufi masters received financial grants to build lodges and hospices to house the master; his disciples, students, novices and even travellers. The lodges soon became schools of Sufi learning and scholarship. Attached to the lodges were other places of learning, such as colleges and universities; where students could learn Islamic law and theology, philosophy, and natural sciences.

The most prominent Sufi master of the day became the ‘founder’ of a particular Sufi order. One of the well-known orders is the "Qadiryya" founded by the great Sufi-master ABDUL QADIR GILANI in Iraq. Others were founded in different parts of the Islamic world by Sufi-masters such as JALALUDDIN RUMI in Turkey, SUHARWARDY in Asia minor, and MUINUDDIN CHISHTI in India. Although each order had a regional flavour, their basic teachings and practices remained fundamentally the same. Because of this, a mutual respect and admiration exists between various orders. Hence, a Sufi may belong to more than one order.

It was between 1200 - 1500 AD that Sufis and Sufism enjoyed a period of intense Sufic activity in various part of the Islamic world. Hence this period is considered as the "Classical Period" or the "Golden Age" of Sufism. Lodges and hospices soon became not only places to house Sufi students and novices but also places for "spiritual retreat" for practising Sufis and other mystics.
Some of the original orders, which I mentioned before, along with new ones are to be found in the Middle and Far East, India, Africa and various parts of Europe and North America. It is estimated, that presently, there are some 40 Sufi Orders in the world.

**Rituals and Practices**

It is rather difficult to summarize all the practices and rituals associated with the various orders. However, there are certain practices common to all the orders. They are:

1. Ritual prayer and fasting according to Islamic injunctions.
2. Remembrance of the "spiritual lineage" of each order.
3. The practice of "dhikr," an Arabic word for remembrance of God, by invocation.
4. Meditative and contemplative practices, including intensive spiritual training, in "spiritual retreats" from time to time.
5. Listening to musical concerts, to enhance mystical awareness.

The ritual of "initiation" into the order is ordained by the Sufi master of that particular order. Aspiring novices had to undergo a period of intense training in self-discipline, learning to control one's instincts and desires, guided by the Sufi-master. It was the master who would eventually decide if the novice was ready to be initiated into the order. The "initiation" was and still is a "solemn pledge" by the novice to obey the master implicitly in all matters, spiritual and moral. The master in turn pledges to instruct, teach and guide the "new initiate" along the Sufi path. The initiation really symbolizes
that the initiate or disciple is now ready to understand the "inner truth" of spiritual realities. Realities which can only be experienced and understood by "intuitive knowledge," Knowledge which stems from the "heart," rather that the "mind."

The practice of "dhikr" is the central feature in all Sufi orders. "Dhikr" is the Arabic word for the devotional practice of the "remembrance of God." It is performed by the repeated invocation of the Names and Attributes of God. It is based on the Qur'anic verse in which God says "Remember Me and I will remember you." The practice of "dhikr" may vary in different orders; but its ultimate object is to create spiritual awareness and love for God. It can be practiced individually, or collectively. Some orders perform it silently and some loudly; all under the direction of the Sufi master.

It should be noted that "dhikr" is not exclusive to the Sufis [for] it is practiced by all Muslims as part of Islamic prayer and devotion. Another important practice in Sufism is what is called "Sema," or "Sama'" which literally means "listening." These auditions may be a recitation from the Holy Qur'an, or devotional poetry. Throughout the centuries, Sufi poets have written mystical poetry for devotional purposes and some have even been set to music. Listening to musical concerts, as part of Sufi devotion, is permitted and practiced by certain Sufi orders.

A Sufi Order known as the 'Mevlevi Order" founded by the Sufi master Jalaluddin Rumi, who lived in Turkey around 1200 AD, permits a "mystical dance" known in the west as the dance of the Whirling Dervishes.
appreciate the significance of this dance, it is necessary to be aware of its symbolic interpretation and meaning.

Veneration of Sufi Saints is a common practice amongst Sufis. Devout Sufi masters who led highly devotional and spiritual lives were elevated to sainthood. The Sufis believe that a Sufi saint (although dead for hundreds of years) can still make his "spiritual presence" felt to his disciples. Hence, it is common practice among Sufis to visit [the] tombs of Sufi saints to pay homage, recite Sura Fateha and/or other Quranic passages, pray to God for *isa-e-thawab*¹ (i.e. praying to God that the rewards of such recitations be bestowed on the dead), and ask for the deceased saint's blessings. There is no formal procedure, or official appointment, or proclamation, similar to the practices of other religions used for the canonisation of saints.

Other practices, include ritual prayer, fasting, and meditation, as directed by the master. Finally a Sufi may, under the strict guidance of his master, enter into a "spiritual retreat," for a fixed period (usually between 3 to 40 days, or for 24 hours) for intensive prayer and meditation, and daytime fasting. It is best to remember here that all these practices are to prepare the Sufi for the "spiritual journey" along the Sufi path; a path which leads towards God through love and devotion.

The Path - Its Teachings and Tenets

The Sufi firmly believes that each individual spirit desires union with the Universal Spirit, namely God, after death. Furthermore, he believes that it is possible to 'experience' God in this life! This kind of experience is described by Sufis as supra-sensory, ultra-mystical, and even visionary. It must be emphasized here that this kind of experience has been achieved by only the elite! Nevertheless, this is the goal of every Sufi.

Sufism teaches that the Sufi who seeks God, must advance by slow stages along the Path. The stages relate to repentance, followed by abstinence, renunciation, 'poverty', patience and trust in God. These stages constitutes the ethical and ascetic disciplines of Sufism. Total commitment at each stage is vital towards the spiritual progress of the Sufi.

The individual soul is called nafs in Arabic. Sufism teaches that the soul initially is a demanding soul, which can be and should be disciplined into a "contented soul", and subsequently into a "soul at peace". These characteristics of the soul are described at length in the Qur'an and commented upon by Sufi teachers and scholars.

Sufism's primary teaching is based on the Unity of God called tawheed in Arabic. Its emphasis is on the "Oneness" and "Uniqueness" of God. This concept of Unity leads to the realization of Unity which embraces multiplicity in the Universe. This may sound paradoxical, but Sufi writers and theologians (both classical and modern) have written volumes on this subject, with
particular emphasis on explaining various aspects, or grades of manifestation, in terms of immanence and transcendence.

Sufis believe that God’s earliest creation was the human ‘intellect’. Giving humans the knowledge to discern, and to choose between right and wrong, good and evil. This knowledge in Sufism is raised to a higher level, which arises from the heart rather than the mind. It is this intuitive knowledge that distinguishes a mystic from a philosopher. It is through the practice of intuitive knowledge that a Sufi experiences mystical phenomena and visions.

The central doctrine of Sufism, however is love, divine love. The Qur’an teaches that "God’s mercy is greater than His wrath" and that "God’s love is His supreme attribute." The Sufi does reject, but instead believes in the doctrine and the concepts of the ‘Fear of God’ and ‘God’s wrath of the Day of Judgement." The Sufi maintains that obedience to God’s commands should ensue out of the fear of punishment of Hellfire or for the desire of the pleasures and bounties of Paradise as a reward, but rather with the sincere motive and intention of attaining proximity to God - purely for the sake of, and solely for the pleasure of God. To the Sufi, Paradise (as a reward) and Hell (as a punishment) are but graphic terms to make us understand a state of things which is beyond all our notions of life in this world. The Sufi longs for what is beyond Paradise, the vision of God Himself - the ultimate reward after entering Paradise. And nothing would be lovelier than gazing upon the Lord when He removes his ‘veil’ (His ‘garb of grandeur’). The Sufi attests that God has created man with a mind, free-will, and love. Therefore the mainspring of
Sufism is love. Based on this, the Sufi path becomes a 'Path of Love,' where the Sufi becomes the 'lover' and God the 'beloved.' This love affair ends only with the ultimate union with the Beloved. This love relationship is depicted in most volumes of Sufi literature and poetry.

**Enlightenment and the Veil of Unity**

Enlightenment is the full body realization and acceptance of the oneness of God (Al-lah!) in all His manifestations, and the non-existence of a separate, isolated self - that there is no separation, except in the imaginations of the mind. This realization (be not content with conceptualization) of the oneness of God is God-realization in its fullest and the total annihilation of the lower, personally motivated self. It is inevitable, and nothing less is acceptable. It is also Bliss and the realization of Nirvana and all other words denoting the divinity of our reality.

Surrender is the Source of Life. It is not, and cannot be a concept. It must be a complete acceptance of God and Self as a manifestation of Divine Will. It is not the goal of the Work but the beginning. After spending time with God as God is, alone, we will eventually return to our "senses" so to speak, cleaned, refreshed and inspired. This 'return is the reality of self-realization. We cannot truly know ourselves without knowing God first. So how do we get to know God? By learning, accepting and being guided by His revelations. And through knowing God, we know ourselves. And we cannot know the Reality of God without including ourselves.
The point may be I emphasized that without the aid and guidance of religion, including and culminating in the Islamic revelation, which includes and accepts all religions, beliefs and people as creations and manifestations of God, there can be only more communities in spiritual isolation, and no real coming together of humanity. Correcting the imaginative mind that sees itself as alone, fearful, self-sufficient, defensive, aggressive and artificially dependent upon all kinds of pleasant and unpleasant relationships, is the work of all spiritual teachings, masters and therapies. It is called by the spiritually aware "resolving our inner contradictions with God". This work leads to a total and perfect Surrender, which is the beginning of spiritual awareness, bliss and real success in the world. In Islam, this work is done, or should be done, by the Sufis. In other faiths, it is the work of the Rabbis, Gurus and spiritual teachers. It is the genuine psychotherapy - the aligning of ourselves with Divine Will.

But enlightenment without guidance is not enough, as religion without realization is not enough. It takes enlightenment to recognize the point, goal and meaning of religion, otherwise its practice misses its purpose. Similarly, it takes an understanding of the origin and purpose of religion to guide the enlightened, otherwise they stagnate in their own individuality. Individually enlightened masters standing alone in their light without being able to understand and reach out to the religions of the world are only creating cults and even though they claim to be in the Unity they are only creating more separation by standing alone.
It's true that there are as many ways to know God as there are hearts, but God-Realization is not enough and it is only the very beginning. Working through our resistances to knowing God is rightly called "The Work". It is the greatest healing and therapy and there are many paths offering themselves as techniques in the way of The Work, showing ways to walk through resistance, overcome doubt and attain to the absolute certainty that is there, waiting joyously for all of us. That is why this absolute certainty (Shahi) is considered to be the goal of most spiritual paths and why there are as many paths as there are hearts to work through.

But absolute certainty, gnosis, God-consciousness, ma’arifat, enlightenment, nirvana, heaven, divine bliss, whatever one wishes to call the innate knowing with which we are created, is still only the beginning. All the great and realized Sufi Masters have referred to even this enlightenment as a veil - "The Veil of Unity" - and have sought Al-Ilahi’s guidance through it, considering it a sin to stop in it even for a moment, much less making it their home. In response to the inner-heart prayer of these gnostics and knowers - "Ihdinas Siratul Mustaqim", (Guide us to the straight path) - we have a Divine revelation, a universal religion of Surrender and seeking Guidance.

**Basic Sufi Concepts**

Like most aspects of the religion of Islam which became recorded and took on a formal aspect after the deaths of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the first four Muslim rulers, the different sciences related to the way of Islam also began to develop and grow in sophistication, such as the science
of the Qur'an, the science of the recorded actions and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the science of Islamic jurisprudence and all the other sciences concerned with theological studies. None of these sciences existed in any formal or structured manner in the early years of Islam, although the knowledge and wisdom on which they were based did exist.

The same trend of growth and complexification\(^1\) seems to have been repeated in the science of Sufism. From about a hundred years after Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) death onwards, when people began to discriminate more and more between original Islam and pseudo-Islam, between spiritual Muslims and Muslims who supported dynastic monarchy, the various concepts of Sufism dealing with the purification of the self and the 'heart' began to manifest more prominently. This does not mean that these concepts and the practices which accompanied them did not exist in the first century of Islam. They were there, but they were far less structured, formulated or discussed. The early Muslims knew the meaning and reality of inner purity, reliance upon God, yearning and the actions based on that reliance and yearning which resulted in that purity, as well as the other basic Sufi concepts, but it was only later on that these concepts were discussed and recorded in a more structured way, in order to help the seeker on the path of knowledge, until he reached the point where he experienced subjectively what he had at first only learned about and accepted intellectually.

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\(^1\) "The way of a Mohammedan Mystic, by W.H.T. Gairdner (Leipzig, 1912), pg. 9
Sufism is none other than reliving the Muhammadan way of life. The early Shi'as had an advantage in having for 250 years qualified and recognized spiritual leaders from among the descendants of the Prophet to guide them in the Muhammadan way of life, in spite of their being persecuted by the Ummayad and Abbasid caliphs. However, most Shi'as concentrated more on learning the formal and ritualistic aspects of this lifestyle from these spiritual leaders, rather than its higher spiritual elements. Accordingly emphasis was placed on the jurisprudence, and a relative neglect of philosophy and the science of the self is evident in any study of Muslim social history. However the way in which these spiritual leaders lived and the flexibility that they had as awakened Muslims are enough for us to see how real spiritual masters live. One such spiritual leader was brought near to the ruling caliph of the day. He was Imam Musa Rida. Another, who was imprisoned by the caliph, was Imam Musa ibn Ja'far. Another spiritual leader Imam Zayn al-Abidin, was given the opportunity to invite people to the way of Islam by means of his prayers and supplications. Yet another, Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq was surrounded by people who wanted to learn from him, so he began to give structure to the sciences of jurisprudence and theology. These spiritual leaders were like different lamps giving off the same light, different representatives of the One God.

The Sufi is an enlightened being following the outer Islamic Law while his heart is encompassed by the inner Reality. However one cannot say much about God's ways for they are so numerous and some of them are strange (to us). We find that some Sufis lean towards being recluses. Now God says through the Prophet Muhammad that those who are loved most by God are
those who serve the creatures of God. We also observe that not every person who is enlightened can teach, just as not every person who is a scholar can be a great orator. Sometimes we find the reverse of the situation to be true in that a great religious orator has little real knowledge. Such people make a far greater impact on society than great scholars who do not have the gift of eloquence or the charisma. So a lack of communication from a quiet dervish or a Sufi does not reflect the extent of his knowledge or his true station.

Sufism is primarily concerned with the 'heart' that reflects the truth which exists within it, beyond time and in time. The Sufi is the whole human being. He recognizes that his reality is beyond time and space, and yet he understands that he himself is caught in his body in order to experience the duality of time and space in this world. The Sufi is the one who realizes the courtesy due to the prison of his body which has been given to him on loan for a few years. He is aware of the fact that he is returning to the abode of infinite bliss from which he originally emerged. Sufism is an art of beingness through the attainment of divine knowledge. It is not an intellectual exercise for scholarly investigations and postgraduate studies.

As far as original Sufi works are concerned, they were not written in order to establish yet another school of Islamic law, like the Maliki, the Shafi'i and the Jafari schools of Islamic law for example, but they were written in order to help those who were already following the Sufi path. Studying the map and staying put is not the same as making the journey and using the map as you go along. The Sufi writings are helpful to the practitioners of the Sufi path, but the
written word is a secondary experience compared to the direct benefits and transmission of knowledge which occur when the seeker keeps the actual company of a spiritual master. Writing is only useful as an aid, a memoir or a reminder for the practitioner. When such writings are discovered and taken and studied out of context, then confusion arises

Who is a Sufi?

One who does not separate himself from others by opinion or dogma; and who realizes the heart as the Shrine of God.

He desires.

To remove the false self and discover God within, and

He teaches.

Happiness.

Seeks.

Illumination.

Beholds.

Harmony.

Given.

Love to all created things.

And gets.

A greater power of love by pursuing this path he find God and looses The ‘self’.
Sufi Psychology

The term "Sufi psychology" is probably a deceptive one, because it implies that there is a relatively homogenous doctrine of the psyche the majority of the Sufis would subscribe to. It is not the case. However, one can point out the terms most frequently used and expound on the meanings of these notions. Drawing from Qur'anic verses, virtually all Sufis distinguish between Nafs, Qalb, Sirr and Ruh. These concepts designate various psychospiritual "organs" or, sometimes, faculties of sensory and suprasensory perception.

Nafs is usually translated as soul or psyche. Its etymology is rooted in "breath" (similar to Biblical or Kabbalistic nefesh and is common to virtually all archaic psychologies where the act of breathing was connected with life, animating otherwise lifeless object. In this respect, ancient notions of "Atman" in Hinduism (cf. German noun "Atem", breath, respiration) or Greek "pneuma" (as well as Latin "spiritus")-all equate the basic visible process of breathing with energizing principle that confers existence to an individual human being. Some Sufis consider under the term "Nafs" the entirety of psychological processes, encompassing whole mental, emotional and volitional life; however, the majority of Quranic-based Sufis are of the opinion that Nafs is a "lower", egotistical and passionate human nature which, along with Tab (literally, physical nature), comprises vegetative and animal aspects of human life. Synonyms for Nafs are devil, passion, greed, avarice, ego-centredness etc. The central aim of the Sufi path is transformation of Nafs (technical term is ‘Tazkiya-I-Nafs’ or ‘purification of the soul’) from its deplorable state of ego-centredness through various psychospiritual stages to
the purity and submission to the will of God. Although the majority of the Sufi orders have adopted convenient 7 maqams (maqams are permanent stages on the voyage towards spiritual transformation), and some still operate with 3 stages, the picture is clear: the Sufi’s journey begins with Nafs-I-Ammara (self-accusing soul) and ends in Nafs-I-Mutma’inna (satisfied soul)—although some Sufis’s final stage is, in their technical vocabulary, Nafs-I-Safiya wa Kamila (soul restful and perfected in God’s presence). In essence, this is almost identical to Christian paradigm of “vita purgativa” and various stages the spiritual aspirant traverses in the journey towards God.

The next term, Qalb, stands for heart. In Sufi terminology, this spiritual heart (not to be confused with the pump in the breast) is again variously described. For some, it is the seat of beatific vision. Others consider it the gate of Ishq or Divine love. Yet, for the majority, it is the battleground of two warring armies: those of Nafs and Ruh or spirit. Here, one again encounters terminological confusion: for the Sufis influenced by Neoplatonism, a "higher" part of Nafs is equated to the Aql or intellect (called Nafs-I-Natiqa) or "rational soul" and is the central active agent in spiritual battle: Ruh or spirit, notwithstanding its name, is rather passive in this stage. In short, cleansing of the Qalb or heart is a necessary spiritual discipline for travellers on the Sufi path. The term for this process is Tazkiah-I-Qalb and the aim is the erasure of everything that stands in the way of purifying God’s love or Ishq.

The third faculty is Sirr, or ‘the secret’, located for the majority in the middle of the chest. Emptying of the Sirr (Taqliyya-I-Sirr) is basically focusing on God’s names and attributes in perpetual remembrance or Dhikr, hence
diverting one’s attention from the mundane aspects of human life and fixing it on the spiritual realm. The “emptying” signifies negation and obliteration of ego-centred human propensities.

Ruh or spirit is the fourth "entity" and the second contender in the battle for human life. Again, opinions on Ruh differ among Sufis. Some deem it coeternal with God; others consider it a created entity. Be as it may, Ruh is the plateau of consensus for the majority of Sufis, especially the early ones (before 11th/12th century C.E.). For those Sufis with Gnostic leanings (which can be found in Bektashi or Mevlevi orders), Ruh is a soul-spark, immortal entity and transegoic "true self", similar to the Christian concepts of "synteresis" or "Imago Dei", or Vedantist notion of "jiva", as well as Tibetan Buddhist "shes-pa", principle of consciousness and Taoist "shen" or spirit. But, the majority of the Sufis would consider this an unnecessarily extravagant speculation and would stick to the more orthodox notion of dormant spiritual faculty that needs to be worked upon by constant vigil and prayer in order to achieve the Tajliyya-I-Ruh, or Illumination of the spirit. Ironically, this spiritual faculty is frequently referred to in terms one encounters in connection with Nafs- "blind" life force or life current that needs to be purified by strict religious observances in order to achieve illumination.

So, in these four "organs" or faculties: Nafs, Qalb, Sirr and Ruh, and the purificative activities applied to them, the basic orthodox Sufi psychology is contained. The purification of elementary passionate nature (Tazkiya-I-Nafs), followed by cleansing of the spiritual heart so that it may acquire a mirror-like
purity of reflection (Tazkiya-I-Qalb) and become the receptacle of God’s love (Ishq), fortified by emptying of egoic drives (Taqliyya-I-Sirr) and remembrance of God’s attributes (Dhikr), gloriously ending in illumination of the spirit (Tajjali-I-Ruh)- this is the essential Sufi spiritual journey. Other spiritual faculties, like Khafi (the arcane) and Akhfa (the most arcane) are employed in other Sufi orders like Naqshbandi, but this is beyond general basic consensus.

The Way of the Sufi

According to the way of the Sufis, a person who has attained the state of outer and inner awareness, and who has managed to reach a point of balance and centrality, is in a position to assist others and to reflect to them their own state of progress. Accordingly we find that throughout the ages the Sufis have kept close together. Spiritual masters accompany their close followers during all the stages of progress.

We need to distinguish between the two terms: state and station. It is the difference between how it is and where it’s at. State means something which one can feel or taste. One can sometimes feel an inner state of incredible generosity or great upliftment. However this state may not be lasting. What is really desired by the seeker is to attain a station which cannot occur unless it is properly founded and secure. A station is not temporary and can always be relied upon and recalled. Most of the wayfarers on the path of God will taste different states to varying degrees of lasting without any permanence in them, which is unsatisfactory and insufficient. It is for this reason that a guiding hand
is needed to ensure that a seeker becomes established in a desirable station. So
the companionship and relating to people who are on the path is an essential
factor in a seeker's progress. Another important reason for having the right
companionship is that we are always a product of the last moment, and since
this moment is born from the previous moment and that from the one before it,
and so on, there is continuity. A person on his own cannot realize how much he
has deviated from the path of self-knowledge or self-realization. Thus a seeker
needs a companion to reflect to him, like a mirror, his state and station.

Just as in the case of the physical or natural sciences where one would
obviously tend to follow someone who has greater experience and
qualifications in these sciences, so the same principle applies to the sciences of
the self. On the physical level, we are constantly striving towards harmony and
right action, and we follow those who have expertise in this field. In the same
way, for inner harmony, the best qualified person is a real Sufi spiritual master.
However, there is a difference between the outer and the inner sciences. In the
outer sciences, the blemishes and imperfections are easily detectable. This is
not the case with the inner sciences where, for example, a person can put a grin
on his face whereas in reality he is very displeased within. Knowledge of the
inner sciences require a subtler specialization. What is needed is a medicine for
the 'heart', which is not easy to obtain or administer whereas physical healing is
prescriptive, descriptive, analytical and logical, and therefore is easier to
achieve.
A major question that arises is how does a seeker find a real spiritual master? Or how can he be sure of the spiritual master's quality? The followers of the esoteric and inner traditions believe that God's mercy permeates and encompasses every situation and everything. The right teacher turns up at the right time if a person has sincerity and the right courtesy. The correct courtesy is patience and recognition of the need. And it is by divine mercy that the right answer comes at the right time for the seeker.

A true spiritual teacher must have the proper basic qualities, just as a physician is supposed to have fulfilled primary basic requirements before he can practice medicine. To begin with, a spiritual guide, that is a Sufi master, must be knowledgeable about all the outer aspects of the original way of Islam and its way of life. He must be fully conversant with the knowledge and practice of the way of Islam. He should apply what is in the Qur'an and the prophetic way of life to himself. If he has not practiced the outer laws, how can he have practiced the inner aspects of this way of life, let alone recommend others to practice them? So the true spiritual master must himself live the outer and inner codes of Islam fully.

Another condition of a spiritual master being a true teacher is that he must have achieved real enlightenment by arriving at complete knowledge of the self. The spiritual master must know the extraordinary vast horizon of the self. Whoever knows his self, truly knows his Lord. A true spiritual master must also have been given the express permission to start out and guide others on the path of self-knowledge, by another enlightened and experienced teacher.
who himself had been given permission to teach, and so on, back to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). For there are people who keep within the outer limits of the Islamic Law, others who have achieved self-knowledge, and still others who have attained gnosis as well as the knowledge of the self, and yet they are unable to guide others. Just as it is not enough for a physician to have only studied and passed examinations, and observed and assisted other physicians in their work, before he himself can begin to practice medicine in his own right. He must also be given the permission or license to practice medicine by a qualified physician who is satisfied with his ability to do so.

Another prerequisite is that there should be a seeker to receive knowledge from the spiritual master, just as there has to be a patient before a physician can practice his medicine. Finally, just as it is of no use for a physician to attend to a sick person if he is unable or unwilling to accept the remedy for his illness, so there is no need of a spiritual master if the seeker is not keen to follow him.

The ultimate aim of the Sufi master is to assist his close follower to discover Truth within the self and to be enlightened about reality. In order to be fulfilled at all times, it is important to discover the causes of unhappiness. The essential cause of all dissatisfaction is rooted in the transgression of limits, waywardness, desires, expectations, fears, anxieties and other aspects like lack of understanding of the nature of Reality. From the Sufi point of view, the basic acts of worship which are defined by the Islamic Law, such as the ritual prayer, fasting in the month of Ramadan, the alms tax, the pilgrimage to Mecca
and so on, are, although necessary, not sufficient for most of the people who are sick in this vast hospital called the world. The globe is God's hospital, and the Messengers, the Prophets and the saints or spiritual masters are the physicians of the soul. Since there are different kinds of illness, there are different wards in the hospital. There are clinics where the patients do not stay for very long; there are wards where the patients stay for several weeks or months; and there is a surgical ward where the physician, or Sufi master, is constantly engaged in 'operating' on his patients. We also find that the 'medicines' are prescribed in accordance with the specific requirements of the patient, taking the total environment and all the surrounding circumstances into consideration.

The ultimate function of a Sufi master is to move the seeker gradually, according to his pace, to a level at which he is able to read the primal 'book' that is within his 'heart'. If the seeker learns this art and becomes strong and acts at will, then obviously he is progressing and evolving. The spiritual master's objective is to part with and transmit to others what he has himself already attained. This process, as stated earlier, can be enhanced when the environment as well as the companionship is right, and when the close follower has the intention to learn and the will to act, and acts appropriately. The teacher can do little if the seeker or the close follower does not want to advance. The traveler can give up at any stage of the journey, even when there is only one step left. However, at times, even if the close follower wants to advance, it is not guaranteed that his objective will be fulfilled according to
expectations. Shaykh al-Fayturi (d. 1979) says the following about the dilemma of the teacher in one of his odes:

No matter how much the teacher strives, No matter how much the close follower wants, No matter how sincere he is, spending days and nights [in worship], Ultimately enlightenment is a gift from God. The teacher's function is to guide the seeker along a disciplined path to the point at which he is able to sit in absolute watchfulness without watching anything. This is the pure, simple, ultimate height of the meditative condition. It is just to be. From there on, it is only Allah Who can help. So the seeker has to complete half the circle himself, but the other half is not in his hands. You go as high as you can climb, and then let go!

The whole Sufi way of life is about giving up attachments, and the greatest and the worst attachment happens to be knowledge. There is an anecdote from Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali (d. 1111) in this context. When Imam al-Ghazzali left Baghdad in order to search for Sufi masters, he had acquired all the outer knowledge of the Islamic sciences, but his innermost was not yet awake. He took with him two mules loaded with books. On the way he was stopped by a robber who wanted to take all his books. Imam al-Ghazzali offered him everything except the books, but the robber only wanted the books, and took them. Seven or eight years later, when Imam al-Ghazzali had fulfilled his Sufi quest, a man appeared before him in Mecca. Apparently it was the Prophet al-Khidr, who is called Elijah in the Judaic tradition, who informed Imam al-Ghazzali that if it had not been for the theft of his books, he
would have remained the slave of those books and would not have discovered the real 'Book' of knowledge that is within everyone's heart. Imam Ali says in this context, 'You are the evident [original] "Book".

Books are needed initially as an aid to inner discovery, but when a person grows stronger with inner knowledge, he needs less external aids. Books are like the push-chair which a child only needs at the beginning of its life. Unfortunately, however, many so-called scholars keep their push-chairs for the rest of their lives. On the other hand, many pseudo-sufis tend to dismiss not only books but also recitations as altogether unnecessary. This simplistic attitude is nothing other than a form of self-elevation, which is a perversion of and a digression from the real spiritual path. Books and recitations are essential aids in assisting inner awakening, and can neither be totally relied on nor totally ignored.

The seeker of knowledge and gnosis has to follow the path under the guidance of a teacher until there comes a point when he has to be left alone. The teacher is like a crutch, on which the seeker no longer has to rely once he can walk. The time comes when the close follower no longer needs a physical master as he is now plugged directly into the original power source. If someone says that he needs an outer teacher all his life, then he has falsely limited the true extent of human potential and divine mercy and generosity. If someone says that he does not need a master at all, then he is arrogant and conceited and will live under the tyranny of the lower self.
Sufi Practices

The outer practices of the Sufis include varying amounts of prayers, invocations, recitations and supplications. If a Sufi Order developed in a nomadic environment, then we find most of their practices being performed while the caravan is on the move, and with many of the gatherings and circles of remembrance of God occurring at the beginning or the end of the night, because the caravan is stationary at these times. If a Sufi Order became active amidst the people of the bazaar in a city such as Qum, for example, or Fes, then we find a different pattern of practices, in which gatherings tend to take place in the afternoon or early evening or at a time which is convenient for shopkeepers.

The meditation practices and night vigils of the Sufis differ according to the place, time and particular orientation of the spiritual master\(^1\). Some spiritual masters are far more ecstatic than others. Some are more serious or sober in their outer manner. However, all of them have something in common, just as master chefs in a kitchen have the love of food and knowledge of cooking in common. The spiritual masters share a state of inner silence and contentment. According to them, since the creation began from silence, anyone who wishes to start living must return to that point of origin – utter silence – inner silence in which there is no vision, no memory, no thought, no movement.

\(^1\) Rashn at 'Ainu 'I-Hayat, Kanpur, 1911. pp. 20-25
The Meaning of the Outer Law and the Inner Reality (Shari'ah and Haqiqah)

According to the Sufis, everything we witness in this creation has a measure of polarity in it. Also, every phenomenon in creation is cyclical. A phenomenon is seen as if it starts from one point and ends in another and both the points meet. For example, the story of creation begins with the hydrological cycle. Water from the ocean evaporates, becomes cloud and then it rains and runs back to the sea. The same principle can be applied to the outer law and the inner reality. The Arabic word for the outer law is shari'ah which means a road or a way. When one embarks on it, it is like putting a canoe into the river in order to reach the ocean. If the traveler has a unific vision, if he is a man of unity, then he will recognize that although it is a river, it has a direction which will lead to its original nature and reality, which is that of the ocean. The Arabic word for the inner reality is haqiqah which means the truth. The ocean is the inner reality and the river is the outer road. The river would have no purpose or meaning if it was not to end at the ocean, and yet its origin is from the ocean!

As regards the people of vision and insight, of genuine connectedness and unity, the moment they step into the outer law, they perceive that they have stepped into the inner reality. From the Sufi point of view, if a person is seeking the depth of meaning and transformation in his life, then the moment he takes on the outer law, he at once realizes its inner meaning and spirit. For example, the outer law obliges a person to perform outer purification, which is a combination of ritually washing the whole body in certain circumstances,
and ritually washing only certain parts of the body in others, before doing a prayer. Now if a person has unific vision of life and is after the knowledge of unity, then he will realize that this knowledge cannot be attained unless he is both outwardly and inwardly purified, and he will extend that requirement of the outer law. He will purify his skin and flesh, not only by ritual washing, but also by being watchful about eating and drinking the right type of foods and beverages. Beyond that, he will purify his heart, his intentions and his thoughts. This is the unific view of the outer law, or code of conduct. It simply and directly leads to the inner reality.

The outer Islamic law, as we mentioned earlier, is the complete and final law of God revealed to the blessed Prophet Muhammad. It is based on the laws of conduct that were revealed directly in the Qur’an, and on the ways and teachings of Muhammad. These laws make it possible for every member of society to go deeper inwardly and to evolve towards the higher consciousness which is the intention and purpose behind this creation. Inner development, which is the aim of Sufism, is not possible without exoteric Islam. Esoteric interest will not be sufficient unless a person has the protection of the outer bounds of the outer code of conduct. Water cannot be contained without a container, nor an egg yolk without a hard shell. In the same way, the outer law is like a shell that protects the inner core which safely carries what would otherwise be very volatile energy.

From the Sufi point of view, man needs to embrace and submit to both the outer law and the inner reality, because he encompasses both. The human
being is an isthmus, or interspace, between the two. He is involved in the outer law, or code of behavior, in the sense that he is a physical, material entity, and he is involved in the inner reality in the sense that there is something within him which is beyond time and space. So inwardly, he is inner reality, and outwardly, he is outer law. The great Sufi masters say:

Whoever has the outer law without the inner reality has left the right way; Whoever has the inner reality without the outer law is a heretic; Whoever unites the two of them has realization.

The outer Islamic Law, as stated earlier, is the culmination of all the earlier revealed laws. Societies and cultures which follow the original divine laws will endure. An individual or society will benefit according to the extent to which these laws are applied. If a society or a country acts in generosity towards the poor and the needy, which is in accordance with all the divinely revealed laws, then as a result of this act, much good will come to those who are charitable. So whenever, inadvertently or advertently, an individual or a society performs good deeds, that act is in line with the Islamic Law. The longevity and well-being of a culture or a society depend on how close its practices are to the original outer Islamic Law. Since the majority of the Muslims today are not fully applying the Islamic Law, other than superficially, they too individually and collectively are being afflicted and punished by their own ignorance or wrongdoing.
To summarize, the outer divine laws have been revealed in different formats over a period of time according to the needs of the age, and this process was completed in its totality 1,400 years ago. This master plan from the unseen, from the source of all creational realities, is part of its love and mercy upon people so that we are not left without guidance. The prophets and messengers revealed what was essential and necessary for the human condition. The laws and blueprints which they brought culminated in the final blueprint which is the Muhammadan code. Thus these various codes of outer laws are complementary and are readings from the same book. It is like the reading of different chapters from the same book or tablet. And within the parameters of the divinely revealed outer laws, there is room for man-made laws which are in harmony with them. The outer Islamic Law, as we have mentioned earlier, provides the body of the law, but within it the specifics — for example, how much tax should be levied upon the population for certain imported items — are left to the government of the day to decide. If the government needs a certain amount of money for a particular project, and people are wealthy, then an Islamic government can establish its own rules in order to collect this money by means of an extra tax, even though it is not expressly obligatory according to the Islamic Law. So there is great scope within the Islamic Law to prescribe rules and regulations which are appropriate to present circumstances and which are compatible with it. It is this flexibility, based on and within a precise form, which ensures that the outer law is indeed a means to the inner reality, and not an obstacle that covers it up or prevents access to it.
The Meaning of Innate Nature (*Fitra*)

According to the Qur'an, the creation began with the divine command, 'Be!' (Qur'an 16:40; 19:35; 36:82). Within that command is contained the entire book of Reality. From the Sufi point of view, every 'heart' contains a blueprint of truth. Most people know what happiness and unhappiness are, what contentment and discontentment are. How do they know this? How do I know that I am not content? How do I know that I am now disturbed? My body may be completely out of balance, and yet I will still know what balance and tranquility are, and what discord and imbalance are. There is something within the core of everyone which reveals the truth. That something does not change, for it is primal and sub-genetic. Physically, everyone appears to be different, but that which is ingrained sub-genetically in man is his innate nature, as we mentioned earlier. The word in Arabic for innate nature is *Fitra*. The original blueprint of divine laws is preserved in this innate nature of man. If that blueprint is not tarnished or obscured, then it is easier for a man to recognize and acknowledge the messengers and Reality. In other words, if a person is brought up in a clean, natural and healthy environment, then his chance of discovering the truth and the way to freedom is better than that of others who are caught up within adverse environmental, racial or cultural constraints.

The Sufis always say that if you follow your 'heart', you will be all right. God also says in the Qur'an that the 'heart' never lies. How does one distinguish between guidance coming from the 'heart', and that which is coming from one's emotions, desires, fears and imagination? How does one distinguish one's original innate nature from one's imagination? The innate nature in each
one of us has been tarnished to varying degrees, due to family and other influences during our early life. In order to return to our original state of innate nature, we need again the guidance of the outer code of divine law. This is why original Islam is much more easily followed by people who have not been educated or trained to analyze, doubt and debate.

The way of Islam is the Adamic way of behavior. Every prophet, every man of awakening and freedom, has been in submission and is therefore a Muslim. Every thinker, philosopher and wise man has been a Muslim to varying degrees of clarity and consciousness. All human beings in fact are born in submission to natural reality and therefore in Islam. It is the society and the parents who often then corrupt that innate Islamic state. There are people all over the world who discover Islam in themselves during some period of their lives, and not as a result of having come across the conventional religion Islam. Rather, it is an echo of something far deeper and pre-creational which is centered in the hearts of all human beings. However the conventions, both behavioral and conceptual, which society, community and personal habit impose upon a person, veil recognition of this reality. Hence we need divine laws to guide us to lead a life which is unified and which leads to knowledge of unity.

Original Islam has existed right from the beginning of humanity and it was revealed in different degrees until the totality of it was revealed through the Prophet Muhammad in such a way that God promised to people that it would be preserved forever. Accordingly, no one has any excuse if they try to distort or change it. The differences that exist between the various Muslim schools of
law on matters of Islamic Law are minor and insignificant. However if people want to see differences, then they see great differences, and this often happens to those who do not have access to their innate nature.

The Purpose of Sufi Practices

The chief purpose of Sufi practices is the restoration of wholeness in people. The Sufi masters, therefore, prescribe different medicine to their followers in the form of different kinds of practices with different intensities according to the type of illness which is being treated. We find that every Sufi Order has its own particular invocation, its own chanting and recitation, and its own ceremonies and methods of sitting or standing. As well as the practices which are done collectively, the Sufi teacher often prescribes specific remedies for particular individuals, for example, if one of his close followers is ill or needs specific treatment, such as intense periods of night vigils or watchfulness. Whatever their apparent differences, one element which we find in common in all of the Sufi Orders is a deep relationship between the spiritual master and the close follower. The relationship is based on trust, love and obedience to the master. It is said that the best follower for a master is like a rag in the hands of a washerman. It is through such submissiveness and obedience that the meaning of the teaching of the spiritual master is quickly absorbed.

There is no doubt, however, that any meditation or divine adoration and invocation or recitation is spiritually helpful. It is like taking a general tonic which helps everyone, whatever their ailments may be. However in the case of

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1. Nafais ul Anfas page 3

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acute or chronic illness, a tonic only brings temporary and limited relief, and
the services of a skilled physician are required. The various forms of
remembrance of Allah of every Sufi Order are helpful. Every recitation that
has come from the genuine spiritual master does have some benefit, even for
the one who recites them without having had them prescribed for him, but
when a specific form of remembrance of Allah is individually prescribed by a
spiritual master, and is transmitted from heart to heart, then an effective step
towards freedom has been taken.

The Meaning of the Remembrance of God (Dhikru’llah)

The Arabic word for remembrance is dhikr. Remembrance is of several types
or levels. There is the remembrance of physical things which are in front of us,
and there is the remembrance of one's desires, anxieties and so on. Along the
spiritual path, remembrance relates to that which is in one's innate nature. It is
the remembrance of the Essence of God the Almighty, of the Source of all
manifestations and attributes. That source is within everybody. On the Sufi
path, one is required to disremember everything else that is discernible,
everything that is other than God, in order to return to the original
remembrance. Allah. The Arabic word for remembrance of God is dhikru’llah.

So the original remembrance of God is already in every heart, whether one is
aware of it or not. Through the guidance of a spiritual master, the seeker is led
beyond, to a level where there is no remembrance of anything that is
mentionable. Then that which has always been there, encompassing
everything, is evidently experienced and witnessed. The purpose of Sufi
practices is to be spontaneously aware of the absolute or central reality as well as remaining aware of the physical and material limitations of the phenomenal world which surrounds us. One is an inner awareness beyond the senses, and the other is an outer awareness which is based on the senses. So the aim of a Sufi teacher is to give the appropriate practices to his close follower and to watch over the results.

**The Meaning of Watchfulness (Muraqabah)**

A very important Sufi practice is watchfulness. The Arabic word for watchfulness is muraqabah. It is practiced in order to witness and sublimate one's own state. With the practice of watchfulness comes greater and greater sensitivity which results in the ability to witness the 'opening' within. Concentrated and advanced watchfulness occurs in retreat. During retreat, and when the real opening occurs, the seeker will recognize the vast emptiness and timelessness within himself. This is the culmination, so to speak, of self-awareness and self-watchfulness, and the beginning of what is considered as the process of gnostic awakening or enlightenment. All this means is that the person is conscious at all times of the indescribable state within, which has no limits.

**The Meaning of Retreat (Khalwa)**

We often come across the practice of retreat combined with other spiritual practices prescribed for 40 days. Why 40 days? In the natural world, there are numerous natural laws, many of which are cyclical. There are also many biological laws, such as those regulating reproduction and feeding, which
follow a certain rhythm and time cycle. In the case of spiritual nourishment or rehabilitation, there are also optimum durations and frequencies.

The Sufi master places a seeker in retreat when he is fully prepared for it in body, mind and heart. The Arabic word for retreat is khalwa. Once in spiritual retreat, the purpose is, by means of remembrance of Allah and watchfulness, to leave all thoughts behind and through single-pointedness experience pure consciousness. During a close follower's retreat, his intake of food must be carefully regulated by the spiritual master. Equally, his mental, emotional and spiritual state is watched. Spiritual retreat and remembrance of God are of no use unless the seeker is ready to leave all aspects of creation behind him. One form of spiritual retreat is called a chilla, which means 40, and its duration is 40 days. It is said that when a person is ready to be locked up for 40 days, a breakthrough or opening may be achieved earlier, before the 40 days have been completed.

Other Sufi Practices

Numerous Sufi masters and saints have come up with certain invocations, recitations, chants and supplications which help the seeker to purify and uplift himself. Circles and gatherings of remembrance of God are held to help purify the self by means of abandoning thought and concern with mundane affairs. Much help comes by concentrating on a special, specific sound repeatedly. The energy that emanates from the presence of many people in a circle of remembrance of Allah creates 'openings' to the 'heart' and produces light-heartedness in the seekers. Different spiritual masters, according to different
circumstances and times, have brought about different remedies for curing the maladies of the self.

Most of the Sufi Orders practice remembrance of Allah by chanting or singing, with the occasional use of musical instruments, especially drums. Music has entered into the practices of the Sufi Orders in a very limited way, and often for a temporary period under the guidance of a spiritual master. In the case of the Indian sub-Continent, the Sufis found that the Hindus were already very fond of music, so they also used music in order to bring them to the path of self-awareness, remembrance of God and joyful abandonment. So although musical instruments were used for that purpose and with that intention, they were however generally considered to be unnecessary distractions. Most of what is sung is concerned with the spiritual path and has no relationship to ordinary songs. They are often descriptions of how to liberate oneself from one's own shackles and how to be awakened.

The Importance of Time and Place

Particular importance is attached to special places and times by spiritual masters for meditation, supplication and other spiritual practices. There are certain places which have natural qualities that are affected by, for example, the earth's electromagnetic field and closeness to granite mountains or rivers and other sources of water. There are numerous places on this earth where people feel an affinity or a desire to be there. Also there are places which are repulsive, such as, for example, near high voltage electric power lines, which frighten away most animals who can feel the bad vibrations and who
accordingly avoid such contamination, unlike most human beings who are not so sensitive.

Obviously, every place has a certain energy or eco-system. There are certain places on this earth which have a high energy concentration, such as Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem and the shrines of the earlier prophets and the great saints, spiritual masters and spiritual leaders, to which people are constantly drawn. When one visits these places, one feels that a great event once took place there, and this feeling is often helpful in healing the heart and raising one's spiritual level. These places help a great deal if a person is guided and prepared to uplift his state.

The enlightened master sees the entire cosmos in his heart. He regards his heart as the sacred house of worship of God at the center of the cosmos. He sees Allah's trace at all times everywhere. However, for a lay person, in spiritual matters, it appears as if God is more present at certain times and in certain places than at other times or places.

The ultimate purpose of all genuine Sufi practices is the experiential awakening into the infinite realities as they unfold in their own natural way within each heart. The sparks of light that emanate from within are innumerable and infinite in their combination and permutation, engulfing all attributes, and yet their essence is one. The real Sufi will not rest until he is established in the knowledge of the essence, and when that occurs, all other
lights, manifestations and glorious attributes fade in the effulgence of that inner awakening.

With the present day connotation of Islamic fundamentalism seen synonymous to Terrorism, Sufism present the other balancing factor which show that Islam is not just about ‘Jehad’ but also about harmony and peace. So the relevance of Sufism today is greater than it has been in any other age, for nowadays we can across cultural and political boundaries much more easily, because of ease of access through communications, travel and closeness of the world. The message of Sufism is more urgent now, especially due to the fact that the world is increasingly becoming bound by materialism, consumerism and terrorism. The awakening to the inner life of man is a necessary condition of his fulfillment as a human being. It comes as the pinnacle of his struggle with the elements and the fulfillment of his basic needs. Once our outer needs are met, then the inner must also be fulfilled. The two are so interlinked that those who are awakened to both the outer and inner realities see them as inseparable and continuous in the one creational, unific universe.

The Rise of Sufism

The rise of Sufism began after the first century of Islam as a struggle against the increasing distortions and misrepresentations of its teachings, especially as perpetrated by the leadership of the day. Rulers or kings could often be seen to be using the name of Islam to justify their own ends, or to be discarding those aspects of its teachings which did not suit their purposes or extravagant lifestyle. The three tenets of Islamic Jurisprudence the Hadith and the Sharia
were used as tool by the dominating class to have its way. However a cornerstone of mysticism is that true knowledge of God is achieved directly and not through an intermediary like a prophet, saint or priest. Over the centuries this has led to a great deal of political conflict between mystics and non-mystics. If a cleric or Priest behaves or commands something that seems in conflict with dogma, the individual is not in a position to disagree as long as there is no direct relationship between God and the individual. The high status afforded saints in communities influenced by Sufism implies an alternative means to communicate with God other than through the Imam, the Islamic clerics. In a fundamentalist Islamic community the highest-ranking Imam is the supreme authority, both politically and religiously, and Sufism presents a potential conflict to this authority that has over the centuries led to persecution of Sufis in several Arab countries. Saudi Arabia and Iran are two countries where the tombs of Sufi saints have been destroyed. In some areas teachings of the Sufi masters are held in high regard practicing Sufism is discouraged or even criminalized.

Sufism is generally believed to have originated among Muslims near Basra in modern Iraq, though there is a history of Sufism in Transoxania dating from shortly after the time of Muhammad. Some scholars believe that early Sufism was essentially the evolution of Islam in a mystic direction, although some of these beliefs lack historic evidence. Annemarie Schimmel proposes that Sufism in its early stages of development meant nothing but the interiorization of Islam. Louis Massignon states: "It is from the Qur’an, constantly recited, meditated, and experienced, that Sufism proceeded, in its origin and its
development." One theory is that Sufism started as pre-Islamic mystical traditions adapted to the new religion. This suggests that in its early days Sufism wasn't a single united sect of Islam but a blanket term to describe many varied systems.

Sufism is said to have been originated near a place called Basra located in Iraq. The Muslims located in this region started off this religion as a path to reach the divine. The divine form who is worshipped in Sufism is Prophet Mohammed. This is one reason why Sufi is considered to have branched from Islam. However, ancient Islamic scriptures have no mention of Sufism in them. Some scholars hold the view that Sufism is the evolution of Islam in a more spiritual and mystic direction. Sufism in its earlier stages was recited and meditated from the Quran.

The Sufi history extends back to the ninth and tenth centuries with several sheikhs predominating in the different periods. The message they permeated their teachings was that the human struggle in the physical world was to help the person fulfill God's covenants and become perfect through God.

In the 13th century a Spanish Moslem and mystic, Muhammad ibn-e-Arabi, emerged to described Prophet Muhammad as the Perfect Man. Also he wrote about the Prophet's ascent into Paradise. Other medieval Christian writers influenced by Sufism included Roger Bacon, Cervantes, Averroes, St. Francis of Assisi, Avicebron, and Chaucer.
What is known as modern Sufism reached its peak during the Mogul and Ottoman empires, in the 1500s to 1800s. Sufi increased the ranks of the Moslem armies during the Islamic expansion of the Middle and Far East during the 18th and 19th centuries; they infiltrated the trade unions and married royal princesses. Then they bravely fought against the European expansion on Islamic lands during the holy war.

Currently Sufism has lost some of its influence by being criticized for its mystical excesses and for worshipping the sheikhs and other holy men.

Throughout its history Sufism records the growing revival, renewal and militancy among many groups of sincere Muslims throughout the expanding Muslim world who were eager to restore the pure and original message brought by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This was a spontaneous awakening of individuals discovering the true prophetic way who were inspired by the inner light of awakening and fulfillment. Sufism spread across the land without its being a centrally organized movement. The Sufi brotherhood was a reality without much of an outer co-ordination or organization. Its reality was the awakening of the original ascetic and joyful qualities within people's hearts and the acceptance of the outer prophetic law. Sufism bore similarities to ascetic mysticism, yet it also allowed for spiritual militancy in many instances. The brotherhood which was experienced by the Sufis was due mostly to their inner conditioning and state of their hearts, rather than to adherence to any particular theological doctrine or other ethnic or traditional bondages.
The Sufi movement in Islam echoed similar movements in other major religions, such as Cabbalism in Judaism, Gnosticism or Unitarianism in Christianity and, in a way, the advent of Buddhism where Hinduism is concerned. Also, as with other spiritual movements and revivals, we find instances of some Sufis taking things to extremes, and even distorting the multi-dimensions of Islam. Excess esotericism, or the rejection of the bounds of outer behaviour or the balanced prophetic way, is examples of this phenomenon, although they are the exception rather than the rule.

The Sufi is the locus of connecting the outer, physical reality with a timeless, spaceless dimension which is experienced within the self. The Sufi lives like the tip of the iceberg which is apparent in the seen world, while experiencing aspects of the hidden and veiled world which is the foundation of what is visible, and which forms the rest of its reality. He does his best to understand the causal, physical outer life while awakening to an immense inner Reality, which encompasses both the known and the unknown worlds, the unitive Reality of the seen and the unseen, of time and space and non-time-space. It is for this reason that the inner life of the Sufi has no bounds, and yet he acknowledges and accepts the outer bounds with courtesy towards nature and the natural creation. The Sufi is totally content with the immeasurable bliss within. Yet he struggles outwardly towards a better quality of life on earth and does his best without being overly concerned about the ultimate results. Outer struggle and work are necessary companions to inner purification and contentment. Genuine Sufis are essentially similar wherever they come from, in that they share an inner light and awakening, and an outer courtesy and
service to humanity. Apparent differences between Sufis tend to relate to matters concerning spiritual practices or prescriptions for the purification of hearts. The sweet fruit of Sufism is the same. It is only the trees which may look different and which may flower in different seasons.

**Sufi Orders**

In the early centuries of Islam, Sufis were not organized into particular circles or orders. However, as time went by, the teaching and personal example of Sufis living in the spiritually decreed code of life began to attract many groups of people.

In the same way that the various schools of Islamic Law which emerged in the early centuries after the Prophet Muhammad's death were meant to define a clear path for the application of that law, so the Sufi Orders which emerged during the same period also intended to define a simple path for the practice of inner purification. In the same way that many great schools of Islamic Law ceased to be propagated and accordingly ended, likewise many great Sufi Orders faced a similar situation. During the 9th century, more than 30 schools of Islamic Law existed, but later on this number was reduced to 5 or 6. During the 12th century, you could not count the number of Sufi Orders, partly because there were so many, and partly because they were not yet defined as such. Most of the great spiritual masters and teachers of the Sufi Orders and schools of law did not expect that their teachings would be given a defined and often a rigid interpretation at a later stage after their deaths, or that the Sufi Orders and schools of law would be named after them. However, the
preservation of the Sufi Orders was often partly a result of their physical isolation as well as the direction that mainstream Islam took.

A noticeable trend within these Sufi Orders is that many of them intermingled, often strengthening each other and at times weakening each other. Most of the Sufi Orders kept a record of their lineage, that is their chain of transmission of knowledge from master to master, which was often traced back to one of the Shi'ite spiritual leaders and accordingly back through Imam Ali to the Prophet Muhammad, as a proof of their authenticity and authority. The only exception to this is the Naqshbandi Sufi Order whose lineage of transmission of knowledge traces back through Abu Bakr, the first leader of the Muslim community in Medina, to Muhammad.¹

The following are a few of the Sufi Orders which are still established today, each with its own predominating characteristics. Seekers of knowledge can be members of one or more of the Sufi Orders, as indeed they often follow more than one spiritual master. The following are only a sample of those Sufi Orders with which the author has personal familiarity.

**The Qadiri Order**

The Qadiri Order was founded by Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Gilani (d. 1166) from Gilan in Persia, who eventually settled in Baghdad in Iraq. After his death, his Sufi Order was propagated by his sons. The Qadiri Order has spread to many places, including Syria, Turkey, some parts of Africa such as

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¹. *Lataif-ul-Asharfi*, p.357
Cameroun, the Congo, Mauritania and Tanzania, and in the Caucasus, Chechen and Ferghana in the [former] Soviet Union, as well as elsewhere.

**The Rifa'i Order**

Founded by Shykh Ahmad ar-Rifa'i (d. 1182) in Basra, the Rifa'i Order has spread to Egypt, Syria, Anatolia in Turkey, Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, and more recently to North America.

**The Shadhili Order**

The Shadhili Order crystallized around Shaykh Abu'l-Hasan ash-Shadhili or Morocco (d. 1258) and eventually became one of the greatest Sufi Orders, having an extraordinarily large following. Today it is found in North Africa, Egypt, Kenya and Tanzania, the Middle East, Sri Lanka and elsewhere, including the West and North America.

**The Mewlavi Order**

The Mewlavi or Mawlawi Order centers around Mawlana Jalal ud-Din Rumi of Qonya in Turkey (d. 1273). Today it is mostly found in Anatolia in Turkey and more recently in North America. The followers of this order are also known as whirling dervishes.

**The Naqshbandi Order**

The Naqshbandi Order takes its name from Shaykh Baha ud-Din Naqshband of Bukhara (d. 1390). It is widely spread in central Asia, the Volga, the
Caucasus, the north-west and south-west of China, Indonesia, the Indian sub-Continental, Turkey, Europe and North America. This is the only known Sufi Order which traces the genealogy of its lineage of transmission of knowledge back through the first Muslim ruler, Abu Bakr, unlike the rest of the known Sufi Orders which trace their origins back to one of the Shi'ite spiritual leaders, and therefore through Imam Ali, and so to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

**The Bektashi Order**

The Bektashi Order was founded by Hajji Bektash of Khurasan (d. 1338). Shi'ite ideas strongly permeate this Sufi Order. It is limited to Anatolia in Turkey and was most powerful up until the early 20th century. The order is regarded as a follower of Shi'a Islamic Law.

**The Ni'amatullah Order**

The Ni'amatullah Order was founded by Shaykh Nur ud-Din Muhammad Ni'amatullah (d. 1431) in Mahan near Kirman in South-west Iran. Its followers are found mostly in Iran and India.

**The Tijani Order**

The Tijani Order was founded by Shaykh Abbas Ahmad ibn at-Tijani, an Algerian Berber (d. 1815). It has spread from Algeria to the south of the Sahara and into western and central Sudan, Egypt, Senegal, West Africa and northern Nigeria, as well as being represented in the West and in North America.
The Jarrahi Order

The Jarrahi Order was founded by Shaykh Nur ud-Din Muhammad al-Jarrah of Istanbul (d. 1720). It is limited mostly in Turkey, with some representation in the West and in North America.

The Chisti Order

The most influential Sufi Order in the sub-Continent of India and Pakistan has been the Chisti Order, which takes its name from Khwaja Abu Ishaq Shami Chisti (d. 966). Its spread has been primarily within south-east Asia.

Sufism in Indian subcontinent

Mystic interpretation of Islamic life within the bonds of religious orthodoxy is known as Sufism, which was initially launched by God fearing people of Perso-Arab world. They renounced the world and devoted themselves to His service. As the seekers of Tawhid (Unity in God) they helped in spread of Islam through mystic movement with intellectualisation of Sunnah (The orthodox customs of Islamic world) as one of its basic principles (Encyclopaedia of Islam). The Sufis either in their lifetime or their tombs after death became a symbol of supernatural power with metaphysical features ascribed to them under the guidelines of Quran and Sunnah. The disciples of Sufis adopted the path of peace or even armed jehad for Shariatisation of the whole world as a mission of holy duty. "Seekers of Tawhid should strive to dedicate themselves to the Prophet Mohammad, so much so that their entire selves, including their hearts and their spirits, were free of thoughts other than of God" (History of Sufism in India by Saiyied Athar Abbas Rizvi, Volume 2, 1992. Page 178).
"Mysticism is a practical spiritual discipline based on the insight of illuminated seekers after truth". It is in fact a mission of higher religious order of any faith, which disdains strife and conflict in any form. Joy of self-realisation being the essence of religion is experienced after a long spiritual practice. The mystics discard outward form of religion once they attain such joy. The concept of Sufism was therefore, to focus the mystic power on the spiritual dimension of Islam with a view to shield the believers from the outwardly and unrealistic dogma of the faith.

Contrary to the spiritual mission of Sufism, the cult was primarily introduced in India for spread of Islam with a view to help the Muslim rulers for political domination. By and large the spiritual successors of mystic Islamic saints enjoyed the royal favour of Muslim rulers and gave moral support to the atrocious Muslim invaders and looked other way to ignore the growing social conflict. They also guided the State in political affairs with their experience of regular interaction with common people.

The way Sufis' tombs emerged as a place of pilgrimage suggests that the missionary objective of the Islamic mystics was formulated mainly for conversion and to establish the Perso-Arabian cultural domination in South Asia. Even though the Sufi saints got convinced with non-Islamic worldview on metaphysics in course of their interaction with non-Muslim saints, they did not allow their followers to accommodate it in the straight jacket of Islamic theology. Sufi saints commonly viewed as symbol of secularism however,
never opposed Jejiya (Tax imposed on non-believers) levied on Hindus in Islamic India.

Sufis had accompanied the Muslim marauders in their conquest and brought Islam in contact with Hindu priests and saints. They were receptive to some of the local Hindu traditions may be for a tactical reason to entice the locals towards Islam but ensured that local norms are not accommodated against the watertight Islamic belief, dogma and practice of Quran, Hadith and Sharia which were the fountainheads of Sufism. Their deeply rooted belief and practice of Islamic norms within Perso-Arabic traditions remained the bedrock of the mystic movement. Therefore, in stead of advising the Muslim marauders against their inhuman deeds, the Sufis overlooked the plight of Hindu priests and saints, who were forced to flee and hide themselves.

Sufism is the sultanate period:

During the period of Sultanate in India these mystics were supposed to guarantee the prosperity to Islamic kingdom. They were patronized by the state for spreading Islam among the non-believers with their acclaimed spiritual influences in the mass. The gift and land provided to the Islamic mystics were used for hospice and their tombs became a place of pilgrimage after their death.

"On paper, the Sultanate seemed to be a perfectly Islamized state (but) religious leaders often of Arab origin and the religion (Islam) were subordinated to the political exigencies of the Turko-Afghans, who were in power" (A History of Modern India edited by Claude Markovitz, Anthen

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Press, 2002, Page 30). "No document attests to the peaceful preaching of the Sufis that most defenders of Islam put forward today" (Ibid. Page 33). "The attraction exercised by the politico-economic benefits that Islam offered seemed to have been the primary motivation for conversion, which particularly affected the middle strata of society" (Ibid. page 33).

Even though the majority of Sufi orders have a Sunni orientation, early Shia Imams were also revered commonly in Sufi circles. However Nakshbandi order of Sufism, which reached the Prophet via Abu Bakra was notably known for anti-Shia views. Suhrawardiyya and Naqshbandiyya orders of Sufism had more support of Muslim political powers in India." The numerous Sufi religious establishments in India were the major means of spreading Islam and adapting it to indigenous cultural tradition" (Islamic Mysticism in India by Nagendra Kumar Singh, former Chairman, Islamic Research Foundation, Delhi).

**Various Sufi Orders:**

Of the various Sufi orders, Muslims of India prominently follow Chistiyya, Naqshbandiyya, Qadiriyya and Suharabardiyya. Of them the impact of Chisti order is visible even in small villages of Indian subcontinent. Khwaja Moin-ud-Din Chisti, a disciple of Khwaja Abu Abdal Chisti, the propounder of this order introduced it in India. Born in Afghanistan in 1142 AD, he came to India with the army of Shihab-ud-Din Ghuri in 1192 AD and selected Ajmer as his permanent abode since 1195. His shrine became a place of pilgrimage largely
with the support of Muslim rulers. Akbar used to have annual pilgrimage there (Indian Islam by Murray T.Titus, 1979, Page 117).

Four Islamic mystics from Afghanistan namely Moinuddin (d. 1233 in Ajmer), Qutbuddin (d. 1236 in Delhi), Nizamuddin (d. 1335 in Delhi) and Fariduddin (d. 1265 in Pattan now in Pakistan) accompanied the Islamic invaders in India (A History of Modern India edited by Claude Markovitz, Anthen Press, 2002, Page 30). All of them were from the Chistiyya order of Islamic mysticism. Radiating from Delhi under Nizamuddin and following the trail of Mohammad ibn Tughlaq towards the south, the Chistiyya spread its roots all across India (A History of Modern India edited by Claude Markovitz, Anthen Press, 2002). Internationally famous Sufi Shine at Ajmer Sharif in Rajasthan and Nizamuddin Auliya in Delhi belong to this order.

A section of Sufis under Chistiyya order was not against adjustment with Hindu saints of Bhakti cult and used even Hindi language for Islamic devotional songs. However, the orthodox Ulama with royal support forced the Sufis to raise the slogan of "back to Shariat" Even though Ulama had certain differences with Sufis over theological and mystic issues, Shariat remained a cementing force between them. Later both the Islamist groups joined together to woo the rulers with a view to furthering their self-seeking interest.

Suharawardy order of Sufism was founded by Shihabud-Din Suharawardy of Baghdad and introduced in India by his disciple Baha-ud-Din Zakariya of Multan. Suharawardiyya order of Sufism became popular in Bengal (Contemporary Relevance of Sufism, 1993, published by Indian Council for
Cultural relations). Qadiri order founded by Abdul Qadir whose tomb is at Baghdad. Its influence is extensively among the Muslims of south India.

Baha-ud-Din Naqshband (1318-1389) of Turkistan founded Naqshbandi order of Sufism. Insistence on rigid adherence to Shariat and nurturing love for prophet was the essence of this order that established its hold in India under the patronage of Mogul rulers, as its founder was their ancestral 'Pir' (Spiritual guide). "The conquest of India by Babur in 1526 gave considerable impetus to the Naqshbandiyya order" (History of Sufism in India by Saiyied Athar Abbas Rizvi, Volume 2, 1992, Page 180). Its disciples remained loyal to the throne because of the common Turk origin. With the royal patronage of most of the Mogul rulers Naqshbandi order served the cause for revival of Islam in its pristine form.

Khwaja Mohhammed Baqi Billah Berang whose tomb is in Delhi (E.I.Rose ) introduced Naqshbandi order in India. Though, the Sufis of this order were lying low during the period of Akbar, Khalifa Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, (1564-1624), a favourite disciple of Baqi Billah achieved increasing importance and popularised this order when the Great Mogul became bed ridden. Baqi Billah, nicknamed him as 'Mujaddid (Reformer or reviver of Islam for the second millenium).

Sufi Thinkers:

The Sharia-guided mystic influence of Sufis produced the Muslim thinkers like Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, Shah Wali Ullah, Sayied Ahmad Barelavi, Karamat Ali, Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan, Allama Iqbal and Maulana Maududi.
They used the mystic philosophy befitting to the political exigencies of the time for revival of political supremacy of Islam. Of them the Sufis like Sirhindi and Wali Ullah, who politicised the mystic ideology for political domination of Islam. They were projected as Islamic reformists for purifying Islam from any extraneous influences. They conveyed the political aspect of Islam to Muslim masses so aggressively that it created a permanent imprint on their psyche. It is therefore said that the Sufi Islamists saved the Islam but failed to save the downfall of Mogul Empire.

The mission of Shaikh Sirhindi popularly know as Mujaddid was to purify Islam from the influence of Akbar with a view to counter his policy of "the Hindu wielding the sword of Islam" and "Peace with all". Unhappy with the regime of Emperor Akbar for withdrawal of Jejia tax imposed on the Hindus, Sirhindi made hectic effort to purge Islam of all extraneous influences. He viewed Hindu mystics like Guru Nanak and Sant Kabir contemptible, as they did not follow Sharia.

With contempt against old schools of mysticism for tolerance, Sirhindi condemned the reign of Akbar for his 'broadmindedness' and policy of 'peace with all'. Propagating against the contemporary socio-cultural situation Sirhindi, felt that the attitude of Akbar "sullied the purity of Islam and the political social and cultural life of Muslims" (History of Sufism in India by Saiyied Athar Abbas Rizvi, Volume 2, 1992, Page 212). During the closing years of Akbar reign, when his son Salim had revolted against him, Sirhindi spread the virus of communalism with some success "in the beginning
of Jehangir's reign". He strongly criticised freedom of worship granted to the Hindus. Hate-Hindu syndrome was so deep in him that "death of Akbar (1605) filled Shaikh Ahmad with hopes that the pristine purity of Islam would be implanted in India" (Sufism in India by Saiyied Athar Abbas Rizvi, Volume 2, 1992, Page 204). "Misguided and greedy Ulama, he (Sirhindi) believed, were responsible for the alleged downfall of Islam in Akbar's regime" (Ibid. Page 365.)

With his strong contempt against Shia and the Hindus, Sirhind wrote several letters to the nobles in the court of Jehangir for guiding the emperor on the path of Shariat, and for removal of Qafirs (Shias and Hindus) from the administration. He was dead against any honourable status of Hindus in Islamic government. Sirhind wanted the religious freedom enjoyed by the Hindus during Akbar regime to be curbed. Enraged with his too much interference in administration, Jehangir imprisoned him in Gwalier (A History of Sufism in India by Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, Vol. II, 1972, Page 178) but released him after one year. Sirhind not only "injected communal virus into the body politic of the country but also generated hatred, mutual distrust and discord among the various sections of Muslims" (Ibid. page XII). Despite this anti-Hindu tirade of Sirhindi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in 1919 eulogised the role of Mujaddid (Sirhind), "who did not see eye to eye with the policy of state" (Ibid. Page215).

Shah Wali Ullah, a prominent Muslim thinker of eighteenth century who shaped the destiny of Indian Muslims was also a Sufi of Naqshbandi order.
His contempt against the Hindus was identical to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. The rise of two Hindu rebellious groups namely Marathas and Jats against the Muslim rulers in 1750s stirred the mystic spirit of Wali Ullah and he invited Ahmad Shah Abdali, the Afghan ruler to invade India to save the Muslims from the subjugation of Hindus. While formulating the contours of his mystical ideology, he transformed the Islamic mysticism to a theo-political concept for supremacy of Islam and for political power to the Sunnis.

Wali Ullah started a tradition of reformed Sufism in which Islamic mysticism was far superior to other form of mystic philosophy. His reform in Sufi cult made the spirituality of Islam subservient to Political Islam. His doctrine for internal unity of Muslims through complete adherence to pure Islam was only to fight against the infidels and for reestablishment of assertive Islamic political power. His ideology had no scope to accommodate any order of non-Islamic mysticism, which he regarded unhealthy. He tried to comb out all the foreign influences, such as neo-platonism and Vedantism from Islamic mysticism. Carving out a new path for Sufism he became an active Islamist with a sole objective for resurgent Sunni political power in Delhi. (A History of Sufism in India, Vol. II, Rizvi, Page 259).

Bridging the gulf between the Islamic clerics and Sufis. Wali Ullah infused new vigour in practice of Naqshbandi1 Sufi order. He synthesised the disciplines of the three major Sufi orders namely Qadari, Chisti and Naqshbandi with a view to unite the Muslim society against the Hindus. Like

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1. Supplement, p-89.
Shaikh Ahmad Sirhind he was also against the presence of Hindu employees in the administration of Muslim rulers as he viewed it detrimental to the purity of Islam. His attempt was to purify Islam from the mystic influence of Hinduism. Under the influence of Serhindi whose belief that Islam is a complete way of life stirred the Muslims to retrieve the medieval glory of the faith in this sub continent. The exclusivist Ideology of Wali Ullah, which sowed the seed of Muslim separatism in South Asia had nothing to do with the secular intellectual approach towards spiritualism.

Against the total rejection of Sufism by his contemporary radical Islamist Wahhab of Saudi Arabia, Waliullah used his mystic ideology for political domination of the Muslims in the region. However, the spirit and aim of both were for adherence to pure Islam. He was the main guiding source for Muslims after the decline of Islamic rule in Indian subcontinent. Contrary to the commonly viewed Sufi tradition he was not receptive to the spiritual tradition of local Hindus in any form. His main spiritual concerns if any was for revival of Islamic India.

The Muslim ruler under the influence of the doctrine of Shah Wali Ullah patronised Islamic learning and "took away the administrative and economic power that had passed into the hands of Hindus" (Islamic Mysticism in India by Nagendra Kumar Singh, Page 185). "For Shah Wali Ullah, the decline of Mogul political power and the spiritual decadence of Indian Islam were closely related "(The Sufi Orders in Islam by J. Spencer Trimingham, Oxford, 1971. Page 196).
Sayyid Ahmad Barelvi, a disciple of Abd al Aziz, (the son of Shah Wali Ullah) continued the tradition of Waliullah by synthesising the three major Sufi orders" (The Sufi orders in Islam by Spencer Trimingham, Oxford, 1971, Page 129). He launched armed jehad against the non-Muslims but was killed in the battle of Balkot against Sikh leader Ranjit Singh. Karamat Ali, a disciple of Sayed Ahmad Barelavi further developed the ideology for purifying Islam from the influences of Hindu custom and tradition. "His work largely paved the way for the establishment of the organisation which has more recently been developed under the name of Ahl-I-Hadith" (Indian Islam by Murray T Titus, 1979, Page 186). It was a neo-Sufi concept of Islam interpreted by Shah Wali-Ullah.

The leaders of Deoband movement were also under the influence of both Wali Ullah and Wahhab and accordingly they resisted against the British and were critical of Aligarh movement because of its leader Sir Sayed Ahmad being loyal to it. Protracted struggle with the concept of greater jehad was the basic creed of Deoband movement, which is a synthesis of Wahhab and Wali Ullah. Deobandis extreme austere approach towards Wahhab and harsh condemnation of the much popular practice of Sufism in India are being viewed as a totally anti-Sufi movement. Ahmad Riza Khan Barilavi(1856-1921), the founder of Barelvi movement was the defender of traditional Sufi movement but Mohammad Ilyas, a pietistic missionary group though, appropriated the ethical emphasis of Sufism rejected its ritual, metaphysics and sainthood (M.A.Haq - The Faith Movement of Maulana Ilyas, London, 1972 - Quoted from Encyclopaedia of Islam Vol. X, page 336).
Sufi during British Rule:

Sufi movement became dormant with the decline of Muslim power in India. With the failure of armed resistance against the British and Sikh- Hindu combined, the followers of hard line Sufism were forced to adjust with the ground reality of non-Muslim occupation of Indian subcontinent but did not reconcile with it. The failure of Sepoy mutiny and consolidation of British power in Indian subcontinent was a further jolt on the radical Islamists but all the Islamic revivalist movements like Deoband, Aligarh and Pakistan drew their inspirations from the anti Hindu syndrome of Sufi saints like Sirhind and Shah Wal Ullah. Khilafat movement and subsequent Pakistan movement were the outcome of the jehadi interpretation of Walli Ullah brand of neo-Sufi jehad against the political domination of non-believers. The resistance of Muslims against the British and subsequently against the Indian National Congress was due to deep and hard line influence of Shah Wali Ullah over them.

Before the failure of 1857 Sepoy mutiny Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan was a follower of the neo-Sufi cult of Shah Waliullah. Elizabeth Syrriyeh (Sufis and Anti-Sufis, 1999) maintained that Syed Ahmad Khan gradually distanced himself fro Shah Wali ullah. But firmly rooted in the Indian Islamic mysticism he was deeply pained with the plight of Muslims after the collapse of Sepoy mutiny of 1857. He therefore, took up the challenge of modern education and transformed the revolutionary mystic ideology of Shah Wali Ullah for revitalisation of Islamic glory through western education. Had he distanced himself from Wali Ullah, he would not have initiated the two-nation theory on
the line of this Sufi Islamist to promote the movement of Muslim separatism through his Aligarh movement.

Sir Sayed’s philosophy was a synthesis of progressive and orthodox Islam. On one hand he favoured modern education on European pattern and on the other he supported Islamic orthodoxy for superior religious identity of Muslims. He reinterpreted the cultural heritage of Islam within the mystic ideological frame of Wali Ullah. His Aligarh movement was a tactical but a hidden alliance of the Muslims with British under latter's sovereignty to revive the supremacy of Muslims. He advocated for free discussion on Islam but due to his communal obsession he did not strive hard to prove his point for the socio-religious integration of Indian society. His excluvist belief of Muslims’ superiority was based on the mystic ideology of Wali Ullah. It was against the unity of Indian society.

According to Allama Iqbal, "he (Wali Ullah) was the first Muslim to feel the urge for rethinking the whole system of Islam without in any way breaking away from its past" (The Sufi Orders in Islam by J. Spencer Trimingham, Oxford, 1971, Page 198). In fact Wali Ullah and Abd al Wahhab recommended religiously approved jehad against unbelievers (non-Muslims) but rejected the commonly viewed difference between lesser jehad and greater jehad. "This physical armed struggle had commonly been termed 'lesser jihad' (al-jihad-al-asghar), the greater jihah (al-jihad-al-akbar) being the struggle for the interior spiritualisation of individual battle waged against the base self
rather than exterior armies" (Sufis and anti-Sufis by Elizabeth Surriyeh, 1999, Page 29).

Iqbal was a known follower of Islamic mysticism of Qadiriyya order. He, synthesied the mystic ideology of Wali Ullah and the modern view on Islam of Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan and made his Islamic mystic approach completely subservient to political domination of the Muslims. Applying modern philosophy in his intellectual exploration of Sufism he gradually turned to an anti-Sufi philosopher. He said, "The present day Muslims prefer to roam about aimlessly in the dusty valleys of Hellenic -Persiam mysticism, which teaches us to shut our eyes to the hard reality around, and to fix our gaze on what it describes as 'Illuminations' a blue, red and yellow reality springing up from the cells of an overworked brain" (Sufis and anti-Sufis by Elizabeth Syrrieh, 1999). "Sufi shaikhs constituting a spiritual aristocracy, Iqbal appealed to Muslim youth to cast off the Sufi noose from their neck" (Ibid. Page133). For Iqbal Sufism was a formulation of Islamic Persianism. It was contrary to the purity of Arabic faith in its original version. His rejection of Sufism was influenced by Wahhabi movement of Saudi Arabia, which was more concerned with Islamic power following the decline of Muslim power in eighteenth century.

Passion to the essential spirituality of life was hardly found in any Muslim ruler or Prince except Dara Shikoh (1615-1659). He was perhaps the only sincere Muslim prince, whose "effort was to find a common ground between
Hindu and Muslim religious thought" (Islamic Mysticism in India by Nagendra Kumar Singh, Page 179). For this he was accused of heresy.

Under the patronage of the State under Muslim rulers, the Sufi mystics while offering spiritual guidance and support to the Hindu subjects allured them for adoption of Muslim identity, superiority of Arbo-Persian-Turkish tradition and accordingly transplanted them in the cultural tradition of India. "The establishment of Sufi orders in India coincided with the rising political power of Muslims (Muslim-Almanac edited by Azim A.Nanji, 1996, Page 61).

Despite the fact that except Prophet Mohammad, the sainthood in Islam has been a debatable issue, Sufism of various orders in the name of their founder saints has become a universal aspect of Islam. Sufis are known as Islamic spiritualists and the Muslims commonly view them as intermediaries between God and individuals.

Muslims of the Indian subcontinent prominently follow Chistiyya, Naqshbandiyya, Qadiriyya and Suharabardiyya orders. Of them the Chisti order is the most visible. Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti, a disciple of Khwaja Abu Abdal Chishti, the propounder of this order introduced it in India. He came to India from Afghanistan with the army of Shihab-ud-Din Ghuri in 1192 AD and started living permanently in Ajmer since 1195. Centuries later, with the support of Mughal rulers, his shrine became a place of pilgrimage. Akbar used to visit the shrine every year [1].

Turkic invaders into India were accompanied by four Sufi mystics of the Chistiyya order from Afghanistan: Moinuddin (d. 1233 in Ajmer), Qutbuddin
(d. 1236 in Delhi), Nizamuddin (d.1335 in Delhi) and Fariduddin (d.1265 in Pattan now in Pakistan) [2]. During the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq, who spread the Delhi sultanate towards the south, the Chistiyya spread its roots all across India [3]. The Sufi shine at Ajmer in Rajasthan and Nizamuddin Auliya in Delhi belong to this order.

Some Sufis under Chistiyya order were not against absorbing ideas from the Hindu Bhakti movement and used even Hindi language for their devotional songs. However, the orthodox Ulama with royal support insisted that Sufis go "back to Shariat" Even though Ulama had certain differences with Sufis over theological and mystic issues, the Shariat remained a cementing force between them. [4]

The Suharawardy order was started by Shihabud-Din Suharawardy of Baghdad and brought to India by Baha-ud-Din Zakariya of Multan. Suharawardiyya order of Sufism gained popularity in Bengal [5]. The Qadiri order founded by Abdul Qadir whose tomb is at Baghdad. It is popular among the Muslims of South India.

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India is the land of spiritualism. Some of the major religions of the world have been started over here. Sufism has also been present in India since a long time
and even today we find a number of Sufi followers here. Some of the popular Sufi saints of India have been discussed below.

**Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti**

Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti was one of the most famous Sufi saints in India. He is the founder of the Chisthiya order in India. He was born in Persia and is said to be a direct descendent of Prophet Muhammad. He settled in Ajmer in India from where he preached the principles of Sufism to all. He had a massive following and even today, people irrespective of their religions are adopting his principles of Sufism. Every year, his death anniversary is celebrated in Ajmer at his tomb when thousands of believers gather to pay respect to this great Sufi saint.

**Hazrat Nizam-Ud-Din**

Another famous Sufi saint of the Chisti order in India was Hazrat Khwaja Nizam-ud-din Auliya, who was popularly known as Hazrat Nizam-ud-Din. His real name was Mohammad and at the age of 20, he became the student of Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakkar. He was revered saint who is supposed to have been the master of Amir Khusro. His shrine located in Delhi is a popular attraction for Sufi followers.

**Bulleh Shah**

Baba Bulleh Shah was a revered Sufi saint of India whose real name was Abdullah Shah. He preached his teachings and principles in Punjab. During the time he was at his peak, there was much unrest between Muslims and
Sikhs. He preached nothing but the truth and his words of wisdom pacified those affected by the constant tiffs between Muslims and Sikhs. Through his poems, he criticized the orthodox religious systems that were prevalent during his time. His poems were written in Punjabi and Sindhi as these were languages that common people could read and understand.

**Sufism in Modern Times**

During the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the major Sufi movements in Africa and Asia were often connected to mainstream Islamic movements. The Sufis were the elite of their societies, and often led the reform movements or opposition to oppression and foreign or colonial domination. Thus, for example, they were deeply involved in political movements such as the uprisings in Morocco and Algeria against the French, and the rebuilding of society and Islamic governance in Libya\(^1\), which was carried out largely by members of the Sanusi Order. In northern Nigeria, Shaykh Uthman dan Fodio (d. 1817), a member of the Qadiri Order, led the religious war against the Habe rulers who had failed to govern according to the Islamic Law, which had led to the imposition of arbitrary taxes, general corruption, oppression and the dwindling of Islamic morality both at the popular and at the courtly levels. Further eastwards, Shaykh Muhammad Ahmad al-Mahdi (d. 1885), a member of the Tsemani Order, successfully opposed attempts at British colonial rule in Sudan. Similar phenomena occurred in the East as well. For example, the Naqshbandi Sufis and Shah Wali'ullah challenged the British colonial power in India.

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\(^1\) Khair-ul-Majalis, p-62
Thus the Sufis were in action in many countries during the colonial era, opposing the colonial dismantling of Islamic governance and attempting to revive and sustain original Islam. They often formed or were at the heart of strong social groupings, and had great followings in many parts of the world. What kept many of these movements coherent and strong was the fact that during the nineteenth century people were not mobile, and the control or ownership of land, together with the influence of long-established cultural traditions, played an important role in the stability of society. However during the twentieth century, the situation began to change radically and rapidly.

It is important that we do not confuse the spiritual qualities of an individual with outer events. Imam Ali, the master of all Sufis, had only war on his hands during his years as the leader of the Muslim community. Outer events can sometimes confuse the onlooker and conceal the light of such beings.

As for the state of Sufism in the West in the more recent past, we observe in conclusion that many of the groups that had accepted Sufism in order to benefit from some of its disciplines, doctrines, practices or experiences have begun to disintegrate. These groups of the 'new age' movement which embraced a number of ideas derived from Sufism are breaking apart because their way of life is not in harmony with the mainstream of original Islam, and accordingly they do not have the outer protection which is necessary to protect and ensure the safety of the inner movement. Thus during the last few decades of this century, we observe that most Sufi movements in the West have either
been strengthened by holding on to the outer practices of Islam, or weakened and degenerated by not doing so Universal Sufism

**Universal Sufism**

Universal Sufism is a spiritual and universalist movement founded by Hazrat Inayat Khan in the early 20th century. The philosophy of Universal Sufism revolves around a unity of all people and religions, as well as the ability to find beauty in all things. Universal Sufism is one of the forms of Sufism that does not exist within the traditional framework of Islam, and indeed the beliefs of Universal Sufism are almost certainly influenced by Advaita philosophy. Universal Sufism is characterised by its respect (if not inclusion) for other devotional traditions and its disapproval of miracles.

**History**

Hazrat Inayat Khan is the founder of Universal Sufism, which he established while traveling throughout the West between 1910 and 1926. His eldest son Vilayat Khan, second son Hidayat Khan, and grandsons, Fazal Inayat-Khan, and Zia Khan are commonly regarded as his successors. Hazrat Inayat Khan was originally a member of the Chishti Sufi order, and some Universal Sufis still trace their Silsila (lineage) to the Chishti order.

The History of the Branches of Universal Sufi Orders Sufi Inayat Khan passed away unexpectedly in 1927. Leadership of the Sufi Movement he had founded first passed to his brother, Shaikh-ul-Mashaikh Maheboob Khan; in 1948 to his cousin, Pir-o-Murshid Ali Khan; in 1956 to his youngest brother, Pir-o-
Murshid Musharaff Khan; and in 1968 to his grandson, Pir-o-Murshid Fazal Inayat-Khan.

In the 1980s Murshid Fazal proposed a bifurcation between Sufi Movement and the Sufi Way, which became a specific branch of Inayat Khan's lineage founded by Murshid Fazal in 1985. For an in-depth description of this history written by Murshid Fazal – read “Western Sufism: The Sufi Movement, The Sufi Order International, and The Sufi Way.” Following the death in 1990 of Murshid Fazal, he was succeeded by the first woman leader of the tariqah (path), Pirani Sitara Brutnell. She passed away in 2004, naming Pir Elias Amidon as her successor.

In 1988 Hidayat Khan assumed the role of Representative General of the International Sufi Movement, and Pir of its spiritual school. At various times during the 20th century there were other disputes among Inayat Khan’s mureeds about who should most rightfully be the next leader of the Sufi Movement. Inayat Khan’s eldest son, Vilayat Inayat Khan, contended for many years that it was his right, culminating in his establishing his own order, the Sufi Order International. His son Zia Inayat-Khan assumed the role of leader of the Sufi Order International on 5 February 2000 following his father's death.

Another American mureed of Sufi Inayat’s, Samuel Lewis, also rose to prominence in the late 1960’s, and while not claiming leadership of the Sufi Movement, began his own related order, the Sufi Ruhaniat International. The
richness and variety of teachings within the western Sufi tradition inspired by Inayat Khan is a sign of its vitality.

**The Purpose of Universal Sufism**

Hazrat Inayat Khan set forth three goals that he hoped Universal Sufis would strive to achieve. These are as follows:

To realize and spread the knowledge of Unity, the religion of Love, and Wisdom, so that the biases and prejudices of faiths and beliefs may, of themselves, fall away, the human heart overflow with love, and all hatred caused by distinctions and differences be rooted out.

To discover the light and power latent in Humanity, the secret of all Religion, the power of Mysticism, and the essence of Philosophy, without interfering with customs and beliefs.

To help to bring the world's two opposite poles, East and West, close together by the interchange of thought and ideals; that the Universal Family may form of itself, and people meet with people beyond the narrow national and racial boundaries.

**Beliefs**

Universal Sufis believe in Wahdat-ul-Wujood, which is a Pantheist view. God is also understood as Universal Intelligence. The common Sufi term is Aql-i Kulli (from the Arabic al-aql al-kulli).
Hazrat Inayat Khan termed God as Nur-Zahoor, he said that this universe is nothing but a manifestation of the divine. The Universal Intelligence manifests in the human consciousness as the Spirit of guidance, which is equated with the "Word of God, the Logos." Through meditation one can listen to this. The Spirit of Guidance is somewhat similar to the idea of Buddha Nature. Universal Sufis believe in an essential unity of the great religions of the world. However, this does not mean they believe the various religious creeds and doctrines are identical. Rather, they view all religions as having sprung from the same spiritual source. The social and outer forms of different religions vary due to the circumstances at the time that they were founded. Other differences in doctrine and belief can be attributed to later accretions, after the death of the founder.

Universal Sufism is a Universalist faith, as it believes that everyone will eventually be "saved" or achieve union with God.

The Coming World Religion

Universal Sufism believes that there is no one religious belief which is true for all people at all times, Hazrat Inayat Khan said that attempting to create new religions is like saying "I wish to teach you new wisdom." Wisdom is simply Wisdom, nothing more and nothing less. Khan links this to the saying of Jesus Christ "Think not that I have come to destroy the law, or the prophets, I have not come to destroy, but to fulfill." Khan believed that people who start wars in the name of religion have immature intellects, and no one religion can claim supremacy over another. Hazrat Inayat Khan saw that the future of religion
was one where all people would realise what is called Dharma in Indian traditions, that is one's duty towards all beings, one where everyone would be thoughtful, considerate and obligated towards our fellow humans. He said that the person who is conscious of honour, shame, sincerity, who is sympathetic and shows devotion is the one who is "religious." The future religion would be one in which people do not "believe" but live.

The Soul

Every person has a fundamental "essence", which does not end with death, but rather goes on to further better itself, until finally it realises union with the Universal Intelligence, which is in fact its true nature. Heaven and Hell are creations of the mind, Heaven being Nirvana - and thus peace, and Hell being ignorance. The Sufi practices teach one to realise oneself in this lifetime (this concept is linked to that of Sach Khand in Sikhism and Jeevan Moksha in Hinduism). The concept of the soul is nearly identical to the Hindu term Atman.

Hazrat Inayat Khan stated that the Soul is the Intelligence being "caught" by the mind and body, therefore Soul and Intellect are not two things, but One. He also likened the soul to a tree; the same essence that gives life to the trunk also animates the branches, the leaves and the seeds.

Differences Between Religions

The differences between religions and how they relate to different people at different times can be explained allegorically using a quote from Layla and
Majnun: When someone said to Majnun, "Layla is not so beautiful as you think," he said "My Layla must be seen with my eyes, if you wish to see how beautiful Layla is, you must borrow my eyes."

**Beliefs about Jesus Christ**

According to The Sufi Message of Hazrat Inayat Khan, Volume 9:

"The Christ-spirit cannot be explained in words. The omnipresent intelligence, which is in the rock, in the tree, and in the animal, shows its gradual unfoldment in man. This is a fact accepted by both science and metaphysics. The intelligence shows its culmination in the complete development of human personality, such as the personality, which was recognized in Jesus Christ by his followers".

Khan tends to refer to the Holy Spirit in terms of the Spirit of Guidance, which is what a major Sufi prayer called the Invocation is directed towards. This spirit and Jesus are considered to be one; however, Universal Sufis believe this spirit to be manifest in all beings. This belief has parallels in Quakerism.

**Beliefs about Muhammad**

Hazrat Ali said, 'The secret of God can be studied in His nature.' Every traveller on foot as a rule lights his torch at the approach of night. So also this heavenly traveller. Seeing darkness overwhelming Him in the lower spheres on His path, He lights a torch. It is the light of this torch, which is called in the Qur'an, Nur-e Mohammadi, that has guided Him to the surface, whence He could clearly discern and find His path back. To the knower's eye, this Nur,
this light, is the real Mohammed. This light it is which has beamed forth through all the Masters of humanity and is known as the Light of Guidance.

It is the nature of every luminous object to shed light all around, and yet a particular beam of light coming forth from it gives more illumination than light spread all around. This may be seen in the light of the sun. The souls which happen to be in the zone of that beam of the Light of Guidance, whether by intention or accident, have been known to the world as the chosen ones of God. They saw God sooner, they heard Him more quickly than others, they have been nearer to Him than others. They may be called the elect of God as it is said in the Song to the Soul of the Saint:

Before the righteous soul, Servant of God, even the angels bend; His lotus feet the long-desired goal Where weary pilgrims find their journeys end In pardon for their sin. Thus, as the saint God comes, and man is healed, And fortunate that happy one, within Whose heart the mystic vision is revealed.

So therefore, the historical Muhammad is seen as a person, just as the historical Jesus of Nazareth is. However, the inner light or Noor which is present in all beings is viewed as the essence of all prophets and divine beings.

**Karma**

Inayat Khan did not speak of the term Karma, but he did refer to it using the terms "Law of Reciprocity" (see Creedal Statement number 5). It can be explained thus:
Right and Wrong depend upon the attitude and situation, not upon the action itself. None are innate but we have the ultimate choice between them. When we give do any action it echoes back to us in the same form. Therefore Reciprocity is likened to a dome, in order to have a good echo one gives good, and to have evil one gives evil. Because we "Live, Move and Have Our Being in God" everything we do must be in awareness of this and therefore it is our duty to refresh the world and help to rid it of negative action and rebound. This is why it is said that humans have free-will. If we blame God for the evil in the world, and say that he is responsible, in truth it is us who are responsible because through us God has his experience, through us God's will is done. Hazrat Inayat Khan said "If you wish to be happy, think of the happiness of your fellow human being"

**Ignorance**

Ignorance is the state of the mind when it is in darkness. When mental vibrations flow into the astral plane, without conscious direction, it is called imagination; when they do so under conscious direction, it is called thought. When the imagination is experienced during sleep it is called a dream.

**Revelation**

Revelation is the disclosing of the inner self. The consciousness throughout manifestation facing towards the surface, turns its back to the world within, the sight of which is therefore lost to it. But when it begins to look within, the world unseen is disclosed, and Choudatabaq, the fourteen planes, consisting of the seven heavens and the seven earths, are revealed. 'The veil shall be lifted
from thine eyes and thy sight shall be keen', as it is said in Qur'an. And annihilation (Fana) is equivalent to 'losing the false self (Nafs)'; which again culminates in what is called Eternal Life Baqa).

**The Purpose of Life (According to Hazrat Inayat Khan)**

Then the only purpose of our life here on earth, if there be any, is the successful attainment of life's demands. It may seem strange at first sight that all which life demands should be allowable and worth-while attaining; but on a closer study of life we see that the demands of our external self are the only ones we know, and we are ignorant of the demands of the true self, our inner life. For instance, we know that we want good food and nice clothes, comfort of living and every convenience for moving about; honor, possessions, and all necessary means for the satisfaction of our vanity, all of which for the moment appear to us as our life's only demands; but neither they nor their joy remain with us constantly. We then come to think that what we had was but a little and that perhaps more would satisfy us, and still more would suffice our need; but this is not so. Even if the whole universe were within our grasp it would be impossible fully to satisfy our life's demands. This shows that our true life has quite different demands from those with which we are familiar. It does not want the joy experienced by this individual self only; it desires joy from all around. It does not wish for a momentary peace, but for one that is everlasting. It does not desire to love a beloved held in the arms of mortality. It needs a beloved to be always before it. It does not want to be loved only for today and perhaps not tomorrow. It wishes to float in the ocean of love.
The Coming of a Messiah in Sufi Thought

What is the Sufi's belief regarding the coming of a World Teacher, or, as some speak of it, the 'second coming of Christ'? The Sufi is free from beliefs and disbeliefs, and yet gives every liberty to people to have their own opinion. There is no doubt that if an individual or a multitude believe that a teacher or a reformer will come, he will surely come to them. Similarly, in the case of those who do not believe that any teacher or reformer will come, to them he will not come. To those who expect the Teacher to be a man, a man will bring the message; to those who expect the Teacher to be a woman, a woman must deliver it. To those who call on God, God comes\(^1\). To those who knock at the door of Satan, Satan answers. There is an answer to every call. To a Sufi the Teacher is never absent, whether he comes in one form or in a thousand forms. He is always one to him, and the same One he recognizes to be in all, and all Teachers he sees in his one Teacher alone. For a Sufi, the self within, the self without, the kingdom of the earth, the kingdom of heaven, the whole being is his teacher, and his every moment is engaged in acquiring knowledge. For some, the Teacher has already come and gone, for others the Teacher may still come, but for a Sufi the Teacher has always been and will remain with him for ever.

Life in this World

One may try to see from the point of view of another as well as from one's own, and so give freedom of thought to everybody because one demands it oneself; one may try to appreciate what is good in another, and overlook what

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\(^1\) Akhbar-ul-Akhyar. p-81
one considers bad; if somebody behaves selfishly towards one, one may take it naturally, because it is human nature to be selfish, and so one is not disappointed; but if one appears oneself to be selfish, one should take oneself to task and try to improve. There is not anything one should not be ready to tolerate, and there is nobody whom one should not forgive. Never doubt those whom you trust; never hate those whom you love; never cast down those whom you once raise in your estimation. Wish to make friends with everyone you meet; make an effort to gain the friendship of those you find difficult; become indifferent to them only if you cannot succeed in your effort. Never wish to break the friendship once made. If anyone causes harm, one should try to think it is because one has deserved it in some way, or else it is that the one who harms knows no better. Remember that every soul that raises its head in life gets much opposition from the world. It has been so with all the prophets, saints and sages, so one cannot expect to be exempt. In this is the law of nature, and also God's plan working and preparing something desirable. No one is either higher or lower than oneself. In all sources that fulfil one's need, one may see one source, God, the only source; and in admiring and in bowing before and in loving anyone, one may consider one is doing it to God. In sorrow one may look to God, and in joy one may thank Him. One does not bemoan the past, nor worry about the future; one tries only to make the best of today. One should know no failure, for even in a fall there is a stepping-stone to rise; but to the Sufi the rise and fail matter little. One does not repent for what one has done, since one thinks, says, and does what one means. One does not fear the consequences of performing one's wish in life, for what will be, will be. Inside the Universal Sufi, Murad Hassil, Katwijk Credal Statement
Hazrat Inayat Khan set the following thoughts, which form the basic creed of Universal Sufism:

1. There is one God the Eternal, the Only Being, None exists save God. The God of the Sufi is the God of every creed, and the God of all. Names make no difference to her/him. Allah, God, Gott, Dieu, Brahma, or Bhagwan, all these names and more are the names of God; and yet to God is beyond the limitation of name. The Sufi sees God in the sun, in the fire, in the idol which diverse sects worship; and he/she recognizes God in all the forms of the universe, yet knowing God to be beyond all form: God in all, and all in God, the Seen and the Unseen, the Only Being. God to the Sufi is not only a religious belief, but also the highest ideal the human mind can conceive.

The Sufi, forgetting the self and aiming at the attainment of the divine ideal, walks constantly all through life in the path of love and light. In God the Sufi sees the perfection of all that is in the reach of man's perception and yet he knows Him to be above human reach. He looks to Him as the lover to his beloved and takes all things in life as coming from Him, with perfect resignation. The sacred name of God is to him as medicine to the patient. The divine thought is the compass by which he steers the ship to the shores of immortality. The God-ideal is to a Sufi as a lift by which he raises himself to the eternal goal, the attainment of which is the only purpose of his life.
2. There is one Master the Guiding Spirit of all souls, who constantly leads all followers toward the Light

The Sufi understands that although God is the source of all knowledge, inspiration, and guidance, yet man is the medium through which God chooses to impart His knowledge to the world. He imparts it through one who is a man in the eyes of the world, but God in his consciousness. It is the mature soul that draws blessings from the heavens, and God speaks through that soul. Although the tongue of God is busy speaking through all things, yet in order to speak to the deaf ears of many among us, it is necessary for Him to speak through the lips of man. He has done this all through the history of man, every great teacher of the past having been this Guiding Spirit living the life of God in human guise. In other words, their human guise consists of various coats worn by the same person, who appeared to be different in each. Shiva, Buddha, Rama, Krishna on the one side, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed on the other; and many more, known or unknown to history, always one and the same person.

Those who saw the person and knew Him recognized Him in whatever form or guise; those who could only see the coat went astray. To the Sufi therefore there is only one Teacher, however differently He may be named at different periods of history, and He comes constantly to awaken humanity from the slumber of this life of illusion, and to guide man onwards towards divine perfection. As the Sufi progresses in this
view he recognizes his Master, not only in the holy ones, but in the wise, in the foolish, in the saint and in the sinner, and has never allowed the Master who is One alone, and the only One who can be and who ever will be, to disappear from his sight.

The Persian word for Master is Murshid. The Sufi recognizes the Murshid in all beings of the world, and is ready to learn from young and old, educated and uneducated, rich and poor, without questioning from whom he learns. Then he begins to see the light of Risalat, the torch of truth which shines before him in every being and thing in the universe. Thus he sees Rasul, his Divine Message Bearer, a living identity before him. Thus the Sufi sees the vision of God, the worshipped deity, in His immanence, manifest in nature, and life now becomes for him a perfect revelation both within and without.

It is often for no other reason than clinging to the personality of their particular teacher, claiming for him superiority over other teachers, and degrading a teacher held in the same esteem by others, that people have separated themselves from one another, and caused most of the wars and factions and contentions which history records among the children of God.

What the Spirit of Guidance is, can be further explained as follows: as in man there is a faculty for art, music, poetry and science, so in him is the faculty or spirit of guidance; it is better to call it spirit because it is the
supreme faculty from which all the others originate. As we see that in
every person there is some artistic faculty, but not everyone is an artist,
as everyone can hum a tune but only one in a thousand is a musician, so
every person possesses this faculty in some form and to a limited degree;
but the spirit of guidance is found among few indeed of the human race.
A Sanskrit poet says, 'Jewels are stones, but cannot be found
everywhere; the sandal tree is a tree, but does not grow in every forest;
as there are many elephants, but only one king elephant, so there are
human beings all over the world, but the real human being is rarely to be
found.'
When we arise above faculty and consider the spirit of guidance, we
shall find that it is consummated in the Bodhisatva, the spiritual teacher
or divine messenger. There is a saying that the reformer is the child of
civilization, but the prophet is its father. This spirit has always existed,
and must always exist; and in this way from time to time the message of
God has been given.

3. There is one Holy Book the Sacred Manuscript of Nature, the only
Scripture that can enlighten the reader

Most people consider as sacred scriptures only certain books or scrolls
written by the hand of man, and carefully preserved as holy, to be
handed down to posterity as divine revelation. Men have fought and
disputed over the authenticity of these books, have refused to accept any
other book of similar character, and, clinging thus to the book and losing
the sense of it, have formed diverse sects. The Sufi has in all ages respected all such books, and has traced in the Vedanta, Zendavesta, Kabah, Bible, Qur'an, and all other sacred scriptures, the same truth which he reads in the incorruptible manuscript of nature, the only Holy Book, the perfect and living model that teaches the inner law of life: all scriptures before nature's manuscript are as little pools of water before the ocean.

To the eye of the seer every leaf of the tree is a page of the holy book that contains divine revelation, and he is inspired every moment of his life by constantly reading and understanding the holy script of nature. When man writes, he inscribes characters upon rock, leaf, paper, wood or steel; when God writes, the characters He writes are living creatures.

It is when the eye of the soul is opened and the sight is keen that the Sufi can read the divine law in the manuscript of nature; and that which the teachers of humanity have taught to their followers was derived by them from the same source; they expressed what little it is possible to express in words, and so they preserved the inner truth when they themselves were no longer there to reveal it.

4. There is one Religion the unswerving progress in the right direction, toward the Ideal, which fulfills the life's purpose of every soul. Religion in the Sanskrit language is termed Dharma, which means duty. The duty of every individual is religion. 'Every soul is born for a certain purpose, and the light of that purpose is kindled in his soul', says Sa'adi.
This explains why the Sufi in his tolerance allows every one to have his own path, and does not compare the principles of others with his own, but allows freedom of thought to everyone, since he himself is a freethinker.

Religion, in the conception of a Sufi, is the path that leads man towards the attainment of his ideal, worldly as well as heavenly. Sin and virtue, right and wrong, good and bad are not the same in the case of every individual; they are according to his grade of evolution and state of life. Therefore the Sufi concerns himself little with the name of the religion or the place of worship. All places are sacred enough for his worship, and all religions convey to him the religion of his soul. 'I saw Thee in the sacred Ka'ba and in the temple of the idol also Thee I saw.'

5. There is one Law the Law of Reciprocity, which can be observed by a selfless conscience together with a sense of awakened justice.

Man spends his life in the pursuit of all that seems to him to be profitable for himself, and when so absorbed in self-interest in time he even loses touch with his own real interest. Man has made laws to suit himself, but they are laws by which he can get the better of another. It is this that he calls justice, and it is only that which is done to him by another that he calls injustice. A peaceful and harmonious life with his fellow-men cannot be led until the sense of justice has been awakened in him by a selfless conscience. As the judicial authorities of the world intervene between two persons who are at variance, knowing that they have a right
to intervene when the two parties in dispute are blinded by personal interest, so the Almighty Power intervenes in all disputes however small or great.

It is the law of reciprocity which saves man from being exposed to the higher powers, as a considerate man has less chance of being brought before the court. The sense of justice is awakened in a perfectly sober mind; that is, one which is free from the intoxication of youth, strength, power, possession, command, birth, or rank. It seems a net profit when one does not give but takes, or when one gives less and takes more; but in either case there is really a greater loss than profit; for every such profit spreads a cover over the sense of justice within, and when many such covers have veiled the sight, man becomes blind even to his own profit. It is like standing in one's own light. 'Blind here remains blind in the hereafter.'

Although the different religions, in teaching man how to act harmoniously and peacefully with his fellow-men, have given out different laws, they all meet in this one truth: do unto others as thou wouldst they should do unto thee. The Sufi, in taking a favor from another, enhances its value, and in accepting what another does to him he makes allowance.

6. There is one Family, the Human Family, which unites the Children of Earth indiscriminately in the Parenthood of God
The Sufi understands that the one life emanating from the inner Being is manifested on the surface as the life of variety; and in this world of variety man is the finest manifestation, for he can realize in his evolution the oneness of the inner being even in the external existence of variety. But he evolves to this ideal, which is the only purpose of his coming on earth, by uniting himself with another.

Man unites with others in the family tie, which is the first step in his evolution, and yet families in the past have fought with each other, and have taken vengeance upon one another for generations, each considering his cause to be the only true and righteous one. Today man shows his evolution in uniting with his neighbors and fellow-citizens, and even developing within himself the spirit of patriotism for his nation. He is greater in this respect than those in the past; and yet men so united nationally have caused the catastrophe of the modern wars, which will be regarded by the coming generations in the same light in which we now regard the family feuds of the past.

There are racial bonds which widen the circle of unity still more, but it has always happened that one race has looked down on the other. The religious bond shows a still higher ideal. But it has caused diverse sects, which have opposed and despised each other for thousands of years, and have caused endless splits and divisions among men. The germ of separation exists even in such a wide scope for brotherhood, and
however widespread the brotherhood may be, it cannot be a perfect one as long as it separates man from man.

The Sufi, realizing this, frees himself from national, racial, and religious boundaries. uniting himself in the human brotherhood, which is devoid of the differences and distinctions of class, caste, creed, race, nation, or religion, and unites mankind in the universal brotherhood.

7. There is one Moral Principle the Love which springs forth from a willing heart, surrendered in service to God and Humanity, and which blooms in deeds of beneficence

There are moral principles taught to mankind by various teachers, by many traditions, one differing from the other, which are like separate drops coming out of the fountain. But when we look at the stream, we find there is but one stream, although it turns into several drops on falling. There are many moral principles, just as many drops fall from one fountain; but there is one stream that is at the source of all, and that is love. It is love that gives birth to hope, patience, endurance, forgiveness, tolerance, and to all moral principles. All deeds of kindness and beneficence take root in the soil of the loving heart. Generosity, charity, adaptability, an accommodating nature, even renunciation, are the offspring of love alone. The great, rare and chosen beings, who for ages have been looked up to as ideal in the world, are the possessors of hearts kindled with love. All evil and sin come from the lack of love.
People call love blind, but love in reality is the light of the sight. The eye can only see the surface; love can see much deeper. All ignorance is the lack of love. As fire when not kindled gives only smoke, but when kindled, the illuminating flame springs forth, so it is with love; it is blind when undeveloped, but, when its fire is kindled, the flame that lights the path of the traveler from mortality to everlasting life springs forth; the secrets of earth and heaven are revealed to the possessor of the loving heart, the lover has gained mastery over himself and others, and he not only communes with God but unites with Him.

'Hail to thee, then, O love, sweet madness! Thou who healest all our infirmities! Who art the physician of our pride and self conceit! Who art our Plato and our Galen!' says Rumi.

8. There is one Object of Praise, the Beauty which uplifts the heart of its worshipper through all aspects, from the seen to the unseen

It is said in a Hadith, 'God is beautiful, and He loves beauty.' This expresses the truth that man, who inherits the Spirit of God, has beauty in him and loves beauty, although that which is beautiful to one is not beautiful to another. Man cultivates the sense of beauty as he evolves, and prefers the higher aspect of beauty to the lower. But when he has observed the highest vision of beauty in the Unseen by a gradual evolution from praising the beauty in the seen world, then the entire existence becomes to him one single vision of beauty.

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1. Islamic culture, April 1946, pp-53
Man has worshipped God, beholding the beauty of sun, moon, stars, and planets; he has worshipped God in plants, in animals; he has recognized God in the beautiful merits of man, and he has with his perfect view of beauty found the source of all beauty in the Unseen, from whence all this springs, and in Whom all is merged.

The Sufi, realizing this, worships beauty in all its aspects, and sees the face of the Beloved in all that is seen, and the Beloved's spirit in the Unseen. So wherever he looks his ideal of worship is before him. 'Everywhere I look, I see Thy winning face; everywhere I go, I arrive at Thy dwelling-place.'

9. There is one Truth the true knowledge of our being, within and without, which is the essence of Wisdom. Hazrat All said, 'Know thyself, and thou shalt know God.' It is the knowledge of self which blooms into the knowledge of God. Self-knowledge answers such problems as: whence have I come? Did I exist before I became conscious of my present existence? If I existed, as what did I exist? As an individual such as I now am, or as a multitude, or as an insect, bird, animal, spirit, jinn, or angel? What happens at death, the change to which every creature is subject? Why do I tarry here awhile? What purpose have I to accomplish here? What is my duty in life? In what does my happiness consist, and what is it that makes my life miserable? Those whose hearts have been kindled by the light from above, begin to ponder such questions but those whose souls are already
illumined by the knowledge of the self understand them. It is they who
give to individuals or to the multitudes the benefit of their knowledge, so
that even men whose hearts are not yet kindled, and whose souls are not
illuminated, may be able to walk on the right path that leads to
perfection.

This is why people are taught in various languages, in various forms of
worship, in various tenets in different parts of the world. It is one and the
same truth: it is only seen in diverse aspects appropriate to the people
and the time. It is only those who do not understand this who can mock
at the faith of another, condemning to hell or destruction those who do
not consider their faith to be the only true faith.

The Sufi recognizes the knowledge of self as the essence of all religions;
he traces it in every religion, he sees the same truth in each, and
therefore he regards all as one. Hence he can realize 'the saying of Jesus,
'I and my Father are one.' The difference between creature and Creator
remains on his lips, not in his soul. This is what is meant by union with
God. It is in reality the dissolving of the false self in the knowledge of
the true self, which is divine, eternal, and all-pervading. 'He who
attaineth union with God, his very self must lose,' said Amir.

10. There is one Path the effacement of the limited self in the Unlimited,
which raises the mortal to immortality, in which resides all Perfection
'I passed away into nothingness—I vanished; and lo! I was all living.'

All who have realized the secret of life understand that life is one, but that it exists in two aspects. First as immortal, all-pervading and silent; and secondly as mortal, active, and manifest in variety. The soul being of the first aspect becomes deluded, helpless, and captive by experiencing life in contact with the mind and body, which is of the next aspect. The gratification of the desires of the body and the fancies of the mind do not suffice for the purpose of the soul, which is undoubtedly to experience its own phenomena in the seen and the unseen, though its inclination is to be itself and not anything else. When delusion makes it feel that it is helpless, mortal and captive, it finds itself out of place. This is the tragedy of life, which keeps the strong and the weak, the rich and poor, all dissatisfied, constantly looking for something they do not know. The Sufi, realizing this, takes the path of annihilation, and, by the guidance of a teacher on the path, finds at the end of this journey that the destination was himself. As Iqbal says:

'I wandered in the pursuit of my own self; I was the traveler, and I am the destination.'

**Respected teachers**

Like the Isma'ilians. Universal Sufis are encouraged to seek truth wherever they can find it. Numerous historical figures, including both founders of great world religions as well as secular individuals, are considered to be important.
teachers, worthy of veneration and respect. These have included, but are not limited to, Jesus of Nazareth, Hafez, Moses, Mirabai, Muhammad, Rumi, Krishna, Frithjof Schuon, Shiva, Zoroaster, Siddartha Gautama, Hajji Bektash Wali, Kabir, Yunus Emre, Khalil Gibran, Guru Nanak, Ravidas, Baba Boota Singh, Baba Dyal Singh, Rabia, George Fox, Martin Lings, Kabir Helminski and Baha'u'llah. Teachers from other Sufi tariqas (orders and paths) are also respected, such as Bawa Muhaiyaddeen and Idries Shah, amongst others.

**Structure**

A Universal Sufi initiate has an association with a spiritual teacher, or guide, who prescribes individual spiritual practices for the initiate. From time to time, the Pir (head of the Order) may prescribe practices for the Mureed (students) to do as well.

There are Universal Sufi centers throughout America and other parts of the world, with Center Representatives who provide classes and group practices. These are often open to the public, not just initiates.

The clergy are called Cherags, Cherag means Light Bearer in Persian, and it is their function to help initiates to move towards enlightenment. eraj is appointed to oversee the training of and to ordain Cherags.

The Universal Worship Service honors the world's spiritual traditions with readings from the holy books of different religions. Cherags take a class in learning about the different religions and the spiritual essence of these traditions.
Universal Sufis who have joined a movement are grouped into three different orders whose leaders are the children or grandchildren of Hazrat Inayat Khan, the most well-known are Pir Zia Inayat Khan and Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan, Pir Hidayat Khan.


There are also various groups who do not adhere to any particular order, but who are dedicated to the teachings of Pir Hazrat Inayat Khan, these often meet together but are not affiliated to any organised form of Universal Sufism.

Sayings:

Some of Inayat Khan's most famous sayings are:

"Shatter your ideals on the rock of Truth."

"There is nothing valuable except what we value in life."

"In a small affair or in a big affair, first consult yourself and find out if there is any conflict in your own being about anything you want to do. And when you find no conflict there, then feel sure that a path is already made for you. You have but to open your eyes and take a step forward, and the other step will be led by God."
"The difference between the divine and the human will is like the difference between the trunk of a tree and its branches. As from the boughs other twigs and branches spring, so the will of one powerful individual has branches going through the will of other individuals. So there are the powerful beings, the masters of humanity. Their will is God's will, their word is God's word, and yet they are branches, because the trunk is the will of the Almighty. Whether the branch be large or small, every branch has the same origin and the same root as the stem."

"The more one studies the harmony of music, and then studies human nature, how people agree and how they disagree, how there is attraction and repulsion, the more one will see that it is all music."

"Universal Sufis practice Dhikr, otherwise spelt Zikr or Zikar. Dhikr is literally "remembering." It is the religious ceremony, or act of devotion, which is practised by the various Sufi orders. Universal Sufi Dhikr differs from the Islamic form of Dhikr, widening the scope of the term to encompass remembrance of the spiritual in all forms. Dhikr formulas are usually given specifically to each individual mureed, and each mureed keeps their formulas private.

The Sikh belief in Nam is very closely linked to the Universal Sufi belief "that God existed before the creation of the universe. The name of God is therefore beyond the language structure created by mankind. The Nam is the internal rhythm that a person experiences is the true nature of God."
There are any number of practices from the various traditions which focus on energy and kundalini. However there seems to be a danger of putting the cart before the horse and losing one's way. Hazrat Inayat Khan advised that the best way is to focus on God and to let enlightenment follow, as opposed to focusing on enlightenment in order to find God (Jesus Christ is famed for giving this advice when he said "Seek First the Kingdom of God, and all other things shall be added unto you"). So rather than focusing on kundalini one might focus on God. Perhaps, then, do the practice which aides in kundalini, but only with a God focus. Thus this first intention may aide in the balanced unfoldment of spiritual attributes.

Focusing on God can be difficult for some. Here the Sufi way is to focus on the highest ideal of God one can conceptualize. And even perhaps to conceptualize is an intermediate step. Once the heart is sufficiently open, it is perhaps easier to feel or even sense God than it is to conceptualize God. God love is something that can be felt and even sensed. Experienced. To stay in tune with this is perhaps the Sufi way. To stay in tune with this and then to let the spiritual attributes follow as Jesus said. So perhaps the best practice is attunement to God love, then all the other practices will facilitate growth from that in proper order. Even to love God is an exercise in subject-object experience. Though this aides growth very much and could be employed as a first step, the Sufi tries to go beyond this subject-object love and into this love. The Sufi says God is love, lover, and beloved. In other words God is the object, God is the subject, and God is the love experienced between the two.
So definitely the practice is to be it, to be in it. Perhaps this is the primary practice.

Wazifa (working with Divine attributes)

The qualities of God, which in Universal Sufi terms are the aspects of Nature, can be evoked, understood, felt, and seen through the repetition of Wazifas, the Divine Names and Attributes of God. This is done either aloud or in silent thought, and the Sufi's only duty in this regard is to simply hold the quality itself up so that his or her consciousness can perceive it. Cherags, initiators and dance leaders must learn how to use wazifas as a psychological prescription to meet the needs of the individual Sufis or groups of Sufis who are their mureeds. Each mureed must learn to recognize divine attributes, both their place in nature and their function in the self and in others.

The repeated phrases which follow some of the daily prayers are Wazifas.

Description of Wazifa Practice

The practice of Wazifa has a particular form and focus. Sitting cross legged on the floor with straight back and eyes closed, the participant begins by reciting the Invocation of Hazrat Inayat Khan:

Toward the One. The perfection of Love, Harmony and Beaty, The Only being, United with all the Illuminated Souls who form the embodiment of the master, The Spirit of Guidance.

If performed by a group, the participants are in a circle and join the Wazifa leader in the Invocation. After a short pause, the music begins with an introduction of several repetitions of the musical phrase. A bell cues the beginning of the chanted section which is approximately 10 minutes long. The
words of the sacred phrase are sung to a melody that is different for each Wazifa. Some of the compositions have secondary melodies. As long as there are sufficient voices in a group to maintain a strong primary melody, some participants may choose to sing "Allah" or "Hu" to the secondary melody. During the singing, the participant may concentrate on a particular point and imagine a colour at that point. Each Wazifa has its own focus and colour: the tip of the nose with the colour yellow, the bridge of the nose, green, the centre of the forehead, red, the top of the head, blue, and above the head, a smoky grey colour.

The end of the singing is cued with the sound of a bell after which the tempo gradually slows to a stop. There follows a three minute meditation which ends with the sound of a Tibetan Bowl being struck. When the sound of the bowl has died away, the group rises with the Wazifa leader. Each participant then bows to the Divine Presence in the middle of the circle. The bow is performed by placing the right hand on the left shoulder, the left hand on the right shoulder and by bending (without exaggeration) toward the centre

**Muraqaba (Meditation)**

Muraqaba is the Sufi word for meditation. Literally it means "to watch over", "to take care of", or "to keep an eye". Metaphorically, it implies that with meditation, a person watches over or takes care of his spiritual heart (or soul), and acquires knowledge about it, its surroundings, and its creator.
**Ryazat (breathing practice)**

The elements of Sufi breathing practice include Healing Breaths, forms of kasab, shaghal, and amal. A Sufi learns the difference between refined and coarse breathing and how that affects their body, as well as the difference between a breath which emphasizes the right or left nostril, inhalation or exhalation. Breath is learned as darood (mindfulness) for walking, as an aid for various physical and mental activities, as an aid for vision, as a doorway for deep meditation, as a source of prana (life force), and as an oracle.

**Ziraat**

Inaugurated in 1926 by Hazrat Inayat Khan, Ziraat uses the symbols and dynamic processes of agriculture as ways of describing the inner life, and as ways of finding a bridge between the spiritual and material worlds. Ziraat is a heart-based approach to gardening and food production outwardly, and to spiritual growth inwardly. The heart, like the earth, is regarded as sacred soil to be prepared for planting. Rocks and roots are removed; last year's stubble is plowed under. New seed is placed in the furrow. Sunshine and rain attend the turning of the seasons, and the ancient cycles of sowing, growth, fruition and harvest are realized in ourselves and in our gardens and farms.

Ziraat is an initiatic school, open to all who feel a commitment to spiritual awakening and to the protection of this sacred world. It is an activity of the Sufi Order International, but one need not be a member of the Sufi Order to join. Initiation in Ziraat confirms a pledge to affirm and cultivate the divine.
seed within our being, and thereby to help in the preservation and restoration of our world\(^1\).

To a little band of sowers has been given a handful of living grain. Faithfully it must be sown; surely, it will be reaped; and the harvest shall be for the sustenance of all. ... Hazrat Inayat Khan.

Although in essence, even after touching the deepest depths of the earth, the soul is divine, in order to realize for itself that Divine Element it has a task waiting even after being human. It is the manner in which that task is accomplished, and the object gained which is called Ziraat........ Hazrat Inayat Khan.

The Central Temple of Universal Sufism is Universel Murad Hassil in Katwijk District, The Netherlands. The building was devised by the Dutch architect S.J. of Embden.

The temple is an international centre where universal worship, brotherhood days and other meetings take place. Also several (traditional) concerts are given and take place here as well as the annual summer schools. Construction of the temple was started in 1969. The building is a simple square in basis and the cupola is gold. The cupola has a typically oriental form.

\(^1\) Jawami-ul-Kalam, p-87
Festivals

For Universal Sufis all days are holy, and the local culture and personal taste determines which festivals are celebrated at home. Universal Sufis communally celebrate several festivals:

February 5th: Urs of Hazrat Inayat Khan.

July 5th: Viladat Day, Hazrat Inayat Khan’s birthday.

13 September: Hejirat Day, the date Hazrat Inayat Khan left his native India to bring Sufism to the West.

June 17th: Urs of Vilayat Inayat Khan.

Sacred texts

Universal Sufis accept as sacred all the world scriptures, seeing them as steps that guide toward the Ocean of Being. The scriptures are read in the Universal Worship Service, with accompanying meditations. The scriptures of the world religions are not viewed as directly the "word of God" but are seen as "inspired" by the Spirit of Guidance.

However, the Gayan and the Nirtan are specific books in Universal Sufism.

Quote from magazine

Universal Sufism is described in an article in the magazine Rays from the Rose Cross, in November 1917, entitled The Sufi Mystics. The author introduces this article by saying that the reports of those who have studied them [the Sufis] all laud their transcendent spirituality. "They are not Rosicrucian, but they have Wisdom, for all that", and he states the reader will undoubtedly profit from reading about these wise men. He adds: There is a
striking analogy between the Sufis in their relation to Mohammedanism and the medieval Alchemists in their relation to the then dominant church. Both Sufis and the Alchemists had the leaven of truth and both were forced to hide it under symbols and signs.

**Sufi Biographies**

**Mansur al-Hallaj**

Mansur al-Hallaj was born in the province of Fars in Persia in 858. ... He was the close follower of several well-known Sufis of his time, including Sahl al-Tustari of Basra, Amr al-Makki and Imam Junayd of Baghdad. However, later on, on account of his saying 'Ana'l Haqq', meaning 'I am the Truth', he was accused of propagating an unacceptable and dangerous religious claim, for which he was executed by the orthodox establishment in 922. From the surviving fragments of his work, we surmise that he was a Sufi intoxicated with divine love. His poetry is a very tender and intense expression of spiritual yearning and love. For example, he sang:

"Kill me, O my trustworthy friends,  
For in my being killed is my life."

Love is, in fact, the central themes of Mansur al-Hallaj's prayers and sayings. Describing divine love, he says:

"Love is that you remain standing in front of your Beloved: hen you are deprived of all your attributes, hen His attributes become your qualities."

The later Sufis, until our own time, have quoted Mansur al-Hallaj as being the epitome of those intoxicated by divine love.
Mawlana Jalal'ud-Din Rumi

Mawlana Jalal'ud-Din Rumi was born in Balkh in present day Afghanistan in 1207. His father Baha'ud-Din, was a noted theologian and Sufi. In 1220, when Balkh was threatened by the invading hordes of Mongols from central Asia, Baha'ud-Din and his family left Balkh and, travelling via Khurasan and Syria, reached the province of Rum in central Anatolia, which is in present-day Turkey. They settled in Qonya, the capital of Rum, and soon Baha'ud-Din's teaching and preaching met with great success, even attracting Sultan Ala'ud-Din Kayubad. Jalal'ud-Din was brought up in his father's tradition of learning, and after his father's death, he was introduced to direct knowledge of God and the deeper mysteries of spiritual life by Shaykh Burhan'ud-Din Muhaqqiq al-Tirmidhi. Under Shaykh al-Tirmidhi's guidance, Rumi underwent many spiritual retreats of forty days each, until he was awakened and enlightened.

Khwaja Mu'in'ud-Din Chisti

The Chisti Order, probably the most widespread and influential of the Sufi Orders in the sub-continent of India, was introduced into India by Khwaja Mu'in'ud-Din Chisti, popularly known as Hazrat Gharib Nawaz which means the Helper of the Poor. He was born in about 1142 in Seistan in central Asia, and was descended from both Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn. He studied the traditional Islamic sciences of the Qur’an and the recorded actions and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad in the universities of Bukhara and Samarkand. However, his yearning for the inner knowledge of self-unfoldment led him to become the close follower of Khwaja Uthman Herwani, a Chisti Sufi master from the Nishapur region of Kurasan in Persia. He served this spiritual master
devotedly for twenty years, accompanying him on many travels throughout central Asia and Arabia. After going on the pilgrimage to Mecca, and visiting the tomb of Muhammad in Medina, he was asked to establish Islam in India. After spending forty days in spiritual retreat next to the tomb of Shaykh Hujwiri (d. about 1075) in Lahore, Shaykh Chisti made his way to India. The proof of the universality of Hazrat Gharib Nawaz's message and his role as a teacher is that today, as throughout all the centuries since his death, his tomb in Ajmer is visited by innumerable Muslims and countless thousands of Hindus who acknowledge his high spiritual station. Every day, all the year round, as in his lifetime, gifts of food from the more well-off flood into the hands of his descendants, only to be cooked in giant cauldrons and redistributed to the less well-off before the end of the day.

**Shaykh Nizam'ud-Din Awliya**

Shaykh Nizam'ud-Din Awliya, who is considered the greatest Sufi master of medieval India, was born in Bada'un in North India in 1238 into a family whose genealogy traced back to the Prophet Muhammad and who had originated from Bukhara. He studied the sciences of Islamic Law in order to qualify as a judge, but in about 1257 was inspired to travel to Ajodhan to visit Shaykh Farid'ud-Din Ganji Shakar, the most celebrated Chisii spiritual master of that time. There his destiny changed. He became the close follower of this spiritual master, and on his third and final visit Ajodhan Shaykh Farid'ud-Din designated him as his successor. He advised him to continue with his studies of the Qur'an and Islamic jurisprudence, alongside his supererogatory prayers.
and the pursuit of the sufic sciences, and to devote himself to whichever
finally won the upper hand.

Shaykh Nizam'ud-Din's respect for the devout Hindus, for whom his doors
were always open, is known by his comment to his close follower, the famous
poet Amir Khusraw, when watching some of them at their devotional
practices: 'Every community has its own path and faith and its own way of
worship.' It was through Amir Khusraw, that the practice of 'quwali', which is
the singing of the praises of God and the Prophet Muhammad and his family
and companions, accompanied by music, was developed and perfected.

**Shah Wali'ullah**

Shah Wali'ullah, the great Muslim reformer of eighteenth-century India, was
born in 1702 into a family that had already produced many Muslim scholars,
especially his father, Shah Abdur-Rahim, who had founded the Ranimiyya
center for religious learning in Delhi. Shah Wali'ullah's father supervised his
son's Islamic education, and before his death in 1719, he appointed Shah
Wali'ullah as the head of his religious school and initiated him into the
Naqshbandi Order.

During his visit to Mecca on the pilgrimage in 1730, Shah Wali'ullah claims to
have received a vision of Muhammad in which his station as a divinely
appointed reformer for his people was revealed to him. At this stage in the
history of Islam, the lack of a vibrant, living Islam in India had contributed
towards a situation in which the corrupt Mughal Empire was disintegrating amidst the growing power of the Hindus and the Sikhs and the increasing influence of the British East India Company. Shah Wali'ullah saw in the lives of Muhammad and his Family and Companions the key to a correct code of behavior whereby a renaissance of Islam in his own country could be achieved. On his return to India in 1732, he directed his efforts towards re-establishing a simple Arab-style Islam, purified of the Turkish, Persian and Hindu cultural elements which had become prevalent amongst the Muslims in India at that time.

Shah Wali'ullah was a strong Sunni Muslim who was attracted to the teaching of Imam Malik in his Al-Muwatta. He displayed a critical anti-Shi'a stance, which may in part have arisen as a result of the distorted Shi'a practices which were prevalent in his time in the Sub-Continent, and his lack of exposure to the original Shi'a teachings. He said that one of the books which would be the key to establishing Islam in the West would be Ash-Shifa of Qadi Iyad.

**Shaykh Abu'l-Hasan Ash-Shadhili**

Shaykh Abu'l-Hasan Ash-Shadhili was born in the north of Morocco in 1175 into a family of peasant laborers. For his education he went to the Qarawiyyin University in Fees, where he met some scholars who introduced him to the sciences of Islamic Law. He also traveled to many countries. In Iraq he met a great Sufi called Wasiti who told him to return to his country where he would find Moulay Abdas-Salam ibn Mashish, the great Moroccan spiritual master. He did so, and became the close follower of this spiritual master who initiated
him in the way of remembrance of Allah and enlightenment. When he met Moulay Abdas-Salam after ritually washing himself, he said, 'O Allah, I have been washed of my knowledge and action so that I do not possess knowledge or action except that comes to me from this Shaykh.'

Shaykh Taj-ud-Din Ahmad Ibn Ata'illah

Shaykh Taj-ud-Din Ahmad Ibn Ata'illah was born in about 1250 into a distinguished family of religious scholars who followed the school of Imam Malik in Alexandria. His father was a close follower of Shaykh Abu'l Hasn ash-Shadhili. Ahmad ibn Ata'illah became the close follower of Shaykh Abu'l-Abbas al-Mursi after he had completed his study of Islamic Law as transmitted by the school of Imam Malik. Shaykh Abu'l-Abbas al-Mursi predicted that Ahmad ibn Ata'illah would become an authority on both the Sufi path and Islamic Law, and it was in Cairo that this prediction of future greatness came true, for there he led two lives. One was his professional life as a teacher of Islamic Law in accordance with what had been transmitted through Imam Malik in various public institutions and mosques in Cairo, such as Al-Azhar and the newly built Al-Mansuriyyah, together with his public preaching which attracted large audiences; his other life was devoted to his duties as a spiritual master of the Shadhili Order, in which he transmitted the transformative teaching of the Muhammadi code to sincere seekers of wisdom and gnosis. Shaykh Ahmad Ibn Ata'illah was also influential in the Mamluk court, and used to counsel Sultan al-Mansur (d. 1298) on religious matters.
Shaykh Moulay Al-Arabi Ad-Darqawi

Shaykh Moulay al-Arabi ad-Darqawi was born around the middle of the eighteenth century in a village near Fes in Morocco. He studied the Qur’an and Islamic Law under the guidance of the traditional teachers in his village, and then went to Fes, where he met many religious scholars of Islamic Law, as well as some of the spiritual masters of inner unfoldment, but not yet his real master.

The teachings of Shaykh Moulay al-Arabi ad-Darqawi were simple and based on adherence to the way of Islam, appropriate ethical actions, noble character, modesty, silence, contemplation, doing without, poverty and abasement before Allah. For twenty-five years, he and his family lived from day to day, never storing up any food for the next day, but, like the birds who have nothing at the beginning and end of each day, trusting completely in God for all their needs to be met. A large part of his teaching deals with overcoming the lower self. Some of his sayings are:

Sufism is observing the outer law of the way of Muhammad, surrendering the will to the Lord of the worlds, and having good character towards the Muslims. The Sufi is the one who is not saddened when he lacks something, great or small.

Shaykh Sayyid Muhammad As-Sanusi

Shaykh Sayyid Muhammad as-Sanusi, the founder of the Sanusi Order of Algeria, was born into a distinguished family, which was noted for its many learned men who were influential in many localities, near Mustaganim in
northern Algeria in about 1787. He was instructed in all the traditional Islamic sciences by a number of teachers at an early age. He learned the entire Qur'an by heart and excelled in his understanding of the recorded actions and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, the nature of existence, Islamic jurisprudence and the Arabic language. In the company of his teachers, he moved about from place to place, living in such towns as Tlemsen, Mu'askara and Mustaganim, before traveling to Fes where he continued his studies at the Qarawiyyn mosque-university. There he studied all the Qur'anic sciences and the science of Unity, and became so well-versed that he attained great distinction in the spiritual knowledges.

**Shaykh Muzaffer**

Shaykh Muzaffer was born in Istanbul in 1916. His father, Hajji Mehmed Efendi of Qonya, was an Islamic scholar and a teacher at the court of Sultan Abdal-Hamid. His mother was the grand-daughter of Shaykh Seyyid Efendi, the spiritual master of the Halveti Order in the town of Yanbolu. On his father's death, when he was only six years old, Muzaffer was taken into the care of Shaykh Seyyid Samiyyi Saruhani of the Qadiri, Naqshbandi, Ushaki and Halveti Orders. From an early age, he studied the Qur'an, the recorded actions and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad and Islamic Law, under the guidance of the spiritual leader of the Fateh mosque in Istanbul and Arnavut Husrev. Hafiz Islamil. the some of the famous musician Zekai Efendi of the Mevlavi Order, taught him many religious hymns and odes. Later on he was appointed as the spiritual leader of the Veznejiler mosque, where he served for

1 Sivar-ul-Auliva p.93
23 years. When that mosque collapsed and was destroyed, he was appointed as the spiritual leader of the mosque in the Covered Bazaar in Istanbul. As well as being the spiritual leader in these two mosques, he also taught and preached to people in 42 other mosques in Istanbul, including the famous Blue Mosque.