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Tasawwuf & Tareeqat's Place in Quran and Sunnah

In The Name Of Allah, The Most High, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful. O Allah, send salutations on our Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace), who is the last and final Messenger.

After him there will be no Prophets to come until the Day of Judgement. Allah The Most High has given Him the highest excellence.

'Islam' is the final and universal religion, its teachings are based upon the Holy Quran (the final Word of Allah, the Almighty,) and the Sunnah (the teachings and attributes of our beloved Prophet, Prophet Muhammad (May Allah grant peace and honor on him)).

Sufism is the spirituality or mysticism of the religion of Islam. In Arabic, Sufism is called Tasawwuf. Sufism is regarded as the 'spirit' or 'heart' of Islam (ruh al-islam or qalb al-Islam). The origin of Sufism goes to the Quran and Prophet Muhammad (May Allah grant peace and honor on him) himself. One cannot be a Sufi without following the true teachings of Prophet Mohammed (May Allah grant peace and honor on him).

The main theme of Sufism is, to purify ourselves from evil and bad conduct (Tazkiah-e-Nafs) and what we try to achieve by it is Ihsaan, Sincerity.

Tasawwuf or Tazkiah-e-Nafs in the Holy Qur'an and Hadeeth:

* In Surah al Shams Allah, the Almighty, says " **قد أفلح من زكها** " **"He Who Purifies it (his self) succeeds"**. (Chapter No: 91:Verse: 9) This verse is talking about getting rid of your bad qualities, Tazkiah -e-Nafs, and the one who does it will be granted Jannah (heaven).

* Allah also said in Surah Aal-Imran, **"Indeed Allah conferred a great favor on the believers when He sent among them a messenger from among themselves, reciting unto them His verses, and purifying them.** (Chapter No: 3, Verse 164) one of the main purpose of sending our beloved and universal Prophet (May Allah grant peace and honor on him) is to purify us.

The benefits of purifying our souls are, (i) to get success in this life and hereafter. (ii) Satisfaction and comfort of the heart. (iii) Steadfastness in practicing Islam, obeying Allah and following the practice of the Prophet (May Allah grant peace and honor on him).

* In a Saheeh Hadeeth of the Prophet known as Hadeeth Jibreel, when Prophet Mohammad(May Allah grant peace and honor on him) was asked to define the category of Ihsaan, he replies: **"It is to worship Allah as if you see Him, for though you do not see Him, surely He sees you."** (Saheeh Bukhari, Kitab ul-Imaan, Chapter: 37)

The meaning of al-Ihsaan can be interpreted as "Sincerity", "excellence," "righteousness" or "deeds of goodness and beauty." That's to say that Ihsaan has two stages: the highest one is to worship Allah as if you see Him. This category is known as 'Mushahadah'. If you cannot attain this status of worship, then worship Him being certain that He sees you and that He is All-Aware of your actions and deeds, this class is well-known as 'Muraqibah'.

The scholars have said that this authentic Hadeeth is the basis of Tasawwuf and another important aspect of the Hadeeth is that it illuminates that Ihsaan is very much part of Islamic Shari'ah. The sentence " هذا جبريل أتاكم يعلمكم دينكم " "That was Jibreel who came to teach you, your Deen (religion)", close the mouth of all those who say that Sufism is not a part of the Religion.

All Sufi orders trace many of their original precepts from Prophet Muhammad (May Allah grant peace and honor on him) through the last caliph and son-in-law of the Prophet, Ali ibn Abi Talib (May Allah be pleased with him), with the notable exception of the Naqshbandi order who claim to trace their origins through the first Caliph, Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him).

(Classical Islam and the Naqshbandi Sufi Tradition. By

Muhammad Hisham Kabbani. P. 557.)

In the different schools the ideal remained the same, although the methods are different. The main ideal of every Sufi school has been to attain that perfection which Prophet Mohammed (May Allah grant peace and honor on him) has taught his followers.

The four great Imams of Fiqh, whose guidance was followed in all over the world, were known to have Sufi masters. Imam Malik May Allah have mercy on him (711–795 CE / 93–179 A. H), Imam-e-Azam Abu Hanifa May Allah have mercy on him (699 – 767 CE / 80 – 150 A. H), (whose teacher was Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq May Allah have mercy on him (83 – 148 A. H)), Imam Shafi' (767 – 820 CE / 150 – 204) (who followed Shayban ar-Rai' May Allah have mercy on him) and Imam ibn Hanbal May Allah have mercy on him (780–855 CE / 164–241 A.H) (whose teacher was Bishr al-Hafi May Allah have mercy on him (767– 850 CE)) all embraced Tasawwuf.

The establishment of many schools of religious thought; the Hanafi, the Hanbali, the Maliki, and the Shafa'i, all named after their founders. Similarly, in order to acquire, preserve and distribute his blessings, an organized effort was initiated by four schools of Sufism: The Naqshbandiah, the Qadriah, the Chishtiah, and the Suharwardiah. These schools were also named after their organizers and came to be known as Sufi Orders. All these Orders aim at purifying the hearts of sincere Muslims with Prophetic lights. These Sufi Orders also grew into many branches with the passage of time and are known by other names as well.

Among the four only two famous and oldest orders of Sufism; i.e. Qadriyah and Nashbandiah, are mention below in brief.

The School of Qadriyah:-

The Qadri order is one of the oldest Sufi orders. It derives its name from Shaykh Al-Sayyid Muhiyudin Abu Muhammad Abdal Qadir Al-Jilani Al-Hasani Wal-Hussaini, May Allah have mercy on him, (1078-1166 CE. 470-561 A.H.) who was from al-Jilan, Iran. He became an important public figure, overseeing charitable trusts, issuing judicial decisions, and addressing audiences that included high government officials. Themes he stressed included virtue, ethical conduct and self-discipline. The popularity of his teachings continued after his death in 1166, inspiring his followers and subsequent generations of disciples to establish the Qadri order.

The order relies strongly upon adherence to the fundamentals of Islam. The order, with its many offshoots, is widespread, particularly in the Arabic-speaking world, and can also be found in all over the world.

The School of Naqshbandiah:-

The Naqshbandi tariqah takes its name from Khwaja Baha'uddin Naqshband Bukhari, May Allah have mercy on him, (1318- 1389 CE.), a very prominent Sufi Shaykh who continued the tradition of making the spiritual teachings and practices of Sufism more applicable to the changing times in which he lived. Khwaja Baha'uddin Naqshband was the student, and later the khalifa (successor) of Amir Kulal, May Allah have mercy on him, (d. 1363). However, he also received instruction from the Ruhaniya (or spiritual being) of Khwajah Abdul Khaliq

Ghujdawani, May Allah have mercy on him, (1043 -1179 CE.), who gave Baha'uddin Naqshband the practise of silent dhikr.

The Naqshbandi order stems from the Silsilah Khwajagan, which originally developed in Turkestan. The best known Shaykhs of the Khwajagan were Khwajah Ahmed Yasawi (1093–1166 C.E.), a native of Sayram in Kazakhstan and Khwajah 'Abdul al-Khaliq Ghujdawani of Bukhara. The latter was responsible for coining certain terms with technical and spiritual meanings which are still in active use within the Naqshbandi tariqah to this day. He also made the teachings of the order accessible and relevant to the people of his era. (Turning Toward the Heart: Awakening to the Sufi Way by Shaykh Azad Rasool)

The order of Naqshbandiah is considered by the majority of Muslim world to be a sober order because of its teachings and practices; specially its way of silent Zikr (remembrance of Allah) rather than the vocalized forms of Zikr common in other orders.

May Allah gives us good knowledge that will lead us to success in this life and the life after and Guide us to the right path of life that will lead us all to Jannat Al Firdause.

Aameen bijahe Taha wa Yaseen[sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam]