

Role of Sufis and Mystics in Human Education and Character Building: An Appraisal

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ABSTRACT

The Sufis have left an effective impact on religious, cultural, and social life in the world. Their teachings of service to humanity and love for God still resonates with people today. Sufis were firm in abstaining from religious and communal conflict and strived to be peaceful elements of civil society. Their main goal was to teach and educate humans to achieve perfection. Keeping this in view they have not only emphasized on individual training but have also emphasized on cultural and social aspects so that humans be aware of their true position in the universe and they could adorn themselves with true qualities and actions and find the best way to live as a human. The Sufis tried to make the humans think that their soul is unique therefore they should enjoy each moment in this world. Moreover, life is an ongoing process and is not just limited to the past, therefore hatred, backbiting, slander and other moral vices should not be allowed to take place. The present article seeks to analyze the moral and social achievements of Sufi education and character building and at the same time answer a challenge that does Islamic mysticism and Sufism leads towards isolation of a person from his society.

Keywords: *Sufism, Education, Character Building, Morality, Society.*

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Introduction:

One of the major problems which has confronted Islamic mysticism and Sufism is the Sufi and Socialism. Critics have criticized these two, saying that Sufis have isolated their disciples during different mystic activities, moreover their disciples become too lazy and self-loving. The disciples say goodbye to their profession and family and totally depend on others for their bread and wine. In some cases, if self-empowerment and improvement of one's own self occurs, it's due to the disciple's individual and personal act.

In the Islamic world Sufism started from asceticism(زهد) and poverty(فقر), but it gradually became an educational institution. This gathered many people who were interested in such education. Therefore, before discussing their moral preaching, we should find out that what was their main aim in such teaching and training and what purpose did they follow.

1) Training goals of the Sufis:

To achieve power, love, health, happiness and salvation most people resort to the external sources without thinking that the main source of achieving all this is based on the concentration towards their inborn traits rather than the superficial external elements. Rumi says:

عارفان را شمع و شاهد نیست از بیرون خویش
خون انگوری نخورده باده شان هم خون خویش
هر کسی اندر جهان مجنون لیلی شدند
عارفان لیلی خویش و دم به دم مجنون خویش

(Rumi, Quliyat e Shams, 1399:475)

Translation:

"The Mystics do not need external superficial happiness and intoxication; they acquire their own inner happiness and pleasure. Everyone in this world is in love with his beloved, but the Mystics are the Majnoon(lover) and Laila(beloved) of their own selves."

We should discover and know the truth of our existence. We should omit the false notions which has brought great distance between us and our true inner self. The main goal of the Sufis is to make us understand that the presence of human is not accidental in the existing universe. In Sufism a Sufi does not actually teaches formal subjects to his disciples rather he just endorses their potentials and streamlines their knowledge. (Suhrwardi,1364:276)

God has created humans in such a way that they have the capability of adopting good or bad and at the same time they are capable of learning good traits and improving with training which is also called etiquette. (Suhrwardi 1364:275)

As Hazrat Ali says in letter No 31 in Nahjulbalagha:

وَاعْلَمْ يَا بُنَيَّ أَنَّ مَنْ كَانَتْ مَطِيئَتُهُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ، فَإِنَّهُ يُسَارُ بِهِ وَإِنْ كَانَ وَاقِفًا، وَيَقْطَعُ الْمَسَافَةَ وَإِنْ كَانَ مُقِيمًا وَإِدْعَاً
“Know my child! everyone who is riding on the carriage of night and day is being carried by them even though he may be stationary, and he is covering the distance even though he is staying and resting.”

Therefore, to achieve this goal Sufism and mysticism leads humans to intuitive knowledge and new ideas so that they realize their possibilities in life and to achieve perfection in their goals they should look for new and better ways. In other words, Sufism and mysticism helps humans to detach from fossilized habits and see, hear and feel the world in a different way and describe their findings in a new way. (Nawali,1373:185)

If training and educating humans is defined as inculcating good habits in them to perform their duties in a right manner, it will make them acceptable and loving towards themselves and others. Thus, it can be said that Sufism and mysticism are an effort to embellish humans with attracted and admired attributes. Keeping this in view one can say that mystic training can be helpful in finding the right path for a better living by not forgetting the reality. (Nawali,1373:19)

2) Purification of the soul based on moral preaching:

2-1 Moral and Ethical Education and Training

The concept of moral and ethical education depends on the wider scope of its meaning. If ethic is considered as virtue or vice, then moral or ethical education or training means transformation in virtuous means and elimination in moral vice. Moral and ethical training can also be called as character building. If the scope and realm of ethics in all three areas i.e. knowledge, emotions and behavior as believed by many Muslim ethicists, then moral education means transformation in three different areas related to human beings which comprises of thinking, feelings and emotions and the third is behavior. (Baqri,1377: 11)

The intellectual and cognitive dimension of moral education and training is to build enough ability in the individual to discriminate good from bad. It can be said that developing practical reasoning is the main aim of this training. From an emotional point of view during a disciple's training, specific emotional morals should be

inculcated in an individual, which on the other hand also encourages the power of controlling negative emotions such as jealousy and anger which are a hindrance for moral development. But from the behavioral point of training what is observed is that a person having done right judgements and correct evaluations should also follow the laws of morality. (Baqari,1377,11)

According to Islamic mysticism, morality does not have an earthly or materialistic origin, we should consider its origin in beauty and love whose main source is the Kingdom of Heaven or Aalam e Malaqoot (عالم ملکوت)

Therefore, it is said that morality is same as love, which is not subject to change, instability and relativity, because it does not belong to multiplicity (کثرت) Its source is oneness and the absolute. Therefore, the Holy Prophet considers morality as that of God and says: (تحتوا باخلاق الله) which means: Adopt Allah's attributes. (Shamshiri,1385:173)

Therefore, according to Sufi teachings man deals with two moral categories, one forms the central core of morality, which is stable and universal and the other which forms around the central core is variable, unstable and in search. Thus, Sufi's consider the first category which has the stability of moral values. (Shamshiri, 1385:97) Hence, Sufis resuscitate the moral teachings of religion in a person rather creating them. (Muhammad zadeh, 1387:99). It can be said that moral education creates recognition and arouses emotions to eliminate negative traits and take care and nurture positive traits so that humans master these qualities (Dahsheeri, 1370:69).

In general, mystical training and education helps a person live morally by improving his inner abilities from the lowest level of this materialistic world to the highest. Get freed from his ego and experience faith, sincerity and love of God. At the same time while crossing different states of spiritual stages he would find divine attraction, several spiritual states and breath of divinity. This way, he will find way to life in God (فنا فی الله) and annihilation in God (بقا بالله).

Giving moral lessons Sufis have always tried to address two aspects in humans, their speech and actions. Whoever does not master manners in speech cannot acquire politeness in actions and whoever seeks closeness to God with polite actions, his love resides in human hearts and his faults are unseen by others. Ibn e Mubarak says: We are badly in need of little morality than huge knowledge (Siraj Toosi, 1382:189). Imam Sadiq A.S says that his father taught him that: "...Whoever does not control his speech will regret much..." (Tohful Uqool, 376)

Affability and good manners are so important in a society that a large portion of Sufistic literature comprises of moral teachings, which have considered friendliness and politeness as the principal of all religious and spiritual practices and struggles which cannot be achieved without interacting with people. Showing patience in reciprocation of a bad behavior is considered as the best moral behavior (Ghazali Toosi, 1390: 145)

Maulana Rumi says and I quote:

صبر باشد مشت‌های زیرکان
هست حلوا آرزوی کودکان
هر که صبر آورد گردون بر شود
هر که حلوا خورد واپس تر رود

(Maulana, Daftar e Awwal, 1974:183-184)

Translation:

Self-control is the thing desired by the intelligent; sweetmeat is what children long for. Whoever practices self-control ascends to Heaven, whoever eats sweetmeat falls farther behind.

2-2 Piety, Truthfulness and Sincerity

In order to abandon selfishness and just to please God if someone makes friendship with others and tolerate their mistakes is another important teaching of Sufisim. (Qusheiri,1385:61)

They also promoted and invited their disciples to learn and act according to Islamic and human laws. One should know that the world is a station of the path leading to God and the humans are travelers. As the traveler's destination is the same therefore there should be harmony and unity between them, and they should protect each other's right (Ghazali Toosi, 1390: 390). The main characteristic of the pious is kindness and charity, as said by the Holy Prophet (PBUH): *عليك بتقوي الله فانه جماع كل خير* (Maibadi,1371:40)

A pious person is full of love, altruism, sacrifice and forgiveness. Is all this other than humane, where one is living with others in the best possible way? Following the Sufis and making friendship and brotherhood for the sake of Allah is one of the virtuous acts of reverence and has a highest place in religion. These disciples were also the best practical examples for teaching moral principles to their disciples. (Maibadi,1371: 40) They always taught their disciples to observe moral principles while dealing with people, and learn hatred for unethical and undesirable manners like stinginess and misery which are considered as the cause of destruction of the soul, and generosity,

forgiveness and self-sacrifice are considered as salvation if the disciple does not look for reward.

It is said: "Generosity is good if it does not burden you. Generosity ranks first among the people, then comes munificence and sacrifice. One who gives some and takes back is called generous, one who gives more and takes a little back is called munificent and the one who stands firm at times of need and gives all he has is called sacrifice. (Qusheiri,1385:402)

Tolerance and forgiveness for someone who has hurt you the most as it is an opinion of the mystic saints that, "Forgive the one who has done bad to you, because kindness in return of kindness seems a trade or give and take. (Suhrwardi,1364:115)

Benevolence is that a person values and seeks the virtue of morality above all and moreover not even anticipate any reward or punishment. A Sufi should free his inner self from malice, hatred, enmity and antipathy. He should clear his inner self and not have malice and hatred against anybody. (Suhrwardi,1364:117) Adorning these morals is the secret of freeing from selfishness, and when selfishness sets off, righteousness takes place.

A Sufi's work is to transform the mortal into immortal. As all the worldly possessions and benefits are about to perish, the best thing is to transform and neither hoard nor show greed for possession. This means that when a person with all his heart, works for the righteousness and does not move from his beloved's path and works to seek His pleasure, whatever he does will remain. The true rich people in this world are those who do not have their own wealth, and they consider themselves as the agents of divine wealth. Rumi says: (Rumi, 1371:6)

روزها گر رفت گو رو پاک نیست

تو بمان ای آنکه چون تو پاک نیست

Translation:

"If our days are gone, let them go, no fear, but You stay, the most pious of all."

The Sufis have very graciously honored and favored their counter brethren to acquire knowledge so that in this way they can serve humanity in a better way. As said by Qusheiri: "For years if someone tries to get a dignified place for himself so that he could benefit another Muslim brother is more virtuous than he who tries to perform purely for God for the salvation of his own self." (Qusheiri,1385:119)

Najmuddin Razi in his book 'Mirsad ul Ibad' has a beautiful explanation regarding the above context. He considers knowledge and education to be the greatest means of closeness to God and His attributes, through which one can attain highest ranks only

if one fears God and by using that knowledge one should be in search of pleasing God to enrich one's hereafter. (Razi,1373: 480)

The Sufis have strengthened themselves with these teachings so that they could control pride and superiority which rises from highly egoistic nature and self-centeredness, and in this way, they help their superior self which intends to serve others. Being arrogant towards the rich and humble towards the poor Dervish is the same as humility. Humility is a blessing because nobody is jealous to a humble person, while pride and arrogance is an unblessed act. (Qusheiri,1385:217)

2-3 Time and its importance

صوفى ابن الوقت باشد اي رفيق
نیست فردا گفتن از شرط طریق
(Rumi,1371: Daftar e Awwal,14)

Translation:

"The Sufi is the son of the time, O comrade. It is not the rule of the way to say tomorrow."

Ego and selfishness tempt a person to chase the next moments, and in this way, he sacrifices the present moment. The egoistic desires in order to control the humans wants him to see his sound life without lacks and deficiencies. Sufis are fully aware that the human soul is unique in every moment, and he himself is nothing, but just what exists in the present moment. (Muhammad bin Mansur,1371:93) They consider time as a sword which cuts before and after. (Ibid: 133)

For this reason, they call themselves "Ibn al Waqt" the son of the present moment, who is completely devoted to the present, and receive what God revealed to him, without worrying about the past and the present. (Jami,1357:385)

As soon as a human is freed from the clutches of his false existence through the purification of the soul, he will be immersed in peace and comfort and will taste true freedom. This does not mean to be opportunist, but to understand every moment of life so that a human without focusing on the past and future let go off the stress and tension caused by life with sacrifice, and by breaking the shackles of the past and future with all the elements of life be in peace and tranquility and abundantly make each activity more fruitful.

Qusheiri quoted Abu Ali Daqqaq saying: "Time means where you are present in a specific moment. If you are in this world your time is of this world, but if you are in the hereafter your time is also related to the hereafter. If you are happy you have a

happy time, but if you are sad or sorrowful your time is also the same.”
(Qusheiri,1385:88)

We can say that mysticism is the result of man’s efforts over the centuries to save himself from fear and open the door towards, knowledge, vision and to realize the importance of the present moment in which he is living. In mystical teachings not having regret on the past and not fearing the future keeps a person away from many mental discomforts and anxieties. It also frees a human mind from misconceptions.

2-4 Teaching purity, sincerity and rejecting pretentiousness

The mystics know by their pure hearts and conscience that man is not inherently evil and destructive, rather, this characteristic is opted due to inappropriate educational, moral, social, political and environmental conditions. Sufis are people of the heart and they always seek purity of heart and soul. It does not matter to them if a body is ugly and impure, but they believe that nobody can detect the inner self of a man and does not know his secrets better than God. Therefore, according to the Sufis all people are considered pure and blessed. Maulana’s Mathnavi and most of the verses by Hafiz and often the teachings of Ibn e Arabi and other Sufi Sheikhs, emphasize and try to disconnect people from pretentiousness, superficiality, untruthfulness, and indecency. (Halabi,1386:166)

True existence and divine nature of a Sufi as a result of self-improvement reaches the truth that the special features in some people are not given by God and others are deprived of these blessings by Him. Instead, considering everyone as one, the Sufi considers the sufferings of others as his own sufferings and he replaces dissociation and superiority with love and affection.

هین زیدنامان نیاید ننگ داشت
هوش بر اسرارشان باید گماشت
هر که او یکبار خود بدنام شد
خود نیاید نام جست و خام شد
ای بسا زرکه سیه تابش کنند
تا شود ایمن ز تاراج و گزند
هر کسی چون پی برد بر سرّما
بازکن دو چشم و سوی ما بیا

(Rumi,1371: Daftare 6:1158)

Translation:

Listen, you must not disdain them that have a bad name:

You must set your mind on their inward parts.

Whoever has once got a bad name

must not seek a name and become half-baked.

Oh, many a gold is made black polished iron

in order that it may be saved from pillage and calamity

Anyone who finds our secrets, open your eyes and come to us

3) Community and Sufi education:

3-1 Socialism

There is no sect and group in human societies like Sufis who think and care about the people. The reason is clear, because every sect and religion consider its followers to be virtuous and on the right path. Sufis get along with all kinds of people from different sects, religions and nationalities. They love peace and harmony because their religion is the religion of love, and they love humanity. Therefore, Sufis have always loved to help people both materially and spiritually. They constantly invited people to live peacefully together and in community. (Halabi,1386:55)

It is mentioned in Abu Saeed Abi Al-Khair's account that he was told that such-and-such a Sufi walk in the sea. He said: It is easy for sparrows and toads to walk and swim in water. They said: Such-and-such Sufi flies in the air. He said: kites and flies also fly in the air. They said: such-and-such Sufi goes from city to city in a moment; Sheikh said: Satan also goes from east to west in one breath. These are petty things. A man should be one who dwells among the people, eats and drinks with them, does trade, buys and sells goods with them, he marries and mingles with people but not forget God even for a moment. (Muhammad Munawar,1371:55)

In other words, being in this world and not forgetting the hereafter means going after a living but not taking anyone's right. The principle of faith is in action, and the action becomes meaningful among the people and for the sake of people. Abu Saeed asked: "Who can give a good loan to God so that God may grant him more and gives him a flawless reward?" Taking loan from humans is not due to the lack of money, as the creations of the heavens and the earth are at his disposal, and God is strong and wise. This loan to God is the dealing of one person with his fellow human beings. People asked 'Sari Saqati' about the meaning of manliness and good behavior. He said: "Protecting one's self from evil and behaving well with people in daily living, but if you show more, it is called as virtue and greatness." (Siraj Toosi,1382:237)

3-2 Serving people

One of the practical teachings of Islamic education that Sufis strongly adhere is

serving people. This is one of the main duties of Muslims in the society. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) said: "The most beloved person in the eyes of God is the one who is more useful to the people than others." The Prophet (PBUH) in another Hadith said:

من اصبح ولم يهتم بامور المسلمين فليس بمسلم (Shariatmadari,1370:181)

Translation: Whoever wakes up and does not care about the affairs of Muslims is not a Muslim.

Mysticism has been brought up during rich Islamic culture and is a school of producing and leading mankind. (Motahari, 1374:83) Therefore, mystics and Sufis have always encouraged the disciples to serve the people, which leads to the happiness of God and the humans. The service to humans is considered as the highest level of prayer and by doing this the Sufis and mystics have been the best example and role model for mankind. (Haqiqat,1381:11)

Sheikh Ala al- Dawla one of the mystics in the 7th and 8th century says:

صد خانه اگر به طاعت آباد کنی
به زین نبود که خاطری شاد کنی
گر بنده کنی ز لطف آزادی را
بهنر که هزار بنده آزاد کنی

(Haqiqat, 1381:87)

Translation: A hundred houses if you build with obedience couldn't be better than to make someone happy. If you make one a slave with favor, better to free a thousand slaves

3-3 Teaching deliverance and freedom

Freedom and piety are major teachings in Islamic mysticism and the lives and sayings of Sufis are full of stories that show their freedom and piety. Sufis only hope in God and do not care about anything other than Him. They are satisfied and comfortable with what they have. They are generous and give away the little they have. Some real Sufis believe that if human is regardless of materialistic worldly pleasures, the materialistic world and the aristocrats will be in search of such divine people. (Halabi:1386:44)

The highest aspect of human perfection is achieved by the one who has freed himself from the bondage of the self. One should keep in mind that keeping yourself and your family regardless of this materialistic world and obtaining their living from Halal is a Jihad in the path of Deen (دین) and this is considered as more virtuous than other reverences. (Ghazali Toosi,1390:325)

It is said that a man saw a mystic eating the fallen leaves by the stream side. The man said to the mystic that if you would have served the Sultan, you would have not been eating these leaves. Hearing this the mystic replied: Had you eaten these leaves like me and be contented you did not need to serve the Sultan. (Ansari,1386:145)

One of the most beautiful topics of mysticism is the meeting of the Sufis with the rulers of their time. It is very informative and thought-provoking. These visits are signs of honesty and pure nature. The relations between Sufis and the rulers if not bad were at least cold because Sufis were disinterested in any contact and communication that might ruin their pure intentions. Therefore, in parables, and in folk poems, and even often in Attar's poetry, the word Darvish has become the subject of social criticism because he points his finger to the wounds of the society and points to the corruption in different affairs. (Schimmel,1374:200)

Ghazali, in 'Nasihat al-Muluk' quotes the words of Shafiq Balkhi to Harun Abbasi, who told him that your God is the gatekeeper of hell; and if you do not follow God's commandments, you will be the leader of the people of hell. (Riyahi, 1361: 22)

However, the Sufis due to their social respect, always tried to establish peace and good relations between the people and between the rulers of the regions, princes and political leaders, to reduce the hatred and enmity between them and bring peace and reconciliation and moderate the oppression of kings and rulers towards the people. (Kiyani,1369:506)

3-4 Teaching the spirit of brotherhood, sacrifice and cooperation

Since man is a social being there are several issues which should be considered by different schools of thoughts and educational forums. As Islam considers unity, brotherhood, equality and cooperation essential for the social life of humans, therefore, the educational system of the Sufis is not excluded from this rule and they are also given full attention. The Quran says:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ (سورة حجرات: 10)

Translation: The believers are brothers to one another, therefore, make reconciliation between your brothers (<https://www.alim.org/quran/compare/surah/49/10/>).

Quran also says: وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَى (سورة مائدة: 2)

Translation:

Help ye one another in righteousness and piety.

(<https://www.alim.org/quran/compare/surah/5/2/>)

The teachings of the Sufis to their disciples, in order to align and match with the teachings of the holy religion of Islam were such that the disciples were raised in such a way that they would be kind and friendly with others, visit them when they were sick, and rush to help when they were in need.

And this Islamic slogan is universal, "What you like for yourself, like for others, and what you hate for yourself, dislike for others too, and when you see a shortcoming or a mistake in someone else, pass him by." (Suhrwardi,1364:170)

What ever is unworthy for the people is also unworthy for God, and vice versa. (Yasrabi, 1370:160) Not to believe in private property is a Sufi tradition. The custom of the predecessors was that if somebody was in need, he would easily utilize from the property of his religious brother without any permission. (Ibid: 161)

3-5 Family and Business

Sufis have always condemned those who love wealth and have hoarded wealth to such an extent that they have focused all their attention in storing it, and this way they have given vent to arrogance and self-conceit.

One day Khwaja Hassan Basri was lecturing his disciples regarding the worldly wealth. One of his disciples asked him: Oh Sheikh! why do people honor and hold dear the rich and wealthy? Sheikh smiled gently and said: "Because their beloved is with them." Most Sufis had a worldly job for their living, and they would also advise and promote others to work hard for their family needs. They would preach their disciples that a married man having wife and children should not be a burden on his family or leave them on God's will, rather he should take care of them and meet their needs. (Siraj Toosi,1382:236)

Many Sufi Sheikhs had different jobs. They were cotton-carders, weavers, book sellers, scribes, glass makers, iron mongers, masons etc. Sufis were even called by their occupation, like Mansur Hallaj. 'Hallaj' is an Arabic word which means a cotton-carder. Some of the dervishes engaged in continuous work, and a few spend their earnings for themselves and helped others in need. (Schimel, 1374:159)

Siraj writes: "A man asked Ibn e Salim in Basra and I was also present in that gathering. Ibn e Salim was talking about the virtue of work and business. The man asked: Oh Sheikh! Should we pray to God for (livelihood) or for the sake of trust (Tawakkal)? Ibn e Salim replied: Trust in God is Prophet's disposition and earning livelihood is his Sunnah. The Prophet has emphasized on this Sunnah because he

knew the level of peoples living. Even if they don't have trust in God (Tawakkal) at least they can earn for their survival and not die due to poverty. (Siraj Toosi, 1382:232) It seems necessary to mention that Sufis are from this world itself, from this materialistic world and they do not abhor gold, silver, blessings of this world, wife and children. A mystic flees from the idols and the cover or barrier (حجاب) which comes between him and God. In short, whatever which causes hindrance between man and God, though be it knowledge or worshipping, if it is making a mystic at far distance from his right direction, which is the place of his beloved is considered as deplorable and unacceptable.

Therefore, how can we come to this conclusion and believe that the true Sufis and mystics who always consider themselves as the true followers of Islam, teach idleness and indolence to their disciples.

4) **Belief in afterlife and accepting death (Transition)**

همچنین باد اجل با عارفان

نرم و خوش همچون نسیم یوسفان

(Mathnavi e Maulavi, Daftar e Awwal, 860)

Translation: Even so, to those who know God (A'rifan), the wind of death is soft and pleasant as the breeze of ones like Joseph.

One of the most difficult and perhaps the most terrifying stages of human life is the stage of death. The seekers of this world have a longing for mortal lust and worldly desires, but death will bring an end to all their desires. Fear of such a moment is the cause of many non-interactions and social conflicts. Because whoever believes, human life ends with death and see himself having an empty and meaningless life, considers the worldly life more pleasurable and therefore, he will use his utmost efforts to gain as much material pleasure as possible. In this case, the human world will become brutal and everyone will try to fulfill his desires by considering others right as his inalienable right.

Sufis for several reasons do not fear death but sometimes they embrace it with love and open arms. A Sufi believes in the true teachings of Islam in which Khuda Shanasi (knowing God) is based on Khod Shanasi (knowing oneself) **من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه**

They with their mystical knowledge based on the teachings of Islam know a human is not destroyed by death, but he is transferred from one stage to another and promoted from a low position to a higher divine position. This world is the prison of mystics and paradise for the admirers of this world. (Halabi,1386:56)

Sufis, gaining knowledge and self-improvement, conclude that: the more one's attachment to the world is, the harder it is to die and the more terrifying it is to lose one's heart. Therefore, materialistically or spiritually the Sufis never attached to this world. The Sufis die in their lives موتوا قبل ان تموتوا which means 'Die before you die.'

Sufis and mystics are dead from worldly needs. What was left of them in this world now is a worthless and dusty body that they willingly surrendered to death.

مرگ اگر مردست آید پیش من
تا کشم خوش در کنارش تنگ تنگ
من از او جانی برم بی رنگ و بو
او ز من دلقی ستاند رنگ رنگ

(Rumi, Diwan e Shams, Ghazal:1323)

Translation: If death comes to me as a man, I'll hold him tight to the side, I'll die without color and smell, and death will take away my colored patched frock.

The Holy Quran says: (عنكبوت:57) كَلَّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ: Every soul will taste death.

Though the above verse of the Holy Quran is a joyful news for man on earth to meet his Lord and that since he has passed from material possessions, food will be given to him at the gate of eternity named death. Let the taste of it open his eyes, ears, mind and intelligence. Then God will call him in that state that comes from death to meet Him. (Ilahi Qumshei,1390:571)

Every creature must die and return to his Lord, though it be human beings, animals, plants, angels etc. According to the Quran death is taking away the soul from the body and handing it over. In sura e Zumor verse 42 the word يَتَوَفَّى is used which says: It is Allah that takes the souls (of men) at death. Tawaffa has not derived from the word Faut (فوت) which means deceased, but Tawaffa means receiving what is delivered. The two words Wafa (وفا: trustfulness) and Istifa (استيفاء: fulfilment) are also from the root word Wafa. (Motahari,1373:40)

It can be explained in this way that tasting something is the initial stage of eating. Hence death should be taken as the food one has cooked during his stay in this world. Death does not swallow a man, rather he tastes death. At the time of handing over the soul to its lord, a human tastes death. The result is how is the food cooked; bitter or sweet.

It is said that when the angel of death came to Rabi'a al Adawiyya, she inquired who is he. The angel replied: I'm the one to bring an end to the pleasures, I'm the one to make the children orphans and make women as widows. Rabi'a said to the angel:

Why are you introducing yourself negatively? Why don't you say that, you are the carrier of one friend to another. (Radfar,1385:116)

'Urs' or the celebration of a Sufi saint's death anniversary is an old Sufi custom which is celebrated with enthusiasm. (Razi,1373:192) They consider it as meeting their beloved.

Yehya Ma'az Razi says: If death was to be sold in the market and kept in a dish, the true lovers of God would not desire to buy anything else than death. (Attar Neshapuri, 1381:389)

Knowing the divine truth there is no place for anxiety and worries. Fear and anxiety prevail when there is lack of knowledge of the self. According to the Sufi concept death does not negates our existence. Our self should not oppose death. We exist and so does death, and we will meet death one day. Allah says in Surah e Jumma:

(قل ان الموت الذي تفرون منه فانه ملائكم...) (سوره جمع: ٨)

Translation: The death from which you are fleeing will inevitably come to you...

Reading this A'yat the fear of death vanishes and the concept of nothingness changes to meeting our Creator, and that we will exist with a truth of the truths.

Junaid was told that Abu Saeed Kharraz at the time of his death was in ecstasy. He replied that there is no wonder as he was flying with excitement. (Qusheiri,1385:525)

If all human beings realize the following facts, their social difficulties and problems will come to an end.

1. By thinking about death and eternal life after death, man realizes that life with all the attributes and conditions of happiness and unhappiness even continues after death and is eternal, therefore he should pay more attention to it than this world.
2. By thinking of death, a person will try to let off his unveil qualities such as enmity, malice, avarice and greed etc, which has separated him from the rightful path and led him to the abyss of destruction.
3. Man starts living with logic and rationale and avoids unattainable desires. Such a person is far-sighted and realistic and avoids dealing with illusory affairs.
4. It gives a person complete confidence and peace and provides the means to perfect faith; because he is sure that God's promises will come true and the wicked will be punished, and the righteous will not be left unrewarded.
5. Another result is that life becomes purposeful and systematic.
6. It creates enthusiasm and activity in humans and causes human actions and behavior find their right direction.

7. It protects a person against psychological pressures and leads him to believe that God is omniscient and everything He has decreed for man is for his good.
8. It causes a sense of responsibility in humans; because he believes that everyone in front of God's justice is responsible for all his actions.
9. Balance of fear and hope in human existence.
10. Possessing excellent and humane motivation for one's own actions and actions will be the results of such knowledge and belief.

Conclusion:

Islamic mysticism was at its peak when people were fed up with the sectarian and national conflicts between religions and sects, and mystics, in order to moderate the pain and suffering of the people from these current difficult situations looked out to tolerance and abandoning bigotry, pride, and stubbornness. It was Sufism which considered brotherhood and sacrifice and cooperation, respect and freedom, fighting against oppressors, as necessary to achieve personal and social happiness. Those mystical teachings that pay attention to the inner world and take care of the transcendence of an individual seeker of truth is to deal with righteous people.

The educational base and guidance in the pure and healthy way of Sufism is based on social education, and the main attention of 'Sheikh e Kamil' is to prepare disciples for a healthy and good life, and to strengthen the foundation of home, family, welfare and social justice. This is not compatible with laziness, carnality, and free eating. The true mystic does not like engaging in unusual, contrary and extreme worshipping which may cause pride. Also, all the defamation of the mystics for the idle and proud scholars is not to deny science and knowledge, but to develop thinking and live a useful life, to deal with the problems of people and to use science to serve the creation and avoid self-disasters. According to 'Zareen Koob' the Sufis and mystics have a sublime vision in the field of moral and educational training and in dealing with social realities, and humanistic approach for culture and society which cannot be underestimated because of some negative elements based on superstition in different teachings of Sufism and mysticism.



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