

Sociological Perception of Sufi Order in the Light of *Kashf-ul-Mahjūb* With special reference of contemporary society

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Abstract: This research ventures to move on to direction that suggests the best possible strategy to begin with is to focus on human society and keep in touch with the Sufi guideline by *Kashf-ul-Mahjūb*. The paper highlights relevant key questions; what is sociological perception of Sufi order and its impact in contemporary era? How does a Sufi apply its order especially on modern man? How does *Kashf-ul-Mahjūb* guide contemporary era as a concern of believers and non-believers to enhance peace and harmony in the society for uprising the sacred mission? Are there any practical steps in *Kashf-ul-Mahjūb* to control inhuman trends flourishing clashes and conflicts in contemporary society? The Sufi study explores human mind to keep it to positive sense enhancing contemporary situation faced by Muslim Ummah today.

Key Words: Sufism, Sociological Perception, *Kashf-ul-Mahjūb*, Peace, contemporary society,

Introduction

Sufi order is a discipline of human life to spend the living time with religio-social revealed regulation to promote humanity with the light of divine power that is directly flowed from God as a Creator of humanity. One of the predictions of modern era that people observe one side of the matter and ignore others without thinking prospects. Even the thoughts overwhelmingly cannot be accepted with all its aspects that envelop human lives. It is limited just with body not to see its inner value. Such as happened with religion of Islam especially with Sufi orders and disciplines, these are considered unpracticed phenomenon regarding their sociological perception. With the definition: “Sufi he who does not participate in social life and spend his time to join monastic life without following *Shari’ah* and living with society” the sociological picture of Sufi order was made ugly to follow for getting the salvation of life forever. It is very important to draw an original picture of Sufi order. The original meaning of Sufi order is applied on human

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life with its context and discipline to explore its practical techniques which attract modern man for inner peace by using tolerance and harmony in the society. Modern man could not discover inner and social peace utilizing modern mechanism to make this universe as a unique empire of all human being. Such challenges have been turned to man and motivate him for adoption of Sufi order which is practically useful for individual and collective fractions of the society. This paper explores theoretical and practical issues of modern man in the light of *Kashf-ul-Mahjoob* keeping touch to peace that is hidden in each man to bring on the surface of the society.

The paper has three major sub topics to meet the comprehensive finding of this study. First part discovers sociological perception of Sufi order, second throws light on sociological practices of Sufi order in contemporary society and third guides with the heading: sociological motives of Sufi order in the light of *Kashf-ul-Mahjoob* to promote peace in the society. Sufi order means one path and Sufi discipline from spiritualism and Islamic mysticism. It has a huge syllabus to work and spiritual practices varies according to the spiritual approach to divine destination.

Sociological Perception of Sufi Order

Sociology is a part of social sciences that studies the human culture, behavior and practices which were adopted by human society. In the sense of study, sociological perceptive is defined as the systematic study of human practices laid by the society. Sufi order is a general social pattern base upon religion; Islam. Society and religion have been evaluated with each other by the scientists and philosophers.

Society and Religion

Society is an amalgam of human groups while religion guides humanity to its salvation forever. Religion is also a strong motive of the society to drive it to the God and gods according to human mind. Human salvation does not lie on physics only but it also covers metaphysics according to spiritual rules of each religion. Religion guides society to the salvation with strong pattern and discipline to get metaphysical destination being divine motives. That religion has been largely represented in both literature and practice. Literature provides seeding regulation and practical knowledge with strong doctrinal foundation.

Religion; *al-Dīn* a Natural part of Human Life

According to Muslim scholars, *Al-Dīn* is a natural part of human life. In this regard, some researchers in history of Religions are of the view that religion is an important factor in human life. Not a single human group had ever been free of it, even if they had been primitive people. Religious thought has always been there in human mind, and they claim that religion is a

phenomenon of the society and society has never been without it.¹ So these thoughts are not in negation of Muslim view point and do not negate Islam as well. Because according to the Holy Qur'an (*al-Bāqrah*2: 31), the first human being (Hazrat Adam) was bestowed with religious matters.

In fact, *dīn* also means *Fitr* h; nature and quality. "*Fitr* h is the pattern according to which God has created all things. It is God's manner of creating, God's Tradition or S^lnnat Allah"² by the reference of Qur'ān.

“فَاقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ”³

“So set thou thy face steadily and truly to the Faith: Allah's handiwork according to the pattern on which He has made mankind: No change in the work by Allah: that is the standard Religion”.

At this place, *dīn* is meant as nature and quality. It is Allah's pattern for the creation of mankind which remains the same. This is called the standard *Dīn* (Religion).

According to this *Ayah*, Muslims believe that God has given nature to man to recognize his Creator and worship Him that is *al-Dīn* (religion). The idea becomes clear, when it is described that *Dīn* and Islam are same. “Both *dīn* and *aslāma* are mutual correlates in the nature of man (*fītrāh*). Man's purpose is to do ‘*ibādah*’ to God, and his duty is obedience (*tā‘ah*) to God, which conforms with his essential nature (*fītrah*) created for him by God”.⁴ This is an Islamic description about religion; *Al-Dīn*, as a natural part of human life.

Role of Religion; *al-Dīn*, in the Society:

It has been observed that religious thought is among human requirements. Human being is a social animal. According to Muslim Scholars, a society can only flourish when its pillars have cooperation between them, and this cooperation becomes complete with Law and this law; *Sharī‘ah*, is enforced by the *Sultan*, or the Ruler.⁵ So, only religion (*al-Dīn*) guides man to the formation of the best society.

Ghazālī⁶ has stressed on different aspects of religion as they are made for achievement of both personal and collective goodness. So much so that religion (*Islam*), even with its minor affairs of day to day life, provides best foundation for the betterment of society. According to Ibn-Hazm, religious laws (*Sharī‘ah*) are only for purification of human beings and for removal of social evils. Ibn-Khaldūn⁷, who is a great Muslim sociologist, says that, by religion, Allah Almighty has preferred social matters and collective attitudes and dealings. For this guidance, *Sharī‘ah* was revealed. Human's purpose is his deputation to vice-gerency and not material greed and goals.⁸

Because *al-Dīn* is a name to worship and serve to God with sincere, according to Qur'ān:

قُلْ إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ⁹

“Say: verily, I am commanded to serve God with sincere devotion”

It is a great thing when a man gets into the attitude of humble devotion to God. Furthermore, this whole set up becomes integral part of the society, and it is called 'the role of religion; *Al-Dīn* in society'. This view point about religion according to Muslim scholars shows that religion has three aspects; doctrines (*Imān*), rituals (*Ibadāt*) and morals (*Khulq*). By applying these aspects, morals (*Khulq*) are key foundation of the Sufi order in the society. Although the first both are also integral part of Tasawuf and Sufi order.

Sufi Order and Contemporary Society

Society goes to right and wrong chose way according to its own selection but Sufi order leads to right direction with its strong discipline comprised with good morals for welfare of the society. Generally in Islamic history, this characteristic of the Islamic tradition has been existed as al-tariqah ila'Llah, literally the path towards God (Allah), and later on, in the second Islamic century, by the name of Sufism that has etymological meaning in literature. That although Islamic spirituality is also to be found in various forms outside of organized Sufism.¹⁰ Then it has grown to the more divisions and branches of the Tasawuf in their own orders and discipline, each is called Sufi Order or literally in Urdu “Silsalah”.

Because of the importance of these Turuq (plural of tariqah) and Salasul (plural of silsalah) just with the name of Sufi orders became famous in the history of Islam cannot be exaggerated. The revival of Islamic society from within over the centuries has usually been talented by the people who have followed the Sufi order, by the great Sufis such as Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazzali or later Shaykh Ahmad Sirhaindi in India and many others. After their late times, these orders have been developed and spread to the non-Arabian nations joining them with fulfill of their religious need keeping in the society. Even the Hanabali jurist and reformer Ibn-e-Taymiyyah was a member of the Qadiriyyah Order¹¹. Islamic societies promoted Sufi orders according to their spiritual and regional approach. The emphasis on personal and emotional religious experience in the society by a Sufi order made it enormously popular among the masses and further led to new forms of religious expressions that lead to new sub division of a Sufi order. The author of *Kashf-ul-Mahj^{1b}*; honourable Sufi Ali bin Uthman Hujwairi, al-Jullabi (RA) followed Sufi order “Junaidiah” and kept himself in the discipline of his Shaikh Abu al-fadal bin Hasan Khatli (RA).

Sufi Order in *Kashf-ul-Mahjoob*

Kashf-ul-Mahjūb is a prominent and comprehensive book of Islamic mysticism and Tasawuf. Ali bin Uthman al-Hujwairi wrote this book with the special guidance of followers of Sufi orders and for the students of Islamic Mysticism. Syed Hujwair also stresses on this point in his book to give answer to Abu Sa'eed Al-hujwiri against his question about the true meaning of the path of Sufism and the nature of the stations of the Sufis considering discipline of Sufi orders: "Nowadays true spiritualism is as rare as the Philosopher's stone (kibrit-i-ahmar); for it is natural to seek the medicine that fits the disease, and nobody wants to mix pearls and coral with common remedies."¹² This impression of the *Kashf-ul-Mahjūb* attracts not only Muslim Sūfīy but also non-Muslim mystical and Orientalist personalities to spend their time for translation and research to make it useful and beneficiary for contemporary society. Professor Nichololson is one of the good writers from Orientalists, who translated this book into English language and to be true he has accomplished this feat in the excellent manner which this book deserves. Pir Muhammad Karam (RA) also commented with such words in his *Muqaddamah* on *Kashf-ul-Mahjūb* to irrigate modern and contemporary society by this mystical literature. "A great and weighty reason of *Kashf-ul-Mahjūb* being popular as an eternal guidance in the present materialistic age when practically everyone is involved in mad race of grabbing wealth and material is that this book has inspired and awakened the conscience and spirit of research of truth among a large group of people have engaged themselves in the research and publishing *Kashf-ul-Mahjūb*. This work is in a befitting manner with neat and tidy get up and vying with one another in the dissemination of message of spiritual blessing which the book contains."¹³ That whole work on *Kashf-ul-Mahjūb* from Muslims and non-Muslims exists with mystical background to draw the lines for followers of Islamic mysticism. It purifies this system and all Sufi orders running and working in the world. *Kashf-ul-Mahjūb* does force the Sufis to follow the discipline of Shari'ah because of their uprising in the spiritual way.

Sociological Practices of Sufi Order in the Light of *Kashf-ul-Mahjūb*

Knowledge exclusively grows in the human mind but there is dedication in the society which is strengthened by social development not in single unit of humanity. *Kashf-ul-Mahjūb* puts this foundation to advance the man and society in growth with spiritual improvement and locates many examples and practices of Sufi Shuyukh. This perception is derived from Quranic verses and Hadith literature modifying with historical stories and poetry of leader of Sufi orders.

Sufi Order and Human Soul

Man has a dual nature; he is both body and soul. He is at once physical being and spirit.¹⁴ God taught him the names of everything. By the names we infer that it means the knowledge (*al-'ilm*) of everything (*al-ashy*)”.¹⁵ The knowledge does not exist in the body without will of God. The Divine power moves the universe to serve humanity. It is also the reality that the knowledge and religion are natural correlates in the nature of man that is the original nature (*al-fitrah*) in which God has created him. The original purpose of human creation is to know and to serve God. Man's duty is obedience of God which conforms to his essential nature created for him by God. Man was rewarded knowledge with different approaches and natural to identify the things and essence. With this diversity, God has equipped him with the powers and faculties of right vision and apprehension.¹⁶ He indicated to him the right and the wrong with respect to the course of action. The human being is created “in the best of moulds”, but without true faith and good works he is worse than the lowly beasts.¹⁷ The man takes one direction to choice for the better or bad. God Almighty shows the right guidance to satisfy his soul when human soul considers the direction of *al-Nafs-ul-mutmainnah*. These discussions and lessons are commanded to the human souls by confident teacher. This teacher guides Sufi to compete the human challenges in the society such discussions are managed by a Sufi order with Sufi Syllabus.

Kashf-ul-Mahj^{LB} describes such Sufi orders and disciplines to guide not only human body but also human soul. Ali Hujwairi wrote different meaning of Tasswuf, Tazkiah, Sufism and other words to present the existence of Sufi order. The literature of *Kashf-ul-Mahj^{LB}* excites man to stand his soul just for will of Allah Almighty and eradicate human ego that is guided by satanic power to destruction and self down fall. In this regard, human soul wants to adopt good manners in following of Sufi order as disciplined with God and Human rights. With the implementation of this syllabus and system of Sufi order, human soul has been granted divine satisfaction and self-salvation that is a high destination to look and to practice in whole human life.

Discipline and Way out of Sufi Order

Kashf-ul-Mahj^{LB} provides complete discipline to face spiritual challenges in Sufi life. Sufi lives in the society and keeps himself apart from the society. He gets principles to fulfill the creed as faithful of God and does not believe in a reason or cause which makes him weak in his faith and creed but believes in Allah and he does continuously extra practices to become near to Him. To fulfill the human rights, Sufi passes his time to adopt and apply good manner with the judgment of Divine virtues uplift man to high

goal with giving honour to humanity. Dignity and self-esteem are preferred in Sufi Order being human quality which empowers man to progress in spiritual way without any greed and material life. Sufi has lesson of “Die before you die.” in the words of Holy Prophet (PBUH). The Prophet (PBUH) also reminded his Companions of the immortality of the human soul, Allah’s judgment of human actions and of the eternal consequences of our life and actions on earth.¹⁸ With this guidance, Sufi strictly depends on Divine Power keeping spiritual relation with His God and escaping from materialistic life, although in the physical life. In Sufi Order, this is body-soul conflict. Sufi learns to reject all commands delivered by physical way of body and tries to fulfill the guidance of soul with virtues and good manners. Such way was modified by *Kashf-ul-Mahjūb* with strong words: “among men good manners consist in the observance of virtue; as regard religion they consist in the observance of the apostolic custom (Sunnah) and as regards love they consist in the observance of respect (hurmat).¹⁹” Sufi discipline is nothing without Quran and Sunnah. Sayid al-Hujwairi stressed to imply such discipline on Sufies for spiritual promotion. He stated that in matter of conduct the observance of discipline is the result of reverence for the object of desire and reverence for God and His ordinances springs from fear of God (*taqwā*). This is actual human growth to touch Divine Will with all efforts keeping in the society. On behalf of *taqwā*, Divine grants and blessings cover men who do not ignore the discipline.

Sociological Motives in the Light of *Kashf-ul-Mahjoob*

Husn-ul-Akhlāq is the sociological motives that are also part of Sufi order to keep men in the society or right way which was granted by Allah Almighty. Syad hujwairi explained it with light of Haidith: “Good manners are part of faith” (Tarimzi: 283) and in next *Hadith Qudsi* “My Lord corrected me and gave me an excellent correction”. Good Manners and excellent virtues guided human development with positive sense to the right way in the society. With this sense, sociological motive invites men to create peace in the society. These are the motivations by *Kashf-ul-Mahjūb* and more than one third literature of the book assigns these motives.

Satisfaction (*radhā*)

Satisfaction is a state of human body. Man struggles to satisfy himself mentally by different human practices. These practices create strong relations with God when it grants satisfaction to human mind. In this regard, satisfaction is a primary motive for the relationship with God. Sayed Ali Hujwairi narrated in *Kashf-ul-Mahjūb* that the ‘Nature of Satisfaction’ with its kinds keeping it as a station of the man by which he progresses to further ranks with divine promotion. He said,

Satisfaction is of two kinds: (a). the satisfaction of God with Man and (b). the satisfaction of Man with God.²⁰

He argued with detail in both kinds of satisfaction as basic need of humanity and satisfaction plays a pivotal role to promote spiritual status of humanity even it becomes strong motive to arrive in the realm of God. Satisfaction of God opens those ways which grant human an approach to choose right way to the will of God. The first kind of satisfaction is preferred upon second because satisfaction of man does not exist without satisfaction of God.

Preference (ٲٲٲٲٲ)

With the reference of a verse²¹, in *Kashf-ul-Mahjٲٲ*, the preference was realized to stress the divine guidance to the humanity. Preference seeds in the society high values without any recognition and nomination of faith, cult and creed. It excites man to get will of God by the service of humanity that motivates to accept other's existence as he or she is in the society. It overwhelmingly brings near among themselves with tolerance and harmony for peacebuilding in the society. In depth, the preference teaches man to favour other in company and friendship. In next step, man should prepare himself for preference in love, not only with his chosen people but also with lay man who he does not know him. The true nature of preference consists in maintaining in particular. The true nature of preference consists in maintain the rights of the person with whom one associates and in subordinating one's own interest to the interest of one's friend, and in taking trouble upon one's self for the sake of promoting his happiness.²² Sayed Hujwairi has motivated new Sufis with sociological and ethical pattern of religion as classical and traditional realm of Sufism but it can be enhanced in contemporary society. Those methods can be applied for the betterment of contemporary society in modern time. The sociological perception of Sufi order has also guideline to provoke modern if he thinks sincerely to choose the will of God. Such situation dos the work in the society to keep it with the harmony, non-violence and human motivation.

Love

Love with every one is a basic lesson of Sufi order that is described with Quranic verses and Hadith tradition in *Kashf-ul-Mahjٲٲ*. With exploring of its etymological meaning, Syad Hajwairi said: “

Mahabbat (Love) is said to be derived from ٲٲٲٲٲ, which are seeds that fall to the earth in the desert. The name ٲٲٲ (love) was given to such desert seeds (ٲٲٲ), because love is the source of live just as seeds are the origin of plants²³.

He narrated the word love with different rational perception applied in the society to understand its grace and depth for acquiring motivational relation among both lines. Love is primary and prime motive of the humanity which excites not only man but also whole society from its existence to perfection and salvation. With the kind of love, he described that the real love goes to its own central or existing point that is a Creator of humanity

because love returns to its seeding point. *Kashf-ul-Mahj^{1b}* stresses that Love grows step by step to the destination for merging or meeting place. Original love with the Creator does not die from the society but it draws its reflection on the minds and hearts of the people. This leads to big social phenomena in the society which spreads among the people for their betterment with Sufi order.

Liberality (*J^{1d}*) and Generosity (*sakh⁷*)

Sufi order teaches the humanity to spend time in the universe with techniques and good morals to interact with each other on human bases. *Kashf-ul-Mahj^{1b}*, being code of social life with Islamic ethical system, exits the people to adopt such good qualities those are attributes of Allah Almighty. With this practice, society will develop itself on the bases of coexistence and mutual tolerance. Regarding religious discussion, Siyyed Hujwairi said:

“in the opinion of theologian, liberality (*j^{1d}*) and generosity (*sakh⁷*), when regarded as human attributes, are synonymous; but God, although He is called liberal (*Jaw^{7d}*), is not called generous (*Sakh¹*), because He has not called Himself by the latter name, nor is He so called in any Apostolic Tradition²⁴”.

That excites human mind to adopt Divine attributes for getting good status in the society and Divine will for inner salvation. It creates harmonious atmosphere in the society to establish mutual ethical and cooperative social tools enhancing tolerance, good dealing and peace. Hujwairi puts down the moral philosophy among society to deliver very important techniques with the historical stories of mystical leaders of Sufi orders from different chains. At the end, he connects the story to the lesson for social guidance. Such perception has a motive on human basis establishing peace for others such as he likes for himself.

Hunger

Hunger is considered in the society as expression of negativity because it does not improve human motions and status in its zeal. It destroys human inner and power to stand for competitive challenges in the society but Siyyad Hujwairi evaluates it with divine guidance with pattern of positive value and non-affective for human body as surviving in the society. He highlights its uprightness and moral benefits with the logical and medical way enhancing its human need in serving of body. He narrates that hunger is an affliction to the body; it illumines the heart and purifies the soul and leads the spirit into the presence of God²⁵. It means hunger is not only productive but also it is constructive for human promotion in this world and salvation in hereafter. It refers to creation of divine system which has not negative perception as applying on the society.

Rules of Human Activities

Human actions promote the ability of work and to learn in the society. That demands to get guidance and training for its right direction emphasized by Qurʾān, Sunnah and other traditional way. Islam has arranged them to motivate and excite humanity for its practicing due to beneficiary for humanity. Siyyed Ali Hujwairi illuminates these concepts with such words:

“You must know that the seemliness and decorum of all religious and temporal affairs depends on rules of discipline and that every station in which the various classes of mankind are placed has its own particular rule. Among men good manners consist in the observance of virtue as regards religion they consist in the observance of the Apostolic custom and as regards love they consist in the observance of respect²⁶.”

In the universe the man is honored by God, it is impossible that human creature does not adopt the virtues and good manners and it remains honorable in the sight of God. Because of its enormity and greatness is to follow the Apostolic tradition and Sunnah that develops its nature with harmonious and tolerative motions surviving in the society. Therefore, men are bound to follow up the rules of obedience to God, that happens sometimes with effort and sometimes without effort. These are applied on the body being labeled good and effective values in sociological perceptive. It changes the society with appreciation of the good manners.

Hujwairi mentions such manners in his book with detail by applying them on the human body. A man may be a bad person in the society without adopting such virtues and he may be declared good because of applying such rules upon him. The rules consist upon different aspects of human life such like traveling, eating, walking, sleeping and each human movement in the society.

Conclusion

Society does not exist in the world without humanity and man grows with the virtues and good manners to get salvation and succeeded life. Religion commands humanity for the development of poise society that is mission of Sufi order. It elaborates human nature with Apostolic tradition to come to Divine guidance for the social development. Human development urges such guidance to manage all aspects of life with the tools and techniques to run human activities. Islam did not ignore the social aspect of human life but it awards him with the rules and principles to set his manners in the images of virtues focusing his characters, actions and dealing others.

The book of Siyyed Ali Hujwairi; *Kashf-ul-Mahjūb* is an encyclopedia of rules and discipline of Islam according to the pattern of Sufi syllabus for promotion of human life. It guides human nature to develop itself on the Divine basis with the worship of God and good manners. *Kashf-ul-Mahjūb* is a sociological perception of Sufi order which draws lines to

humanity to keep him under the Divine will but make human society with mutual understanding and fruiting merits converging it in Islamic society.

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