



Sufism

1. Introduction

The word Sufism comes from the Arabic word “suff” meaning “wool”. The poor people of Madina during the Prophet Muhammad are called “Ashab-us Suffa” due to their garments being made of wool. Sufism is not a sect or denomination of Islam; it is the spiritual side of Islam. Islam has outer and inner dimensions:

Outer Dimension (Sharia): Islamic commandments or Islamic Law. Sharia deals with visible dimension of the religion: Praying, fasting, giving alms, pilgrimage, marriage, divorce, inheritance, etc. It is obligatory for Muslims to follow the sharia.

Inner Dimension (Sufism): Sufism deals with how the religion is perceived in an individual’s life. Sufism is based on observing even the most trivial rules of the Sharia in order to penetrate their inner meaning. In this way, Sufism is nothing more than the spirit of the Sharia.

As Gulen defines, Sufism is a path of purifying the self, freeing himself or herself from human vices and wickedness in order to acquire angelic qualities, pleasing to God, living in accordance with the requirements of God’s knowledge and love, and always being together with God or in His presence so that no worldly or other-worldly goals are entertained.

German philosopher Kant states that “God cannot be truly known without practicing faith”. So practicing faith makes people closer to God. Sufism is a practical knowledge, so it can be truly understood through personal experience. Every person’s experience differs depending on his/her devotion and consciousness in the religion. Therefore, there is not a single path which makes people closer to God. Every person can make his/her path as long as the path is within the boundary of faith.

As Gulen describes, Sufism, being a demanding path leading to knowledge of God, has no room for negligence or frivolity. It requires the initiate to strive continuously to acquire this knowledge, like a honeybee flying from the hive to flowers and from flowers to the hive. Pleasing God is the highest rank which one can attain in Islam. The goal of Sufism is to elevate each individual to the rank of a universal, perfect being (Insan al-Kamil) a perfect human being.

Gulen summarizes the principles of Sufism as follows:

- Reaching true belief in God and living in accordance with its demands.
- Overflowing with Divine Love and getting along with all other creation.
- Giving preference or precedence to the well-being and happiness of others.
- Being open to love, spiritual yearning, delight, and ecstasy.

- Being content with permitted pleasures, and not taking even a single step toward that which is not permitted.
- Struggling continuously against worldly ambitions and illusions, which lead us to believe that this world is eternal.
- Never forgetting that salvation is possible only through certainty or conviction of the truth of religious beliefs and conduct, sincerity or purity of intention, and the sole desire to please God.

2. Major Themes in Sufism

Islamic spiritual life based on asceticism, regular worship, abstention from all major and minor sins, sincerity and purity of intention, love and yearning. We will describe Sufism has several interconnected themes: Servanthood is at the center, asceticism, the purification of the heart, and service to the community. These themes are best represented by Prophet Muhammad’s and his companions lives. For centuries Sufis tried to represent these themes in their lives according to their understandings.

2.1. Servanthood

The Prophet himself showed a perfect example of servanthood to God. He invited people to worship God sincerely, and he is himself the best example of such worship. Apart from daily five times of prescribed prayers, Prophet Muhammad used to perform more than 10 different supererogatory prayers, some of which are daily prayers. He regularly spent more than half of his nights in prayer, crying and full of humility.

His wife Aisha reports that he was performing prayers in such lengths that his feet would swell. She asked him one night, *“O Prophet of God! Although God forgive all your past and future sins, why do you make it so hard for yourself?”*

He responded:

“Aisha, Should I not be a thankful servant of God?”

In another occasion, Aisha reports that she woke up one night and could not see God’s Messenger beside her. As she just got up from bed, her hand touched his feet. She noticed that he was prostrating, praying:

“O God, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your wrath, and in Your forgiveness from Your punishment; I also seek refuge in Yourself from You. I cannot praise You as You praise Yourself.”

Aisha reported that the Prophet used to sway to and fro during prayer, trembling with the fear of Hell and flying on wings of the desire of Heaven.

Imam al-Nasa’i narrates:

“While the Messenger was praying, a sound, like a boiling pot, was heard.”

Huzeyfe narrates that one night he was praying with the Prophet. The Prophet read the two largest chapters of Quran (About 75 pages) in a single prayer. The prayer was so long that Huzeyfe thought to give up the prayer and leave the Prophet alone.

The prophet used to fast Mondays and Thursdays every week. He also used to observe spiritual retreat during the last 10 days of Ramadan. In these days, he spent his time by fasting and worshipping God.

Gulen states that

“One cannot find a prayer that Prophet Muhammad started performing and later gave it up.”

2.2. Asceticism

Asceticism, which literally means renouncing worldly pleasures and resisting carnal desires, is defined by Sufis as indifference to worldly appetites, living an austere life, choosing to refrain from sin in fear of God, and despising the world's carnal and material aspects. Asceticism is the cornerstone of Sufism where Sufis show their sincerity by living simple life and disciplining themselves.

Leaving This World Behind

There are two aspects of asceticism that we want to emphasize: The first aspect is that the life of hereafter is better than this worldly life. So one should spend everything of this life for the cause of Hereafter. In several places Qur'an mentions about this fact and also the dangers of this worldly life:

“And the worldly life is not but amusement and diversion but the home of Hereafter is best for those who fear Allah. Will you not then reason?” (6:32)

“But you prefer the worldly life, while the Hereafter is better and everlasting.” (86:16-17)

“As compared with the life of the hereafter, the life of this world is nothing but a brief passing enjoyment” (13:26).

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), too, clarified the value of this life in relation to the hereafter:

“The life of this world compared to the hereafter is as if one of you were to put his finger in the ocean and take it out again then compare the water that remains on his finger to the water that remains in the ocean.” (Muslim)

Ibn Umar said: The Messenger of God (pbuh) took me by the shoulder and said:

“Be in this world as though you were a stranger or a traveler.”

The Prophet (pbuh) expressed his concern for Muslims:

“By God, it is not poverty that I fear for you, but I fear that this world will be spread out in front of you as it was spread out in front of those before you, and then you will compete for it as they competed for it, and it will destroy you as it destroyed them.” (Nawawi)

A man came to the Prophet (pbuh) and said,

“Messenger of Allah, show me an action for which Allah will love me and for which people will love me if I do it.”

He said,

“Do with little of this world and God will love you, and do with little of what belongs to other people and people will love you.” (Ibn Maja)

Living Simple

The second aspect of asceticism is living simple and avoiding the luxuries of the world. Before the prophethood, Prophet Muhammad married to Khadija, one of wealthiest women of Mecca. After the revelations came, they spent all of their wealth for the sake of God. The prophet desired a comfortable life for his people, provided that his community would not be led astray by world attractions, but himself lived a very simple life.

Once Umar, his second best companion, saw him lying on a rough mat and wept. When the Messenger asked him why he was weeping, Umar replied: “O Messenger of God, while kings sleep in soft feather beds, you lie on a rough mat. You are the Messenger of God, and as such deserve an easy life more than anyone else.” The Messenger answered:

“Don't you agree that the luxuries of the world should be theirs, and that those of the Hereafter should be ours?” (Bukhari, Muslim)

Abu Hurayra once saw him praying while seated and asked if he were sick. The Messenger's reply caused Abu Hurayra to cry:

“I am hungry, Abu Hurayra. Hunger has left me no strength to stand up for prayer.”

Hunger was a common feature of Muslim life. One night, God's Messenger, Abu Bakr, and Umar met each other unexpectedly outside. When they asked one another why they were outside, all replied: “Hunger.”

One day the Prophet saw his daughter Fatima wearing a bracelet and warned her:

“O my daughter, do you want people to say of my daughter that she is wearing a ring of Hellfire? Take it off immediately!”

When the Prophet's daughter Fatima went to Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, and asked for her inheritance, Abu Bakr replied:

“I heard the Messenger say: ‘The community of the Prophets does not leave anything to be inherited. What they leave is for charity.’”

There are many examples from the life of companions regarding living simple life:

- Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, used to milk cows and sheep to earn his livelihood.
- Umar, the second Caliph, was living like the poor of the community. When he went to Jerusalem, people could not differentiate him from his servant.
- Ali, the Prophet cousin and the fourth caliph, was wearing one dress for both summer and winter.

2.3. The Purification of the Heart

Spiritual purification of the self is the essence of Islamic teachings. We must purify our hearts from spiritual sins such as greed, malice, envy, arrogance, and worldliness. In their place, we must adorn the heart with spiritual virtues such as generosity, compassion, goodwill, humility, and asceticism.

Qur'an emphasizes the importance of clean heart:

“The Day when neither wealth will be of any use, nor offspring, but only he (will prosper) who comes before God with a sound heart.” (26:88-89).

“Prosperous indeed is he who purifies himself. And who mentions the Name of his Lord and does the Prayer.” (87:14-15)

“He is indeed prosperous who has grown it in purity; And he is indeed lost who has corrupted it.” (91:9-10)

The prophet Muhammad (pbuh) used to seek repentance over 70 times a day. He said,

“Verily, Allah does not look at your appearance or wealth, but rather He looks at your hearts and actions.” (Muslim)

“Surely, in the body there is a small piece of flesh; if it is good, the whole body is good, and if it is corrupted, the whole body is corrupted, and that is surely the heart.” (Bukhari)

2.4. Service to Community

The Prophet and his companions devoted themselves to the service of the community.

Once, a Bedouin came and asked the Messenger for something. The Messenger complied with his request. The Bedouin continued to ask, and the Messenger continued to give until he had nothing left. When the Bedouin asked again, he promised that he would give it to him when he had it.

Umar angered to this rudeness and said to the Messenger: “You were asked and you gave. Again you were asked and you gave, until you were asked once more and you promised!” Umar meant that the Messenger should not make things so difficult for himself. The Messenger did not approve of Umar’s words. Another companion stood up and said: “O Messenger, give without fear that God will make you poor!” The Messenger pleased with these words and said: “I was commanded to do so!” (Ibn Kathir)

Bukhari, Muslim, and Ahmad ibn Hanbal record that the Prophet said:

“The upper hand is better than the lower one.”

The prophet explained that the upper hand gives to the poor and needy, while the lower hand takes from others. So, besides expressing the merits of charity, this hadith encourages people to work and earn their living.

Before the expedition to Tabuk, there was a fundraising. Abu Bakr, the first caliph, gave all his wealth for the sake of God. Abdurrahman bin Avf, Uthman donated huge sums of money. Umar, the second caliph, gave half of his wealth for the sake of God.

Aisha, the Prophet wife, lived a saintly life after the prophet’s death. The caliphs were giving large sums of money to her, but she donated them all to the poor. Once Abdullah bin Zubayr sent her 100,000 dirhams, but by the end of the same day she had given it all to the people. In another occasion Aisha distributed 70,000 dirhams among the people and then went back her tent and patched her dress.

Zaynal Abedeen, Prophet’s grant-grandson, dedicated his whole life for helping the poor of Madina. He was seen going during the darkness of the night with a sack full of bread for

the hungry people of the city. They never knew the identity of the person who gave them food night after night, but Imam’s own companions knew the fact and they passed it on to the later generation to know and to learn. It was after his death that those hungry people came to know the identity of their benefactor.

3. History of Sufism

Sufism emerged as living sensitive life according to God’s orders; and represented by pious Muslims after the Prophet’s death. Islamic scholars were cautious about the way of Sufism in early centuries of Islam. In his famous book, Reviving the Religious Sciences, Imam al-Ghazzali made a notable contribution to legitimize the Sufism in Islamic scholarly understanding. He reviewed all of Sufism's terms, principles, and rules, and establishing those agreed upon by all Sufi masters and criticizing others. In this way, he united the outer (Sharia) and inner (Sufi) dimensions of Islam.

Sufi masters who came after Imam al-Ghazzali presented Sufism as one of the religious sciences. In addition, the Sufi masters made several Sufi subjects, such as the states of the spirit, certainty or conviction, sincerity and morality, part of the curriculum of madrasas (institutes for the study of religious sciences).

In terms of organization, Sufism can be categorized as *individual* and *organized*. Individual Sufis belong to no order or disciplines. Most of earlier Sufis are in this group. Organized Sufism has certain types of disciplines and master/student relationships.

Some prominent Sufis throughout the history are as follows. We will only discuss the ones indicated with boldface.

Hasan al-Basri (Basra, 642-728)

Zeynelabidin (Madina, 657-713)

Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya (Basra, 714-801)

Ibrahim ibn Adham (Balkh, 718-782)

Bayazid Bastami (Bastam, 804-874)

Junayd Bagdadi (Bagdad, 835-910)

Mansur Al-Hallaj (Bagdad, 858-922)

Abdul Kadir Geylani (Bagdad, 1077-1166)

Imam al-Ghazzali (Tus, 1058-1111)

Ahmed Yesevi (Ashgabat, 1093-1166)

Ibn Arabi (Damascus, 1165-1240)

Farid ud-Din Attar (Nishapur, 1145-1221)

Mevlana Rumi (Konya, 1207-1273)

Yunus Emre (Eskisehir, 1238-1321)

Baha ud-Din Naqshband (Bukhara, 1318-1389)

Hafiz-i Shirazi (Shiraz, 1325-1390)

Imam Rabbani (Sirhind, 1564-1624)

Fuzuli (Bagdad, 1494-1556)

Mevlana Halid-i Bagdadi (Baghdad, 1779-1827)

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Turkey, 1877-1960)

Fethullah Gulen (Turkey, 1941-)

3.1. Rabia al-Adawiyya

She was born in 714 in Basra, Iraq to very poor family. While she was travelling in a caravan, the caravan was robbed. They took Rabia as a captive and later sold to a master. The master used to take hard service from her. After she had finished her house jobs, she would spend the whole night in prayer. She fasted many of her days and lived a pious life. Such life of Rabia influenced her master and he became pious as well. Eventually, the master started to serve her and later set her free.

Rabia went into the desert to pray and became an ascetic. She is often cited as the most famous and influential Sufi woman of Islamic history. She was renowned for her extreme virtue and piety.

Rabia's mentor was the greatest saint of her time, Hasan al-Basri. As her fame grew she had many disciples. She also had many discussions with the scholars of her time. Rabia was never married and passed away at the age of 80. Throughout her life, Rabia did not possess much other than a broken jug, a rough mat and a brick, which she used as a pillow. She spent all night in prayer and contemplation.

Hasan al-Basri narrated,

"I spent one whole night and day with Rabia. It never came through my mind that I was a man nor did it occur to her that she was a woman. When I saw her true sincerity and devotion, I saw myself as spiritually bankrupt."

Rabia was the one who first set forth the doctrine of Divine Love. She was against worshipping God for entering paradise and avoiding hell. One day, she was seen running through the streets of Basra carrying a pot of fire in one hand and a bucket of water in the other. When asked what she was doing, she said,

"I want to put out the fires of Hell, and burn down the rewards of Paradise. They block the way to God. I do not want to worship from fear of punishment or for the promise of reward, but simply for the love of God."

3.2. Abdul Qadir Gilani

He was born in Gilan, close to Bagdad in 1077. His parents are descendants of Prophet's grandsons Hasan and Husayn. He was trained as an Islamic scholar in the areas of Hanbali Jurisprudence and hadith. In his speeches, he reconciled the mystical nature of Sufism and the teachings of Quran. He became very influential and later Qadiriyya order established based on his teachings. He wrote several books on Islam and passed away in 1166. One peculiarity of Qadiriyya order is that the chants of God Names and supplications are vocal.

A quote from him,

"Listen to your heart and not your ego. Your ego prompts you to boast of vain assertions to obtain the glory of this world. Turn away from vanity and seek Him in the recesses of your heart and soul."

3.3. Imam al-Gazzali

He was born in Tus, Iran, in 1058. He got education from the most distinguished scholars of his time. He served in the

Seljuk government as a jurist. Due to his brilliance, Grand Vizier Nizam al-Mulk appointed him to the most prestigious university of the time, Nizamiyya Madrasa in Baghdad.

He underwent a spiritual crisis in 1095, and consequently abandoned his career. After performing pilgrimage, he returned back to Tus and lived in seclusion until his death in 1111. Al-Ghazali contributed significantly to the development of a systematic view of Sufism and its integration and acceptance in mainstream Islam. He wrote about 20 books in different fields of Islam. Also he had significant influence on Medieval Christian philosophers.

Some of his sayings are as follows,

"Do not allow your heart to take pleasure with the praises of people, nor be saddened by their condemnation."

"Half of disbelief in God in the world is caused by people who make religion look ugly due to their bad conduct and ignorance."

"Desires make slaves out of kings and patience makes kings out of slaves."

"Never have I dealt with anything more difficult than my own soul, which sometimes helps me and sometimes opposes me."

"Dear Friend. Your heart is a polished mirror. You must wipe it clean of the veil of dust that has gathered upon it, because it is destined to reflect the light of divine secrets."

3.4. Ibn Arabi

He was born in Andalusia (Muslim Spain) in 1165. He completed his basic education in religious sciences in Andalusia. He left to Mecca in 1200 and lived in Syria, Palestine, Iraq and Anatolia. While he was travelling from place to place, he met with the greatest scholars of his time and wrote several books on the way. He died in Damascus in 1240.

Ibn Arabi shared the same views with Al-Gazzali in the areas of Islamic Law and Theology. Spiritually, he was influenced by Qadiriyya order. Ibn Arabi is the first Sufi to coin the term "Insan Al-Kamil" or "perfect human." This concept is very important today that every Sufi order emphasizes on it.

Ibn Arabi is the foremost proponent of the concept of Wahdat al-Wujud (Unity of Essence) which was later criticized by mainstream Islamic scholars. Ibn Arabi wrote more than 100 books and he was one of the greatest mystics of all times.

Some quotes from Ibn Arabi are as follows:

"How can the heart travel to God, when it is chained by its desires?"

"The ignorant one does not see his ignorance as he basks in its darkness; nor does the knowledgeable one see his own knowledge, for he basks in its light."

"I follow the Way of Love, and where Love's caravan takes its path, there is my religion, my faith."

3.5. Mevlana Rumi

Jalal Ad-Din Rumi was born in Balkh, Afghanistan in 1207. His family left their home when he was a teenager. The family settled in Konya, the capital of Seljuk Sultanate of

Rumi. His father was an Islamic scholar and he was appointed to the Madrasa of Konya. After his father's death, Rumi became the head of the madrasa, and start giving sermons and fatwas (Islamic legal opinion).

Rumi's life has changed dramatically after meeting with the dervish Shams-i Tabrizi (1244). From an accomplished teacher and jurist, Rumi was transformed into an ascetic. Shams left Rumi in 1248 unexpectedly and never be found again.

His student Hussam encouraged Rumi to write a book. He agreed and dictated his most famous work, Masnavi, which is about 27,000 lines of Persian poetry. Masnavi is known as one of the greatest works of mystical poetry of all times. Rumi passed away in Konya in 1273. Due to his universal compassion, he was revered in East and West. "Love of God" is the most dominant theme in his Sufism. Mevleviyye order is established after him.

Some of his sayings are as follows:

*"Come, come, whoever you are,
Wanderer, idolater, worshiper of fire,
Come even though you have broken your vows a thousand times,
Come, and come yet again.
Ours is not a caravan of despair."*

"Say all in Persian even if Arabic is better — Love will find its way through all languages on its own."

"Let yourself be silently drawn by the stronger pull of what you really love."

"Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it."

"Why do you stay in prison when the door is so wide open?"

"Why are you so enchanted by this world, when a mine of gold lies within you?"

3.6. Baha ud-Din Naqshband

He was born in Bukhara (Uzbekistan) in 1318. Most of his life spend in Bukhara as well. He was raised among several Sufi masters in Bukhara at that time. He attended many different Sufi circles and later developed his own Sufi understanding. Main components in his Sufism are silent supplication of God (as opposed to vocal supplication in Qadiriyye order), and structured master/student relationship. Imam Naqshband forbade the recordings of his teachings during his lifetime and did not write any book. His order later become the largest and most influential Sufi order in Islamic World. He died in 1389 in Bukhara.

"The poor one is the one whose inside is always in struggle and whose external is always at peace."

"In the state of contemplation, the seeker forgets the created and remembers only the Creator."

4. Hizmet Movement and Sufism

4.1. Bediuzzaman Said Nursi

Nursi was an influential Ottoman-Kurdish Islamic scholar, thinker, activist and revivalist. He was trained in both Islamic sciences and Sufism. Nursi identified atheism originating from scientific materialism as the biggest problem of his age. Due to that he spent most of his time writing on arguments leading to the existence and unity of God, Hereafter and other articles of faith.

Nursi emphasizes on "the unity of and connection between universe, Quran and humanity". He is the first Islamic scholar pointing out that everything in the Universe is the manifestation of God's names and attributes.

On the personal side, Nursi was never married and lived an ascetic life. He also wrote extensively on Sufism concepts in his books and lived those concepts in his life as an example.

Nursi wrote more than 20 books on various subjects. His ideas spread to various corners of Turkey and well accepted by people so that many became followers of him. Although finding no crime, Turkish Government disliked his activities and influence, thus, he spent more than 28 years in either prison or house arrest. His movement was called *Hizmet* (Service) movement.

Nursi initiated the idea of dialogue in his Damascus sermon in 1911:

"Said Nursi proposed dialogue and collaboration between Muslims and Christians before a congregation of over 10,000 Muslims, including 100 prominent religious scholars, in the Umayyad Mosque, Damascus" (Yücel 2013, 197).

Nursi suggested that Muslims and Christians should cooperate against common threats such as disbelief that materialism spreads, as well as poverty, ignorance, and enmity between peoples.

Some quotes from his books are as follows

"Those who attend to the good side of everything contemplate the good. Those who contemplate the good enjoy life."

"The Qur'an, the universe, and humanity are three kinds of manifestations of one truth."

"Minds should be enlightened with science, and hearts need to be illumined with religion."

"Time demonstrates that Paradise is not cheap and that Hell is not pointless."

4.2. Fethullah Gulen

Hizmet's ideological framework is based on humanism and Islamic sources, and manifests itself in the form of selflessly dedicated service to humanity. While humanistic aspects of this ideology emanates from universal values such as love, respect, freedom, democracy, and human rights; at the root, they are based on Gülen's reinterpretation of Qur'an and hadith (*ijtihad*).

Gülen's teachings are based on Turkish Islamic tradition inspired by Sufi figures like the poet and theologian Rumi

(1207-1273), and the Ottoman Empire's religious tolerance exemplified in the Empire's community self-governance or the millet system. Simply implementing the famous saying of Sufi master Yunus Emre;

"We love the created because of the Creator."

Basmala is a recitation of God's attributes "the Compassionate and the Merciful." According to Gülen, the recurrence of this phrase 114 in the Qur'an, is an indication that

"God wanted to teach Muslims, among other things, to be compassionate and merciful in their relations with their fellow human beings, and with nature" (Saritoprak and Griffith 2005, 333).

Gülen was inspired by the writings of Imam Rabbani, Indian Sufi, who introduced the concept of loving friendship (*khillah*) and proposed the task of each believer to cultivate a spiritual friendship with all those who profess the faith of Abraham, both Muslims or non-Muslims (Saritoprak and Griffith 2005).

Referring to love in the Sufi tradition, Gülen emphasizes one of the "beautiful names" of God, "al-Wadud", or the Beloved One; and asserts that Muslims are expected to reflect this attribute in their lives by being a people of love. Gülen also finds the roots of these themes in the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, quoting the hadith,

"Whoever is humble, God exalts him; whoever is haughty, God humiliates him."

Kim (2015) calls Gülen's approach to dialogue "dialogic Sufism" a reactivation of the traditional Turkish Sufi tradition in the contemporary world rather than a simple repetition or adoption of it.

"Dialogic Sufism opposes a dialectical approach to humanity which assumes an opposing and conflicting relationship between self and others" (Kim 2015, 36)

This approach is in contrast with the reactionary political Islam.

"Instead, it interacts with any challenging condition and context to build a dialogical bridge between the past and the present, the East and the West, rationalism/materialism and spiritualism, and between different civilizations, religions and cultures, obliterating difference and distinction between 'self and others'" (Kim 2015, 37).

To Gülen, at the heart of Islamic ethics lies this idea as he finds the basis for interreligious dialogue and sees dialogue as the natural result of the practice of Islamic ethics by Muslims. Thus, humbleness is likely to lead to settling differences through dialogue, since someone claiming superiority would not choose the way of dialogue.

According to Gülen, the Qur'anic verse 3:64 revealed in the ninth year of the Hijra (629 CE), represents one of the greatest ecumenical calls of Prophet Muhammad's time that clearly indicates Muslims are expected to treat People of the Book with respect and tolerance (Webb 2015; Saritoprak and Griffith 2005):

"Tell them: 'O people of the Book, let us come to an agreement on that which is common between us, that we worship no one but God, and make none his compeer, and that none of us take any others for lord apart from God'. If they turn away, you tell them: 'Bear witness that we submit to Him'." (3:64.)

5. References

- All numbered references are from the Qur'an. (The Qur'an with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal)
- Named references are from authentic Hadith books. A hadith is a saying or tradition of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.).
- The Sufism definition and themes are adapted from Key Concepts in the Practice of Sufism 1 by Fethullah Gülen.
- The lives of Sufi saints are adapted from Wikipedia.
- Kim, Heon C. 2015. "Sufism and Dialogue in the Hizmet Movement." *Hizmet Studies Review*. 2(2): 33-49.
- Saritoprak, Zeki, and Sidney Griffith. 2005. "Fethullah Gülen and the People of the Book: A Voice from Turkey for Interfaith Dialogue." *The Muslim World*. 95(3): 329-40.
- Webb, M. O. 2015. "Fethullah Gülen's Use of Philosophical and Scriptural Resources for Tolerance." *Hizmet Studies Review*. 2(2): 9-18.
- Yücel, S. 2013. "Muslim-Christian Dialogue: Nostra Aetate and Fethullah Gülen's Philosophy of Dialogue." *Australian e-Journal of Theology*, 20(3).

The following is a short list of books recommended on Sufism:

1. Rose Garden (Gulistan) by Saadi.
2. Emerald Hills of the Hearth by Fethullah Gülen. (4 volumes)
3. Fundamentals of Rumi's Thought by Sefik Can.
4. Masnavi by Rumi. (6 volumes)