

SUFISM AS A GLOBAL HIGHWAY TO PEACE

***Dr. Seema Manzoor**
****Dr. Nasreen Aslam Shah**
*****Dr. Asma Manzoor**

Abstract

Since the beginning of awareness, humans have looked for ways to search for their existence as an individual. Sufism is considered as the most accepted religious pathway to seek the realization of Allah in order to maintain the love, harmony and peace at all levels in the existing society. This research specifically aims to investigate the role of Muslim Sufis (Male and Female Sufis) regarding their role in maintaining world peace. Sufism has attempted to bring various groups of the world together so as to detail a practical expressway to peace is a significant target in these people to establish a sustainable highway for maintaining peace in existing society, which is going through an increasingly distraught times in order to maintain durable type of tranquil cooperation, humanity. It is an accepted fact that Sufism can nurture global peace, because it is an unbiased way to create a peaceful atmosphere based on tolerance, empathy and tranquility. Despite the western misconceptions Sufism is open for everyone irrespective of class, race, ethnicity, caste and creed. The essence of mysticism and the Sufi way of living is found in the love of Allah by believing in the oneness of Allah as the only supreme authority.

*Assistant Professor in the Centre of Excellence for Women's Studies, University of Karachi.

**Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Meritorious Professor, Department of Social Work & Director in the Centre of Excellence for Women's Studies, University of Karachi.

***Assistant Professor in the Centre of Excellence for Women's Studies, University of Karachi.

This research has focused on qualitative methods by exploring the role of Sufism, regarding world peace by using various qualitative research techniques to establish an in-depth understanding regarding the people's perspective about Sufism and world peace. For this purpose library research and content analysis method has been chosen to analyze every possible detail to cover all the aspects of the research problem. Sufi philosophy clearly explains the true essence of Sufism, i.e. divine reality is the knowledge based on truthfulness, perpetual luminosity of soul, absolute beauty and its nature is self-manifested, which is reflected through the face of the entire universe.

Key Words: *Sufism, Love, Peace, God-Man Relationship, Sufi philosophy.*

Introduction

Islamic mysticism holds great importance and has traditional roots within Islamic societies, which promotes spirituality. The term Sufism is depicted from the word "SUF", and its literal meaning is wool, which refers to rough woolen clothes worn by the Sufis to practice poverty. This practice clearly represents that Sufis do not have any interest in the worldly pleasures. The focus of Sufism has changed over a passage of time as Islam grew and expanded. Earlier Sufism concept was linked with fear of God then its focus shifted to the verification of doctrine of love and after that the Sufism promoted it as individual's spiritual journey towards God. Sufism became an emotional attachment for the believers and worshippers through which the Sufis attracted the followers towards Sufism (Metcalf, 2012).

The Sufi masters based on their faith established different school of thoughts. Some focused mainly on "SAMAA" for example, dancing (dhamal), singing (qawwali) and the worships of the Sufi masters, whereas other school of thoughts believed in following Quraan and Sunnah only, which created conflict of ideas between Sufis and Ulama. Basically both Ulama and Sufis believed in transferring knowledge among common people. Ulama focused on institutional means of transferring knowledge and doing welfare work by

establishing shelters for orphanages and charity hospitals. There are many Sufi orders lead by a Sufi master and having many followers and disciples. These Sufis prefer to live a life of austerity and poverty (FIKR . فقر). Sufi orders mainly stressed on attainment of love and reunion with Allah. Some Sufi orders even had the political influence, especially in Turkey during Ottoman Empire. Many Muslim calligraphers were closely associated with Sufi masters (Hammarlund et al., 2017).

The world has now become a global village, and has advanced in all fields due to the use of technology and fast and effective means of communications. In any part of the world faces disturbance of any kind than the entire world feels its effect, therefore the social and religious well-being of the world depends on harmonious society with peace and tranquility. Thus, creating a just and peaceful society is possible only by establishing understanding between people of different religions by mutual trust and respect for every religion. A huge majority of Muslims are living across the globe. By the year 2020 the Muslim population will become around 4.7 billion (Kettani, 2010). Across the globe there are almost 50 independent Muslim states, besides that a large number of Muslims live in various countries and hold key positions socially and politically. Islam and Muslims have played a vital role in the development of human civilizations and socio-cultural changes. But unfortunately in today's world, we are divided on religious grounds instead of living in harmony conditions. Specially, Muslims are considered at war with people of other religions, and it is because of the misconception established due to the misinterpretation of the Jihad concept. Therefore, it is a time of realization now to identify people who aim to destroy peace, whether they belong to Islam, Christianity or any other religion. It is very unethical to relate terrorism acts or terrorists with any specific religion, because terrorists have no religion, as no religion promotes such activities. In order to remove misunderstanding regarding religious beliefs of all religions, joint dialogue sessions should be conducted, so that everyone can understand that religions never promote violence and terrorism. For this purpose religious figures should play their role in harmonizing the world. Islamic Sufism is based on love and peace and Muslim Sufis have portrayed Islam as the religion of peace by their behavior

and attitude towards the society, which shows that Mysticism and Sufism are the spiritual and pure feature of every religion, especially Islamic Sufism is based on love, peace and harmony for the betterment of humanistic societies, because Islam focuses on humanity, tranquility and harmonious society (Tahir & Ali, 2011).

Sufis have contributed to a huge extent in searching realities and truths by their wisdom, which Allah has bestowed upon them. These realities and truths about the universe has been a mystery for humankind, which is discovered by the Sufi saints. Finding these realities is not an easy task, they have attained through annihilating their being by following the path of Allah and surrendering themselves before him. The truths and facts of universe are disclosed by Allah only to them who find the ways to escape from the worldly pleasures to discover Allah.

After the actual realization they became free from all problems related to life, whether emotional or mental etc. They came to know all there is to know, just God himself knows everything, the essential knowledge of certainty and truth of certainty that comes with annihilation and permanent non-being. Following the path man will obviously become aware of the mysterious connection between man and God. After getting deeply absorbed into the relation of reality the reformers (Sufis) migrated to different corners of the world to propagate the message of peace among common people irrespective of religion. Mention may be made of a noted Sufi scholar and reformer namely Baba Ghulam Shah BadShah. He migrated Rajouri Shahdara Sharief Kashmir to benefit the people through the laws of Islamic Shariah. Shariah for him was an instrument of social change and mysticism is the way and basis of all knowledge be it science, art, philosophy, religion and literature. So it is very much beneficial for everyone to follow the Sufi path (Andrabi, 2016).

Sufism is depicted as a medium of educating moral and other religious goals, which has been verified by Sufi saints who held noticeable positions in Muslim social orders (Carl, 1997). In Islamic history the Sufism gained its

pinnacle during the medieval period and the Arabic and Persian Sufi literature became the classic literary piece of the Sufi traditions (Carl, 2002).

Theoretical Framework

What are the teachings of a Sufi master and how does one search for a Sufi master? Moulana Jalaluddin Rumi warns that many devils are in the garb of Sufi masters. He warns man not to lend his hand and become a disciple of the person claiming to be a Sufi master or a peer or a peeran unless you are satisfied that your Sufi master is a true Sufi and has surrendered himself before Allah whole heartedly, a person of honesty and a person of integrity and his only interest is to make you perfect, help you polish your mirror of the heart, so that you can see the Divine in your own self. A Sufi Master should have no other desire, no other attachment, no other plan. Neither he has a desire to acquire money and wealth but his only desire is to reach the Divine, to spread the knowledge of the Divine. Only such a person is entitled to teach Sufism. You may say it's very difficult to find such a Master in this world. If you search in your own self then the Divine will show you the path (Ingram, n.d).

The Holy Quran speaks about the three inner consciousnesses. As a human being, the biologist say that man is a product of evolution and that he is an evolved being from the apes and the monkeys. If this be true then the carnal desires in man is the animal consciousness that is 'nafse-e-ammara'. The Sufis recognize that man has initially acquired all the instincts and behavior of an animal. An animal will always search for food, satisfy his hunger, satisfy his lust, fight for his territory, conquer anyone who would attempt to seize him and he lives for his own desires and his lust. In such a person, the inner consciousness is filled with anger, jealousy and other instincts of ego and greed. The animal consciousness makes a person proud and his heart turns into a stone (Arasteh, 2014). So the first and foremost aspects of the teachings are that a person's heart and mind and soul is filled with animal consciousness and that man should conquer the animal consciousness. This has to be conquered by the various methods as taught in Sufism.

The second stage is 'nafs-e-lawwama', the consciousness which teaches you about right and wrong. You are told as to what is right and what is wrong. Man keeps developing moral consciousness which keeps telling him as to what he shall do and what he shall not do. This is based on the teachings of the society and also about the purity which dwells in the heart and mind. The moral consciousness reminds man not to do a wrong, a wrong which hurts another human being and which takes away the liberty of other human beings. A wrong destroys the goodness of the man and nature (Ali & Zainab, 2010).

The third consciousness is referred to as 'nafs-e-mutmainna'. In this self-dwells divinity. The self which seeks the Lord; man begins to live by the dictates of the Lord and remains in the purified state. He practices day in and day out to remain in that position. He keeps remembering the names of the Lord. The cleanliness of the body is by taking regular bath by water. The cleanliness of the tongue is by shunning evil talk. The cleanliness of the mind is to remove all that disturbs the mind, to maintain equanimity; to maintain the benevolence of the mind and heart. So the 'nafs-e-lawwwama' achieves the Divine. This perfection is achieved through daily attempt to retain the light in the heart and mind. This process is carried out from morning till evening. A Sufi master teaches his pupil to be true to his own self, to be true to his mind and heart and carry on the dictates of God. As a humble servant, one is required to carry out all the duties assigned to one's self in a most perfect manner and without disturbing one's mind and heart. The main focus of life is to see the inner light and to enlighten oneself. To enlighten one's being with the knowledge of the Divine. To live a very honest, simple, humble and sublime life (Balsley, 2010).

Tasawwuf / Sufism / Irfan is the core concept of Islam, it teaches humanity, brotherhood, peace, serenity, and the concept of monotheism i.e. oneness of Allah (the concept of Tauheed). Sufism guides the way to gain perfection in Tariqat and cultivates our heart, mind and soul (Lings, 1993). Sufism I way to awaken soul and adopting simple life by practicing meditation, incantation, and other Sufi practices through belief in oneness of Allah, the Last Holy Prophet (SAWW) by strengthening faith, offering Salah five times

a day, righteous deeds, Taqwa (Awe of Allah), repentance, complete surrender before Allah, sincerity, sense of gratitude, remembrance of Allah, hope, uprightness, insightfulness and etc. Holy Prophet said that: “Whosoever believes in Allah and his last day let him speak good or else let him be silent” (Islam, 2005). Sufism also helps us in enlightening our soul and it purifies our heart and mind. Sufism is not treated as something other than Islam; in fact, it is a segment or branch of Islamic spirituality (Osho, 1999).

Review Literature

The concept of Sufism (Mysticism) is linked with unification and to bring peace and humanity in human societies by establishing deeper understanding of life. The Sufis focus on human societies in order to maintain brotherhood by respecting others faith, religion and holy books. Basically Sufism is based on love, compassion, kindheartedness for all creations. It is a religious approach of life which draws its source from the Islamic principles, which accentuates less on exhibiting rituals performed socially yet it is more focused on the actions of one's inner-self, i.e. it specifically signifies the Islamic mysticism. In Arabic language Sufism is known as Tassawuf (تصوف) and those who follow the path of Sufism are called as Sufi (صوفى) or Sufia (صوفياء) (stoddart & Nicholson, 1998). The Sufis, being pious, practice the true essence of Islam, based on the following principles: 1).. repentance (توبه), 2).. trust (توكل) and 3).. patience (صبر). A person, who adopts the path of Sufism, despises all worldly pleasures by laying an ascetic and austere life (Platts, 1939). Sufism has a wide variety of concepts, but basically it begins by adopting poverty and alienating one's-self from the desires (نفس) (Murad, 2008). Sufism is a mystical form of Islam, which develops the Sufi culture of religious traditions based on fundamental concepts and it is so deeply rooted in a local cultural setup that it even impacts the local traditions, norms and values by absorbing the aboriginal cultural setup and values (Cunningham, 2014).

The Concept of Tazkiya-e-Nafs in Islam (Purification of the Soul)

The literal meanings of the term Tazkiya (تزكية) is a purification of internal as well as external impurities. Almost every Muslim is well aware of the

external impurities, i.e. personal hygiene. But there are numerous internal impurities, which included weak faith, false beliefs and polytheism, relying on humans or other beings than Allah, jealousy, arrogance, hatred and malice, materialistic approach and etc. (Picken, 2011). One must always keep in mind that regarding internal impurities two important things should always be considered on a priority basis. Allah Almighty has made two best possible and easy approachable ways by which a man can acquire internal purity. Firstly the revelation through Holy books, secondly, He sent down Prophets to explain and teach those books. That is, He did not consider it sufficient to send down Prophets without Holy books or books without Prophets. Thus Holy books and Prophets both are equally important to understand the orders of Allah. This is the proof that Allah has sent down Prophets to teach these books for the welfare of humans, which has provided us with knowledge and wisdom and taught us that books and Prophets are equally important for our proper upbringing and nurturing. And perfection can only be achieved the teaching of the Prophet and heavenly sacred scripture combines together to guide us into better humans (ISHAQ, 2014).

Sufism is the inner core of the Islamic principles is the stage where a person can achieve Tawhid, which is achieved by the universal concept of Shahadah, la ilaha ill'Allah in order to express unity before Allah. The mysteries of Tawhid are realized by the Sufi saints, because they truly understand the meaning of assertion. Assertion here clearly stands for realizing the oneness of Allah and knowing that Allah is everywhere (Nasr, 2000).

In Qur'an three basic religious approaches are mentioned i.e. Islam, Iman and Ihsan, these approaches/attitudes help in understanding the true spirit of Sufism. The Holy Prophet has described these approaches as three components of religion, whereas, Kitab-ul-Iman of Sahih Bukhari discusses Islam and Iman as distinctive attitudes, which may vary according to the religious connotation. And they may have different characteristics and intensity within themselves. The attitude Islam relates itself to the concept of submission before the Allah's will and it is taken as the least for entering in the circle of Islam. The next attitude Iman is considered as a more advances

level in the religion, it is based on firm faith into religious teachings and getting deeper into Islam. The third attitude/quality Ihsan is the highest level in regard to spiritual development. This level enhances the devotee's sense of realization about religious truths, which in result grants the devotee to attain direct vision. Ihsan was later expressed by the Sufis as Mushahidah (Direct vision), it is also expressed in the traditions of the Holy Prophet as:

“Ihsan is to adore Allah as though thou do see Him for even if thou do not see Him, He nonetheless sees thee.”

According to Annemarie Schimmel these three attitudes shows the devotee's spiritual progress from the initial level Islam to the last stage Ihsan (Schimmel, 1975). Arberry claims that Islam is more towards mystical faith than Christianity (Arberry, 1942). Sufism contains the sense of mysticism and quietism, which gained more importance as the development of ascetic tendency during the Umayyad period. Sufism is understood better by understanding mysticism. The Greek concept Myein means closing eyes, and its attainment is not possible by adopting ordinary means. Primarily mysticism and Sufism means absolute love of Allah with the realization of Tawhid, i.e. Sufis prefer Allah's love over worldly pleasures and Allah prefers these pious people over others (James, 2004). Similarly Lings relate Islam and Sufism are connected like heart is to human body (Lings, 2011).

Islam and Sufism are interconnected to each other, because Sufism is the spiritual growth of Muslims and it is nothing other than Islam, in fact it is the practice of Islamic teachings in a true sense (Stoddart, 1998). Religion helps us in tracing down our true self spiritually whereas; the science deals the outer world unlike religion, which helps us in exploring ourselves inside us (Sopsy, 1976). Sufism aims to make us better Muslims and humans by establishing realization of inner purity and unification to Allah (Faruqi, 1984). Sufis are so much engrossed in Allah's love that they surrender worldly pleasures corruption and materialism, but it does not means that they do not believe in having a normal worldly living. As Islam has never stopped Muslims to live worldly living, in fact people are advised to maintain balance between religion and worldly living. But with that a Muslim is bound to

follow Skari'at by following the spiritual path i.e. Tariqat, to attain Abudiat i.e. to become Allah's beloved (peeran, 1998).

A Sufi saint has to pass certain stages known as Muqamat during the process of self-purification, which is attained by Ahwaal (subjective experiences). The Muqam of Fana (annihilation) is attained by the Sufi after getting inner self purification. This stage is considered as the Kamliyat i.e. the perfectness. The perfectness can only be achieved by following the Tariqat with the help of a Sufi master. The Sufi master or murshid polished his disciple by helping them in gaining human-Allah communion (Rafiabadi, 2005).

The Bases of Pacifism

The basic two principles of Islamic mysticism are based on pacifism, which are love and pantheism and they are also a major part of Rumi's thoughts.

Love

Love in Sufism is used as a relative term regarding the context. It is actually a combination of experiences and emotions, which establishes the thoughtfulness and deep affection to Allah in regard to oneness of Allah (Michon, 2016). In Islamic mysticism love holds a very important place and is considered as a principle of Tasawwuf, which enables us to attain closeness to Allah. The theories and definitions of Sufism guide us to attain the love of Allah and to be united to him (Abrahamov, 2003). The creation of universe is also based on divine love, and thus, it cures all disdains, selfishness, pain and agony.

In this context Maulana Rumi articulates the concept of love so beautifully that "love is the very meaning of creation and life," Citlak (2007). According to Rumi when heart is filled with love then there is no space for hatred and violence. Similarly when Rabia al- Adawiyya (one of the most famous female mystic) was enquired that do she sees Satan as an enemy, her answer was in negative and said that she has no place for negative feelings because she is full of love for Allah (Smith, 1994).

Maulana Rumi has a very clear point of view about the existence good and evil. He has a firm believe that evil is not in absolute form rather it is

relative, because negativity can be turned into positivity. Rumi has very positive approach towards life and he never held grudge against others (Rumi, 4V, 2000). He was known as “the brethren of love”, as he thinks that whole world revolves around the love of Allah (smith, 1972). Rumi believes that love has great power and strength to change negative aspects of our life into positivity for example; war can be changed into peace, bitter to sweet and cruelty to compassion. His perceptions and thoughts are so clearly projected in his poetry:

“By love, bitter things become sweet;
 By love, pieces of copper become golden;
 By love, dregs become clear;
 By love, pains become healing;
 By love, the dead is made living;
 By love, the king is made a slave” (Rumi, 2V, 2000).
 “Love’s nationality is separate from all other religions,
 The lover’s religion and nationality is the Beloved (God).
 The lover’s cause is separate from all other causes
 Love is the astrolabe of God’s mysteries”.

“Each moment the voice of love is sounding of from left and right;
 We are traveling on our way to heaven, who desires to look at anything on the way?”

“Love in Islamic mysticism and Rumi thoughts divided in two parts: love in the human and love in the all the world and creations. So pacificism divided in these two parts: peace to the people and peace to the all the world and creations.”

“Rumi about love to the people said:
 Thou art taking no pity on the Moslems;
 (Yet) the true believers are kinsmen and one body (of) fat and flesh”
 (Rumi, 4V 2000).

“If you desire tears, have mercy on one who sheds tears;
 If you desire mercy, show mercy to the weak” (Rumi, 1V, 2000).

“And he said about the love in all the world and creations:
 (God saying), “had it not been for pure love’s sake,
 How should I have bestowed an existence on the heavens” (Rumi, 5V, 2000).
 “This the fire of love that is in the reed;
 This the fervour of love that is in the wine” (Rumi, 1V 2000).
 “Love makes the sea boil like a kettle;
 Love crumbles the mountain like sand,
 Love cleaves the sky with a hundred clefts;
 Love unconscionably makes the earth to tremble” (Rumi, 5V 2000).
 “(God saying :) had it not been for pure love’s sake;

How should I have bestowed an existence on the heavens, (They [creations] all say, “we have hearing and sight and happy, (Although) with you, the uninitiated, we are mute All particles (of phenomenal being), (whether) in movement (or) at rest, Are speakers (and declare): “verily, to him we are returning” (Rumi, 3V 2000).

According to Maulana Rumi universal peace can be maintained by respecting nature through aesthetic attitude. This aesthetic attitude leads towards the spiritual journey by love, which is symbolized as perfection; i.e. abandoning ego, seeking the truth to attain spiritual growth.

Methodology

This research has focused on qualitative methods by exploring the role of Sufism, regarding world peace by using various qualitative research techniques to establish an in-depth understanding regarding the people’s perspective about Sufism and world peace. For this purpose library research and content analysis method has been chosen to analyze every possible detail to cover all the aspects of the research problem and the material for the research has been collected from different libraries, newspapers and websites. This study examines the new dimension of sufism, and it also attempts to capture in-depth understanding based on available literature about Sufism and their role in world peace. Thus, the researcher focused on detailed study on the subject through qualitative research method and the information is collected for further analysis.

Purpose of the Study

This study presents the qualitative analysis regarding the role of Sufis in maintaining world peace and humanity in the society by exploring the exclusive dimensions of Sufism which is not yet explored, because there is no sufficient research work done regarding role of Sufis in world peace.

Conclusions

Current global political situation has divided world into different groups and almost all regions are in the state of war. In this perspective religion is used to gain political and economic benefits, it has become a tool of gaining political hostility. This global picture has greatly influenced the society, especially the youth and it has impacted in terms of shame towards culture, customs and traditions, religion and cultural values. The Muslim youth is confused about Islamic teachings and modern western thoughts and this gap can be easily filled by the by the Sufi tendency. There is a need to build relationship between Muslims and the religion. And the social harmony can be maintained by prevailing inner and outer societal peace, because society and people are linked with each other and the inner-self is in relation with the inner peace which will influence outer peace as a result. Without maintaining balance between people and the society, concept of peace cannot be promoted. Since the peace and harmony are based on the social values; therefore, it is not a difficult task to achieve global peace. Mystical approach by following the laws of Islamic Shariah social peace can be laid down on concrete basis to gain ultimate reality. Islamic mysticism has unquestionable role and deep roots in the Islamic history. During the Ummayyad era, link between Christianity and Islam gave real meanings to mysticism, which was later promoted by the Islamic faith and teachings. Though it has its roots in Islam, but it appeared as an independent aspect due to its mannerism. This concept was later known as Sufism (Tasawwuf) among common people and the individuals who followed it were known as Sufis. Sufism greatly impacted the people at individual and collective level and somehow transformed the people's typical religious concepts. The term Sufi (meaning woolen cloth) was derived from Arabic language and became common in the nineteenth century. Basically Sufism refers to seeking knowledge about ultimate reality, i.e. the oneness and uniqueness of Allah. The basic purpose

of the Sufis is to fetter oneself off from one's self through the realization of that nothing is permanent and forever except Allah. All societies, especially Muslim societies cannot address their social issues without developing the resolving the issues through peace, because social issues can only be resolved through non-violent means. Pakistan, despite being a land of Sufi saints experience many social issues like terrorism and extremism, which causes damage to human lives and their properties. It is assumed that Sufism can play a vital role in resolving such issues through promoting tolerance and respect. As Sufism teaches patience, brotherhood, love and harmony irrespective of their religion, faith and culture, and it is based on pure feelings and togetherness.

Recommendations

To highlight the relationship of Sufism and world peace extensive studies are required to examine the global perception. Following are the recommendations incorporated in this study.

1. To bring peace and harmony human societies must be tolerant and humane instead of seeking chaos and violence based on race, caste, colour, language and etc.
2. We shall held ourselves as honest, truthful, and a promising human being to accept responsibility to bring positive change in the society, to cultivate awareness within the existing culture, society and this should start from ourselves.
3. Sufism is a path of respect, nobility and servility; therefore, we should consider our actions above our personality, our personal gains and ambitions and should inspire others through our actions.
4. There should be no distinction in existing societies; everyone should be equal in status to attain highest station of spirituality.
5. Muslims can influence different societies by keeping in mind the historical, social and cultural aspects to curb down the wave of terrorism and extremism.
6. Muslim societies should be moderate and balanced and should give equal chances to all its elements to survive and sustain their individuality.

7. There is a need to change social perception regarding the status of women, which Islam has given them and uplifted their role and status in all aspects of life including worldly life, religion and spirituality, because without uplifting women's status we cannot maintain harmony and peace globally.

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