

# Understanding Sufism Though Islam

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**Abstract:** *The First word revealed to The Holy Prophet from Allah was "IQRA" which mean to Read. To seek knowledge! Educated yourselves! Be Educated. My small effort in the direction. I have made a small effort to make a beginner understand about spirituality through Sufism in the world of stress, anxiety and depression to make an individual free from all these.*

**Keywords:** Sufism Islam Tawhid Niranjan Nirakar Shariyat Hakikat Tarikat Marefat Chishti Silsila

## Understanding Sufism through Islam

The book Noor E Rushan was written in AH 1171. Four main schools of the Sufism were Chishtiyes Quadariya, Sohrawardi and Nakshbandiya Chishti was the city located on the bank of river Heart near Iraq. There were four great Sufis belonged to chishtis.

- 1) Khwaja Abu Mohammad Chishti (R.A.)
- 2) Khwaja Nasinddin Abu Mohammad Chishti (R.A.)
- 3) Khwaja Abu Yusuf Chishti (R.A.) and
- 4) Khwaja Qutbuddin Mavdud Chishti (R.A.)

The successors of these great sufis were called chishti. On the order of the Profit (PHHU), Hazratkhwaja Monuddin Chishti (RA) came to India. He gave his blessings to two great sufis- (1) Hazrat Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki (RA) and (2) Hazrat Khwaja Fanduddin Ganj Shakar (RA) who is known as a Baba Farid.

About is greatness-Delhi's Hazrat Khwaja Nihamuddin Auliya Mehboob-E-Ilahi (RA) wrote:

“बुदी अगर नबुवत बाद अज्ञ नबी रवा,  
गोफती तमाम खल्फ मर उरा पयम्बर अस्त”

Meaning-If it could be allowed, after prophet Mohammad (SAW), Hazrat Baba Farid (RA) would be called the prophet by the people.

Hezart Baba Farid (RA) was belonged to the lineage of Kabul's sultan Farrukhsiyar who was belonged to silsilah of Hazrat Ali (RA). Sultan of Bokhara-Ibrahim Ahmad was amongst Hazrat Babab Farid's ancestors.

Hazrat Jamaluddin Sulaiman was the father of Hazrat Baba Farid (RA). Hazrat Shued was his grandfather. When Mahmud Ghazni Invaded India, at that time he brought Hazart Shub with him, ensuring that he was going India for the benefit of Islam. After being victorious in the battle in India, Mahmud Gazni gave his sister in marriage to Hazratshoeb and established him as the leader of Islam in Punjab.

Hazrat Baba Farid (RA) was married to the daughter of sultan Ghayasuddin son of Delhi's sultan Shamshuddin Altamash).

When Hazrat Baba Farid (RA) left the world, at that time there was absence of chishtisilsilah in Gujarat. After about 300 years of his death, his successors came to Gujarat such as Khwaja Ruknuddin Kane Shakar (RA) came and resided in Peeran Pattan (Patan) near Ahmedabad. There were some sufis in Kadi belonged to the same silsilah. The sufi writer of the book.

**Noor E Roshan**-Shah Kayamuddin Chishti (RA) was one amongst them, who tomb is located in Ekalabra near Vadodara. He had followed vegetarianism whole life. Thus, he had huge number of Hindu followers also. Even today, no one can go to his tomb after consuming meat.

When his father HazratBadruddin was in Ibaadah, at that time shah Kayamuddin (RA) was born at Kadi. When Hzrat Badruddintok him for the first time in his hands he said, “This boy will preached Islangreatly and will follow this way of religion always. Thus, his name should be kayamuddin.” Then like cloth, he dapped Kayamuddin (RA) in water six times. Then Dai (midwife) got afraid and snatched him from the hands of Hazrat Badruddin Hazrat Bahauddin said, “By the six daps, his six plications are shined and if you did not snatched win from me, by the seventh daps his seventh plication could be brightened but now it would be shined by his efforts.” This kid of blessings he got from the childhood.

When he was 8 years old, Shah Kayamuddin (RA) had remembered the whole Quran sharif. Then he learned persian, Arabic, Gujarat and Sanskrit languages.

He showed kashi to the pilgrims in the sleeve of his coat, seating in Gujarat.

Once when he was going towards the south, he entered in the temple while raining. When rain shopped, the priest of temple came and got angry and said, “Since 30 years, I am taking care of the temple and I did not allow people of other religion to enter the temple but today you made the god impure” Shah Kayamuddin (RA) replied, “God can't be impure and when you are taking care of the temple since 30 years, then God will do as you say”. The priest proudly said, “Yes, God does a sl say”. Shah Kayamuddin (RA) said him, “Feed the fodder to this bull companion of shiva”. The priest said, “The bull of stone can't eat fodder”. Shah Kayamuddin said to the bull, “Eat this fodder.” The Bull became alive and started eating fodder. Thus, the priest became his disciple.

He wrote two book namely, Noor E Roshan and Deen E Roshan Unfortunately, Deen E Roshan is not available now-a-days. He was called Kutob. He used to do Ibaadah by dispatching his body parts from the body. Thus, he was called, "Gaus". Noor E Roshan was completed in AH 1169 by him.

He respects both Hindus and Muslims equally, as the holy Qur'an says: "Don't force in the matter of religion". [surah Bakarrah (the cow)]. "Don't say wrong anything about the people who believe in idols otherwise they would say wrong about Allah." (Surah An'aam) Discuss guidance and knowledge of the Holy Qur'an with other and do debates in a good way." (Surah Nahal)

He had total zoo disciples including Hindus and Muslims. He gave 51 Disciples the higher spiritual knowledge and made them able to reach higher positions in the Deen. Ibrahim Bhagat (Abhara Baba) was at the top amongst them. He was belonged to pariyej village of Bharuch and was a farmer.

Shah Kayamuddin (RA)'s disciple-Peer Aman had a disciple-Neerat Bhagat Peer. He established Neerat Path (belief) near Kajan.

One of his disciples-Ratan Bai Patidar had the wish to be uried in the feet of her peer Shah Kayamuddin (RA) so that all the pilgrims can go to the mazaar of Shah Kayamuddin (RA) by putting legs on her grave. Shah was buried according to her wish. She wrote in the praise of her peer Shah Kayamuddin (RA):

શબ્દ બતાવ્યો માહમ તણોને, ઓહમનો ઉઘડ્યો દ્વાર,  
બાઈ રતનને મુરશદ મળીયા, નજરે દીઠા કીરતાર

Hazrat Shah Kayamuddin (RA) left kadi by walking in the search of disciples and reached Ekalbara near Vadodara. He crossed Mahi river with the help of fisherman in his boat. Due to too much water between a boat and the bank. Fisherman brought him on his shoulder upto bank. At that point, fisherman felt him weightless. He got to know about his greatness. Thus, he brought Hzrat to the house of Thakkor of the village and thakor did all the arrangements for his living. After sometime when Hazrat was going to leave Ekalbara, Thankorbried to shop him there but Hazrattodl him, "I have a lot of work. I will ocme Ekalbara-alive or dead". Then he went Nandarbar where he left the world in AH 1187. According to his wish, he buried at Ekalbara where his tomb is located.

There Five Mazaars Inside His Tomb;

- 1) of ShahKayamuddin (RA)'s brother peer Inqayat Miya (whose son peer Mota Miya established guddi at Mangrol).
- 2) of Peer Kayamuddin (RA) (in the centre).
- 3) of the father in law of Hzrat Kayamuddin (RA).
- 4) Two small graves of Hazrat's daughter's son.

Hazrat had a daughter-Aapaaji Shahib who had higher knowledge of religion (Ilm).

Hazrat Kayamuddin (RA)'s throne is known as Mangrol Ki Gaddi as after him his brother peer Inayat Miya's son-Mota Miya Saheb I became peer and he settled in Mangrol. When this book -Nour E Roshan was written, there was peer Mota Miya Saheb II at the guddi of Mangrol. He had done B.A. with English. He knows Gujarati, English, Urdu, Arabic Languages. He had a good knowledge about Hinduism. He gave the slogan "ધર ધર ઝીલ્ય" to unite Hindus and Muslims.

Hazratkayamuddin (RA) in his book Noor E Roshan Said:

"जीने आपसकू सही कर जाना,  
उने साहबकू भी पिछाना;  
जो मरम आपसका न जाने,  
वोह साहबकू कहांसे पिछाने"

Meaning-

'Whosoever gets to know himself perfectly,  
he gets to know Allah;  
whosoever does not know himself,  
how can he know Allah".

**Tawhid**

The disciples of Hazrat followed Tawhid. In sufism, Tawhid has been expressed as 'God is the only Reality which is absolute and present everywhere. In sufism, there are degree of tawhid which can be experienced though various level of marifah (gnosis). Thus tawid expressed as La Ilaha Illallah (there is no God but Allah) is the tawhid of the ordinary, whereas the tawhid of the electis La MawjudaIllallah (there is nothing but Allah). This means that whatever we see does not have any significance, for it does not exist in reality. It is only relatively real, what does exist in reality is only God.

Sufis posited that the basic understanding of Tawhid as oneness of God is accepted by all Muslims. However, higher senses could only be experienced by the particular teaching of Sufi Islam. For sufis, tawhid in the highest sense is to have the perception of the one Being through mystical experience. It is the highest experience of the unity of Allah, where one loses his own identify and becomes one with the One Being. This doctrine that focuses on unity and the idea that Allah and His creation and one has been called wheat at Wujud (Unity of Bight) From a sufi perspective, the concept of wahadat-al wujud is thought to be more or less synonymous with the highest expression of tawhid or the union, which is only attainable by those who have achieved a lasting state of spiritual annihilation or fana.

Sufis seek to explicitly associate themselves with God-not to become Gods, but to completely unite their individual consciousness and identity with God, whose existence is both transcendent and immanent and therefore pervasive and manifest throughout all creation. The Creator in the sufi view, is not removed from creation; it is just that there is one

presence everywhere, which expresses itself as diversity within the unity. For Sufis, God is both immanent and transcendent. He is inward as well as outward. The inward rank is absolute transcendence (tanzih) where he is divine, unknown and unseen (ghayab). His immanence (tashbih) is predicted of him in the stage of His manifestation. Thus he is both ghayab (unseen) and hazir (present). The immanence of Allah is manifested in his love for mankind. Allah is near us, present with us, active on earth and involved in our world, Allah's transcendence refers to his distance, his separation from all else. Allah is not just quantitatively greater than us, but qualitatively different in his greatness he is transcendent, infinitely above or beyond US. For most of the Sufis, Allah's immanence and his transcendence worked tighter. He was to be loved and experienced yet the veil of transcendence was unreachable.

### “मन राआनी फकद राअल –हक”

The prophet Mohammad (SAW) said, who has seen me, he has seen Allah.

When a Sufi-Mansur E Hallay realized the higher knowledge, he used to say-“अनलहक”, which means I am Allah.

In this book - Noor E Roshan, Hazrat Shah Kayamuddin (RA) said;

साहेब एसा हे समरथ -खेल खेले सब आपही घट,  
जीसपर महेर करमकी नजर करे – उसे तोहीद इल्मकी समज पढे,  
मीलावे उसे मुरशीद कामील – नफा दीदारका होवे हासील।

Meaning-Allah is everywhere. This can be realized through the mercy of Allah. Allah gives an individual Murshid E Kamil (a perfect guide) who helps him to reach the realization of Allah. Under the path of Sufism, though the blessings of Murshid E kamil, the one can get to see Allah. Peer Keeps eye on the heart of the disciple to maintain its purity which led to the realization of Allah.

Human body has two parts - (1) Jismani (Physical) and (2) Rushani (Spiritual). As we purify our body from outside, peer helps in purifying it from inside. People require peer to control their worldly pleasures. IIm E Baatin (mysticisms) can be achieved though the guidance of peer or Muurshid E Kamil. Hazrat Ali (RA) said,

### “मन अरफा नफसहु फकद अरफा रब्बहु”

Meaning-Whosoever gets to know his self / soul / spirit (Nafs), he gets to know Allah. As an individual cannot know the problems of his body without the help of doctor, one cannot find the nafs without the help of peer.

Sahi Bukhari Hadith says-Once in the vaej of Musa (AS) (Sermon, preaching), a person asked him, “in this world, is

these anyone who is more knowledgeable than you?” Hzratmusa (AS) replied, “No”. At that time, from the Arsh (Ghayb, sky) he got order that, “one person has more knowledge than you. He is Hazrat Khizar (AS). Go to him”. Then he achieves rohani knowledge from Hazrat Khizar (AS). This is described in the Holy Qur'an in Majmaul Beharain (meeting of Two Seas). Thus, the tradition of Peer O Murshid is most important in the path of Sufism.

Moulana Jalauddin Rumi (RA)-one of the great sufis wrote in his book-mansnavi that-

का – न – म एझा तकूरब ननासो एला खालेकेहीम बे अनवाइल  
बीर्रे – फ-तकूरब एलल्लाहे – बील – अकले वर सीर्रे तसबेका  
हुम बीददरजाते वझ झुलफा इनदन नासे व इनदुल्लाहे फील आखेरह।

Hazrat Rumi (RA) has given its translation in the following poem:

गुफत पयगंबर अलीरा कय अली,  
शेरे हककी, पहेलवानी पुर दीली,  
लेक बर शेरी मकुन हम अऐतमीद,  
अदर मा दर सायये नख्ले उमीद  
हर कसी गर ताअती पीश आवुरद,  
बहेर कुर्बे हझरते बीचुन वो चद,  
तु तकूरब जु बअकलो सीर्रे खीश,  
नय चु इशान बर कमाल वर खीश,  
नय चु इशान बर कमाल वर खीश।  
अदर आ दर सायए आ आकेली,  
कश नतानद बुर्द अझ राह नाकेली,  
या अली अझ जुमलए ताआते राह,  
बस गुझीन तु सायए खासे इलाह  
चु गीस्फती पीर हैन तसलीम शव,  
हम चु मुसा झेरे हुकमे खीझर रव

Meaning-The prophet Mohammad (SAW) said to Hazrat Ali (RA) that, you are a lion of Allah and a brave but don't be dependent only on that but go under the blessings (rehmat) of Murshid E Kamil (Peer). People like to go closer to Allah

thought Ibaddah (prayer) but you go closer to Allah thought the blessings of peer.

Ali, in the all paths of Ibadaah, you go towards Allah under the blessings of peer.

And like Musa (AS) who remained under the blessings of Hazrat Khizar (AS), you remain under the blessings of peer.

On another place there are words written;

स्व बजु यारे खुदाइश तु झुद,  
चु चुनान कर्दी खुदा यारे तु बुअद।

Meaning-Go and find the aashiq (lover) of Allah and when you find him, Allah would be your friend.  
Moulana Rumi (RA) Said-

अय पीगान अझ यारे नाजीन्स अय पीगान,  
हम नशीने नीक जुइद अय मीयान  
ज्ञान जलीस अल्लाह गश्त आन नेक बख्त,  
के ब पहेलुए सइदी बुर्द रुख्त  
यारे बद जानत सीतानद अय सलीम,  
यारे बद आरद, सुये नारे हजीम

Hindi Translation-

छोड कुसगी से तुं प्यार, सच्चा संगी खोजो यार  
जीने कीया सतगुरु का संग, सत पुरुषका पाया रंग  
जुटे गुरुका जो संग लाए नरक पड़े और अती दुःख पाए।

In Noor E Roshan, same thing is

Written

कायमदीन खलक क्या करे, पकड़ा अधेका साथ,  
पीर आप भुले पडे, चेला क्युं पावे बाट

Noor E Roshan Says,

कायमदीन, हरी मता कीसी के बापकी नही जान,  
जीसे पावे तो दास हरीका पीछान,  
कायमदीन, हींदु, मुसलमान जे बरणमे हरीजन होवे जान,  
जो कोई हरकु ओलखावे वो सतगुरु पीछान  
कायमदीन, केतेक नीच जातने हरी ओलखा होवे जान,  
वोही सतगुरु कर कुंची ले मान

Meaning: In selecting Peer, the only thing should be checked that the peer should be reached the highest level of spiritual knowledge. No caste should be checked peer should have experienced the Supreme Being and can be made his disciple

to reach that level so he can experience the supreme being (Niranjan Nirakar).

**Niranjan Nirakar**

**(Incorporeal Supreme Being)**

The Holy Qur'an says-

Ash-haduanlailahailal-LahuWa-ash-haduanna Muhammad  
(Islami Declaration of Faith)

Meaning: I bear witness that there is no deity besides Allah, who is without partner, And that Muhammad (ASW) is His Servant ad Messenger.

Noor E Roshan Says on this line that

लीखु नाम उसके सिफाती सही – निरंजन निराकार अलख हय वोही

The Holy Qur'an says

इन्नल लझीना हादु वननसारा वस, साबीयुना मन आमनतु  
बिल्लाहे वल यओमिल आखेरे व अमेलुस –  
आलेहाते फ लहुम अजरहुम इन्दा रब्बेहीम व ला खौफुन अलयहिम  
व ला हुम यह झनुन

Meaning -If a man of any religion-Jews, Christian, or Sabian will believe in Allah and have faith in Qayamat (the day of Judgment) and will do good work, then I will give him a reward.

Surah Nahal in its 36<sup>th</sup> Ayat Says-

I have sent prophet in every followed to say that do Ibadaah and remain away from satan”.

**Sharivat-Tarikat-Hakikat-Marefat**

**There are five rokan (pillars) of Islam.**

- 1) Kalma / Shahada-The shahada is the fundamental statement of faith and commitment made by Muslims: “There is not God but Allah, and Mohammad (SAW) is His messenger”. It distinguishes Muslims from those of other faiths.
- 2) Salah-Salah is the ritual prayer of Islam through which all Muslims conform to the will of Allah. Prayer is reformed in the direction of Mecca five times a day. Friendly is set aside as the day for congregational prayer (Jum’a).
- 3) Zakat-The Qur’an speaks about zakat which refers to the obligatory donaton of a portion of a muslim’s surplus wealth to help the poor and the needy.
- 4) Sawm / Roza-Muslims are expected to fast during Ramadan-The nith month in the Islamic calendar. During daylight hours, they abstain from food and drink, sexual activity and smoking breaking the fast with a meal after



sunset. Those who are elderly, ill, pregnant or breast-feeding are exempt, and children are not required to participate.

- 5) Hajj-Completing the Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca, is a duty that every Muslim should perform during their lifetime. All pilgrims should be in good physical and spiritual health before they make the journey. Whilst in Mecca, they complete a series of individual and collective actions on the various days of their visit, following a pattern set by Mohammad (SAW).

By following these five steps, one can complete the first step of spirituality called shariat.

Second step is Tarikat (Spiritual way, path.) In this step, an individual starts doing the things which help in achieving spiritual power. In this, Takwa (God-consciousness, God-fearing piety) is indispensable. Subtraction of mind, doubt, perplexity, anger should be removed from the mind.

Third step is Hakikat (reality, truth). At this destination, the person would be like a child of 6 months who does not have any kind of friendship or hatred / hospitality, jealousy or anger.

Fourth step is Marefat (God-realization). The concept of spirituality in Islam is based on the principle of God-realization or more fat. Allah is the treasure house of all virtues. When man's contact with Allah is established, in the world of his feelings, at the psychological level, an unseen, inner revolution is brought about which is called spirituality. According to the Holy Qur'an the universe has been fashioned by Allah in a way that it may become a source of spiritual inspiration for man. A truly religious person, connected to the

power-house of Allah, is able to observe the phenomena of the universe and draw lessons from them and receive spiritual nourishment from the physical events by converting physical events into spiritual lessons. He derives spiritual nourishment from material things. The Holy Qur'an has described how godly people continuously derive such sustenance from their environment, thus maintaining their intellectual and spiritual well-being.

"In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the succession of night and day, there are signs for men of understanding; those that remember Allah when standing, sitting, and lying down, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth (saying): 'Allah, you have not created these in vain. Glory be to you! Save us from the torment of the five, Allah. "(3:191) Contemplation is essential for developing spirituality. Contemplation is a high kind of thinking. It is not a state of silence, but a deep kind of thinking process. It takes an individual from the seen world to the unseen, from darkness to light, from chaos to conviction, from limitation to limitlessness, from word to meaning. It is like a door through which one enters another world. It should, from the human world we reach the divine world.

When an individual starts following and being regular in initial rules, then he passes the first destination which is called Naasut. When an individual becomes regular in Tarikat, then he reaches to the Malakut. One forward step from it is called Jabarut. When he reaches the final destination called Laahut, then he completes the Journey of spirituality.

#### Noor E-Roshan mentions:

1. अस - शरीरतो अकवाली - The Prophet (PBUH) says, My sayings are the shariat.
2. अत - तरीकतो अफवाली - The Prophet (PBUH) says, My doings are the Tarikat.
3. अल - हकीकतो अहवाअली - The Situation in which I am living is my Hakikat (Troth) : The prophet(PBHU)
4. वल - मआरेफतो रासुल मआली - The Prophet (PBHU) says, My position is the Marefat.

Shah Kayamuddin (RA) Says that, As there is a Ghee included in a milk, there is presence of Allah within a human. By boiling milk, we can get a cream like that human should be burned in the love of Allah to be regular follower of the shariat.

Nor E Roshan Says,

जो चहावे शरीरत का घर, कहा कीसका चीत न घर,  
सबके घटमे पीयु पीछान, भुडा भला कीसे मत मान,  
इतने अमल रहेवे जब, सही शरीरत उसकी तब,  
शाह कायमुदीन चीशती कहे सो मान, सब घट अल्लाह नबी पीछान ।

To remain away from worldly pleasures, one should require peer to reach to Allah.

मलकूत मुकामे जो कोई जाय, सो कुछ आगे रुतबा पाय,  
मलकूत मुकाम मे जो जा मीले, उसकु आगे इरफान खुले

One can be called the achieve of Marefat when he feels only Allah everywhere.

नजर तेरी जो आवे अब, यु जान सब हेगा ।  
आसमान, जमीन कछु मत देख, देखे कोन जो हुवा एक,  
“ते” “ता” “हु” अब कर तु दर, हो एकाएक नुर दर नुर  
दुध गया अब घी हुवा जान, खुदी गई तब रहा रहेमान,  
ओठा तुजे धाका दीया, मुकाम मारेफतका पुरा कीया  
जयु दुध, दही, मस्का, और धी, यु शरीयत, तरीकत,  
हकीकत मारेकत मीसाल दी  
हजम हुवा जीसे ए तुर बाजा, सोइ सालीक रहा साजा,  
वो बाहेर भीतर हे हुशीयार, जीधर देखे उधर नुर दीदार,  
मुकाम लाहूत हुवा हासील सोही पुरा हुवा कामील ।  
पडदा खुदी पणेका उठ गया, जात अल्लाह मे मील रहा,  
जात और भात फीर कीसकु कहेवे, लाहूतमे दोनुं एक हो रहेवे

Allah says in the holy Qur'an that I have created all the things between the sky and the earth within 6 days.

According to Mishkat (Hadith), Allah has created the earth on Saturday, the mountains on Sunday, the trees a Monday, the unpleasant things on Tuesday, the light on Wednesday, the animals on Thursday and after the satah (prayer) on Friday, he sent Hazrat Adam (AS).

According to Tawarikh E Farishta book once a man asked to Hazrat Ali (RA) that, who was there on the earth before 3000 years of Aadam's presence (AS) Hazrat Ali (RA) replied, "Aadam". There times a man asked and same reply was given by Hazrat Ali (RA.)

Noor E Roshan Says about the bright of the world.

जब कुछ नही था तब सुनकार था,  
अकीला नीरजन आपी आप था  
“पीछुं बनाया नबीका सो नुर,  
नबी नुर से सब हुआ सो झहुर”  
मुसलमानी में जीसे “नुर महमदी” कहते हे,  
हींदी में उसे “ब्रह्म” कहते हय

मुसलमानी में जीसे “जीब्राइल” कहते हे  
हिन्दी में उसे “विष्णु” कहते हय  
मुसलमानो में जीसे “आदम” कहते हे  
हिन्दी में उसे “महादेव” कहते हय ।

About the formation of the human body Hazrat Kayamuddin (RA) Says,

कायमदीन, आत्मा तो जीव अलेकमे मील गया  
पीछु माटी, पाणी, पवन, आकाशका भाग रहा  
कायमदीन, इन चारुकी उतपत्ती जहाकी तहा समाई,  
वोही पुरुषकु जन्म मरण कुछ नाही ।

**हद – बेहद – अनहद**

कायमदीन हदका नाम शरीयत  
बेहदका नाम तरीकत, हकीकत,  
अनहदका नाम हेगा अलेक मारेफत

Imam Gazali's Kimiya E Sa'adat

Says:

An individual cannot understand the meaning of Aakherat (the Day of Judgment) if they cannot understand the meaning of death. An individual cannot understand the reality of the death if he cannot understand the reality of the death if he cannot understand the reality of the life. When an individual gets to know about the reality of a soul, then after he can get to know about the truth of a life. To know the truth of a soul is equal to know the truth of a self (Nafs).

#### -Sufism-

The term “sufi” comes from the word “suf” which means the thick woolen cloth. Sufis used to wear thick woolen clothes and in Iran they were called “Pashmina Posh” i. e., the people who wear the woolen clothes.

Original name of Sufism is Tasawwuf. Tasawwuf is a form of Islamic mysticism that emphasizes introspection and spiritual closeness with allah. In this, an individual left all the worldly pleasures to come closer with Allah.

“The aim of the Sufis was to free the mind from earthly considerations, to purify it from all passions, to leave it only Allah as an object of meditation. The highest truths were not to be reached by study, but by transport, by transformation of the soul during ecstasy. The key to the return of a sufi to his original home, and by ‘annihilation in God’ to once more merge in the divine essence, is Love. All world is a phantasm and evils therein illusions. All desires and feelings have their root in the idea of self and self is an illusion. “Therefore the first and the greatest step is to forget the self, and even an earthly love may effect this deliverance Love is the sovereign alchemy transmuting the base metal o humanity into the divine gold, “Al-majazu qantarat-ul haqiqate”, ‘the phantasmal is the

bridge to the real', by the typical love the salik learns to forget self and to see only the beloved, until at length he realizes that what he loves in his beloved is a mere reflection of the Eternal Beauty. Which appears in thousands of mirrors, yet is but one when the love of the Divinity is thus developed the sufi loves Allah for His sake only. The wish to go to Heaven is a selfish idea and consequently it cannot accompany a sufi's devotional prayer. He loves Allah for his sake only and his only wish is the Eternal Union with Him."

To be attached with Allah, Sufis should generate a love towards Allah, that they find Allah in everything on the earth.

#### -Schools of Sufism-

In the second century of the Hegira, Abu Hashan (RA) was known as the First Sufi saint. He left the world in AH 150. In this time, the books on a sense of devotion were started to be written. To know the level of the knowledge, some words were used such as dhikra (remembrance of Allah), Fikr (reflection filth of thought), raza (contentment, consent, satisfaction), faqr (poverty), tawakkul (God-consciousness), shukr (gratitude), mohabbat (love), khauf (fear of God to avoid committing disobedience). According to their thoughts, sufis established different schools. First school was established in AH 149 by Hazrat Shaikh Alwan (RA) in Jeddah. Second one was established by Bayazid Bastami (RA) in Bstam city in AH 261. Third school was established by Baghdad's sufi Sirri Sqi in AH 295. Fourth school was founded by Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti in AH 532. Which is called chishtiya order. Fifth one was established as Qadariya order after the name of Shaikh Abdul Qadir Gilani (Gous Paak) (RA) in AH 561. Sixth school of Sufism was established in Baghdad after the name of Hazrat Ahmad Rifaai (RA) in AH 576. Seventh school was established on the name of Baghdad's Shaikh Shahabuddin (RA) in AH 600. Eight one was Nakshabandiya school on the name of Khwaja Bahauddin (RA) which was established in AH 719. There are about 10 different different schools, four are famous amongst them-

- (1) Qadariya
- (2) Chishtiya
- (3) Shohrawardiya
- (4) Nakshbandiya

Different schools of Sufism were established because different sufi saints used different ways to reach to Allah.

The Holy Prophet (PBHU) said,

'Mutu Kabl An Mutu'

(Die before death)

मुरशीद कामील की खोजनी कर,  
मुरशीद बतावे युं मुशाहेदा कर

The Holy prophet (PBHU) said that before the natural death, one should create the situation to be dead inside himself. Living by death is the true living. At the time of death, one can feel the departure from the all grief. But truly, Grief is not ended by the death. Living by death leads to the end of Grief. Living by death means to end mind's desires which lead to non-realization of happiness and grief. This state of mind leads to the peace.

Noor E Roshan Says

मेरा तुम मुवे के पहले जब,  
दरशन देवे तुमको रब

Hazrat Bayazid Bastami (RA) said, whosoever is faded himself in Allah, he finds all the things in himself that means All the things are existent in Allah.

Experiencing this can be called the achievement of the knowledge of wahdat at Wujud. (the unity of Existence/ the unity of Being). This knowledge has three steps which means there are three types of yaqeen (certainty) and we come to know about this from the tafseer surah at-Takthur and Surah Waqia.

- (1) I/m al Yaqeen-Yaqeen based on knowledge
- (2) Ayn al Yaqeen-Yaqeen based on seeing
- (3) Haq al Yaqeen-Yaqeen based on feeling.

For example, seeing smoke signifies the fire even if we can't see the fire. This is I/m al Yaqeen. We know that smoke signifies fire through our knowledge. Now we know something is burning when we actually see the fire, it is called Ayn al Yaqeen. We will be convinced there is fire when we feel its burring or warmth. This is called Haq al Yaqeen.

In Noor E Roshan, Shah Kayamuddin (RA)

Says-

‘ऐन गैन मे एक नुकते का तफावत हय जान,  
यु बंदा और अल्लाह बीच खुदी हय जान,  
नुकता बीचसे उठ गया तो ऐन हय जान,  
खुदी बीचसे खीस गई तो हय रहमान

Hazrat Bayazid Bastami (RA) said that each word which is come out from my mouth, I feel it is spoken by Allah.

Hazrat Kayamuddin (RA) said,

बोले सो कायमदीन नही, ए प्रीतम केरा नुर,  
एका एक - ज हो रहा, जु पानी मीला बीच समदुर  
कायमदीन, बोले सोखुद नही, ए जान बोलते ला बोल,

एका एकज हो रहे, अब दीया सो पडदा खोल  
करनी तेरी सब पीया, मत सीर मेरे नाख,  
कायमदीन के मन एक हे, जहा दखे वहा नुर,  
नबी रसुलकी मेहेरसे, दुवा सो नुकता दुर

When an individual merges himself with Allah, then he finds Allah in everything. Thus, these kind of words come out from his mouth.

### -Chishti Education (त आलीम)-

Allah azzawajal is one. He has no partners in being, attributes, actions, commands or in names. Allah is "Waajibul Wajood" (His existence is necessary). His non-existence is absolutely impossible (Muhaal). Allah is Qadeem (Always was, always will be; not a creation). Another name for this is Azali or Abadi. It is Allah alone who is worthy of worship.

It must be understood that Allah is one. In other words there is only one Allah. If any person believes that his "God" has partners, then that God of his is not Allah. Allah is one without any partners. Allah being Waajibul Wajood means that Allah's existence is necessary. In other words, if someone claims for his (so-called) God to be non-existent, then it is clear that that is not Allah. Allah is "All Existing". Muhaal means that which can never occur, in other words another Allah or the non existence of Allah is Muhaal. When we say that Allah is Qadeem, we mean that Allah has not been created. Allah always was and always will be. It is our (belief) that Allah alone is worthy or worship.

Allah is free from need (beparwa), in other words Allah is not dependant on anyone or anything rather the entire creation is dependent on Allah. When we say that Allah is free from, it means that Allah is not in need of anything from anyone. Allah does not depend on anything or anyone. In other words, every single atom in the creation is dependent on the one creator "ALLAH" azzawajal.

There are those, who think (Allah forbid) that Allah created Angles etc. to do certain chores, so these mean that Allah is dependent on them to do these chores. This is totally incorrect. Allah created the Angles as His servants and gave them the opportunity to serve Him as their Lord. It is the Angles and all the creation that are dependent on Allah and Allah is without doubt dependent on none.

To comprehend (understand) Allah's being (zaat) by means of reason is absolutely impossible. That which can be understood by means of reason, can be comprehended and encircled by the mind, and there is nothing that can encircle or comprehend Allah's Being. However, through Allah azzawajal's works (Af'ail), His attributes can be identified and through His attributes, one is able to attain knowledge about the being of Allah. The above mentioned Belief explains that it is absolutely impossible for us to comprehend Allah's Being. The reason that has been given for this is that anything which

can be understood can be comprehended, but for the sake of understanding, an example without comparison is that if one thinks of a bird, then one's mind can comprehend a bird's physique and one will thus be able to imagine or picture a bird. The reason for this is because it is tangible which the mind can understand through reasoning and knowledge. Now, none can imagine or picture Allah. Thus, the human mind cannot comprehend Allah's being as it is beyond the understanding of the creation. However, it has been explained that through the attributes of Allah, such as His Mercy, His Wrath etc. We are able to know about Allah azzawajal and His commands.

Just as His being is Qadeem, Azali and Abadi (all these terms mean non-created always was, always will be): His attributes are also Qadeem, Azali and Abadi. It must be understood that Allah is self Existent. Allah is "All Existing" in other words not created, always was and always will be.

With the exception of Allah's being and Attributes (such as Allah being Most Merciful, The sustainer etc. ) everything else is "Head is" meaning that it did not exist, and only came into existence after Allah created them. This means that with the exception of Allah's being and His Attributes, everything else is a creation. In other words the Angles, Prophets, Jins, humans and everything else in the universe only came into existence after being created by Allah, so they are all known as "Creation". In other words, all creation came into existence through Allah's command.

Allah is not a father of anyone, nor is he a son of anyone, nor does he have any wife. Anyone who claims that Allah is the father or son of anyone, or says that Allah has a wife is an unbeliever.

Allah is "Hayy" in other words Allah is All Existing, and the lives of everything is in His control. He gives life to whomsoever He wills and causes death to whomsoever He wills.

He is Qadir (has power) over everything that is possible (Mumkin). There is nothing possible that is out of his power. Maqdoor refers to those things which are within Allah's power (Qudrat). It is not necessary that any or all Madoor things have to come to existence. However, only those things that are possible are Maqdoor. Muhaal or absolutely impossible things are not Maqdoor. It is His will that He brings into existence whatever He wills.

Allah knows everything apparent and hidden. Iilm-e-Zaati (self knowledge) is His unique attribute. Iilm-e-Zaati means Allah's self knowledge, which is unattained and uncreated.

As per His knowledge, He has written all good and bad as they are to happen and as it was to be done. It is not so, that we have to do as He has written, but He has written as we would to do. Thus, if Allah wrote badly for a certain person, then it was because that person was to do bad. If he was to do well, then Allah would have written well for him. His writing did



not force any person to do anything. This is known as Taqdeer.

The Holy prophet (sallal Laahu alaihi wasallam) has said that one who rejects Taqdeer is like the fire worshippers in this nation.

### Fate is of three types:

- (1) Mubram-e-Haqeeqi-It refers to inevitable fate and is not changeable.
- (2) Mu'allaq Mahz-It refers to that which is evidently pending the books of the Angels and can be changed.
- (3) Mu'allaq Shabi Ba Mubram-refers to that which is not evidently shown to be pending in the books of the Angles, but it is in the knowledge of Allah, that it is a pending situation (can be changed for example for example through the duas of Allah's chosen servants).

Hama Oost (*ÚÑâ áâèsÈ*) means Allah is everywhere in everything and everything of this universes is the manifestation of His Essence. Allah has no physical body but everything of the universe is the manifestation of His Greatness and a part of His Essence and in this way everything is connected with other thing.

The Holy Qur'an says "Watuwa 'a' a kulli shay' in qadeer"

Which means that all has encompassed all things in his knowledge.

Ayah 4 of Suratul Hadid-"Wa huwa ma akum aynama kuntum" says that the knowledge of Allah includes everything. The prophed (PHHU) said, "You are not calling upon the one who does not hear or know. In fact you are calling upon the Lord who hears and knows all."

(Related by at Bukhariyy)

### "Fa Ayna maa thuwallu fasamma wajhullah"

(Surah Baqarah Ayah 115) which means that wherever they see there is Allah's face (Z: 115)

### Ta'ayyunat wa Tanazzulat

All the objects in the world are attributes of Allah (sifat). But they all are only shadow of Allah. They can't be called Allah due to different shapes and features.

In sufi terminology ta'ayyun means that the different natures or different essential characteristics inherent in the Divine Being manifest themselves with different wavelengths and ranks and infinitely expand in the All-Existent, the All-Life, and the All-knowledge beyond all modalities of quality. In the rank of absolute necessity, ta'ayyun is called the first manifestation, the All-sacred emergence, the Breath of Mercy, while in the rank of contingency it is known as the First Intellect, the most exalted pen, the first light, and the Truth of

Mohammad (SAW) or the Mohammadan Truth.

### Five stages of Consciousness

In Sufi terms there are five stages of consciousness: Naasut, Malakut, Jabarut, Laahut and Haahut.

**Naasut**-Naasut is the consciousness which depends upon our senses. Whatever we see by means of the eyes, or hear by means of the ears, whatever we smell and taste, all these experiences which we gain by the help of the material body, prove to us that this is a particular plane of consciousness, or a particular kind of experience of the consciousness.

**Malakut**-Malakut is a further stage of consciousness working through our mental plane. By means of this higher consciousness we experience thought and imagination-which are beyond our senses. Very often it happens that a person does not notice a passer-by, so deeply is he thinking upon some subject. You may speak to him, but he will not listen, so deeply is he absorbed in his subject. Though his ears are open he cannot hear, though his eyes are open he cannot see. It means that at that moment his consciousness is experiencing life o a different plane. Though he is sitting before you with open eyes and ears, his consciousness is on another plane, working through a different body.

The plane of Malakut is experienced by every person not only when absorbed in thought, but also in dreams. While the different sense-organs are resting, the mind is free to work, and it works with the aid of the same mechanism which it has collected during the experience of the Naasut condition. In other words, all the experiences which a man gathers during the day are assembled during the night, and the mind works with that mechanism; whatever has been collected during the day is at work during the night. Therefore, if a person has acquired an impression of fear, fear will manifest itself in the dream in different forms. If a person has acquired an impression of love, love will appear in the dream in various forms.

If of success the dream will show success in different forms. So the mind prepares a cover for every impression it receives, it prepares an outward appearance for it: that is what accounts for the meaning of dreams.

It is not only so that the mind adorns itself with a certain form in order to tell you that you are going to have a good or a bad experience. There also is the natural outcome of things, there is action and reaction: what we take from the outer world is prepared in the mind, and it reacts again in another form. This gives us a sort of key by which we can understand what the next step will be. In that form the dream is warning.

There is no need to take it as a warning in a spiritualistic form, and claim that a spirit, a ghost or an angel came to tell you the future. It is your own mind which disguises itself as a spirit, a ghost or an angel, in whatever form you wish it to come to you, or in whatever form you are accustomed to. It will never come in a form strange to you, such as you have never known;

it will only come in a form to which you are accustomed. For instance, if you were to see a dog with wings, it would still be the form of a dog with which you are familiar; only the mixture or combination of forms is curious. Although wings are attached to the dog, the form is not actually new; you are seeing something which you recognize.

In the dream the state of the mind has two different aspects. When the mind is not expensive but responsive and is not acting in a positive but in a negative rhythm, then it becomes visionary. That mind is visionary. That mind is visionary which is apt to catch the reflection of whatever other mind falls upon it. Thus it may catch the reflection of a living person's mind, or of a deceased person's mind, of a spiritually advanced person, or of a very ordinary person. That mind lies open like a piece of uncultivated ground which a person may turn into a farm or into a garden; in that soil he may sow seeds of flowers or only seeds of thorns. This accounts for people having different experiences in their dreams from those they had in their waking life. When people say, "I learn something from my dreams, I am inspired by them, have received new ideas, new lessons in my dreams", it is because their mind was exposed to the given impressions. However, a mind open to impressions in this way may reflect a satanic as well as an angelic impression, a wrong one as easily as a right one: it is open to whatever comes into it. Such a person is as likely to be led astray as to be helped. The result is only good as long as the impressions to which the mind responds are good ones.

What then is the way in which one can be sure to have the mind focused upon good things, and so to receive only good impression? There are three considerations.

- (1) First, one must be able to keep all the ever-moving thoughts away which come into one's mind. One must develop that mental strength, that will-power which will keep all thoughts away which come into one's mind during concentration and take one's mind away from the object on which one focuses it.
- (2) Secondly, the mind will always focus itself upon the object which it loves. If one does not have love for the divine Being, for God, if one does not have that ideal, then it will certainly be difficult, for it cannot be done by the intellect. The person who only uses his intellect keeps asking, "where shall I direct my mind, on what object shall I focus it? Please, picture it for me, and point out where it is". It is the lover of God whose mind cannot wander any whither, save always directly to God.
- (3) Then, purity of mind is necessary. The mind must be pure from all fear, worry and anxiety, and from every kind of falsehood, for all this covers the mind from the vision of God. When the mind, full of faith, love, purity and strength, is focused upon the ideal of God, man will receive teaching, inspiration and advice directly and for every case he meets with in life. The simple teaching of all the religions during every age, the essence of all religion and philosophy, is contained in these words: Go and Stand before God in simple faith, being as a little child before God.

**Jabarut**-The next stage, beyond the plane of Malakut, brings us to Jabarut, the plane of consciousness where the experience is like that of a person in deep, dreamless sleep-who is said to be sound asleep. The blessing here is greater still. In this higher experience there is God's own being through whom we experience the life, peace and purity which are within us. Moreover, whilst anyone may experience this blessing during sleep, the person who follows the path of spiritual development will experience it while awake. Yogis call this state Sushupti. This joy of life, peace and purity the mystic experiences with wide open eyes, wide awake; others can only touch it during deep sleep.

**Laahut**-A still further experience of consciousness is Laahut. This raises a person from the material to the immaterial plane. In this plane the state of being fast asleep is not necessary. There is greater peace and joy, and nearness to the essence which is called divine. In Christian terms this stage is called communication. In Vedantic terms it is called Turiyavastha.

**Haahut**-And the further step to this is called Samadhi, which may no doubt be described as merging in God. In other words, in this stage we dive into our deepest selfhood; God is in our deepest self. In this state we have the ability to dive so deep as to touch our deepest being, which is the home of all intelligence, life, peace and joy, and where worry, fear, disease or death does not enter.

Haahut is the experience which is the object of every mystic who follows the inner cult. In Vedantic terms this stage is called Manan; the equivalent in Christian terminology is "atonement" [at-one-ment].

From these considerations it may be seen that the work of the Sufi is to aim at ennobling the soul.

#### **Rooh--> The Holy Qur'an, Surah-al-Israa 17: 85-**

And they ask you [O Mohammad (SAW)]

Concerning the rooh [the spirit] say: 'The rooh: it is one of the things, the knowledge of which is only with my Lord. And of knowledge, you (mankind) have been given jonly a little'.

According to this Qur'anic verse-the knowledge of soul (rooh) is only with Allah.

As zaat cannot be seen through eyes, rooh is also hidden. It cannot be seen physically. All the bodies have rooh which is the shadow of the Great Rooh. Rooh is the mirror of zaat. (Allah's Being).

**Qalb-->** Qalb is the mirror of Allah's name and his sifat (attributes qualities)

In Sufi terminology the Qalb a bright essence separate from matter, between the human soul and the human self. Human-ness depends on the heart. Qalb. Philosophers call it the rational self, (nafs-e-natiqa). The human soul is its interior

and the animal soul is its exterior. The animal soul divides the Qalb and body of man. In the Qur'anic verse:

**Allah is the light of the heavens and of the earth**

**(Al-Noor, 24: 35)**

The heart (Qalb) of man is the throne of God wherein He manifests His Essence. The Divine Name, Rahman (Compassionate) holds sway over it. The human Qalb is the center of Divine secrets; it encompasses all the realities and created orders in the different circles of existence. The human heart represents the Divine Light of God, its one flash is the essence of all created things and all beings in the cosmos. One of the characteristic of the human heart is its ability to immediately accept change. This is because, the heart is the pivot around which all Divine Names and Attributes revolve. Whenever the heart is attentive towards a particular Divine Name or Attribute, it conforms to it. In quick succession, different Divine Names imprint themselves on the heart. The Divine Names and Divine Attributes are like moulds for the human heart. One reason for its being called Qalb is that it keeps turning towards its origin, from this world to the Hereafter. Its point of vision changes from creation to Reality. Qalb is a mirror for the realities for all creation.

**Nafs (Self)**--> The essence of the self is called its nafs. The reality of nafs in the soul and the reality of soul is the Divine Reality. God created the nafs of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) from His own Nafs. He then created the essence of Adam patterned on the nafs of the Holy Prophet (SAW). On account of this subtle spiritual sense (latifa-e-nafs) that Adam, despite being warned, ate the forbidden fruit.

The nafs is created from the Essence of Sovereignty, and the spirit of sovereignty will not be forbidden. This bewildered the nafs. If had relied on its own being, when it was duty bound to rely on the divine injunction. It did not comprehend that to act on the exigency of nature creates darkness in the soul and he who acts thus, becomes wretched. The nafs also did not comprehend that it is against the Majesty of Sovereignty to bring about things that create wretchedness. Inclinations that cause darkness of nature are disobedience, and inclinations which inspire spiritual light, are called obedience. Defiance results in the disobedient natures being pushed downwards. Expelled from Divine nearness into physical existence, in itself is a downward descent. If knowledge acquired by man through his own effort was relinquished and replaced by faith on Divine enlightenment, and the faith is unshakable, it would result in his good fortune; the opposite path would result in misery. The ruin of individuals and nations is the result of confusion of these precepts and deceptions of the nafs. In man, nafs is one subtle sense (latifa) from among the six subtle senses (latifa e sitta) and according to the Sufis, is located near the navel.

The nafs, which is surrounded by darkness of its elemental nature and infernal habits, is called nafs-e-amaara (the disobedient self).

**Man's nafs is prone to evil (Surah Yusuf, 12: 53)**

When the nafs begins to emerge from its lowliness through spiritual exercises and striving, then flashes of guidance cast their light on it from time to time, it then begins to realize its waywardness and deviation from the straight path. It wants to turn away from sin, and every act of disobedience makes it remorseful. This is called nafs-e-lawwaama, (the reproachful soul).

**Allah says: I swear by the self accusing soul**

**(Al-Qiyamat, 75: 2)**

When this skill becomes established in the nafs and it attains lofty grades of reformation and refinement, it is then called nafs-e-mut'mainna (The soul at peace), and it is addressed thus:

Oh thou soul which art at rest, Return to the Lord, pleased, and pleasing Him: Enter thou among my servants, and enter thou my paradise.

(Al-Fajr, 89: 27-30)

Now the question remains, how does one acquire the serene soul (nafs-e-mut'mainna) ? The Holy Qur'an gives guidance and clearly states:

**Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest! (Al-R'ad 13: 28)**

In Sufi terminology, the top half of the human body is called the angelic body (jism-e-malkooti) and the lower half, the beastly body (jism-e-nafsaani). But when the refinement of the nafs is duly gained, the entire body assumes unity of form.

**-Ikhtilaf e Silsila (difference of opinion)-**

There are many Sufi Silsila (order). They are divided because of different methods and the way of remembrance (dhikr). There is not a big difference among them as there is the single way of Tasawwuf. (becoming a Sufi). Silsila got different names from the names of different Sufi Saints who developed them. There is a little difference among the Sufis in two matters:

- (1) Wahdat Ul Wajood and (2) Sima'a

The meaning of Wahdat Ul Wajood is the "Unity of Being". It is a Sufi belief (aqeedah) emphasizing that "there is no true existence except the Ultimate Truth (God)". Its metaphysics implies that there is a unity and oneness in all that exists. The differences, disagreements and divisions among human beings, ideas and all that exists are illusory. Everything is 'He' (Allah), which implies that Allah is reflected in everything. This is called Hama Oost. Others say that "Hama al Oost" which means that everything is born from Allah.

(2) Sima'a (Raga)-Some silsila the Sufi music and some prohibit the singing and listening of Raga. In the Chishtiya order there is a great importance of Qawwali. Sufism, as the mystical dimension of Islam, preaches peace, tolerance and pluralism, while encouraging music as a way of deepening one's relationship with the creator. Based on the mystical branch of Islam, Sufi music seeks to unite listeners with the Divine. The pain of separation from the creator is at the core of Sufi lyrics and music; and hence the intense longing to dissolve the physical realm and transcend into the spiritual universe with Sama'a, the practice of listening to music, chanting and whirling, and finally culminating in spiritual ecstasy (wajd).

Sound and music is thus central for the core experience of Sufism, since music is regarded as a means for the believer to get closer to the divine. Sufi music therefore is the music of the 'soul' by the 'soul' and for the 'soul'.

In India and Pakistan, it is the Qawwali, made globally popular by Shankar-Shambhu and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan that has been known to move the audiences to a state of emotional rapture. In the Indian subcontinent, Sufi thoughts fine expression through several musical genres: Qawwali, Qaul, Qalbana, Ghazal, Folk forms from Rajasthan, Sindh and Punjab, Sufiyana Kalam from Kashmir, etc. Nonetheless, it is Qawwali, the home grown genre attributed to Amir Khusrau Dehlavi (1253-1325) that seems to be the most popular 'food for the soul'. No doubt it shares general traits with the light classical music of the region; however, with elements such as mystical poetry and powerful rhythm suggesting ceaseless repetition of God's name (dhikr), the music of Qawwali fulfills a religious function; to arouse mystical love and divine ecstasy, which is the core experience of sufism.

The song text of Qawwali is mystical poetry in Farsi, Hindi and Urdu, and has a poetic idiom rich in image and metaphor, which the generations of Sufi poets have invested with a wealth of highly elaborate symbolic content. As a result, much meaning can be conveyed in a few words drawn from this familiar and well-loved idiom of Sufi metaphor. The impact of such a communication is both instant and universal. The songs are presented in a fluid style by alternating solo and group passages characterized by repetition and improvisation. The vigorous drum accompaniment on the barrel-shaped dholak is reinforced by hand clapping while the small portable harmonium, usually in the hands of the lead singer, underscores the song melody.

For centuries, the sufi communities of the Indian subcontinent have sustained this musical tradition in the mahfil-e-sama, the 'assembly for listening', and it remains the central ritual to this day, especially at the shrines of the sufi saints like Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia in Delhi and Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti in Ajmer. In India, many Sufi musicians trace their descent to the original Qawwali singers who were believed to be trained by Amir Khusrau, the most influential disciple of Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia.

## Sources

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