



SUFISM AND ITS RELEVANCE IN TODAY'S WORLD: AN INSIGHT FROM SOCIO-MORAL PERSPECTIVE

Minara Choudhury, Assistant Professor

Department of Philosophy

M.C. Das College, Sonai, Cachar

Email: laskarminara@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Sufism represents a path that grants access to the profound silence hidden at the core of human existence. It embodies the divine trust rooted in God's mercy—a key enabling individuals to unlock the secret of their being and discover the forgotten treasure within themselves. This realization is attainable at all times and in all places. Sufism has the potential to encapsulate the true essence of religion, fostering socio-moral development within society in a deeply appealing manner.

In the modern context, the teachings of Sufism can be applied by emphasizing social welfare and the advancement of humanity. The essence of Sufi philosophy lies in serving humanity selflessly. Sufis, through their mystic insight, can mitigate rigid religious attitudes and promote universal love and compassion. Beyond traditional Sufi practices, one may embody the Sufi spirit by engaging in simple acts of virtue and kindness.

This paper aims to provide a concise overview of Sufism and to elucidate its moral philosophy. To explore the moral vision of Sufism, it is essential to examine the goals and practices of the Sufis, their distinctive conception of religious knowledge, and the dissemination of their ethical ideals. Ultimately, this study concludes by analyzing the socio-moral relevance of Sufism in contemporary society.

Keywords: Sufism, Relevance of Sufism, Moral Vision of Sufism

INTRODUCTION

Sufism is a spiritual path that unveils the stillness at the center of human existence. It is a divine trust emerging from God's mercy—a key allowing humans to unlock the mystery of their being and rediscover the hidden treasure within themselves.

Sufism is the science of direct knowledge of God, derived from the doctrines and practices found in the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah. While deeply rooted in Islamic revelation, Sufism also draws analogies from Greek and Hindu philosophical traditions where they align with Islamic teachings, thereby bridging the gap between human reason and divine knowledge.

A Sufi serves as a spiritual guide, philosopher, and moral exemplar—a reflective thinker who fosters the growth of the human soul. Even in solitude, a Sufi's presence resonates across time, offering wisdom and moral guidance. Through detachment from material desires, Sufis embody spiritual strength and serve as antidotes to the world's moral and emotional ailments.

ROLE OF SUFISM

The role of Sufism in the Indian subcontinent has been profound and transformative. Sufi saints dedicated themselves to spreading the teachings of Islam and refining the moral character of the people. Many non-Muslims were deeply moved by the Sufis' simplicity, humility, and fairness. Numerous Sufis migrated to India to devote their lives to God's service, enduring immense hardships for the sake of divine pleasure and sharing their spiritual wealth without discrimination.

Figures such as Khwaja Bakhtiyar Kaki, Makhdoom Jahania Jahangasht of Bahawalpur, Data Ganj Baksh of Lahore, Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti of Ajmer, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya of Multan, Baba Farid of Pakpattan, and Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi exemplified this mission. Their compassion and integrity attracted people to Islam, not through compulsion, but through moral persuasion and exemplary conduct.

Sufis made notable contributions to the subcontinent's culture, language, poetry, and music, influencing society's moral and aesthetic sensibilities. They succeeded in nurturing socio-moral transformation due to several key factors:

- They sought to liberate religious practice from rigidity and to emphasize God's love rather than fear of His wrath.
- They encouraged sincere practice of faith rather than mere verbal expression.
- They promoted detachment from material greed and worldly desires.
- They urged resistance to tyranny and moral corruption.
- They taught spiritual self-discipline and moral responsibility.
- They fostered unity and brotherhood by transcending racial and linguistic divisions.

RELEVANCE OF SUFISM IN TODAY'S WORLD

Throughout history, Sufism has worked to create what modern society would call a system of social welfare—an infrastructure for uplifting humanity in moral, spiritual, physical, and psychological dimensions. In this respect, Sufism has profoundly influenced the societies in which it flourished.

In today's world, where violence, intolerance, and extremism threaten peace and harmony, Sufism offers spiritual guidance as a remedy for humanity's suffering. Evil cannot be overcome by evil; it can only be defeated through faith, character, and wisdom.

Sufism advocates patience, sacrifice, tolerance, equality, and peace—values crucial for countering extremism and fostering inclusive societies. The interethnic and cross-cultural understanding promoted by Sufism remains vital in addressing modern social decay. Sufi-inspired initiatives, such as community institutions promoting socio-moral education and charitable endeavors, can help restore harmony and compassion.

Similarly, the establishment of welfare-oriented systems—schools, hospitals, and rest houses—modeled on Sufi ideals could parallel contemporary social welfare programs. Academic institutions should encourage seminars and discussions on the practical aspects of Sufi thought to inspire moral awakening.

Given the modern scientific temperament, it is essential to reinterpret Sufi teachings in ways that harmonize with rational and empirical understanding. The focus should remain on service to humanity—through honesty, kindness, patience, and humility—thereby creating a moral bridge between individuals, society, and the Divine.

Sufism teaches that the ultimate purpose of religion lies in fostering a direct and loving relationship with God, transcending sectarian divides. As the Holy Qur'an declares, "Whatever you have been promised is truth," religion represents the ultimate reality.

Thus, the Sufi approach remains deeply relevant today. Sufis can effectively interpret the moral dimensions of Shari'ah, soften rigid attitudes toward religion, and spread a universal message of love, peace, and compassion. Ultimately, Sufism embodies the essence of faith that sustains the socio-moral fabric of society in a timeless and compelling manner.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arberry, A. J. (1950). *Sufism*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Bruinessen, M. van, & Howell, J. D. (Eds.). (2007). *Sufism and the "Modern" in Islam*. London: I. B. Tauris.
- Chih, R. (2007). What is a Sufi order? In M. van Bruinessen & J. D. Howell (Eds.), *Sufism and the "Modern" in Islam* (pp. xx–xx). London: I. B. Tauris.
- Pluralism Project at Harvard University. (n.d.). *Boston Sufi Orders*. Retrieved from https://pluralism.org/affiliates/student/nguyen/Boston_Sufi_Orders.pdf
- University of Georgia. (n.d.). *Sufism*. Retrieved from <https://www.uga.edu/islam/Sufism.html>