Sufism is the psychology of heart because it studies the two realms simultaneously – ʿalām-i khalq and ʿalām-i amr i.e. the world of creation and the world of (divine) order, and the human heart is the meeting point of the two realms.

The modern psychology is called ‘nafsīyat’ or the study of the nafs. Nafs is taken as the lower self-shorn of the higher reaches of the soul. The world of ‘nafsīyat’ is the world of the creation. The modern nafsīyat studies the proximate courses of the human psyche only. But the self of the Sufi functions in the context of a few cosmic principles. Nafsīyat does not go beyond the ʿalām-i nasut, i.e. the visible and material phenomenal world, but the Sufi psychology outgrows ʿalām-i nasut and passes through other higher spiritual realms of ʿalām-i makāt, jābarut, lāhut etc. and gets union with the hāhut.

These are the wārdāt-i qalb i.e. events of the heart. The Sufi psychology has its subject matter – the events of the heart. So the definition of the Sufi psychology will be the Psychology of the heart or ‘Qalbshanasī’ in which the researcher studies the transpersonal experiences of the human self. Dr. Raza Arasteh (1975) is clearer on this point when he writes:

“A true psychology of man is experiential and its mechanism one of total absorption in the object of desire for greater awareness, but due to the fragmentation theory of man if biological drives become dominant, their expression and behavior should then be properly discussed in terms of psychological factors; if however socio-cultural factors become dominant, their manifestation should be interpreted in terms of
psycho-cultural analysis; whereas if a greater transcendence takes place, and one’s behaviour becomes identical to his inner experience, then psychological laws should be found within the realm of psycho-cosmology.\(^1\)

Dr. Arasteh in the above lines suggests a hierarchy in the approach to study of man. Every man has his own level of being. The study should correspond to that particular level. The statistical approach reduces everyone to the same general level. The Sufi psychology on the other hand, is an integrated and holistic approach.

**Titus Burckhardt** (1983) writes –

‘For profane psychology the only link between the macrocosm and the world of the soul lies in the impressions which reach the soul through the gateway of the senses, but Sufi psychology takes account of the analogy in constitution between the macrocosm and the human microcosm.’\(^2\)

He writes further –

“Sufi doctrine includes several branches in which two chief domains can be distinguished, that of Universal Truths (*al-Haqaiq*) and that which relates to human and individual stages of the way (*ad-daqaiq*) or in other words, metaphysic and a ‘science of the soul’. Needless to say these domains are not separated into watertight compartments.”\(^3\) Our present study is more concerned with the second domain i.e. *ad-daqaiq* or the science of the soul.

Dr. Arasteh (1973) provides a psychological frame of reference for Sufism in the following words:

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1 Toward Find Personality Integration. ohn Wiley & Sons. N.Y. 1975 p. xiv
2 An Introduction of Sufi Doctrine. p. 37
3 Ibid. p.35
“We must take man’s stages of growth as a blank sheet on which we can map all systems of psychology in their proper place. We must have a comprehensive chart that can give meaning from zero to plus and minus infinity of growth. When I ponder on the stages of life, I perceive a range running from purity biological unconscious evolution to that of final pure psychic cosmic unconsciousness. Therefore, I propose the following four successive stages of growth (which can serve frames of reference for systems of psychology):

1. Psychobiology is used to study the very early stages of human growth, when biological forces, not in terms of an action-reaction chain, but in relation to the child’s total expression, dominate the child’s expression. A holistic approach is most useful here.

2. The second stage appears as soon as socialization is rooted. We must realize that the biological force is manifested through psycho-cultural forces, thus calling for a new theory and technique – that of psycho-cultural analysis.

3. The third stage begins with the objectification of the ego and the awareness of single reality, namely experiential analysis, emphasizing experience and insight at its peak; this stage will be transformed into cosmo-psychology.

4. At this stage the person’s insight is harmonized with the pulsation of the universe. For example, the ordinary experience belongs to the stage of I-ness (ego world), which at the experiential level becomes he-ness and at a deeper perception arises from the world of oneness.”

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Dr. Arasteh has compared Sufi way of individuation with Jungian way of individuation⁠¹ thus establishing Sufism as a study under Transpersonal psychology. Broadly speaking, the Sufi way of individuation (or growth of self) is growing from the lower self \textit{nafs} and covering the higher stages of heart, spirit, \textit{khafi}, \textit{akhafa} etc. and finally submerging in the Truth and abiding there. These last two stages are called \textit{fana} and \textit{baqa}. Dr. Arasteh writes:

“Sufism as a way of individuation can be summarized in two major psychological steps, both of which are interrelated: disintegration (\textit{fana}) from a self-intellect, partial soul, and a social self, and reintegration (\textit{baqa}) as the universal self, that is, activation of one’s totality.”⁠²

\textbf{R.S. Bhatnagar} (1984)³ studies Sufism under the following headings –

a) The ascetic concept of Sufism.

b) Moral interpretation of Sufism.

c) The Philosophical approach to Sufism.

d) Sufis spiritual experiences and psychological assessment etc.

Regarding the first two we have discussed in the previous pages about the philosophical approach he writes –

“The philosophical or the theological side of Sufism consists in the mystical doctrines expounded by the Sufis from the standpoint of the relation between the mystic’s soul and God, the annihilation of self, the soul’s realization of the Divine attributes and the soul’s unification with God.”⁴

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¹ In the study quoted above.
² Ibid, p. 98
⁴ Ibid, p. 10.
We can agree with Bhatnagar what he says about the philosophical approach but we cannot do so when he expresses his views on the psychological approach to Sufism. He writes –

“A Sufi’s spiritual experience can neither be explained in language nor interpreted psychologically. The science of psychology is concerned with the mental states and – their relation with one another. Its range is limited to the subjective consciousness alone and it fails to provide any account of the extra-mental facts. The Sufi’s mystic experience is directly concerned with the Divinity of God which is a ‘trans-mental Reality’ and hence it lies beyond the reach of a psychologist….. In other words, the transcendent side of a Sufi’s spiritual world remains completely out of reach for the psychologist. Moreover, the science of psychology does not offer any fixed and universally accepted standard for the assessment of mystical states.”

We cannot agree to the above views as it does not mention which ‘psychology’ fails to comprehend mystical sciences, as the definition of psychology has been changing since its beginning. Previously, in it’s beginning, psychology was a part of philosophy and mysticism. Later on it bid farewell to philosophy when it adopted the path of the natural sciences. It was now called the science of behaviour only and it ignored and refused the questions concerning soul, mind, consciousness or the ‘inside’ world. It is this science of psychology that falls short of categories to understand mystical sciences.

But fortunately, the science of psychology has broadened its spectrum as we have seen in the last section. It has broadened its scope to accommodate itself to the mystical experiences. There are now many researchers like Ornstein and Sutti and few other

1 Ibid, pp 22-23
figures like Maslow who have changed the definition of psychology. We shall discuss here a few points concerning the two approaches of psychology (which we did not do in the previous part, but kept to be discussed here).

Nathan Brody and Paul Oppenheim (1966) in their research paper\(^1\) tries to understand the debate between two opposite approaches in Psychology – behaviorism and phenomenology. They write about behaviorism as –

'According to this position, the fundamental data of psychology are the publicly observable behaviours of organisms; these are conceived as being describable in an intersubjective observable language. For the behaviourist, private experiences as per se are not admissible as data, but only their publicly observable symptoms, if any. Behaviorists differ as to whether it is necessary or at least advisable to assign to private experience any role at all in Scientific Psychology. Behaviorists who assign a role to private experiences would do so by referring to them by means of theoretical terms.'

On the contrary, the phenomenological approach includes the experiencing individual. The subject matter of phenomenology is not behavior but the underlying subjective experience that guides or obstructs the behavior. The above mentioned authors quotes Macleod (1964) as:

‘..........colors and sounds are data; so are impressions of distance and duration; so are feelings of attractions and repulsion; so are yearnings and fears, ecstasies and disillusionments; so are all the relations – ranging from the crude and obvious to the delicate and intangible – with which the world presents us.’

\(^1\) Tensions in Psychology between the methods of Behaviorism and Phenomenology. Psychological Review, Vol. 73, No. 4, 295-305.
Phenomenology studies the data of experience. Phenomenologists make distinction between “fully reflexive categorical thought” and “pre-reflexive awareness”. The subject matter of pure phenomenological psychology is the former one. They write –

“Carried to its logical extreme, the method of pure phenomenological psychology (ppp) demands the bracketing of all concepts since they arise out of the activity of thought. It is therefore appropriate to call the type of experience involved in the method of ppp non-conceptual experience, that is, an experience of the immediately given sometimes referred to as ‘brute facts’, or ‘raw feels’, not mediated by any concepts.”

They write further –

“Also relevant are discussion of mysticism which can be considered a type of non-conceptualized experience.”

They summarize the discussion of non-conceptualized experiences as follows: –

1. During a non-conceptualized experience, the experiencer is not capable of distinguishing himself conceptually as experiencer from that which he is experiencing and in this sense in union with it.¹

2. During a non-conceptualized experience, the experiencer is not capable of assigning a locus to his experience in a public spatio-tempered co-ordinate system. Thus, the experience could only have a locus in a private frame of reference with respect to space and time. With respect to time, the experience is called a specious present.

3. Non-conceptualized experiences are ineffable in the sense that during and after the non-conceptualized experience of the experiencer has not at his

¹ In Sufism according to Mulla Sadra, whom we shall discuss in one of the next chapters, this state of the experience is called the ‘union between intelligence, intelligenting and the intelligibles.’
disposal words which could be used by him to describe for himself or others the content of his experience. A fortiori, they are propertyless, since properties involving class terminology cannot be assigned to them. This implies that differences, if any, contained in the experience cannot be described; it remains in this sense an undifferentiated unity.

4. Non-conceptualized experiences are solipsistic. Since they cannot be verbally communicated to others, they have meaning, if any, only for the experiencer himself.

Maslow studying about the ‘peak experiences’ which are non-conceptual experiences, writes that these (non-conceptual) experiences are valuable in that they promote psychological growth and health.

These peak experiences or the mystic experiences are by nature non-conceptual intuitive experiences that do not fall in the compass of any behavioristic experimental design.

Brody and Oppenheim then quote from Jaspers that –

a) Man in his entirety cannot be objectively (conceptually) known;

b) Cognition is not limited to causal explanation.

c) There are essential aspects of mind which are by their very nature not accessible to experimental methods and cannot be rationally grasped.

Man cannot be known objectively, because in this way of knowing him, we ignore his subjective experiences. Psychology in its attempt to become scientific has adopted the quantitative methods, thus, leaving behind man’s subjective experiences. Phenomenology is an approach that tries to study man as a subject. Naturally, it has to part ways from the
natural scientist in its approach towards human studies and it has to formulate its own
different research designs, which are qualitative in nature. Recently, there has been an
attempt in this way. It will not be out of place here to mention a brilliant work done by
Clark Moustakas (1995). He has tried to chalk out a phenomenological approach of
research in his book – ‘Phenomenological Research Designs’. It is really a wonderful
study in which he has presented a method to conceptualize the non-conceptual
experiences. This sort of endeavor can be very helpful in studying the mystic experiences
in future. The space does not permit us to discuss this approach in detail. We would say
only this here that presently psychology is coming up with new approaches to reach the
inaccessible depths of human mind. But this psychology will be a kind of ‘esoteric
psychologies’ in which the experimenter and the object of the enquiry will not be alien to
each other but the experimenter will himself grow towards the ‘Experience’, by adopting
certain prescribed practices.

A Sufi in his search for the experience of the reality, prepares himself variously,
undergoes mortifications and obligatory practices, does meditations and worshipping to
reach that level of being that attracts corresponding experience which is non-conceptual
in nature. He cannot express this experience, he can then only sing, dance or be lost in
ecstasies. He tries to represent his spiritual experiences in the guise of various figures of
speech, stories, and anecdotes as well as other devices of literature.

The self of the Sufi that experiences the vision of the ultimate reality undergoes
different stages of growth. The present thesis is an endeavor to study the various
experiences of the growing self in a Sufistic experience.
R.C. Zaehner compares Carl Jung’s ‘individuation’ with mysticism.

‘Jung puts it . . . the confluence of subject and object as the reunion of mother and child.’

Comparing Jung and Ibn Sina, he writes –

‘Thus anger and lust are regarded as opposites and each can be used to restrain and temper the other. To suppress them altogether, he (Ibn Sina) considers, would be to invite disaster. Thus, for Avicenna (or Ibn Sina) as for Jung, integration of the personality was man’s first wish on earth, and his lower soul does not seem to differ greatly from Jung’s collective – unconscious.’

Jung means by integration the marriage of the male and female portions of the psyche, the reconciliation of the conscious mind with the unconscious, both personal and collective. We can similarly see in Sufism the marriage of soul and the spirit whose offspring is the heart.

Individuation means the discovery of the Self in Jungian Psychology. The center is transferred from Ego to the Self. This new center of the self makes it appearance as something distinct from the old ‘I’. This is a movement from the narrower sense of the ego to the all-comprehensive sense of the self. It is to transcend the personal identity to achieve the impersonal identity. It is a shift in the center of identification. It is at the same time a change in self-conception. Now the mystic feels himself egoless as adam (non-being) and identified totally with the all-comprehensive and all pervasive reality.

The above experience has many gradations. Some Sufis understand it as the losing of the drop into the sea but others realize that the drop again collects itself later on.

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2 Ibid, p. 106
The first experience is called *wahdat al wajud* and the second is called *wahdat al shu`ud*. The first bases itself on ‘intoxication’ (*sahv*) and the later on ‘sobriety’. Junayd (the great Sufi of Baghdad) viewed that the *wahdat al wajud* is the state of the beginners and *wahdat al shu`ud* is the more advanced state (this view was later on supported staunchly to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi). Zaehner writes –

“This is probably what Junayd the founder of the ‘middle’ school of Muslim mysticism, meant when he spoke of his ecstatic (one is tempted to say ‘manic’) predecessor, Abn Yazid, of Bistam, as having reached the first stage only on the mystic’s path when he made such astonishing statements as ‘I am He’, and ‘Glory be to me’, how great is my glory’, implying thereby that he was actually identical with the Deity.”¹

Zaehner again compares Ibn Sina and Ghazali with Jung –

“We have seen that the Muslim philosophers, and particularly Avicenna and to a lesser extent Ghazali, insist that ‘anger’ and ‘lust’ by which they mean the aggressive and sexual instincts, are natural constituents of the human psyche and are, as such, in creditable. East should be used to restrain and temper the other. They are not in themselves evil but are compared respectively by Ghazali to a wild animal and a pack-animal. It is probably these two faculties that Jung has chiefly in mind when he discusses the ‘shadow’, since it is these qualities which principally contribute to loss of self-control, a condition, as Jung points out, when one is no longer ‘oneself’, when one ‘forgets oneself’ or is ‘beside oneself’, and his remedy – bringing the shadow into the open, - is not very different from Avicenna’s.”²

¹ Ibid, p. 114  
² Ibid, p. 122
"...what is usually called the natural mystical experience may be nothing more than an up rush from what Jung calls the collective unconscious."¹

Charles Francis Potter (1950) studies man's spiritual evolution as the next step in the evolution. He says that we began from the lower protoplasmic fluid and reached the present stage of the biological evolution. Man attained mind and self-consciousness. The next stage would be the appearance of cosmic consciousness. This cosmic consciousness sometimes presents itself in the self of the mystics and the prophets, but later it will be in the reach of all. He writes –

"What we are suggesting is that: that these few scattered instances of the attaining of cosmic consciousness by the lone and difficult path of theophany or mystic trance are precursors, forerunners of what may some day be the normal experience of any individual who really desires it. And no trance will be necessary, although a quiet period in a solitary place may still be found a helpful preparation."²

The same thing has been told by Rumi –

az jahadik rod m wana hidm
 pem bi frism ke rorod kum shum
 ma bar irom az maletk bal e ber
 agha nader rod m naid shum

¹ Ibid, p. 144
About cosmic consciousness Potter writes further –

'It is a new type of mind, or consciousness, then, for which we must look if we would discover among us representatives of the great Next Man or Superman.'

Potter says that the men who attained cosmic consciousness were called ‘The Enlightened One, The Praised One, The Anointed One, the Deliverer, and the like. Men also called them Lord, Master, and Teacher.'

And –

'Their cosmic consciousness did not annihilate their self-consciousness, out of which, indeed, it had grown, as self-consciousness grew out of the simpler consciousness of animals.'

And –

'When a man attains cosmic consciousness, the area of his awareness widens to include the cosmos.'

Potter regrets that scientific approaches has not tried to fathom the phenomena of the cosmic consciousness:

'The phenomena of cosmic consciousness have not been sufficiently investigated by scientist, partly because the experiences of those who have attained it have been dismissed as theophanies, that is, alleged appearances of God to men. Such events have been deemed impossible and said to be mere delusions of mystics and religious fanatics.

1 Ibid, p. 126
2 Ibid, p. 126
3 Ibid, p. 128
4 Ibid, p. 129
with disordered imaginations. Along with other unusual personalities, these mystics have been classed as psychopathic cases.\textsuperscript{1}

Potter outlines the contents of the cosmic consciousness or the mystic experience as follows:

1. A visual sensation as of a bright light.
2. An auditory sensation as of a voice or music.
3. A sudden sense of mental clarity.
4. A consciousness of the immensity and unity of the universe.
5. A conviction that even material things are alive.
6. A feeling of self-expansion to include all things.
7. A disappearance of guilt, doubt, and confusion.
8. An influx of great exaltation and joy of spirit.
9. An assurance that immortality has already begun.

The total impression may be summed up as an immediate, joyous, illuminating awareness of the unity, beauty, and immortality of the universe, which seems suddenly all alive and strangely related to and identified with oneself.\textsuperscript{2}

He further gives very important statements as –

‘When the cosmically conscious person feels this self-expansion to the extent that he identifies himself with the universe, he is apt to make statements which seem very extravagant to those around him who have not had the experience. When he calmly states that he is the son of God, or boldly debates with and denounces the religious authorities

\textsuperscript{1} Ibid. p. 134
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid. p. 138.

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of the day (as did Zoraster, Jeremiah, Jesus, Paul, Muhammad, Luther, and many others), he is charged with blasphemy or heresy, and sometimes suffers torture and death.

'There is frequently recorded, however, a sense of the disappearance of personal identity, when his self-consciousness expands into cosmic consciousness and all things have become new, he feels his former self swallowed up in the immensity of the new universe which he has discovered. The almost indescribable difference between his new state of mind and his old one so impresses him that he refers to his former self as dead. He has put off the old man and his deeds. He has been born again and works in newness of life.'

Potter quotes Dr. Bucke who was the great pioneer in the study of cosmic consciousness. Dr. Bucke in his book, Cosmic Consciousness, gives eleven marks of the cosmic sense:

a) The subjective light.

b) The moral elevation.

c) The intellectual illumination.

d) The sense of immortality.

e) The loss of the fear of death.

f) The loss of the sense of sin.

g) The suddenness, instantaneousness, of the awakening.

h) The previous character of the man-intellectual, moral, and physical.

i) The age of illumination.

1 Ibid, p. 153
j) The added charm to the personality so that men and women are always (?) strongly attracted to the person, and;
k) The transfiguration of the subject of the change as seen by others when the cosmic sense is actually present.¹

Potter is in the view that the possessors of the cosmic consciousness are termed as the prophets, and the teachers.

What has been said above is applicable in more or less way to Sufism too. Sufism also is an approach to achieve the cosmic consciousness. The achievers of such an integrating consciousness are called the nabis or walis or the Perfect Men. It has best been described by Ibn Arabi² in his writings. We call this experience of the cosmic consciousness as the Transpersonal experience.

The modern (behavioristic) psychology finds its gauge falling short of its measures to judge the “farther reaches of human nature”. Its scope is only the ordinary consciousness, which is according to Robert E. Ornstein (1977) a phenomenon of personal construction. He writes –

‘Ordinary consciousness is an exquisitely evolved personal construction, “designed” for the primary purpose of individual biological survival. Sense organs and the brain serve to select aspects of the environment most relevant for survival. Our ordinary consciousness is object-centered; it involves analysis, a separation of oneself from other objects and organism. This selective, active, analytic construction enables us to achieve a relatively stable personal world in which we can differentiate objects and act

¹ Ibid, p. 160
² Cf his Fusus al hikam, Futuhat al Makkiya and Shajarat al-kawn.
upon them. The concept of causality, linear time, and language are the essence of this mode.¹

The psychology as taught in the universities centers itself around the above mode of human consciousness only. But in fact, man has an ability to outgrow this ordinary consciousness to gain the cosmic consciousness. Ornstein writes –

‘And yet this individual, active mode is not the only mode in which consciousness can operate as the daylight hours do not constitute an entire day. If ordinary consciousness is a personal construction, then other constructions and other consciousnesses are potentially available to us.’²

Ornstein then quotes William James who wrote –

‘Our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different.’³

Ornstein writes further –

‘We find another major mode of consciousness manifests itself culturally, personally and physiologically. It is a mode of consciousness that is irrational, predominantly spatial rather than temporal, and receptive as opposed to active. Such a mode is difficult to encompass within the linear, verbal terms so dominant in our culture, but it is this mode of knowledge that is predominantly cultivated within the esoteric traditions.’⁴

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² Ibid, p. 72
³ Ibid, p. 72
⁴ Ibid, p. 116
According to Omstein to gain the esoteric experience it is essential to undo the automatizing mode of the ordinary consciousness –

'Concentrative meditation coupled with dis-habituation exercises, undoes the normal construction of consciousness. When the normal mode is temporarily dismantled, the other major mode can emerge – that of the “night”, the “receptive”, the often misunderstood and devalued mode of intuition.'

The above undoing of the ordinary consciousness is a kind of ‘fana’ as told by the Sufis. The Sufis many times considers ‘fana’ in the psychological sense, that is, clearing away the false impressions in the human mind. (We shall study this concept of fana in the chapter of the growth of self in Sufism).

Esoteric traditions have developed exercises and techniques for deautomatizing (or fana of) ordinary, outward-oriented consciousness, as well as internal states.

Robert Ornstein suggests a synthesis between the rational and the intuitive mode or ordinary and cosmic consciousness:

'Two modes of consciousness can function complementarily in the study of the psychology of consciousness. Gaining personal knowledge may initiate us – in the new area of inquiry, but once there, we can make full use of modern scientific techniques and instruments to explore and map the territory. We can then “translate” some of the ideas and the metaphors of the esoteric traditions into more modern scientific terms when appropriate and combine technology with a traditional perspective.'

He proposes an extended concept of man in which the few major modes of consciousness (rational and intuitive) exist in man and function in a complementary

1 Ibid, p. 184
2 Ibid, p. 194
manner. He considers Sufism as an esoteric science that has many methods to provoke in man the transpersonal experience. He believes that –

‘Sufism is experience of life through a method of dealing with life and human relations. This method is based on an understanding of man, which places at one’s disposal the means to organize one’s relationships and one’s learning systems. So instead of saying that Sufism is a body of thought in which you believe certain things and don’t believe certain things, we say that Sufi experience has to be provoked in a person. Once provoked, it becomes his own property, rather as a person masters an art.’ (Idries Shah).’

1 Ibid, p. 230.