Sufism

Origin and Development

التصوُّف جُذورهُ وتطوُّرُه

By

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All Praise is due to Allaah, we praise Him, and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allaah, Most High, from the evils of our own selves and from our wicked deeds. Whoever Allaah guides, cannot be misguided, and whomever He leads astray cannot be guided. I testify that there is no true God worthy of being worshipped except Allaah, alone, without partner or associate. I further testify that Muhammad is His true slave and Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). May Allaah’s Salaah and Salaam be also granted to the Prophet’s pure family, and to all of his noble companions.

O you who believe! Fear Allaah [by doing all that He ordered and abstaining from all that He forbade] as He should be feared [Obey Him, be thankful to Him, and remember Him always] and die not except in a state of Islam (as Muslims with complete submission to Allaah). (Qur’aan 3:102)
O mankind! Be dutiful to your *Rabb* (Allaah), Who created you from a single person (Adam) and from him (Adam) He created his wife (Eve), and from them both He created many men and women and fear Allaah through whom you demand your mutual (rights) and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship). Surely, Allaah is ever an All-Watcher over you. (Qur’aan 4:1)

O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allaah and fear Him, and speak (always) the truth. He will direct you to do righteous good deeds and will forgive you your sins. And whosoever obeys Allaah and His Messenger has indeed achieved a great success. (Qur’aan 33:70-71).

\[\text{اَمَّا بعَدَ/}

\[1\text{Rabb: Allaah is \textit{ar-Rabb}: He is the One Who gave all things the power to grow, to move and to change, to Whom belongs the Creation and Commandment, The Master Who has no equal in His Sovereignty, Predominance, and Highness, The One Who Provides and Sustains all that exists.}\]
It proceeds then: That the most truthful speech is that of Allaah's Book (the Qur’aan) and that the best of guidance is that of Muhammad ﷺ. The worst of evils are innovations (foreign to the true teachings of Islam). Every innovated matter (in religion) is a Bid'aa; every Bid'aa is a Dalaalah (misguidance), and every Dalaalah is in the Fire of Hell.

KNOW, may Allaah’s Mercy be upon me and you, that the issue of Soofism may be confusing to some and may be clear to others. Many have come to know about Soofism as the highest form of “Spiritual Islamic practices.” A kind of rich tradition, that only the special and very pious can adhere to and practice. Consequently, if Soofism is criticized, they see that as an insult to Islam. Some, however, consider Soofism as a “Spiritual” path which Muslims and non-Muslims can associate with. The fact, however, is that the reality of Soofism is known only to the few amongst Muslims. This is due, in part, to the very deceptive nature of the propagation of the teachings of Soofism as done by its advocates who present it as a very special way of worship that is linked to the Prophet (ﷺ) and his noble companions (may Allah be pleased with them) and those who follow their path in righteousness. Is it, however, the case?
Attempting to answer this question about “Soofism,” I ask Allaah, the Most High, to assist me in relating the truth and to make this effort sincerely done for His Most Honorable Face.

The slave of Allaah, Saleh As-Saleh

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First Part: The Meaning of Soofism

The origin of the word and its derivation:

There are many opinions regarding the origin of this word. They may be summarized as follows:

1-Some Soofis like to link the name to Ahlus-Sufaah (people of As-Suffah) who were at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ). They claim that there are great resemblances between the Soofee adept and Ahlu-Suffa. Those were poor people from the Muhaajireen who migrated from Makkah to al-Madeenah fleeing the persecution of the pagan Arabs. They were driven away from their homes and had neither money nor families, nor a place to stay. The Prophet (ﷺ) and the companions (ﷺ) assisted them and he (ﷺ) allowed them to stay in a courtyard by his Mosque. The fact, however, is that those poor Muslims resorted to the Mosque out of necessity. Their numbers increased at certain times and decreased at other times. Some of them stayed longer than others. So they were not a specific group united on something. Soofism in its early stages stressed the concepts of detachment from the worldly life, poverty, isolation, etc. The people of As-Suffah did not choose such concepts. They were in need and the Muslims helped them. They did not isolate themselves. In fact, they engaged in Jihaad whenever it was announced. When Allaah, the Most High, bestowed from His bounties upon the Muslims, some of them became free of want and were among the richest of the Sahaabah and others became
leaders in some Muslim lands. The Soofis would like to establish a linkage with the Prophet’s era and claim as well that he (ﷺ) approved the early seed of Soofism exemplified in Ahlus-Suffah. In addition, and from a linguistic point of view, to derive Soofism from As-Suffah is wrong, because the correct term would be Suffism and not Soofism.

2-As-Saf al-Awwal (الصف الأول): Some Soofis claim that Soofism comes from As-Saff al-Awwal (First Row) “standing before the Hands of Allaah, the Most Mighty and Most Majestic, by virtue of the high determination and eagerness towards Allaah in their hearts and by positioning their innermost before Him.” This term is far from being linguistically applicable for if it were so, the term would be Saffee (صفي).

3-As-Safaa’ (الصفاء): Other Soofis claim that the term is derived from As-Safaa’ which means clearness, purity, sincerity. This is disputed by other Soofis and linguistically it does not fit. The derived term would be Safwee, Safaaawee or Safaa’iee not Soofee.

4-Soofah (صرفه): It is said that their title is derived from ‘Soofah,” the name of some people who used to serve the Ka’bah in the pre-Islamic era (Jahiliyyah), and who used to go in seclusion in the Sanctified Mosque (Al-Masjid Al-
Although this affiliation may be linguistically sound, it is rejected because:

(a) The people of “Soofah” were not known well enough to be remembered by most of the early Soofis.
(b) Had this affiliation been correct, it would have been known in the times of the Sahaabah. However, such an affiliation was not known then.
(c) True devout worshippers do not accept to be affiliated with a tribe from the Jaahiliyyah times.

5-Sophia (سُوُفِية): The historian and philosopher Abu Rayhaan Al-Bayrooni (d.440 AH) mentioned that the word “Soofism” springs from the Greek term “Sophia” meaning wisdom. The Greek were the first to speak of the concept of Wahdat Al-Wujood (Unity of Existence: that all existence is a single reality which is Allaah, and that everything we see is one aspect of Allaah’s Essence). Though one cannot confirm nor deny the authenticity of this derivation, it is certain that Soofism during its course of development was highly influenced by the Greek and Hindu philosophies.

6-As-Soof (الصُّوْف): Many Soofis from the past and present consider that the term Soofism refers to the wearing of

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2Imaam Ibnul Jawzee supported this view in his book Tablees Iblees, p. 201.
woolen clothing (*Soof*). This is also the opinion of Shaykh-ul-Islam Ibn Taymeeyah. Also Ibn Khaldoon inclined to this opinion in his famous *Muqaddimah*. Many orientalists are also of this view. Although this is the most common opinion regarding the derivation of the term, it is disputed by some *Soofis* like Al-Qushayree (d.465 AH) who claimed that the *Soofis* were not specialized in wearing woolen clothes. Nevertheless, the desire by many *Soofis* to affiliate their name with this origin explains their exaggeration in matters of worship, detachment from the worldly life, abandoning lawful means of earning, property, children, etc. On the other hand, wearing woolen clothes is not something meriteous or raises the status of the Muslim with Allaah. Had it been so, the Prophet (**salla2**) would have preferred it to other clothes. In fact, he (**salla2**) disliked the odor of the wool upon sweating as related by ‘Aa’isha (**radiya1**). She said:

> جعلت لنبي صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم بردة سوداء من صوف، فلبسها فلم يعقم ولم يجد من ريح الصوف قذفها، وكان يحب الريح الطيبة. -رواه أبو داوود وأحمد وغيرهما وقال الحاكم "صحيح على شرط الشيخين" ووافقه الذهبي، والألباني في الصحيحه (2136)

> “I made a black cloak for the Prophet (**salla2**) and he put it on; but when he sweated in it he noticed the odor of the wool, he threw it away. The narrator said: I think he said: he liked good smell.”


5Reported by Abu Dawwod (English Translation no. 4063) and Ahmad in his *Musnad* (6:132, 144, 219, 249) and others. Al-Haakim
And in the agreed upon *Hadeeth* related by Anas (ﷺ), he (ﷺ) said:

"كان أحبُّ النياب إلى النبي ﷺ أن يلبسه الحِزَّة." 

- متفق عليه.

"The most beloved garment to the Prophet ﷺ to wear was the Hibara (a kind of Yemenese cloth made of cotton used to be from the best to wear)."⁶

7-*The term is not derived:* This opinion is held by some important figures in *Soofism* like al-Qushayriee and al-Hajooyari (d.456 AH). They say it is just a given title. Such a claim is a strange and very weak one, because none of titles adopted by any sect lacks a meaning associated with it.

These were the most important sayings regarding the origin of the word "Soofism". Such differences regarding this term is due to the mystic nature that folds *Soofism* in esoteric concepts which is open to all kinds of interpretations Any *Soofee* master could add his own methodology and concepts based upon his own experiences (Thawq). This rendered *Soofism* limitless in terms of its doctrines and ways. The case is even worse when it comes to the meaning of ‘Soofism.” One of the leading *Soofee* contemporary figures, Dr. ‘Abdul Hameed Mahmoud said: “The opinion regarding

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⁶Agreed upon. See *Saheeh Al-Bukhaari*, vol. 7, no. 704.
the meaning of it [At-Tasawwuf] did not yet reach a conclusive result."^7

As-Siraaj At-Tusi (d. 378 AH) mentioned that the definition of Soofism exceeds a hundred, while As-Sahrawardee (d. 632 AH) related that the saying of the Soofee shaykhs about the meaning of Tasawwuf exceeds one thousand. One of the latter Soofis by the name of Ibn ‘Ajeebah (d. 1224 AH) related that shaykh Zarrooq (d. 889 AH) mentioned that it reached about two thousand definitions. The definitions describe Soofism as being linked to concepts and practices as well. They range from poverty, perseverance, seclusion, withdrawal from the world, secrecy, deception, depriving the soul, wondering, singing, dancing, wearing wool clothes, ecstasy, inward transformation, spiritual development, all the way to Wahdat Al-Wujood^8. In fact, careful study of its history and of its men, brings one to the same conclusion that there is no specific and comprehensive meaning of Soofism. Despite this, it can be easily said that it represents an accommodation of beliefs, experiences (highly stressed), philosophies, and methodologies of varied degrees of divergence from the Qur’aan, authentic Sunnah, and the way of the Salaf. Largely comprised within such accommodation are certain fundamental matters that shape Soofism, mainly:

^7 Abhaath fit-Tasawwuf, p. 153 (Taqdees, p. 40)
^8 See Taqdees Al-Ashkhaas, pp. 40-44, Masaadir At-Talajee, pp. 35-37, and At-Tasawwuf: Al-Mansha’ wal Masaadir, pp. 36-39.
1- Limitless figurative interpretation of the texts and/or the sayings of their masters.

2- Classifying the Deen into *Thaahir* (*Sharee’ah*) applicable to the common Muslims and *Baatin* (Hidden) known only to the Masters and mystics.

3- Accommodation of any deviation in matters of creed, worship, or morals. The extreme *Sooфиз* accommodate all creeds and all sorts of innovations.

4- The deviated relationship between the Master and the disciple.

5- The state of *Kashf* claimed by Masters in the *Soofee* orders in which they perceive and witness all of the realities of existence as well as those of the *Ghayb* (unperceived realities).

6- Emphasizing *Manaamaat* (dreams), fabricated stories and/or *ahaadeeth*, as well as *Shatahaat* (intense and wild emotional state of excitement and agitation arising form what they call sudden Divine touches and during which the mystic utters unlawful innovated and mystic words, hallucinations and in many cases plain *Kufir*). Yet they say their utterances are due to the mystics being in a state of spiritual intoxication, e.g. “Praise be to me (*subhaani*),” and “Under my robe there is only god.”
Second Part: When Did It All Start?

The Beginning and Development of Soofism

Innovations usually start small then grow big.

Some scholars traced the seeds of Soofism to the early stages of the second Century of the Hijri calendar, while others pointed out that the early features of it began before the year 200 After Hijrah (AH). The early deviation was exemplified in exaggerations in worship and extremism in avoidance of the worldly life. In the beginning, some people became interested in leading a pious life of Zuhd (an abstemious way of life), patience, clemency, sincerity, truthfulness, although some of them exaggerated and (or) introduced innovated forms of worship and innovated concepts. Then those who attached themselves to such practices became lax in allowing singing and dancing, something which they refer to as Samaa’ [singing aimed at stimulating a state of Wajd (ecstasy) and excessive worship.]

As, with every Bid’ah, Iblees beautifies it in the eyes of its beholder and drives him to do more Bida’. The Soofism is

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10Ibn Taymeeyah holds the first while Ibnul Jawzee and Ibn Khaldoon are of the second opinion (See Talbees Ibleess, p. 201 and Al-Mugaddimah, p. 467, respectively).
just one case of *Talbees Iblees* (A devil’s deception), whereby he turned them away from knowledge and showed them that what matters is action. Though many of them may have started with good intentions, nevertheless they took off from the course of the Sunnah.

During the third century, introduction of new concepts and practices became more evident. Some became interested in monasticism (living like monks), while others spoke of poverty, hunger, sleeplessness, wonderment, seclusions, dancing, clamping, innovated forms of *Thikr*, etc. Many abandoned marriage and the seeking of means of sustenance. Others exaggerated in disassociating themselves from *Hadeeth* and its knowledge. In the course of this development, the masters would put certain regulations that made them see themselves as the “special” who have “special inward knowledge” that takes the person directly to Allaah. They referred to this state as *Al-'Ilm Al-Baatin* (special "inward" knowledge). Such baseless classifications marked the beginning of the introduction of the so-called "knowledge of Al-Haqeeqah" (lit. Reality), in reference to the so-called "mystic knowledge" of Allaah.

By the end of this century, *Soofism* spread and *Soofee* orders began to sprout and some of its deviant creeds like *Al-Hulool* (indwelling of Allaah in incarnation), *Ittihaad* (union between Allaah and the created) were adopted by some of their extreme masters. New states of *Soofism* were defined and the masters spoke of specific terminology defining such
states, like *Fanaa*’ (annihilation), *Thawq* (experience), *Kashf* (perception and witnessing all of the realities of existence as well as those of the unseen), *Wajd* (ecstasy), *Samaa*’ (mystic singing and dancing as a means of inspiration), and other philosophical terms.

During the 4th century, *Soofism* was almost transformed into orders accommodating all sorts of *Bida*’ in ‘*Aqeedah* (creed) and *Ittibaa*’ (way of following). It was a blend for every sect. Amongst them you find the *Jahmiyyah*, the *Mu’atzaatlite*, the *Maatureedi*, the *Ash’aree*, the *Shee’ee*, the philosopher, the *Murj’i*, the *Jabri*, and followers of all sorts of *Ahwaa*’ (desires and innovations). For *Ahlul Ahwaa*’ (followers of lowly desirers and innovations), *Soofism* became a universal ground which they penetrate in the name of spiritual guidance.

During the sixth century, a group of mystic *Soofis* claimed to be descendents of the Prophet (ﷺ) and each one of them established for himself a special *Soofee* order with special followers. Ar-Rifaa’i appeared in ‘*Iraaq*, Al-Badawi and Ash-Shaathili in Egypt. These orders branched into other orders. In this century and in the next two, the *Soofee Fitnah* reached its climax with the ‘*Aqeedah* of *Wahdat Al-Wujood* (Unity of Existence), appearance of new *Bida*’ (building on graves and magnifying them, innovated celebrations, etc.), more *Soofee* orders and more superstitions. This was supported by the establishment in Egypt of the ’Ubaydiyyah State (known as the Fatimid State), which spread its
influence over many Muslim lands. Finally, during the latter centuries, the ninth, tenth, and eleventh, the Soofee orders reached the thousands and the Soofee practices and affiliation spread over the entire Muslim world. Today, Soofism has establishments, preachers, funding, and almost unrestricted movement of its people across the borders of many Muslim and non-Muslim countries. As to its most important objectives, I leave it to a Soofee enthusiast well known in the circles of Soofism, Saayed Hossein Nasr, who stated that, “All that we can do is to stress that the Soofee teachings center upon two fundamental creeds: Wahdat Al-Wujood, and Al-Insaan Al-Kaamil (the Perfect Man).

11 Al-Insaan Al-Kaamil: In the world of Soofism, Al-Insaan Al-Kaamil is the “barrier” qualified with both the Essence of Allaah and the essence of creation (or man). And he is the one who comprises all the worlds of the Divine and that of creation, the complete and the partial. He deserves the Names of the Thaat (Allaah’s Essence) and the Divine Qualities. The Soofee mystics refer to Prophet Muhammad (salla2) as being the “Perfect Man” or the “Al-Haqeeqah Al-Muhammadiyah”: The Thaat (Essence of Allaah) in its first designation; to him (Muhammad salla2) belongs all of the Most Beautiful Names [of Allaah] and that he is Al-Ism Al-A’tham (Allaah’s Greatest Name). From Muhammad, the entire creation, this world and the Hereafter, was brought to exist!! This is most fully described by ‘Abdul al-Karim Al-Jeeli (d.820 AH/1417 C.E.), a Soofee of the school of Ibn ‘Arabi, in his book Al-Insaan Al-Kaamil. See V. 2, p. 73 (4th edition), 1395 AH/1975 C.E.. See also Mu’jam Al-Mustalahaat As-Soofeeyyah by ‘Abdul Mun’im Al-Hafnee, p. 27. Also refer to Mu’jam Al-Mustalahaat As-Soofeeyyah by Anwar Fouad Abee Al-Khazzaam, p. 49, published by Maktabat Lubnaan, Beirut, Lebanon, 1993. Al-Jeeli’s
During all of this past of Soofism and nowadays, Soofism was not left without challenge. The Salaf gave their advice and warned against the early deviations and mistakes of some the early Soofis. They exposed the false concepts of beliefs and practices of Soofism in the past and in the present. This, by Allaah’s Grace, benefited and continues to benefit the Muslims worldwide. The truth propagated by the followers of the Salaf is finding its way everywhere despite the efforts by its opponents who try to disseminate among the people it causes rifts between the Muslims while they represent "the way of unity" through their so-called Mainstream Islam. The Path of the Salaf distinguishes between the truth and falsehood and calls to unite the Muslims on the true Tawheed and pure Ittibaa’ (following of the established Sharee'ah). This makes it binding that the followers of the Salaf should be a good example and use wisdom and kindness in their efforts to propagate the truth without compromising the principles of the Deen. Errors by some of the followers of the Salaf should not hinder the truth seeker from accepting the truth regarding matters of the Deen, and he should judge according to the principle not the mistakes of people.

book Al-Insaan Al-Kaamil is filled with plain statements of Kufr. Just consider his belief regarding the Prophet (Peace be upon him) (above).

Third Part-Concepts and Practices of Sufism

(A) In Reference to Tawheed of Allaah, the Most High.

The belief in the Oneness of Allaah (Tawheed) means to single out Allaah with creation, sovereignty and control of affairs, with all worship, and with whatever names and attributes He has affirmed for Himself or upon the tongue of His Messenger and as they befit His Magnificence. The proof of this is in many texts from the Qur’aan and authentic Sunnah. One of them is the saying of Allaah, the Most High:

[Allaah is] the Rabb of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, Ar-Rahmaan (the one whose Mercy encompasses everything), so worship him alone and be patient and firm on his worship, do you know of any who is similar to Him? [Qur’aan, Soorat Maryam, 19:65]

So Tawheed centers upon three types:

1-Tawheed ar-Ruboobiyyah (Tawheed of Lordship): Singling out Allaah with creation, sovereignty and control of Affairs.

2-Tawheed al-Uloohiyyah (Tawheed of Worship): Singling out Allaah with all worship such that no kind of
worship could be offered to anyone or anything besides Allaah.

3-Tawheed al-Asmaa’ was-Sifaat: Singling out Allaah with whatever names and attributes He has affirmed for Himself in His Book, or upon the tongue of His Messenger. So the believer affirms what Allaah has affirmed for Himself, and denying whatever He has denied from Himself, without Tahreef (changing and distorting their meanings), without Ta’teel (denying or divesting Allaah of His Attributes), without Takyeeef (describing how they are), and without Tamtheel (likening them to those of His creation).

This true belief in Tawheed is not the “Tawheed” of the foremost Soofis. Their Tawheed reflects different creeds and is considered by many as “hidden knowledge” which may be only attained by the elite:

1-Al-Hulool:13 In mystic Soofism it refers to the Divine incarnation in the so-called Soofee saints. Imaam ibn Taymeeyah classified the Hulool into two kinds. The first is the specific hulool like the claim of the Christians that Allaah is incarnated in ‘Eessa ﷺ and like that of the extremist Shee’ah and Soofee mystics who claim that Allaah is incarnated in ‘Ali ibn Abee

13Hulool: lit. “settling,” “alighting,” “lodging,” “descent,” and by extension “incarnation”. The most common definition is that it refers to the doctrine of Divine incarnation in the human form.
Taalib and in special Soofee saints, respectively. The second kind is the general *Hulool* and it is the saying that “Allaah, in His Essence, is everywhere.” Amongst the most daring Soofis who held to the concept of incarnation was Al-Hallaaj who was tried for his heresy and put to death by the ‘Abbaasid authorities. Ibn ‘Ajeebah (1224 AH/1809 C.E.), one of the leading Soofis who explained the Hikam of the mystic Ibn ‘Ataa (d. 709AH/1309 C.E.) related that Al-Hallaj said: “I am You without doubt. Subhaanak is Subhaanee. Your Tawheed is my Tawheed and disobeying You is disobeying me. Glorified be He whom his Naassoot (creation, human qualities) made manifest the secret of His shining and piercing Laahoot (the Divine). He then appeared in His creation manifested in the image of the one who eats and drinks. Even His creation was able to see Him with their own eyes like the moment an eyebrow sees an eyebrow [emphasizing certitude].” Ibn ‘Ajeebah added, “And because of the unraveling of such matters and other similar ones, Al-Hallaaj, may Allaah be

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14 See *Al-Fataawaa*, vol. 2, pp. 171-172.
15 Al-Hussein bin Mansoor Al-Hallaaj (d.309 AH/922 CE).
16 *Laahoot* and *Naasoot* are terms of Christian origin referring to the dwelling of the Laahoot (God) in the Naasoot (i.e. ‘Eesaa垟暠)!!
17 Ibn ‘Ajeebah in *Eqaath Al-Himam fee Sharhil Hikam* [Beirut, Lebanon: Daar Al-Ma’rifah], p. 156.
pleased with him! -was killed.” 18 These matters according to Ibn ‘Ajeebah and other mystics should not be disclosed. They are the secrets of their Tawheed.

2-Some see Allaah as the only existing being. This is stressed by Al-Ghazaalee, may Allaah forgive him, in his book Ihyaa ‘Ulum ad-Deen. He said: “Anyone who does not see Allaah in everything, then he sees ‘other’ than Him,” and that “The pure Tawheed is to see in everything nothing but Allaah.” 19 The meaning of such “Tawheed” is **that there is one existing being and that is Allaah.** The one who sees an existence other than that of Allaah is the Mushrik (who commits Shirk). Al-Ghazaalee explained the perfect understanding of la ilaaha illa Allaah as: “To see none except the One, the Truth,” and that this represents the “perfect state of Tawheed!” He referred to a state of “Tawheed,” “witnessed by the sincere ones and which the Soofis call Al-Fanaa’ (annihilation) in Tawheed” as the one in which, “Only One (i.e. Allaah) is seen in the entire existence.” Al-Ghazaalee stresses that the utmost objective of Tawheed is to see, “Al-Kull (everything) not as Katheer (many), but as one,” and that this “represents the objective of the (Soofee) knowledge known as Kashf,” and that, “The secrets of this knowledge

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18 *Ibid*, p. 156.
19 *See Ihyaa*, V. 1, p. 288.
should not be recorded in a book.” He defined the Mushrik as the one, “Who affirms the existence of ‘an existence’ besides that of Allaah” and that Allaah is, “The witness and the Witnessed, the one loving dearly and the Beloved, and He is the Shaakir (the one who is thankful) and the Mashkoor (The One Who deserves acknowledgment and recognition)…”20 This is not true Tawheed in which the believer knows well that Allaah is distinct and separate from His creation, rather this is “Wahdah” (unity).

The Doctrine of Wahdat Al-Wujud. This is neither Hulool (indwelling of Allaah in creation) nor Ittihaad (union between Allaah and the created), rather it means that every creature that the eye sees is Allaah in essence. This concept of the Unity of Existence is held by many of the so-called Soofee saints (Awliyaa’) like Ibn Al-Faarrid (d. 632AH/1235 C.E.), Ibn ‘Arabi (d. 638AH/1240 C.E.), Ibn ‘Sab’een (d. 669 AH/1270 C.E.), Al-‘Afeef At-Tilmisaani (d. 690 AH/1291C.E.), Ibn Masheesh (d. 622 AH/1225 C.E.), An- Nabulusi (d. 1143 AH/1731 C.E.), and others. Under such concept, the presence of creation is an illusion or an imagination. Many Soofis consider Ibn ‘Arabi the Greatest sheikh and the symbol of the concept of Wahdat Al-Wujud. He considers the Soofee who knows of Allaah (‘Aarif billaah) as the one who “Sees Allaah in everything, rather he

20*Ihyaa*, V. 1, 288, V. 4, pp. 86-87 and pp. 245-247.
sees Him the essence of Everything,”\(^\text{21}\) and that “He (Allaah) is the Essence of Existence”\(^\text{22}\) Ibn ‘Arabi considered all kinds creeds to be true and he believed in them all. This is his “Unity of Worship”:

وَأَنَا أَعْقَدُتِ جَمِيعَ مَا أَعْقَدْتُهُ

Creatures have held [certain] tenets regarding the Ilaah
And I have believed in all of what they have believed in.\(^\text{23}\)

He also said: “Be careful not to restrict yourself to a particular (or distinct) creed and deny everything else otherwise you would miss a great deal of good. Rather you would miss knowing the matter as it is. So, be within yourself an هَيْوْلِي (Hayouli: A substance) for all the forms of creeds, for Allaah is Greater than being limited by one creed and excluding another.”\(^\text{24}\)

The books of Ibn ‘Arabi contain many statements in which he considers everything worshipped on earth is Allaah\(^\text{25}\)

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\(^{21}\)Ibn ‘Arabi’s *Fusoos al-Hikam* [Beirut, Lebanon: Daar Al-Kitaab Al-‘Arabi, 1400 AH/1980 C.E.], p. 192. He claimed that his *Fusoos* was recommended by the Prophet (ﷺ) for the people to benefit from it!

\(^{22}\)Ibid, p. 109.

\(^{23}\)Imaam Ath-Thahabee’s *Taareekh al-Islam*, p. 354.

\(^{24}\)Ibn ‘Arabi’s *Fusoos*, p. 113.

\(^{25}\)Ibn ‘Arabi’s *Al-Futoohaat Al-Makkiyyah*, 3:248. Ibn ‘Arabi claimed that *Al-Futoohaat Al-Makkiyyah* was “Divinely dictated” to him. [See
and that his heart “turned to accept every image”; it became “a monastery for monks, a home for idols, the Ka’bah of the Ta’eef (the one in Tawaf), the Tablets of the Torah, and the book of the Qur’aan...”

This is only a very brief presentation on the position of mystic Soofism regarding the belief in Allaah Who is High above what they attribute to Him. Imaam Ath-Thahabee رحمه الله تعالى said regarding the book of Fusoos Al-Hikam of Ibn ‘Arabi: “If there is no Kufr in it [Fusoos], then there is no Kufr in this world!”

(B) Position Regarding the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

The Muslim believes that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allaah and the last Prophet. Allaah (ﷻ) says:

Ma kaan Muhaammad a’ba a’had min Raja’llam wa raskul Allahu mustafa wa hamma’u bihi [al-Ahzab, 40].

Masaadir At-Talaqee, p. 277 quoting from Ibn ‘Arabi’s Al-Futoohaat Al-Makkiyyah 3:456.] 26


Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allaah and the last of the Prophets. [Qur’aan, Soorat Al-Ahzaab, 33:40].

Allaah entrusted Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) with the final and complete message of Islam, calling mankind to worship none but Allaah. He (ﷺ) is the best of the Messengers and the best of mankind. He, has no share at all of Ruboobiyyah (lordship) nor any share of Divinity. Contemplate the saying of Allaah regarding Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ):

قِلْ لَا أُمْلِكُ لَنفْسِي نفعًا وَلَا ضَرًا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَوْ كَتَبَ أَعْلَمَ الْغَيْبَ لَا سَتَكُونَ مِنَ الحَرِيرِ وَمَا مَسَّنِي السُّوءُ إِنَّ أَنَا إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ وَبِشْرٌ لِّقُومٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ [الأعراف ، 188].

Say, O Muhammad (ﷺ), it is not within my power to bring benefit nor to keep away harm except as Allaah wills; and if I knew what the future holds I could amass a great deal of wealth and harm would not befall me. But I am just a Messenger from Allaah sent by Him to warn those who disobey Him of His punishment, and to give glad tidings of His reward fro those who truly believe in Him and are obedient to Him. [Qur’aan, Soorat Al-A’raaf, 7:188].

He (ﷺ) said: “I am just a human like yourselves, I forget just as you forget. So, if I forget, then remind me.”  

28Reported by Muslim in his Saheeh [English translation], vol. 1, no.1168]
The belief that Muhammad (¶) is the Messenger of Allaah necessitates that

1-He (¶) is the true Messenger of Allaah; he did not lie nor was he believed.
2-The Muslim should follow his teachings.
3-The Muslim believes in all of the reports which he (¶) related regarding the past, present and future and that these reports were revealed to him by Allaah (¶) and was not something which he knew on his own.
4-We comply with his commands
5-We stay away from what he forbade
6-We defend the Sharee’ah with which he was entrusted.
7-We comply with all that the he (¶) brought from the Sharee’ah as if it were from Allaah.

In the sight of the mystic Soofis, the Prophet (¶) is looked upon in ways that oppose the path which Allaah (¶) intended for the believers. This could be summarized in the following points:

1-Many Soofis stress the concept of what they call Al-Haqeeqah Al-Muhammadiyyah or the “Perfect Man” (Al-Insaan Al-Kaamil). In the world of Soofism, Al-Insaan Al-Kaamil is the “barrier” qualified with both the Essence of Allaah and the essence of creation. And he is the one who comprises all the worlds of the Divine and that of creation, the complete and the partial. He deserves
the Names of the Thaat (Allaah’s Essence) and the Divine Qualities. The Soofee mystics refer to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) as being the “Perfect Man” or the “Al-Haqeeqah Al-Muhammadiyyah”: The Thaat (Essence of Allaah) in its first designation; to him (Muhammad ﷺ) belongs all of the Most Beautiful Names [of Allaah] and that he is Al-Ism Al-A’tham (Allaah’s Greatest Name). From Muhammad, the entire creation, this world and the Hereafter, was brought to exist!! This is most fully described by ‘Abdul al-Karim Al-Jeeli (d.820Hj/1417 C.E.), a Soofee of the school of Ibn ‘Arabi, in his book Al-Insaan Al-Kaamil. In this book he said: “Know, may Allaah guard and protect you, that Al-Insaan Al-Kaamil (the Perfect Man) is the Qutub (the axis) around which the spheres of existence from beginning to end revolves. And he is one since the being of existence and forever and ever. Furthermore, he takes on various forms and appears in churches...his original name which belongs to him is Muhammad...I met him while he was in the image of my sheikh Sharaf-ud-Deen Ismaa’eel Al-Jhubratee...the secret behind this matter is him being able to take the form of every image...” It is the same creed of Ibn ‘Arabi and the advocates of Wahdat Al-Wujud, those who claim that Allaah is the essence of all that exits. They consider the Prophet (ﷺ) as the first created

30 Al-Insaan Al-Kaamil, Chapter six quoting from ‘Abdur-Rahmaan ‘Abdul Khaaliq’s Al-Fikr As-Soofee [Cairo, Egypt: Daarul Haramayyn, 1413/1993], pp. 243-245
being and from him originated rest of creation and that he himself is the God who is above the Throne. Such concept is similar to the philosophical concept of the “first cause” or the “first active intellect” from whom the creation emanated.

2- Some *Soofis* hold to the same concept as above but do not say that the essence of Muhammad is above the ‘Arsh.

3- Many *Soofis* claim that the light of Muhammad (**صلى الله عليه وسلم**) is the first being, and that he is the most honorable of creation, and for his sake Allaah has created the universe. They do not explicitly say that the creatures originated from him.\(^{31}\)

Most *Soofis*, however, concur that the Prophet (**صلى الله عليه وسلم**) is the essence of emanation of all knowledge. Some of them consider that this emanation is eternal, meaning that it is

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\(^{31}\) You can find many of the *Soofee* concepts regarding Prophet Muhammad (**صلى الله عليه وسلم**) in the sayings, writings, and invocations of principal *Soofis* like Abu Taalib Al-Makki, Al-Ghazaali, Ibn ‘Arabi, Al-Jeeli, Ibn Masheesh, Abul-Hasan Ash-Shaathili, Al-Booseeri (in Nahjul Burdah), Ahmad Badawi, Al-Jazooli (in Dalaa’il AL-Khayraat), Ahmad-Ar-rifaa’I, Ibraheem Ad-Dasooqi, Fakhrud-Deen Ar-Raazi, Muhammad Al-Bakri (As-Salaat Al-Bakriyyah) and others. Some invocations stressing such concepts include the Teejaaniyyah, Al-Jeelaaniyyah, As-Saqaafiyayah, Al-Idreesiyyah, and others as well. See *Kashf Hageeqat As-Soofeeyyah*, pp. 263-281, and Al-Fikr As-Soofee, pp. 175-195.
present even before the existence of Muhammad (ﷺ). That is why a large sector of the Soofis believe that the Prophet (ﷺ) knows the Ghayb and that nothing escapes his knowledge in the heavens and on the earth. They have also innovated many practices aimed at showing their so-called love of the Prophet (ﷺ) including celebrations of the Prophet’s birthday and his journey of Israa’ and Mi’raaj, his Hadraah.32 and so forth. They even call upon the Prophet (ﷺ) seeking aid and help believing that he (ﷺ) responds and answers such Shirk. Such concepts, beliefs, and practices concerning the Prophet (ﷺ) are corrupt and contradict the Message of the Qur’aan and Sunnah as well as the way of the true believers, the Sahaabah and those who followed them on the path of righteousness, may Allaah be pleased with them all.

(B) Their Position Regarding the Wilaayah

In this section we will examine some points related to the concepts and practices, which we mentioned earlier:

(1) The Concept of Soofee Zuhd:

The call for Zuhd in Islam is to lead a pious life devoted to Allaah  taking the least that is sufficient of the lawful things of life. It does not mean to abandon lawful means of

32Soofee innovated circles of Thikr: They claim that the Prophet (ﷺ) attends these circles!
earning, property, children, etc. nor exaggerating in performing acts of worship. Allaah, the Most High, says:

{\textit{O Children of Adam! Take your adornment [by wearing your clean clothes] while praying and going round [the Tawaaaf of] the Ka'bah, and eat and drink but waste not by extravagance, certainly He [Allaah] likes not the extravagants. Say [O Muhammad ﷺ]: “Who has forbidden the adoration with clothes given by Allaah, which He has produced for his slaves, and At-Tayyibaat [all kinds of Halaal things] of food?” Say: “They are, in the life of this world, for those who believe, [and] exclusively for them [believers] on the Day of Resurrection [the disbelievers will not share them].” Thus We explain the Aayaat [Islamic laws] in detail for people who have knowledge.} [Qur'aan, Soorat Al-'Araaf, 7:31-32].

He also said:

\{ وَابْنِغْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمُ الَّذَاذَ الأُخْرَىَِّ وَاَنْصِبْنِ يِتْبَعُكُمْ مِنِ الدُّنْيَا وَاَحْسِنْ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ الْلَّهُ إِلَيْكُ وَلَا تَنَغِي الْفِسَادَ بِالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ \} [القصص،77].

But seek with that [wealth] which Allaah has bestowed on you, the home of the Hereafter, and forget not your
portion of legal enjoyment in this world, and do good as Allaah has been good to you, and seek not mischief in the land. Verily Allaah likes not the Mufsideen [those who commit great crimes and sins, oppressors, tyrants, mischief-makers, corrupted people]. [Qur’aan, Soorat Al-Qasas 28:77].

When Sa’d Bin Abee Waqqaas asked the Prophet (ﷺ) whether he can will all of his property in charity, the Prophet (ﷺ) told him to give only one third of it and said:

“*وَاللَّهُ كَبِيرٌ أَن تَذْعَرْ وَرَتَّلْكَ أَعْجَبَةً خَيْرَ مِنْ أَن تَذْعَعْهُمْ عَالَةً يَتَكَفَّفُونَ النَّاسُ فِي أَيْدِيهِمْ*”-
[Surah Al-Kahf 18:29].

“One third is too much. It is better for you to leave your inheritors wealthy than to leave them poor, begging from others.”

33Sa’d Bin Abee Waqqaas, one of the early sahaabah who accepted Islam and one of the ten companions whom the Prophet (ﷺ) brought good news that they would enter Al-Jannah. He shared in the battle of Badr and Uhud and was one of the six members of the Shoora counsel which ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab ﷺ chose to appoint the new Khaleefah after ‘Umar was stabbed. He was the first to shoot an arrow at the Mushrikeen in Jihaad. He lead the Muslims in taking over ‘Iraaq from the Persians after defeating them in the battle of Al-Qaadisiyyah in the 15th year of Hijrah (634 C.E.) He ﷺ died in 55th year of Hijrah (675 C.E.). [See Tahtheeb Siyar ‘Alaam An-Nubalaa’, V. 1, #5.]

34Agreed upon hadeeth. [See Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree, V. 4, Hadeeth #5.]
He (ﷺ) invoked Allaah ﷺ to grant abundant wealth to Anas Bin Maalik ﷺ:

 وعن أنس رضي الله عنه قال فانثى أمي يا رسول الله خادمك أنس إذ غل الله له قال اللهم أكثر ماله ولدته وبارك له فيها أغطيته. [متفق عليه].

Narrated Anas ﷺ: My mother said, “O Allaah’s Messenger! Please invoke Allaah on behalf of your servant (i.e. Anas ﷺ).” He said: “O Allaah! Increase his wealth and children, and bestow your blessings on whatever you give him.”

There are many other texts in the Qur’aan and (or) Sunnah which teach the medium course of this Deen in its acts of worship as well as in its codes for living this life in the way that pleases Allaah ﷺ. In contrast, we find that the Soofee type of Zuhd opposes the essence of true Zuhd laid down in the Qur’aan, authentic Sunnah, and as understood by the Salaf, mainly that it is a renunciation of that which is of no benefit in the Hereafter. Consider, for example, some of the so-called Soofee Zuhd:

(2) Poverty, hunger, abandonment of lawful things and of Hadeeth, and other strange things:

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35 An agreed upon hadeeth. [See Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree, vol. 8, Hadeeth #355.]
A Soofee master said, “I like for the beginner not to make his heart busy with the matter of earning (i.e. a living), otherwise he would change.”

Another master said, “I have attained this state (of Soofee knowledge) by means of a hungry stomach and a naked body.”

A call to abandon marriage and the seeking of hadeeeth—knowledge is attributed to the “Soofee master” Al-Junayd. Al-Ghazaalee also related the same saying of Al-Junayd: “I like for the starting Mureed (Soofee disciple) not to occupy his heart in three things, otherwise his condition will change (he then named them as): (1)-Seeking to gain sustenance, (2)-Seeking knowledge of Al-Hadeeth, and (3)-Marriage.”

Within Soofee sources we find the following statement: “Hunger is the food of the Zaahideen!”

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38Ibid vol.1, p. 267.
40Soofee sources attributed this statement to Abu Muhammad ‘Abdullaah Al-Kharraaz, a master of the way. See Ihsaan Elaheeh Thaheer’s At-Tasawwuf, Al-Mansha’ Wal Masdar [Lahore, Pakistan:
‘Abdul Wahaaab Ash-Sha’raanee, an authority on Soofism in the eyes of the Soolis reported that Rabaah Bin ‘Amr Al-Qayeesee said: “A man would not attain the levels of the Siddeeqeen until he leaves his wife as if she was a widow, his kids as if they were orphans, and takes refuge in dog houses!”

According to Ash-Sha’raanee, Ibraaheem Bin ‘Usayeefeer was, “A man having a great deal of Kashf...He used to come to the town riding a wolf or a hyena, and to walk on water having no need for a boat; his urine was as white as milk...Most often he slept in a church, and he used to say: the Christians, unlike Muslims, do not steal shoes in the church.” He invalidated the fasting of the Muslims who ate chicken and mutton meat. Only those who, like the Christians, do not eat mutton meat, their fast is correct as far as ‘Usayeefeer is concerned!

Idaarat Turjumaan As-Sunnah, (1st edition), 1406 AH/1986 C.E.), p. 100. Ihsaan quoted the text from Tabaqaat Ash-Sha’raanee, 1:7, printed by Daar Al-Ilm Liljamee’ and Al-Matba’ah Al-Aamiryah Al-Uthmaaniyyah, Cairo, 1305AH/1887 C.E.. This print of the Tabaqaat will be referred to as Tabaqaat-I.

Siddeeqeen (Sing. Siddeeq): One who eminently, or always, accepting, or confirming the truth in his saying, belief, and deeds.

At-Tasawwuf, Al-Mansha’ Wal Masdar, p. 58, quoting from Tabaqaat-I, 1:46.

They may not steal shoes, but they steal something far greater- creed!

Ibid, p. 90, from Tabaqaat-I, 2:140.
A story of another “Soofee”, Ibn Al-Kurainee, the teacher of Al-Junayd in which he says that he subdued himself into humiliation for twenty years until it became like that of a dog!45

According to the Soofee sources, Abu Yazeed, an example for many Soofis, devoted himself to Allaah and he had the determination to restrain himself from drinking water and from sleeping for one year!46

Ash-Sha’raanee also reported that one of the celebrated Soofee so-called Awliyaa’ by the name of ‘Abdur Rahmaan Al-Majthoob, “Cut off his own private part in the beginning of his Jathbah (a mystic Soofee state of Jathb)”!47

He also reported that another Soofee mystic by the name of Yaaqut Al-‘Arshee (d.707 AH/1307 C.E.) married the daughter of his sheikh Abul ‘Abbaas Al-Mursee. She

45Qutul Quloob, vol. 2, p. 74. This is contained in the “most influential book” of Abu Taalib Al-Makki, as some Soofis refer to it. In Qutul Quloob (V. 4, p. 71) there is the story of “special people” in Basra who if they “would ask Allaah to hold off the establishment of the Hour, He would do so!” Al-Ghazaalee commented: “In themselves these are conceivable matters!” Reported in his Ihya’, vol. 4, p. 356.
stayed with him for eighteen years but he never touched her being shy from her father. He left her while she was still a virgin!\textsuperscript{48}

These are only few cases presented in order to expose this early deviation in \textit{Soofism}.

\textsuperscript{48}\textit{Ibid}, p. 60, quoting \textit{Al-Akhlaaq Al-Matbuliyah} by Ash-Sha’raanee, V. 3, p.179, checked by Dr. Manee’ ‘Abdul Haleem Mahmood. Published by Daar At-Turaath Al-’Arabi, Cairo, 1974.
In conclusion

The sensible person must not be deceived therefore in the deceptive ways of mystic Soofism which tries to present itself as ‘spiritual Islam’.” True spiritual matters in Islam do not oppose the Sharee’ah in any way. The address of Islam to the actions of the hearts is based upon sincerity and following the path of the Messenger ﷺ. This is the way that truly draws the person to Allaah.

May Allaah guide all Muslims to the Path of Righteousness. He is All-Able to do all things. Aameen.

Saleh As-Saleh
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