

An Appraisal of Early Tasawwuf Literature

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Abstract

Tasawwuf is an acclaimed spiritual tradition of Islam, which is mostly based upon intuitive knowledge about reality and prophetic way of soul refinement through the principle of self-purification. The early practitioners of Tasawwuf, like al-Muhasibi, in second century hijra, codified their teachings in the form of books, which have been passed on to the later generations. Some of them have survived till today. By the fourth century AH, the tradition of compiling books on Islamic Tasawwuf, evolved as an important movement, after passing through various stages. Great Sufis such as Abu Nasr Sarraj, Abu Bakr Kalabazi and Abu Talib al-Makki compiled comprehensive books on Tasawwuf. Tasawwuf flourished in the middle ages, especially and some ever-lasting books on Tasawwuf have appeared in Arabic, Persian and other languages. The following appraisal discusses systematically compiled pioneering books of Sufi literature, which contributed to flourish Tasawwuf, at the global level.

Key Words: *Tasawwuf, Spirituality, Sufi, Taqwa Principle, Morality & Self-Purification*

Introduction:

Throughout Islamic history, Tasawwuf has produced a thriving body of scholarly writings full of intuitive intellect, particularly during its "Golden Age." Some of the books still survive and are preserved, while few have vanished in the darkness of history. In this regard, it is acknowledged that Kitab Ur Raayat, a book written by Harith al-Muhasibi (781-857 AD), is the earliest genuine literary work in the realm of Tasawwuf. Some of the other, authentic Sufi literature, coming under discussion, in this survey are mentioned as under:

1. Kitab al-Raayat by Harith al- Muhasibi
2. Kitab al-Sidq by Abu Saeed Al-Kharaz
3. Rasail-e-Junaid by Hazrat Juanid Baghdadi

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4. Kitab al-Muwaqif by Imam Nafri
5. Kitab al-Taarruf by Abu Bakr al-Kalabadhi
6. Qut al-Qulub by Abu Talib al-Makki
7. Risala al-Qushayria by Abd al-Karim al-Qushayri
8. Kitab al-Luma by Abu Nasr Saraj al-Tusi
9. Kashaf al-Mahjub by Usman al-Hajveri

***Kitab Ur Raayat* by Harith al- Muhasibi**

Al-Muhasibi (781-857 AD), a teacher of the renowned Sufis Junayd al-Baghdadi (830-910 AD) and Sirri Saqti (776-867 AD), founded the Baghdad School of Islamic philosophy. He belonged to the Arab Anazzah clan and went by the full name Abu Abdullah Harith bin Asad bin Abdullah al-Anizi al-Basri. Al-Muhasibi was one of the creator of Sufi Ideology and had an impact on many theologians after him, including al-Ghazali. He wrote on theology and Tasawwuf, nearly 200 of his works¹, including Kitab al-Khalwa and Kitab al-Ri'aya li-huquq Allah being the most important ones.

Al-Muhasibi belongs to the first class. He is an excellent scholar of ostensible sciences, sciences of principles, matters and indications. He is teacher of the people of Baghdad, prominent shaykh and author of many books.² He was the Sheikh of Baghdad in his time.³

The complete name of this book is *al-Ri'aya li-huquq Allah w al-qiyam biha* which means how to observe and abide by the rights of God. The peculiarity of this book is that it is the oldest of all the books on Tasawwuf available in printed form today. The author died in 243 AH. It is speculated that he may have written this book twenty-five years before his death, when his physical health would have been very good, for such a large and lofty foundation could not be written in weak health. In every case, the period of its authorship is said to be between 220 AH and 225 AH.⁴

A study of this book can prove that in the early days Islamic Tasawwuf was based on the Qur'an and Hadith and its purpose was nothing but self-purification. Also, it was not until the third and fourth centuries that non-Arabic or Iranian ideas were mixed in Islamic Tasawwuf.

There are sixty-two chapters in the book. Apart from the Qur'an and Hadith, the author has often used the instructions, narrations and relics of the great Companions (R.A) of the Prophet (PBUH). The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) and his blessed

name is mentioned at 135 places throughout the book. There are 23 Ahadith narrated by Abdullah Ibn Abbas, 22 Traditions by Abdullah Ibn Masood, 14 narrations by Hazrat Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq, 35 by Hazrat Umar Farooq, 9 narrations by Hazrat Ali Bin Abu Talib, 8 hadith from Hazrat Ayesha Sidiqah and 3 by Hazrat Fatima. (R.A)

Al-Muhasibi's work *Al-Ri'ayah* contains his doctrine of the soul. His thesis was referred to as the "science of hearts." The soul is symbolised as the "heart." It contains the nafs, the "psyche," "self," or "ego," as well as the conscience (*sirr*), the soul's spiritual core. The nafs is required for human survival, its self-centeredness weakens the soul's spiritual character.⁵

Al-Muhasibi refers to the egocentric soul as the "commanding nafs" by using a Quranic phrase (*al-nafs al-ammara*). Self-examination is the key to controlling the "commanding nafs" (*muhasaba*). The "commanding nafs" becomes the "self-blaming nafs" through introspection (*al-nafs al-lawwama*). At this point, one realizes the harm that has been done to oneself and others as a result of letting the nafs rule one's life. The "self-blaming nafs" is yet nonetheless egocentric. Its excessive self-criticism can result in self-hatred and even death.

The "nafs at peace" (*al-nafs al-mutmainna*), the third and ultimate level of self-awareness, can only be attained by completely transcending the ego. Because the soul has transcended the human ego and is now under the sovereignty of God in this ultimate stage, it is at peace and has been spiritually cleansed. Al-Muhasibi's maxim, "Be God's or be nothing," has this connotation.⁶

Imam Al-Muhasibi was focused on heart cleansing and psychological insight. As a result, he would probe his pupils' motivations and tendencies in an effort to comprehend them and help those who were naughty, after which he would produce writings that were solely the product of spiritual intuition rather than inspiration from the written word.

Because of this, some academics of his day harshly condemned him and advised readers to avoid reading his writings. For example, when asked about al-Muhasibi and his writings, Abu Zur'ah Al-Razi responded: "Beware of these books... Innovations and deviances. Be obliged by what is transmitted. For verily, you'll find in it what will avail you from these books." It was then said to him, "But there is useful consideration (*'ibrah*) in these books." He replied, "Whoever doesn't have useful consideration in

the Book of Allah... Has it reached you that Malik, Thauri, Auzai, or any of the Imams wrote books about insidious notions (khatarat) and mischievous whisperings (wasawis) and these things? . . . , "How quick are people to innovations!"⁷

People who are familiar with Imam Al-Muhasibi's teachings would recognize right away that Imam Abu Zurah's views unequivocally demonstrate the intolerance of traditional scholars.

Al-Muhasibi's bidah (innovation) is that he didn't adopt the same strategy as others; it was something neither the Prophet nor his companions did. Therefore, not every bidah is wrong.

Imam Ahmad (780-855 AD) disagreed with Al-Muhasibi... attacked Al-Muhasibi as a result of the writings he published in opposition to some heretical Islamic groups, such as those who deny the existence of the divine decision (Qadariyah). The issue was that he would extensively discuss or at the very least allude to some of the defenses made by the fringe organizations in his books. So that they wouldn't be exposed to the heretical beliefs, he barred people from reading Al- Muhasibi's books.^{8 & 9}

Kitab al-Sidq by Abu Saeed Al-kharraz

Abu Saeed Ahmad Ibn Isa Al-Kharraz (d. 284 A.H) is one of the famous Sufis of the third century AH. Unfortunately, details of his life are just vaguely known. The narrators, as usual, have attributed many miracles to him, but none of them is proved...the predominant thing is that he died in 284. Although the exact date of his death is unknown, it was most likely between 279 A.H (890 AD) and 286 (899 AD).¹⁰

It is known from the narrations that Kharaz's uncles used to meet Dhul Nun Misri (796-859 AD), Bishr Ibn Harith (767-850 AD), Sirri Saqti (776-867 AD) and Al-Taji and all these pious men respected him very much. He may have written several books, but so far only Al-Kitab al-Muddaq is available in printed form after Harith al-Mahasibi's oldest book of Tasawwuf i.e. the book Al-Riaya li Huquq Allah.

Maulana Jami (1414-1492 AD) has written in Nafhat-ul-Ans that the name of Kharaz is Ahmad ibn Isa, the title is Kharaz, and his hometown was Baghdad¹¹.

Sheikh Faridud-Din Attar has mentioned in his Tazkira-ul-Awliya about him that his title was Lisan al-Sidq and Lisan al-Tasawwuf. It is also narrated from him that one

night I saw in a dream that two angels came to me and asked what is Sidq (truth)? I replied, "Al-Wafa 'al-Ahwad (الوفاء بالعهود) means fulfilling the promise. They said sadaqat means you told the truth. Then they went to sky."¹²

Kitab al-Sidq (The Book of Truth):

The beginning of Sheikh's book is in the form of questions and answers, so the first question is what is truth? He himself has answered that truth is a word that includes all meanings. It is then briefly described and then explained in detail. In short, it is stated that a person who seeks salvation in the Hereafter must first attain it through three principles:

The first principle is sincerity, so Allah says:

{ اعبد الله مخلصا له الدين الا الله الدين الخالص¹³ }

So worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion. Unquestionably, for Allah is the pure religion.

Also said:

{ فادعوا الله مخلصين له الدين¹⁴ }

So invoke Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion,

The second principle is truth. Allah says:

{ يا أيها الذين امنوا اتقوا الله وكونوا مع الصادقين¹⁵ }

O you who believe! Be mindful of Allah, and be among the truthful.

The third principle is patience. So Allah says:

{ واصبروا ان الله مع الصابرين¹⁶ }

The meanings of these three words are included in all the deeds. No action is perfect without these three, and these three principles themselves are bound together in such a way that no any principle is perfect without the others, for example, sincerity cannot be perfect without truth and patience, and patience cannot be perfect without sincerity and truth- .

After this comprehensive answer, the truth is explained in detail. Therefore, the following chapters have been established for this purpose:

1. Sidq fi al-Ikhlās (صدق في الاخلاص)
2. Sidq fi al-Sabr (صدق في الصبر)
3. Sidq fi al-Adab (صدق في الانابة)
4. Sidq fi al-marfat al-Nafs (صدق في معرفة النفس)
5. Sidq fi al-Iblees (صدق في معرفة ابليس)
6. Sidq fi al-Waraa (صدق في الورع)
7. Sidq fi al-Zuhd (صدق في الزهد)
8. Sidq fi al-Halal al-manafi (صدق في الحلال المنافي)
9. Sidq fi al-al-Tawakal (صدق في التوكل)
10. Sidq fi al-Khauf min Allah (صدق في الخوف من الله)
11. Sidq fi al-Hayya (صدق في الحياء)
12. Sidq fi al-maarifat (صدق في معرفة)
13. Sidq fi-Uns Billah (صدق في الانس بالله)
14. Sidq fi-al-Muhabat (صدق في المحبة)
15. Sidq fi al-Riza (صدق في الرضاء)
16. Sidq fi Shauq ilallah (صدق في الشوق الى الله)

In each chapter, the Sheikh has adhered to the fact that first he has recorded one or more verses of the Quran Al-Hakim in support of his claim, and then he has quoted one or more hadiths and proved his claim in the light of them.

A study of this book makes it very clear that true Islamic Tasawwuf is based on the Quran and Hadith and the teachings of the Companions. This book's veracity is questioned. Some academics, though, think it's real. In fact, there is considerable internal evidence that seems to prove its validity beyond a reasonable doubt.

The scholars who doubt believe that this book is not specifically mentioned in any Sufi or bibliographical authority books. Only one copy of the work had survived, and it was written by Ismail ibn Sawdakin (d. 646/ 1248), a well-known student of Ibn 'Arabi

(1165-1240 AD). Therefore, it is acceptable to speculate that the book was a closely guarded secret of the Sufis who shared it privately with one another without disclosing it to people.

The text is clear but not without faults, the most prevalent of which is the frequent deletion of the particle in interrogative forms. Despite being aware of these flaws, Ismail ibn Sawdakin makes no attempt to remedy them, therefore they must be attributed to the archetype from which he drew and probably to the author. But the text is never ambiguous or its meaning uncertain.¹⁷

Sheikh Junaid Baghdadi & his writings:

It is uncertain when exactly Abu-l-Qsim al-Junayd ibn Muhammad ibn al-Junayd al-Khazzaz al-Qawriri was born, however estimates place his birth between 210 and 215 AH.¹⁸ He might have died between 296 and 298 AH (908 to 910 CE). Al-Junayd descended from Persians. After becoming an orphan as a young kid, his uncle Sirri Saqti¹⁹ reared him. His teachers included Ab Thawr, Ab 'Ubayd, Harith al-Mu'hasibi, and Sari ibn Mughallas.²⁰

One of the most well-known of the early Islamic saints was Junayd of Baghdad, a Persian²¹ mystic. In the spiritual history of several Sufi groups, he plays a key role. Throughout his career, Junayd was a prominent player in the development of Sufi ideology and lectured in Baghdad. Junayd was frequently referred to as the "Sultan" due to his significance in Sufi theology.²²

Books of Junaid:

Shaykh Junaid (830-910 AD) was not a multi-author like his teacher Mahasbi. Ibn Nadeem has mentioned two of his books i.e 1. Kitab Imsal ul Quran, 2. Kitab ur Rasail. Abu Nasr Saraj has mentioned in his book Kitab al-Lumma some excerpts from Junaid's book "Sharh Shatiyat Abi Yazid Al Bastami". Hajweri mentions his fourth book, Tasheeh al-Irada, in Kashf al-Mahjoob, but today only two of his books have reached us: one is Rasa'il Junaid and the other book is a few of his Rasail which are included in Haliyat-ul-Awliya.²³

Kitab al-Mawaqif, Biography of Author by: Muhammad ibn Abdul Jabbar ibn al-Hasan al-Nafri. Much about Imam Nafri (d. 965 CE), is unknown. He is among Sufis of the 4th century AH. According to Haji Khalifa, he died in 354 AH. The

circumstances of his life are very little known and all his commentaries are provided by Afifuddin Al-Talsani.

All the commentators agree that his correct name was Abdul Jabbar Ibn Al-Hasan, but there is a difference of opinion. Hazrat Mohiyyud-Din Ibn Arabi has mentioned his name at four places in the conquests of Makkah (Futuh-at-e-Makkah), but he has written only Nafri everywhere. At one place, Ibn Arabi writes that Nafri is the author of Al-Mawaqif and undoubtedly the man was devoted to God.²⁴

It is reported that, the person who compiled the book Al-Mawaqif was the son of Nafri. Sheikh did not write any book with his hand. He used to write his revelations on different pieces of paper. His son compiled this book having collected them. Sheikh was always busy wandering in the deserts and forests; he never stayed at one place. He didn't like meeting people at all. If anyone met him, he would not reveal his actual status. Apart from Al-Mawaqif, Al-Mukhatibat is also attributed to him and this book is also a collection of his sufi revelations.²⁵

Author of al-Mawaqif has written: "Waqfa" terming it as the place where the seeker would go out of his self and live in God. Just as a fish stays in the water, and the story of the mind ends, so the two do not remain, just as iron falls into the fire and becomes fire. In the term of Nafri, the "Waqfa" does not mean the period of time which is well known as it is said that that work would be completed after some interval but here "Waqfa" means to pause or stay in divine being. There is no place above it as in the philosophy of Nafri, this is ascension of human.²⁶

One of the undiscovered mystics of the fourth century is Abdul Jabbar Niffari. His convoluted mystical writing is one factor in his invisibility. Al-Mawaqif, one of his most significant writings, is firsthand accounts of his mystical encounters.

Kitab al-Taarruf by Al-Kalabadi:

The full name is Abu Bakr Ibn Abi Ishaq Ibn Ibn Ibrahim Ibn Yaqub Al-Tajari Al-Kalabadi (d. 3 AH). Kalabad is the name of a neighborhood in the city of Bukhara. He lived & died in the same city in 3 AH i.e between 990 to 995 AH. His life is just vaguely known. Apart from Tasawwuf, he also mastered jurisprudence because at that time every famous Sufi was also a religious scholar. Kalabadhi studied Tasawwuf under Abu al-Husayn al-Farisi.

In addition to Kitab al-Tarruf, he also wrote commentaries on selected hadiths, entitled Bahr al-Fawaid fi Ma'ani al-Akhbar. But his entire fame hangs over Kitab al-

Tarruf. The book was accepted in his lifetime. This book is still considered authoritative in Sufia and its commentaries have been written in every age.²⁷

Kalabadhi's out of six/seven total works, two great works still remain in Arabic:

1. Ma'ani al-akhar, Bahr al-fawa'id. Brief moral interpretations of two hundred twenty two Hadiths
2. Kitab al-Taruf

The Kitab al-tarruf is main source of his reputation. Kalabadhi's book itself has 75 very small chapters, however there are a number of lengthy appendices. The Sahu ("sober") school of Sufi philosophy was promoted in the book, secondly and most importantly, it was also designed to reassure followers of traditional Islam that Tasawwuf was not against their beliefs. The second element was particularly crucial since Tasawwuf faced the possibility of being labelled a heretic.

Al-Kalabadhi must have felt the effects of this rather strongly. In his writings, he regularly alludes to Sufi Mansur al-Hallaj (858-922 AD) but never by name. "One of the great Sufis" is how he refers to him. Numerous significant statements from the first three hundred years of Islam are preserved in the book, which are still comprehensible to bookworms today.

There are seventy five chapters, divided into five parts:

- i) The excursus consists of one to four chapters. In these opening chapters, the author has given a preface on the subject of Tasawwuf in which he has explained the meaning and source of the word Sufi. According to him, the great Sufis were: Hazrat Ali R.A (599-661 AD), Hazrat Hassan R.A (625-670 AD), Hazrat Hussain R.A (626-680 AD), Hassan Basri (641-728 AD), Malik bin Dinar (d. 748), Fadhail bin Ayyaz (d. 803 AD) and Sufyan al-Thawri (716-778 AD), whose piety no one doubted. Finally, the author mentions the splendor that Islam enjoyed in the early centuries and laments the decline that had taken place in the author's time.
- ii) The second part consists of chapters 5 to 30, in which he has clearly stated the beliefs of Islam which all Sufis consider to be the orbit of faith. Their purpose in this statement is to prove that Tasawwuf as a system is within the realm of Islam, not outside. Sofia's beliefs are in complete harmony with Islam. They do not accept anything that is against the Qur'an and Hadith.
- iii) The third part consists of chapters 31 to 51, in which he has described the various conditions and places of the Sufis, such as fear, hope, love, patience and gratitude, etc.
- iv) The fourth part consists of chapters 52 to 63 which is an important part of this book. In it, he has penned the meaning of three terms of Sofia. He has made it clear that the

Sufis have coined these terms to express their heartfelt thoughts and esoteric observations. It has also been made clear that he has only explained the meaning of these terms but the spiritual observations themselves are indescribable. The nature of the situation cannot be described in words.

- v) The fifth part consists of chapters 64 to 75, in which he described the various manifestations of Tasawwuf and proved that only Sofia are Ahlullah (Divine people): It is an established fact that, after Qushayriya and Qutb al-Qulub, Kitab al-Ta'r'ruf is the most popular book in Arabic and is considered to be the most authoritative book. The reasons for its popularity are; the brevity has been kept in mind, that is, the river has been closed in a jar. The author has proved in this book that Tasawwuf is based on Qur'an and Hadith. None of its teachings are against Islamic law. That is why the author started the book with the basics of Islam.²⁸

No doubt, the treatise on which Abu Bakr Kalabadhi's fame is based is "kitab al-ta'arruf li-madhhab ahl al-tasawwuf," also known as "The Doctrine of the Sufis." It is significant because it is the earliest literature still in existence that attempts to bring Tasawwuf and traditional Islam into harmony. It was instantly regarded as authoritative and is regarded by Arabs, particularly Sufis, as the most priceless compilation on Tasawwuf.

The book gives, an overview of the meaning of the term "Sufi" and a list of famous Sufis; an explanation of the Islamic principles upheld by the Sufis; a discussion of the different "stations" of the Sufis, such as fear, hope, and love; the phrases they use to describe true mystical encounters, such as union with God; and a discussion of the various Sufi phenomena. He does appear to have been trained as a reporter of hadith, as the Indian author "Abd al-ayy al-Lakhnaw" (d. 1886) says, "he does seem to have been trained as a reporter of ḥadīth since at various place in the book, he mentions weak traditions."²⁹

Qut al Qulub by Abu Talib Al-Makki:

Abu Talib Muhammad ibn Ali al-Makki (d. 996 AD) was a hadith expert and renowned Sufi.³⁰ He was born in the early third AH/early ninth AD century. Al-Makki grew up in Makkah and received his education in hadith and the Qur'an from the orthodox communities of the scholars. One of first Al-Makki's orthodox instructors was Abu Sa'id ibn al-Arabi, who studied under the sober mystic Junayd of Baghdad.

Al-Makki relocated to Basra in 341 A.H., where he finished his education with other Sufis until seeking shelter in Baghdad. Al-Makki maintained a rigid asceticism for the entirety of his life and was well-known in Baghdad for his austere eating habits.³¹

Qut al Qulub, or the Sustenance of Hearts, also known as Qut al-qulub fi mu'amalat al-mahbub wa wasf tariq al-murid ila maqam al-tawhid, is considered to be the Al-Makki's most important book. It is a methodical investigation of Tasawwuf and the "knowledge of hearts."³²

Looking at the list of contents and summaries, it can be made clear that Qut al-Qulub is undoubtedly the encyclopedia of Tasawwuf and Shari'a. The biggest feature of this book is that it was written by a man who had mastered the science of hadith and jurisprudence before stepping into the path of Sufism, so he did not write anything in this great book in support of which there is no evidence from the Qur'an or hadith.

There are forty-eight chapters in it, but each chapter has several sub-chapters, so without exaggeration, there are hundreds of topics and issues in this book on which the author has expressed his views in the light of Qur'an and Hadith. Since this book was written in the middle of the fourth century AH, it is free from the influence of Ismaili, Qaramata and Zinadqa. There is nothing against the teachings of Ahl as-Sunnah. That is, it is the marquee of true Islamic Tasawwuf.

The third characteristic is that the author has very effectively explained the importance of moral purification. That is, Tasawwuf is in fact the name of moral purification and not the manifestation of miracles. That is why this book has had an impact on future Sufi literature and has been used by eminent scholars of Islam & Tasawwuf.

A close examination of the Qut reveals that al-Makki relied on weak traditions. In fact, he makes it very clear that he gives preference to favours flimsy tradition over the application of logic and analogies (qiyas). And according to him, weak tradition (al-hadith al-daeef) is superior to argument and analogy. Thus, that weak tradition may be regarded as genuine if that's not in conflict with the Qur'an and Sunna.³³

Tarikh Baghdad of Khatib al-Baghdadi (1002-1071 AD) records a critique on Qut al-Qulub, summary is as below:

“Muhammad b. Ali b. Atiyya, Abu Talib, generally known as al-Makki. He wrote a book which he entitled Qut al-Qulub in the language of the Sufis. He mentioned in it bad, forbidden things about the attributes (of God)... I was informed about him by Muhammad b. al-Muzaffar al-Khayyat and Abd al-Aziz b. 'Ali al-Azji; Abu Tahir Muhammad b. 'Ali b. al-Allaf: Abu Talib al-Makki was from the inhabitants of al-Jibal. He grew up in Makkah, he entered Basra after the death of Abul Hasan b. Salim and he affiliated himself to his (Ibn Salim) doctrines. He arrived in Baghdad and the people gathered around him (to listen) to his sermon. He spoke confusedly. It has been

recorded about it that he said: “Nothing is more hurtful to the creatures than the Creator”. The people accused him of heresy and rejected him. Al-Makki was prohibited from preaching in Jumada. Al-'Atiqi said: He was a pious man and devoted himself to worship, and he composed treatises on tawh'id.”³⁴

According to thirteenth-century historians like Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 597/1200), perspective of al-Makki on the veracity of traditions was a particular target of criticism. Ibn al-Jawzi wrote:

“Muhammad b. Ali b. Atiyya Abu Talib al-Makki who reported (traditions) on the authority of Ali b. Ahmad al-Masisi and Abu Bakr al-Mufid and others. Abd al-Aziz b. Ali al-Azji and others relate (tradition) from him. He was from the ascetics who devoted themselves to worship. Al-Atiqi says that he was a pious man and devoted himself to worship. He wrote a book which he called Qut al-Qulub in which he mentioned traditions which have no origin.”

Ibn al-Jawzi reiterates the same critiques and additional claims in another book of him: “Abu Talib al-Makki wrote Qut al-Qulub for them (Sufis). He mentioned in it false traditions and that which can not be traced back to its origin, on the subject of day and night prayers and other false traditions. He also mentioned in it corrupt faith. He repeated in it the saying "Some of the mukash'ifin say", and this is an idle saying. He also mentioned that some of the Sufis (claimed) that Allah Most Honoured and Glorified reveals Himself in this world to His saints.”³⁵

Kitab al-Luma by Abu Nasr Sarraj:

Abu Nasr Abd Allah ibn Al-Sarraj (d. 988 AD) was a Sunni sheikh and hermit born in Tus, Iran. Persian commentators have written that his title was Taus al-Faqra. Abu Nasr was a very orthodox Sunni. He made the Shariah sciences the basis of his writings. A study of Kitab al-Luma shows that he traveled to most of the major cities of the Islamic world and had discussions with the Sufis there. These cities include Basra, Baghdad, Damascus, Ramallah, Nishapur, Antioch, Cairo, Damiyat, Bastam, Tastar and Tabriz. He died in Rajab 3 AH. His important Kitb al-luma (Book of Light), which is regarded as an encyclopedia of the history of early Tasawwuf, is what made him most famous.³⁶

Sheikh Farid-ud-Din Attar has written in Tazkira-ul-Awliya that the virtues of Sheikh Waqt Abu Nasr Siraj are beyond description.³⁷

The fame of Sarraj rests with *Kitab al-Luma fil Tasawwuf*. It is one of the first surveys of *Tasawwuf*. The author in the book establishes *Tasawwuf* as a "genuine religious practise" before he enters into detailing the many modalities of knowing in *Tasawwuf*. His work is regarded as an encyclopedia for Sufi notions and sayings, as well as the history of Islamic *Tasawwuf* and the many Sufi ways of knowing.

With direct knowledge from 39 Sufi experts round about 200 Sufis, the book was a huge hit as one of the first "authoritative documentary" surveys.³⁸ In the book, Sarraj also aimed to show how *Tasawwuf* and traditional Sunni Islam may coexist.³⁹

A renowned Orientalist, Reynold A. Nicholson writes in the preface of translated work of *Kitab al Luma* that Nasr Sarraj had written *Kitab al Luma* on appeal of his friend as under:

"I wrote this book at the request of a friend (whose name he did not reveal) and my aim is to explain and prove the correct principles and rules of *Tasawwuf*." Let me say that these principles are in complete accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah and the followers of the Prophet and his companions are their goal.⁴⁰

In this book, the author presents his views and ideas about *Tasawwuf* through the teachings of the earlier Sufis. He has cited many elders and their writings from which an accurate knowledge of the gradual development of *Tasawwuf* can be gained. He has collected authoritative information on many different issues in this valuable work. Although the style is clear, there are many places that only mystics can enjoy.

The greatest and most prominent feature of this book is that Sarraj has written a chapter on Sufi method of deducing from the Quran and Hadith.⁴¹ Nicholson's critiques, narrates:

- i) Sarraj states that a friend, whose name he omits, asked him to write the *Kitab al-Luma*. He wrote it with the intention of laying out the true Sufi principles and demonstrating through argumentation how they are supported by the teachings of the Koran and Apostolic Traditions, involve imitating the Prophet and his Companions, and are in line with the religious practices of devout Muslims. As a result, the writing is debated and rueful.
- ii) Since the *Kitab al-Luma* discusses the author's views and conjectures about *Tasawwuf*, it is difficult to consider it as unique work.
- iii) He mostly sticks to recording and analyzing the words that his forebears had uttered or written, and he criticizes current writers for their pompous discourses. His reserve is appreciated from a historical perspective. The early growth of Islamic *Tasawwuf* is shown, but when extraordinary collection of materials he has assembled and organized is traced. These texts are mostly nowhere found.

- iv) Sarraj acquired his knowledge in part from books and in part from oral tradition, but the details he provides about his sources are far from exhaustive.⁴²

***Risala e al-Qushayriyya* by Abu al-Qasim Al-Qushayri:**

Al-Risala al-Qushayriyya fi 'Ilm al-Tasawwuf, most commonly known as al-Risala al-Qushayriyya (The Treatise of al-Qushayri), is one of the first full textbooks on the study of Tasawwuf, and was authored by scholar Abu al-Qasim al-Qushayri (986-1074 AD).⁴³

Imam Qusayri had written this treatise in 437 AH. The reason he gave for writing this book in his sermon is very strange. He says, in his time, the teachings of Tasawwuf were obliterated. The sheikhs who were his guides had passed away. There is intensity of greed and temptation among men. The prohibition of Sharia has been lifted from the hearts. The distinction between halal and haraam has disappeared. People are living in the fields of negligence. They are prone to lust.

That is why he, has written this book and in it has recorded the biography of some of the sheikhs of this method and have mentioned their manners, ethics, affairs and beliefs so that people can know the truth of real Tasawwuf.

His work may be divided as under: On the Shaykhs of This Way, is the first section. In which lives and teachings of eighty five Sufi saints have been included to manifest respect for the Divine Law, who had "defended and assisted Islam with religious evidences."

The second section provides an explanation of twenty eight terms used by Sufis along with an explanation of ambiguities. The last part and stage in an epistle of al-Qushayri, is Tasawwuf. The last station and state, model behaviour (adab), the Sufi's conduct and discipline toward his shaykh and fellow Sufis, is described. The Sufi shaykhs' ideas were "in conformity with Sunni doctrine on matters of the principles of religion (Usul al-Din)".⁴⁴

Eighty three biographies of previous Sufi gurus are included in the second half of the epistle, starting with the semi-legendary Ibrahim b. Adham (d. 162/778) and concluding with Ahmad al-Rudhbari (d. 369/960). But the biographies are not in chronological order. Stories of Sufis are mentioned as proof of their spiritual enlightenment instead of tales of prophets. Weak traditions are used in Risala.

***Kashf al-Mahjub* by Ali al-Hujwiri:**

Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Ali b. 'Uthman b. 'Ali al-Ghaznawi al-Jullabi al-Hujwiri, also known as Ali ibn Uthman al-Hujwiri alias Data Ganj Bux (1009-1072 AD) was an eleventh century Persian Islamic philosopher, theologian, and author. He wrote the *Kashf al-Mahjub*, the first Persian-language formal book on Tasawwuf.

Ali Hujwiri, a native of Ghazni, travelled extensively across the Ghaznavid Empire and gave sermons all throughout the Middle East. He lived in Baghdad before relocating to Lahore, where he made a great contribution to the propagation of Islam through his preaching. In his later years, Ali Hujwiri, a revered Sufi saint in the area, composed the *Kashf al-Mahjub*. Hujwiri passed away at Lahore in 1072 and was buried there as well.

The famed *Kashf al-mahjub*, which has been hailed as "the oldest formal treatise on Tasawwuf in Persian," was authored by Ali Hujwiri and is possibly his most well-known work (Unveiling of the Hidden). The book offers biographies of the most revered saints in Islamic history as well as an introduction to the numerous conventional Sufi traditions.⁴⁵

The sole piece of writing by Ali Hujwiri that has survived to this day is the *Kashf al-mahjub*.⁴⁶ With this exception, all of Ali Hujwiri's writings are gone. Reynold Nicholson presents a brief list of his unpreserved works, which included the following among others:

Diwan (poetry of Hajwiri), a collection of his poetry.⁴⁷ *Minhaj al-Din* (The way of the Religion), a work that includes thorough biography of the mystic and martyr Mansur al-Hallaj from the 10th century, as well as a detailed description of the Companions of Muhammad who Ali Hujwiri considered to be the forerunners of the Sufis (d. 922).⁴⁸ *Asrar al-khiraq wa 'l-maunat'*, A treatise on the woollen clothing used by the Sufis of his period.⁴⁹ An unnamed work that explains the sufi proverbs of mystic Mansur al- Hallaj.⁵⁰ *Kitab al-bayan li-ahl al-'iyan*, An essay on the understanding of the Sufi term annihilation.⁵¹

Kashf al-Asrar, A concise Persian manual on following the path of Tasawwuf in its entirety, translated with in-depth comments by al-Sheikh Syed Mubarik Ali Shah al-Gillani.

The earliest official treatise on Tasawwuf was the *Kashf al-Mahjub* (also known as "Revelation of the Hidden"). It was compiled by the Persian scholar al-Hujwiri in the eleventh century. Tasawwuf's comprehensive system, including its theories and rituals, is included in *Kashf al-Mahjub*.

By sharing his experiences, many mysticism-related debates and contemporary viewpoints are elucidated. The book is a part of al- Hujwiri's personality with its Persian-influenced philosophical speculative writing and fiction.⁵² Ali Hujwiri, also known as Data Ganj Bakhsh, was hindered in writing this work by the disappearance of the volumes he had left behind in Ghazna, Afghanistan. Because of this, writing this book must have taken him a long time.⁵³

Many Sufi saints, many of whom are well-known across the world, have used the book as a "vaseela," a means of spiritual ascent toward God. This is the rationale behind Moinuddin Chishti Ajmeri's advice to an ambitious disciple (murid) who has yet got no spiritual guide to study *Kashf ul-Mahjoob* by Ali Hujwiri since it will (temporary) lead him spiritually.⁵⁴

The term *tabaqat*, which is plural of *tabaqa*, literally means level or stratum, refers to the way that biographical notes are traditionally organized in Arabic text according to a system of ranks, classes, or generations. However, Hujwiri does not organize the biographies into the ranks or generations. Additionally, *Kashf al-Mahjub* accepts a wide spectrum of people rather than concentrating just on the most well-known Sufis.⁵⁵

Conclusions and Findings:

The details of the teachings and achievements of the Sufis are well-preserved and recorded in these pages; some of key points are mentioned as under:

- i) The pure teachings of Islam that are recorded in books and theoretically taught in Madrasahs but practically taught to the world by Sufis through actions in monasteries.
- ii) Sufis taught the ethics and spiritual system of Islam every time.
- iii) No any congregation performed the duty to preach and build character better than Sufis.
- iv) Sufis spoke the word of truth publicly in front of the kings. When the so-called rationality arose among the Muslims and they began to make the Qur'an subordinate to their reason, the Sufis remedied the harmful consequences of rationality by teaching the love of God.
- v) When the jurists emphasized on the manifestations of religion, Sufis moderated the nation by teaching inner reform and purity of heart. Sufiya rejected non-Islamic beliefs, polytheism and idolatry in every era.

vi) They promoted the importance of spending in the way of Allah compared to capitalism. They advised the kings to be religious.

vii) When the Mu'tazila, the jurists and the theologians were entangled in logical debates and were dividing the Ummah into sects, at that time the Sufis taught the Muslims monotheism (Tawheed). When the jurists were arguing against each other, Sufis taught them love and compassion.

viii) Scholars and jurists continued to gain closeness to the kings, but the Sufis remained isolated from the royal courts and continued to describe the evils of monarchy.

ix) When the scholars were engaged in interpretations to please the kings, the Sufis continued to teach the kings the fear of God. The Mu'tazila, the theologians and the scholars wasted their time in debates about attributes of God. Sufis said that discussion about God is futile. God cannot be found through logic. Clean the mirror of the heart so that, It can be seen.

x) Theologians, only upgraded the mental approach, Sufis performed the duty of training and reforming the heart as well as the mind. The Holy Prophet SAW said: Be aware that there is one organ in the human body. If it becomes corrupt, the whole body (man) will become corrupt, and if he becomes righteous, the whole body will be righteous and that organ is the heart.

Sufis emphasized that the whole of the creation is Allah's family and Allah loves him the most who is the best to His family. Scholars explained the truth of Islam with arguments. Sufis clarified the authenticity of Islam through introspective observation.

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