'Sufism' in the history of theosophy and poetry represents a school of mysticism within Islam, which chiefly stands for 'Purity', external as well as internal. In fact, the 'sufis' formed an ascetic sect with pantheistic speculations which imbued the spirit of revolt against the intellectualism and materialism of Islam. At its psychological level, 'Sufism' stressed on the human being's aspiration for a personal and direct communion with God with an intense experiences of the Truth. It is stated in some verse of the Koran as follows:

Those whom ye call on, themselves desire union with their Lord, striving which of them shall be nearest to Him.¹

Even the prophet Muhammad's own relation to God had some mystical aspects, especially, in his direct communion with God and his consciousness of the divine presence. As Philip K. Hitti observes, "the sufis came to consider themselves the true interpreters of the esoteric teaching of the Prophet as preserved in the hadith.²"

1. J.M. Rodwell Transl.: The Koran, Sura, XVII, 1957, p. 169
The 'Sufis' sought for a spiritual bliss and union with the Creator through self-elevation and exultation of the soul. The tenets of their basic concepts bear resemblances to the Philosophy of the Vedanta, Sahajana Buddhism and even Neo-Platonism. The scholars, western as well as oriental, have defined 'Sufism' and traced its origin, growth and development by means of an analogy to different religions. The prominent among them are Zaelner, Reynold, Arberry, Hastings, Radhakrishnan etc.

In its derivative sense, perhaps, the word 'Sufi' owes its origin to the Arabic word 'Suf' (coarse white wool). Different interpretations are put forward by different scholars. Philip K. Hitti observes:

Sufism during and after the second Islamic century developed into a syncretic movement, absorbing many elements from Christianity, Neo-Platonism, Gnosticism and Buddhism, and passing through mystical, theosophical and pantheistic stages.

Of late, 'Sufism' has been defined by Whitfield Foy as

"a protest against worldly compromises and responding to influences, ascetical and intellectual." The terms 'ascetical' and 'intellectual' are significant as they represent

3. P. K. Hitti: Ibid., p. 433
the Neo-Platonic concept of 'Spirit' which is higher than 'Matter' and 'Soul'.

In plain words, the 'Sufis' were ascetics who had abandoned the mundane world in their love for God.

Some scholars trace the origin of the wearing of 'white wool' ('Sufi') as a dress in imitation of the Christian monks, which also virtually implies the ideal of celibacy which was not encouraged by the Orthodox Islam. The practice of solitary meditations and prolonged vigils were performed by some of these ascetics. The Sufi concept of fraternity 'tariqah' which means 'rightway' with a master ('shaykh') and disciple (murid) correspond to the Christian concept of father and monk. The only difference that Nicholson discovers is the religious service called "dhikr" (that is, the remembrance and mention of God's name) is "the only elaborate ritual in Islam and betrays Christian litanies as a source." 5

Even the scholars have likened Sufism to Buddhism. An analogy has been drawn to Lord Buddha's transformation from prince Gautam to the legend of Ibrahim ibn - Adham of Blakh (+Ca 777).

Dr. Rom Choudhury analyses numerous similarities between Sufism and the Vedantic philosophy, to whom "Sufism is one of the most important branches of Islamic philosophy. It is specially interesting because of its similarities to some systems of Indian philosophy, particularly the Vedanta."6

The Arabic word 'tasawwuf' is the term that stands for Sufi mysticism, which indicates the act of devoting oneself to the contemplation of 'Allah' or God. But since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the western scholars have been in practice of referring to it as 'Sufism' or 'Sufism'. The New Encyclopaedia Britannica defines 'Sufism' as follows:

Sufism derives from Arabic term for a mystic, 'Sufi' which is in turn derived from 'Suf', 'wool', plausibly a reference to the woolen garment of early Islamic ascetics.

Dr. Radhakrishnan deals elaborately with various lexicographical sources about the derivative meaning of the term 'Sufi'. He agrees with Abu Bakar-al-Kalabadhi and Ibn Khaldun about the origin of the word 'Sufi' from 'Suf', i.e., white wool.⁸

Some other probable derivative sources of the term 'Sufi' may be traced to the word 'Safā' which means 'Purity' of the heart and 'ʿāthār' which means the cleanliness of human action. The other vocabularies like 'Saff', i.e., 'first rank' before God; 'Saffah' meaning 'Bench' have been conjectured to be the root of the mystic terminology 'sufi'. According to this view, the 'Sufi' is one who resembles the people of the 'Bench', that is, the companions of the Prophet, in respect of piety, purity and such other qualities.

But the first view that of 'Cuf' or 'Suf' meaning 'white coarse wool' has been etymologically accepted as correct and appropriate.

Thus, it is clear that sufism lays utmost emphasis on the purification of human soul, through a path of

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renunciation of the worldly life and non-attachment to the worldly affairs. The 'white' colour is symbolic of purity, external and internal as well. This is possible only through a strict observance of discipline in all walks of life, more particularly, in the domain of religion. The Sufi symbolizes purity, not only to his own self, but also to improve his morals to conform to the building of inner and outer life in equal manner. This culminates in the attainment of 'perpetual bliss' and eternal felicity as the 'summa bonum' of life.

But it should be noted that Sufism is not a complete break-away from the basic tenets of Islamic doctrines. The power of intuition as superior to the power of intellect brings in the purity of 'self'. The soul's constant desire for communion with God, through a path of purity, poverty, patience, penitence etc., is the essence of a 'Sufi's spirit of revolt. But it is within the codes of Islam, not without it. The rigid dogmas are replaced by a powerful method of 'self-discipline' and 'spiritual ecstasy' of 'self-annihilation'. The practice of 'Dhikr' or 'recollection' is the
idea around which the concepts 'self-discipline' and 'spiritual ecstasy' move. The Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics maintains that the movement (Sufism), though extreme in certain directions, was mainly orthodox. It is characterized by "intense religious exaltation, an overwhelming consciousness of human frailty, boundless fear of God, and the 'submission to His Will'."9

With regard to 'Sufism', Dr. Radhakrishnan states as follows:

Sufism is a purely Islamic discipline which builds up the character and inner life of the Muslims by imposing certain ordinances and duties, obligations and impositions which may not be abandoned in any way by any man.10

The 'Sufis' are, in fact, devotional mystics who strictly adhere to the cult of purity and refinement which in Arabic is known as *tasawwuf*, i.e., the act of devoting oneself to mystic life.

Chief characteristics of the Sufi Path:

Sufism implies a renunciation of the world, but it is an ascetic life of purity, poverty and meditation or contemplation through the material world of senses. The rapturous union with God (Allah) is possible through various means and ways.

The path (Tariquah) to the unitive mystic state of the sufi lies in his fervent yearning and aspiration for union with the Absolute Truth. In his search for Truth, that is, Absolute Beauty, a sufi generally finds himself a 'traveller' (Salik).

The path of the sufi's journey consists of several 'stages' which are generally enumerated as follows:


Repentance, leads to abstinence or self-mortification in which the lower soul or 'nafs' is to be purified. Some of these ways are like fasting, wearing coarse woolen cloths,
observance of silence, solitude, the undergoing of physical
and mental tortures etc.

The path of renunciation is nothing but a complete
absence of the desires for the material world.

Renunciation, then, is followed by poverty, which is
not a painful, but a joyful state of life to the sufi.

Poverty, then, naturally leads to patience, distingui­
ished by a power of forbearance of hardships for the sake of
Divine Love.

Contentment or satisfaction culminates in the complete
surrender to the will of God.

At a higher level, Gnosis (marifat) i.e., love and
ecstasy in union of the human soul with God takes place in
the divine union.

'Gnosis' ( 'marifat') is attained through intuition as
distinct from intellectual knowledge (Ilm). The poetry of
Divine Love of the Persian poets like Khayyam and Hafiz as
discussed in the sixth chapter makes this clearly evident.
The 'Sufis' cherished the ideal of love which forms the central theme of Sufi poetry. As against the concept of love of servitude (dasya) of the medieval Indian Bhakti poets, the Sufi's relation to God is that of a 'Lover' (the man) and 'Beloved' (Allah).

The highest state of Sufi's mystic experience of union with the beloved is a state in which a man loses of his own selfhood and becomes one with the Beloved in a spiritual rupture. This is the highest state of Truth('haqiqat') of the enraptured mystic.

The Sufi Poets:

It has been already pointed out that Sufism is a doctrine within Islam. The Sufi mysticism produced a number of mystic poets in the literary history of the Islamic world. According to these poets, nothing really exists except God (Allah), who is the Supreme Reality and the source of Eternal Love. It is the bond of Love that unites the human lover's soul with the Divine Beloved.
The Sufi mystic poetry mostly flourished in Persia and Iraq during the period from the eighth to the thirteenth centuries. Philop K. Hitti observes, "The term sufi appears first in Arabic literature in the middle of the ninth century applied to a certain class of ascetics."\(^{11}\)

The first individual on whom the name was bestowed was Jabir-ibn-Hayyan (fl. ca 776) who professed an ascetic doctrine. He was followed by his contemporary Ibrahim Ibn-Adham of Balkh (+ca 777) who too was an exponent of early 'quiet-ist asceticism' (Zuhd). Rabia of Basara (717–801 A.D.) too was one of the early Sufis. She was a woman slave marked with a mixture of devotion and speculations and intense feeling of ecstasy.

The greatest of the theologians, al-Ghazzalli made a reconciliation between sufism and orthodox Islam. The word 'Ghazal' means a spinner. An orphan, brought up by a sufi friend of his father, Ghazzali was first attracted by intellectualism and later turned to sufism again. He makes a confession of his own experience;

\(^{11}\) P.K. Hitti: History of the Arabs, 1965, p. 433
Such was the unquenchable thirst of my soul for investigation from the early days of my youth, an instinct and temperament implanted in me by God through no choice of mine.  

The second phase of sufism in the Islamic world began in the later half of the second century A.H., that is, the first half of the ninth century A.D., especially in Persia and Iraq. There seem to be some new influences like the Vedantic mysticism, Buddhism, Christianity and Neo-Platonism too. The Western Scholars, particularly, are much in support of this view.

Dr. Roma Choudhury, in speaking of the later sufism observes,

A Sufi no longer remains a mere ascetic (Zahid), but becomes also a mystic and a gnostic (Arif); i.e., one who claims a direct, occult and mystic supraintellectual knowledge of God.  

Ma'ruf al Karkhi himself claimed a direct communion with Allah. Another contemporary sufi Abu Salayman al-Darani (d. 830 A.D.) and Dhu'l-Nun al-Misri (d. 860 A.D.) too were the chief exponents of this phase.

Abu Yazid Tayfur or Bayazid al-Bistami (d. 873) was another sufi of pantheistic trend. Al Junayad of Baghdad (d. 909), Persian, a great theosophist to reconcile the law (Shariat) with the truth (haqiqat), too, admitted of Bayazid's miracles, "Abu Yazid holds the same rank among us as Gabriel among angels."14

Then, a man ever shines bright in the history of sufism of this period is Abul Mughith al Husayan b. Mansur al Hallaj (d. 922 A.D.), who was executed on the charge of blasphemy for his utterances "Anal Haqq", i.e., 'I am God' (The Supreme Reality).

However, the Sufis of this phase bore the tendency towards pantheism by shaking off the external rites and rituals.

The third period of the growth and development of sufism from the eleventh century Christian era also saw some efforts of reconciliation between Sufi mysticism and the orthodox Islam.

In Persia, the political, socio-economic conditions favoured the growth of Sufi movement in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and even later. The three most prominent Sufis of the period are like Faridud-Din 'Attar', Jalaluddin Rumi and Shaykh Sadi.

A famous Persian mystic Jalalud-Din Muhammad (1207-1273 A.D.), universally known as Jalalud-Din Rumi, composed a famous Sufi work 'Masnavi' popularly known as the 'Persian Koran'. His 'Diwan', too, is a mystical poem of high order.

The other prominent Sufi poets and mystics of Persia are like Sa'duddin Mahmud Shabistari (1250-1290), Shamsud-Din Hafiz (d 1389 A.D.). Their poems have been translated into various languages of the world.

The two famous poets of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries of Persia were Abdu'l-Karim ibn al-Jili (1365-1405) and Abdur-Rahman Jami (d 1414 A.D.).

An ever celebrated fame in the western world as well as the oriental lies in the poetry of Omar Khayyam whose real name was Ghiyathuddin Abulfath Omar bin Ibrahim Al-Khayyami
who was popularly known as Omar Khayyam. According to the available biographical sources, he was born in the later half of the eleventh century and died in the first quarter of the twelfth century. Louis Untermeyer observes that Omar "was born at Naisapur in Khorassan, sometime during the later half of the 11th century."  

Omar Khayyam remained almost in oblivion for about seven centuries, but his fame as a poet began to spread in the west through the free and celebrated translation of his *Rubaiyat* by Edward Fitzerald (1809-99) in 1859. The appreciation of Omar-Fitzerald continued to grow throughout the nineteenth century.

**Essential qualities of Sufi Poetry**:  

The speculative and pantheistic tendencies of Sufi mysticism lie mainly in four elements, such as, 'Nafs' (the flesh) 'Ruh' (the spirit), 'Qualb' (the heart) and 'Aqib' (the intelligence). The word 'Qualb' or 'heart' does not mean the human heart of flesh and blood. But it implies transcendental subtlety, which has a power to perceive and reflect

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on spiritual realities. 'Ruh' (the spirit) has to purify itself through 'Divine Graces'. The 'Nafs' (flesh) is to be fully overcome in order to gain ecstatic experiences. Thus, it resembles the Neo-Platonic doctrine of 'Matter', 'soul' and 'spirit'. According to Plotinus, 'Matter' is inferior to 'soul' which is of two kinds (higher and baser souls), as 'soul' is inferior to 'spirit'.

Dr. Ram Naresh Sharma observes, "Sufis believe in a single God who is truth or 'hak', goodness or 'Khaira' and beauty or 'Jamal'." To a Sufi, the entire universe is a manifestation of the Divine Beauty. It is only because of his folly and arrogance that a man considers himself a different identity from God. To a Sufi poet, God is his beloved and he spends the whole of his life and time in waiting for a glimpse of and a union with the Divine Beloved. Hence, the poetry of the Sufi poets vibrates with sensuous imagery much in resemblance with the Neo-Platonic concept of love.

'Fana' and 'baqwa' are the two ecstatic states of mystic experiences of a Sufi poet. 'Fana' is more or less a

negative term meaning the extinction of the passions or the desire of senses with a complete annihilation of the 'Self'. In the state of 'baqua' the individual self abides in God with a note of self-surrender. In spite of a Union with the Absolute, there is no complete loss of personality of the human self. Hence, 'Lahut' is the state in which the poet experiences the divine love and 'Nasut' is the state of experience of humanity or human love, which does not get confused with divinity or 'Lahut'. Thus, the man who experiences the Divine Grace through mystic trance is the elevated man, "Ana'1 Haqq".

In this manner, the Sufi poets transform the human love into 'Divine Love'.

Love as well as intoxication ('saki' and 'Sukr') form the symbols of spiritual life. Some of the poems of Omar Khayyam and others vibrate with such symbolic imagery: 'Saki', i.e., the one who pours out wine, while 'Sukr' is the wine capable of inducing a spiritual 'intoxication'. Also the imagery of 'Visions', 'dreams', 'auditions' with full colour and sounds have been profusely used by the Sufi poets in their poetry.
Sufism in Indian Poetry

The Sufis also carried forward their missionary activity all over the world. The Persian literature and others related to it, such as, Turkish, Pashto, Urdu, Sindhi and even Punjabi and Hindi would lack their spiritual charms without the fervour of sufism.

With the Mohammedan invasions and Muslim rule, sufism played a dominant role in the Indian literary scene.

However, in Indian Sufism, there was a blend of sufism and Hindu mysticism. A number of Hindu poets were attracted to it. Some of the Muslim rulers like Sikandar Lodhi, and later, Akbar the Great, were liberal-minded. Abdul Rahim Khan Kanauj (1550-1629) was a sufì and court poet of Akbar. He wrote *Rahim sat saI*. Also, he was a profound scholar in Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic.

The provinces of Sindh, Gujrat and the Punjab and some other parts of the Northern India saw a harmonious blend of Sufism and Hinduism. Even a seventeenth century Muslim lady called, 'Taj' is said to have composed songs on Krishna. Such other poets like Saiyed Ibrahim and his disciple quadir
Baksh became Vaishnavites and composed songs on Lord Krishna. Malik Muhammad Jayasi and Nur Muhammad bore a similar mark of Sufi spirit. Their poetic works Padmavati and Indravati respectively, are full of mysticism with allegorical tendency.

In this context, Ram Awadh Dwivedi observes as follows:

Jayasi's poetry has all the basic features of Sufi thought. It gives expression directly and sometimes indirectly to warm and powerful feelings of love which invariably has super-mundane implications. 17

The earliest example of Sufi poetry in Hindi is Kutuban's Mrigavati which was written in the beginning of the sixteenth century. The story of the poem is of the symbolic love affair between the Prince of Chandannagar and Princess Mrigavati of Kanchanpura. Manjhan's Madhu Malati too embodies some elements of Sufism. Usman's long narrative poem Chitravali, Shaikh Naqi's Gyanid, Noor Muhammad's Indravati too bear the traces of Sufi elements.

The province of Sindh also produced a number of Sufi poets like Lal Shahbaz, Anchal, Rohal, Dalpat, Shah Inayat, Shah Latif. The Hindu Sufi Dalpat saw the same divine light

in the mosques and monasteries.

Even later, Dara Sikhon, the great grandson of Akbar, in the seventeenth century, was a great exponent of sufism. He made a synthesis of sufism and Hindu mysticism. He himself translated some of the *Upanishads* into Persian and caused others to translate them. All these translations were entitled *girzi-Akbar*. His sister Jahanara and even Aurenzeb's son prince Azam Shah are said to have been inspired by the spirit of liberal views of sufism. M.W. Mirza states that sufism in course of time, imbibed several Hindu beliefs and majority of the new converts, who came into contact with great Sufi teachers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, became devoted followers of sufism.18

Even in the twentieth century the celebrated Indian poet Iqbal, who composed some of the finest patriotic songs, was a supporter of Wahjudia sufism or monistic mysticism. He also wrote a popular poem on Hallaz who inspired him with a faith in monism.

Sufism flourished in Bengali literature too. In this connection, Asit Kumar Banerjee admits that the credit for
the theme of romantic love in the mediæval Bengali poetry
goes to the Muslim poets.19 The names of Shah Muhammad Sagir,
Jainuddin, Mazammal are remarkable as mediæval poets of the
fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Shah Muhammad’s ‘Yusuf
Julekha’ is an allegorical poem in the line of Sufi mysticism.
Some other Muslim poets of the mediæval period also
flourished in the sixteenth century, such as, Birid Khan, Donagazi,
Shaikh Faizulla, Daulat Ujir, Muhammad Kabir, some of them
were influenced by the Vaisnavism of Chaitanya, Daulat Ujir’s
Lalla-Majnu, and Muhammad Kabir’s Madhumalati are remarkable
poems.

Daulat Kazi and Syed Alkal were the seventeenth century
Muslim poets. Some poets with sufι bent of mind were much
attracted towards the theme of Radha–Krishna relationship as
symbolic of human soul’s devotional yearning for union with
the Divine. Akbar, Lalan Fakir, Lal Mahmud were prominent
poets among them.

19. A.K. Bandopadhya : Bangla Sahityar Sampurna Itihas,
Sufism in Assamese Poetry:

In Assam, there were cultural exchanges and intermingling of ideas between Vaishnavism and Islamic tenets, which gave birth to a considerable amount of Sufi literature. Subsequently, with the frequent Muslim invasions of Assam since the thirteenth century, many Muhammadans began to settle in Assam and they identified with the people of Assam and accepted the Assamese language and culture. This led to the composition of songs called jikir and jari which too bear the traces of mystic elements. Syed Abdul Malik rightly observes that though Assam came into contact with Islam as early as in 1103 A.D., yet it is not well-known how and when the sufis entered into this land.\(^\text{20}\)

However, the fact cannot be denied that the Islamic settlement took place in Assam in a slow process and the influences of sufis too took place in a similar way. Nirmal Kumar Basu, observes that the Mughal invasions brought Assam into contact with the rest of India that "with these invasions Assam came into contact with the thought of other people."

\(^{20}\) S.A. Malik, *Sufi Ama Sufived*, 1979, p. 64
specially of the Islamic people on life and art.21 Sufi religious preachings gave birth to the 'Jikir' and the 'Jari' songs. As a result, a large number of words of Persian and Arabic origin got mixed-up with the Assamese language.

These Jikirs and Jaris convey the meaning of spiritual theme, both Islamic and Vaisnava in essence. Because, the contemporary bhakti movement of the Assamese Vaisnavism too influenced these songs. Some of these songs have been compiled together in book forms by the writers like Syed Abdul Malik and Razek Ali Ahmed.

The Jikirs are devotional songs based on meditation ('Japa' or 'dhyana'). The Jikirs reflect the idea of Sufism as defined by Reynold A. Nicholson in the following way,

The soul being divine in its essence, longs for union with that from which it is separated by the illusion of individuality and this longing aspiration, which urges it to pass away from the selfhood and to rise on the wings of ecstasy, is the only means whereby it can return to its original home.22

The chief tenets of Sufi mystic speculations find expression in the Jikirs and Jaris through the simple and homely words

and phrases which are easily accessible to all. Each song begins with a 'ghoeha' or 'refrain' and ends with a 'pada' (verse). It can be sung in congregation as prayer to the Lord. The name of 'Ajan Pir' is associated with such songs. A large number of such 'pirs' or spiritual teachers came to Assam in different times. There are still the 'dargahs' or tombs of several 'pirs' in different parts of Assam. Some of their names are like Saleh Pir, Samal Pir, Navi Pir, Khondkar Pir, Abdul Ghani Pir. As Syed Abdul Malik observes, most of these Pir who travelled to Assam in different ages belonged to the Syed sect of Islam and all of them are known to be belonging to the Chistiya Nizamia order.23

The jari contains the elements of sadness. The emotional feelings of the people are aroused through the narrative of the sad tale of Hassan and Hussain of Karbala. These Assamese compositions bear the traces of Assamese elements and reflect the Assamese life. As Dr. Satyendra Nath Sarma observes, these two kinds of songs are Assamese in their very rhyme and tune. Of course, some of the Persian and Arabic

words relating to Islamic religion have got blended together 
with Assamese. 24

Abdus Sattar, an eminent writer of the Assamese Culture 
and Literature finds no difference between Bargasita and Jikira. 
Like the Vaisnavism of the Mahapurusa sect, the Islamic faith 
too adhered to 'monotheism'. Like 'Vishnu' as 'Rama' or 
'Krishna', 'Allah' alone is the omnipotent Lord. They are sung 
in the same manner as the Bargasita and Kirtana are done ; in 
the accompaniment of music and clapping of hands. However, 
these songs are of folk origin.

Sufism may claim of some other works of poetry in Assa- 
mesa. The first of this kind is Mrigaavati Charit or Gehapari 
Upakhyan composed by Rama DwiJa in the post-Sankara era.
There is also another work Kedharalati of an anonymous writer. 
The stories of these two poems seem to have been derived from 
the Hindi Sufi poetry of the sixteenth century. There is also 
a third work of this kind discovered in the early twentieth 
century by Dr. S.K. Bhuyan. This work is known as Candravali.

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24. J.N. Sarma : Asamiya Sahityar Sandeshathmak Itibritta, 
1984, p. 59
One Pashupati Didi is the author of this work. The first two poems are in Assamese while the third one bears the traces of both Assamese and Bengali languages.

The first two works, bear the brands of Sufi elements blended with Assamese Vaishnavism. Dr. Maheswar Neog is of the opinion that the tales of *Mrigavati* and *Madhumalati* spread in some form or other in the entire northern India beginning from Assam in the east to Gujarat in the west.  

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The poem of *Mrigavati charit* or the *Chahapari Upakhyan* (the tale of *Mrigavati* or the 'Queen Fairy') begins with a prayer to Lord Krishna as 'Anadi Ananta'. The 'Payer', 'dulari', 'chhabbi' etc. menstrual forms too have been employed in the narrative which very much resembles a fairy tale. In this poem, the old king Amir Shah is the second Indra. The capital city of Kundila is described as magnificent as Indra's capital 'Amaravati'. In his old age, the most favourite of the one hundred queens of his harem, gives birth to a child. The whole narrative deals with the story of the Prince's love affair

with a beautiful fairy who had first appeared before him in the guise of a deer. Then follows his adventures in pursuit of love. The Prince, then, marries the fairy in the city of 'Rokam', who begets two children, 'Amira' and 'Somira'. The old king and the queen die broken-hearted due to their son's absence. The story finally ends with the Prince's return to Kundila along with his wife and children.

There is, however, a great amount of universal appeal in this love-tale, although it is chiefly a narrative of an Islamic legend. Dr. S.K. Bhuyan rightly calls it, "a literature of romance in fairy fiction dressed." The union between the Prince and the Fairy symbolically means the human lover's union with the divine.

Briefly, the other work Madhumalati, by an anonymous author, is an allegorical representation of human love for the Divine, based on the model of the Vaisnava poetry.

The other work Chandravali deals with the love story of the Princess Chandravali, the daughter of king Chandrasena and Visvaketu, a prince.

Then, again, in the Romantic period of Assamese literature, some traces of sufism may be observed in the Jnanamalini of Mafizuddin Ahmed Hazarika first published in 1896. In a poem like 'Visvakhandar', the poet expresses his sincere love for God. Even a few poems of his Tattvaparijata contain some elements of sufism. But his poems lack the flavour of mysticism, as they are much didactic in tone.

It may be noted that Omar Firtha of Jatindranath Dewera and Hafizar Sur of Ananda Chandra Barua bear the traces of mystic elements of sufism.