UNIT IV: OUTLINE OF CULTURE DURING 13TH AND 16TH CENTURY: SUFISM ITS MAIN CONCEPTS AND ORDER

WHAT IS SUFISM?

Sufism is that mode of religious life in Islam in which the emphasis is placed, not so much on the performances of external ritual but on the activities of the inner- self— in other words it signifies Islam mysticism called ‘Tasawwaf’ in Islamic texts ’.  *“Sufism is a religion of intense devotion; Love is its manifestation, poetry, music and dance are the instruments of its worship and attaining oneness with God is its ideal.”* The Sufi attests that God has created man with a mind, free-will, and love. Therefore the mainspring of Sufism is love. Based on this, the Sufi path becomes a 'Path of Love,' where the Sufi becomes the 'lover' and God the 'beloved.' This love affair ends only with the ultimate union with the Beloved. This love relationship is depicted in most volumes of Sufi literature and poetry.



*Image 1: Images of whirling dervishes.*

*WHAT IS MYSTICAL ISLAMIC?*

[Mystical](https://www.britannica.com/topic/mysticism) [Islamic](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Islam)  is a belief and practice in which Muslims seek to find the truth of divine love and knowledge through direct personal experience of God. It consists of a variety of mystical paths that are designed to [ascertain](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ascertain) the nature of humanity and of God and to [facilitate](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/facilitate) the experience of the presence of divine love and wisdom in the world.

ORIGIN AND MEANING: Sufism is said to have been originated near a place called Basra located in Iraq. The Muslims located in this region started off this religion as a path to reach the divine. The divine form who is worshipped in Sufism is Prophet Mohammed. This is one reason why Sufi is considered to have branched from Islam. However, ancient Islamic scriptures have no mention of Sufism in them. Some scholars hold the view that Sufism is the evolution of Islam in a more spiritual and mystic direction. Sufism in its earlier stages was recited and meditated from the Quran. There are various opinions regarding the term of Sufism.

1. In Arabic, Sufism is called ‘Tasawwaf’. Both the words come from Suf ‘wool’ a reference to the woollen robe worn by the earliest Sufis.
2. Since early time some have also linked the word Sufi with Sufiya (Purified or chosen as friend by God.)Many Theories revolves around the origin of the word Sufism, some scholars opines that it is derived from ‘Safa’ ‘Safa’ means Purity and that Sufi is one of the elects who have become purified from all worldly defilements.
3. Other scholars connect it with ‘Saf’ means rank, as though file Sufis were spirituality is the first rank in virtue of his Communion with God.
4. It is also connected with ‘ Suffa' means bench, referring the origin of Sufism to the ' Ahl al -Suffa' or ‘ Ashab -e - Suffa’ means people of bench .

The origin of the name ‘ Sufi’ is explained by the Sufis themselves in many different ways, but of the derivation which have been proposed only three possesses any claim for consideration viz

1. those which connect it with Sophia ( wisdom) or
2. with Safa ( Purity or
3. with ‘Suf ( wool)

As the Sufis wear woollen robe to distinguish themselves from others thus they came to be known as Sufis. the Arabic word ' Sufi’ like the Sanskrit word ‘ yogi’ refers only to one who has attained the goal, nevertheless, it is often applied by extension to initiate who are still nearly travelling towards it. The word ‘initiate’ serves to indicate that, in order to embark on the spiritual path, a special rite of initiation is an indispensable prerequisite.

**Important aspects of Sufi Thought and Practice:**

1. The mystics drew their vocabulary largely from the [Qurʾān](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Quran), which for Muslims contains all divine wisdom and has to be interpreted with ever-increasing insight. In the Qurʾān, mystics found the threat of the [Last Judgment](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Last-Judgment-religion), but they also found the statement that God “loves them and they love him,” which became the basis for love-mysticism.
2. Strict obedience to the religious law and imitation of the Prophet were basic for the mystics. By rigid introspection and mental struggle, the mystic tried to purify his baser self from even the smallest signs of selfishness, thus attaining *ikhlāṣ*, absolute purity of intention and act. *Tawakkul* (trust in God) was sometimes practiced to such an extent that every thought of tomorrow was considered irreligious. “Little sleep, little talk, little food” were fundamental; fasting became one of the most important preparations for the spiritual life.The central concern of the Sufis, as of every Muslim, was [*tawḥīd*](https://www.britannica.com/topic/tawhid), the witness that “there is no deity but God.” This truth had to be realized in the existence of each individual, and so the expressions differ:
3. Early Sufism postulated the approach to God through love and voluntary suffering until a unity of will was reached; Junayd spoke of “recognizing God as He was before creation”; God is seen as the One and only actor; He alone “has the right to say ‘I’.” Later, *tawḥīd* came to mean the knowledge that there is nothing existent but God, or the ability to see God and creation as two aspects of one reality, reflecting each other and depending upon each other (*waḥdat al-wujūd*).The mystics realized that beyond the knowledge of outward sciences [intuitive](https://www.britannica.com/topic/intuition) knowledge was required in order to receive that [illumination](https://www.britannica.com/topic/enlightenment-religion) to which reason has no access. *Dhawq*, direct “tasting” of experience, was essential for them. But the inspirations and “unveilings” that God grants such mystics by special grace must never contradict the Qurʾān and tradition and are valid only for the person concerned. Mystics who expressed in their poetry their disinterest in, and even contempt of, the traditional formal religions never forgot that [Islam](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Islam) is the highest [manifestation](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/manifestation) of divine wisdom.The idea of the manifestation of divine wisdom was also connected with the person of the Prophet Muhammad. Muhammad is also described as light from light, and from his light all the prophets are created, [constituting](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/constituting) the different aspects of this light. In its fullness such light radiated from the historical Muhammad and is partaken of by his [posterity](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/posterity) and by the saints; for Muhammad has the aspect of sanctity in addition to that of prophecy. An [apocryphal](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/apocryphal) tradition makes even God attest: “I am [Aḥmad](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Muhammad) (= Muhammad) without ‘m’ (i.e., Aḥad, ‘One’).”
4. A mystic may also be known as *walī*. By derivation the word *walī* (“saint”) means “one in close relation” or “friend.” The *awlīyāʾ* (plural of *walī*) are “friends of God who have no fear nor are they sad.” Later the term *walī* came to denote the Muslim mystics who had reached a certain stage of proximity to God, or those who had reached the highest mystical stages. They have their “seal” (i.e., the last and most perfect personality in the historical process; with this person, the evolution has found its end—as in Muhammad’s case), just as the prophets have. Female saints are found all over the [Islamic world](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Islamic-world).
5. The invisible [hierarchy](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hierarchy) of saints consists of the 40 *abdāl* (“substitutes”; for when any of them dies another is elected by God from the rank and file of the saints), seven *awtād* (“stakes,” or “props,” of faith), three *nuqabāʾ* (“leader”; “one who introduces people to his master”), headed by the *quṭb* (“axis, pole”), or *ghawth* (“help”)—titles claimed by many Sufi leaders. Saint [worship](https://www.britannica.com/topic/worship) is contrary to Islam, which does not admit of any mediating role for human beings between humanity and God; but the cult of living and even more of dead saints—visiting their tombs to take vows there—responded to the feeling of the masses, and thus a number of pre-Islamic customs were absorbed into Islam under the cover of [mysticism](https://www.britannica.com/topic/mysticism).
6. The advanced mystic was often granted the capacity of working [miracles](https://www.britannica.com/topic/miracle) called *karāmāt* (*charismata* or “graces”), although not *muʿjizāt* (“that which men are unable to imitate”), like the miracles of the prophets. Among them are “cardiognosia” (knowledge of the heart), providing food from the unseen, presence in two places at the same time, and help for the [disciples](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/disciples), be they near or far. In short, a saint is one “whose prayers are heard” and who has *taṣarruf*, the power of materializing in this world possibilities that still rest in the spiritual world. Many great saints, however, considered miracle working as a dangerous trap on the path that might distract the Sufi from his real goal.

**The path:** The path ([*ṭarīqah*](https://www.britannica.com/topic/tariqa)) begins with [repentance](https://www.britannica.com/topic/repentance-religion). A mystical guide (*shaykh* or *pīr*) accepts the seeker as [disciple](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/disciple) (*murīd*), orders him to follow strict [ascetic](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ascetic) [practices](https://www.britannica.com/topic/religious-education), and suggests certain formulas for [meditation](https://www.britannica.com/topic/meditation-mental-exercise). It is said that the disciple should be in the hands of the master “like a corpse in the hand of the washer.” The master teaches him constant [*jihad*](https://www.britannica.com/topic/jihad), or struggle (the real “Holy War”), against the lower soul, often represented as a black dog, which should, however, not be killed but merely tamed and used in the way of God. The mystic dwells in a number of spiritual stations ([*maqām*](https://www.britannica.com/topic/maqam-Sufism)), which are described in varying sequence, and, after the initial repentance, [comprise](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/comprise) abstinence, [renunciation](https://www.britannica.com/topic/asceticism), and [poverty](https://www.britannica.com/topic/poverty)—according to Muhammad’s saying, “Poverty is my pride”; poverty was sometimes interpreted as having no interest in anything apart from God, the Rich One, but the concrete meaning of poverty prevailed, which is why the mystic is often denoted as “poor,” [fakir](https://www.britannica.com/topic/fakir) or [dervish](https://www.britannica.com/topic/dervish). Patience and gratitude belong to higher stations of the path, and consent is the loving acceptance of every [affliction](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/affliction).

On his way to illumination the mystic will undergo such changing spiritual states ([*ḥāl*](https://www.britannica.com/topic/hal)) as *qabḍ* and *basṭ*, constraint and happy spiritual expansion, fear and hope, and longing and intimacy, which are granted by God and last for longer or shorter periods of time, changing in intensity according to the station in which the mystic is [abiding](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/abiding) at the moment. The way culminates in *maʿrifah* (“interior knowledge,” “gnosis”) or in *maḥabbah* (“love”), the central subject of Sufism since the 9th century, which implies a union of lover and beloved, and was therefore violently rejected by the orthodox, for whom “love of God” meant simply obedience. The final goal is [*fanāʾ*](https://www.britannica.com/topic/fana-Sufism) (“annihilation”), primarily an [ethical](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ethical) concept of [annihilating](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/annihilating) one’s own qualities, according to the prophetic saying “Take over the qualities of God,” but slowly developing into a complete extinction of the personality. Some mystics taught that behind this negative unity where the self is completely effaced, the *baqāʾ*, (“duration, life in God”) is found: the ecstatic experience, called intoxication, is followed by the “second sobriety”—i.e., the return of the completely transformed mystic into this world where he acts as a living witness of God or continues the “journey in God.” The mystic has reached *ḥaqīqah* (“realty”), after finishing the *ṭarīqah* (“path”), which is built upon the *sharīʿah* (“law”). Later, the disciple is led through *fanāʾ fī ashshaykh* (“annihilation in the master”) to *fanāʾ fīar-Rasūl* (“annihilation in the Prophet”) before reaching, if at all, *fanāʾ fī-Allāh* (“annihilation in God”).

One of the means used on the path is the [ritual](https://www.britannica.com/topic/ritual) [prayer](https://www.britannica.com/topic/prayer), or [*dhikr*](https://www.britannica.com/topic/dhikr) (“remembrance”), derived from the Qurʾānic injunction “And remember God often” (sura ). It consists of a repetition of either one or all of the most beautiful names of God, of the name [Allah](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Allah), or of a certain religious formula, such as [*shahādah*](https://www.britannica.com/topic/shahadah) (the profession of [faith](https://www.britannica.com/topic/prayer)): “There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet.” The rosary with 99 or 33 beads was in use as early as the 8th century for counting the thousands of repetitions. One’s whole being should eventually be transformed into remembrance of God.

In the mid-9th century some mystics introduced sessions with music and poetry recitals (*samāʿ*) in [Baghdad](https://www.britannica.com/place/Baghdad) in order to reach the ecstatic experience—and since then debates about the permissibility of *samāʿ*, filling many books, have been written. Narcotics were used in periods of degeneration, and coffee was employed by the “sober” mystics (first by the [Shādhilīyyah](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Shadhiliyah) after 1300).

Besides the wayfarers (*sālik*) on the path, Sufis who have no master but are attracted solely by divine grace are also found; they are called Uwaysī, after Uways al-Qaranī, the Yemenite contemporary of the Prophet who never saw him but firmly believed in him. There are also the so-called *majdhūb* (“attracted”) who are often persons generally agreed to be more or less mentally deranged.

**Main concepts of Sufism:**

1. Sufism derives its inspiration from Islam. While the orthodox Muslims depend upon external conduct and blind observance of religious rituals, the Sufi saints seek inner purity.
2. According to Sufi saints, God is the beloved of the lover (‘Mashook”) i.e. the devotee and the devotee is eager to meet his beloved (God).
3. The Sufis think that love and devotion are the only means of reaching God.Along with Prophet Muhammad, they also attach great importance to their ‘Murshid’ or ‘Pir’ (Guru).
4. Devotion is more important than fast (Roza) or prayer (Namaz)
5. Sufism does not believe in caste system.
6. Sufism emphasizes upon leading a simple life.
7. Sufi saints preached in Arabic, Persian and Urdu etc.

DEVELOPMENT OF SUFISM:

1. **The early phase:** The Sufism of the early Muslims was characterized by the renunciation of worldly pleasures and an intense fear of Allah and His judgments. It was not till some three hundred year after the death of Muhammad that such doctrines came to be outstanding features ofSufism. In other words the early Sufis were strictly speaking ascetics, with poverty as the ideal of their religious life. The formative years of Sufism were between 620 to 1100 AD. It was during this time the Sufi masters, known in Arabic as "Shaikh," started to form the first Sufi fraternities. These early fraternities and some individual Sufis met with great hostility and resistance from certain sections of the Muslim community; on points of interpretation of Islamic Theology and Law. Some of the early Sufis were even persecuted on account of their mystical utterances and beliefs. The most famous Sufi-martyr was Al Hallaj of Basra in Iraq. Some of the well-known early Sufi saints were Rabia Basri (a female Sufi Teacher), Junaid, Ibrahim Adheim and Hasan Basri the most notable one was the great theologian and philosopher Al Gazali who lived in Syria around 1100 AD. His famous treatises, called the (Reconstruction of Religious Sciences) the (Kimiya-e-Sa'adat) and other works; set off to convince the Islamic world that Sufism and its teachings originated from the Qur'an and were compatible with mainstream Islamic thought and theology. It was Al- Gazali who bridged the gap between traditional and mystical Islam.
2. LATER PHASE OF SUFISM: The later phase particularly begins with Al Ghazali who, after analysing the indescribable experiences of the early sufis and after having plunged himself into the realm of mysticism, founded some doctrines of Sufism. They are as follows- (1) Tauba (Repentance) (2) Beem-vrija (hope and fear) (3) Sabr-v-Tavakkul (Patience) and dependence. (4) Marfat (Gnosis) (5) Fana (annihilation) (6) Ishq (Love of God). Later on other sufis like Junaid Bhaghdadi, Shahab-ud-din Suharwardi and Bayazeed Bistami and others discovered their own doctrines like(1) Suhv- (Sobriety)(2) Noor-doctrine of light(3) Sukr- Intoxication. Rumi is the founder of the famous whirling dervishes. Since he left behind an enormous amount of mystical love poetry, the works of this 13th century mystic are eagerly read by people without any Islamic background



Image2: Al-Ghazal Image3: Rumi

FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES OF SUFISM: the following fundamental doctrines:

(1) Worship of God (2) Love of God (3) Knowledge of God (4) Obedience to God (5) Purification (6) Annihilation

They involve a variety of mystic experiences resulting into different stages ensuing several

mental states. The stages are given below:

(1) Salik (Novice)(2) Sabir – (Patient) (3) Arif – (Gnostic) (4) Majzoob – Charlatan

(5) Wali – Saint (6) Qutub- The leader or the star etc. The last and important development of Sufism was the use of Sufi Silsilahs( spiritual Chain) in the 12th century. Sufis founded the Khanqahs in various parts of the countries of the world and establish their silsilahs through which they established a special ties with their predecessor.

**Rituals and Practices:**

It is rather difficult to summarize all the practices and rituals associated with the various orders. However, there are certain practices common to all the orders. They are:

1. Ritual prayer and fasting according to Islamic injunctions.
2. Remembrance of the "spiritual lineage" of each order.
3. The practice of *"dhikr,"* an Arabic word for remembrance of God, by invocation.
4. Meditative and contemplative practices, including intensive spiritual training, in "spiritual retreats" from time to time.
5. Listening to musical concerts, to enhance mystical awareness.

The ritual of "initiation" into the order is ordained by the Sufi master of that particular order. Aspiring novices had to undergo a period of intense training in self-discipline, learning to control one's instincts and desires, guided by the Sufi-master. It was the master who would eventually decide if the novice was ready to be initiated into the order. The "initiation" was and still is a "solemn pledge" by the novice to obey the master implicitly in all matters, spiritual and moral. The master in turn pledges to instruct, teach and guide the "new initiate" along the Sufi path. The initiation really symbolizes

**SUFISM IN INDIA:**. Contrary to the spiritual mission of Sufism, the cult was primarily introduced in India for spread of Islam with a view to help the Muslim rulers for political domination. By and large the spiritual successors of mystic Islamic saints enjoyed the royal favour of Muslim rulers and gave moral support to the atrocious Muslim invaders and looked other way to ignore the growing social conflict. They also guided the State in political affairs with their experience of regular interaction with common people. The way Sufis' tombs emerged as a place of pilgrimage suggests that the missionary objective of the Islamic mystics was formulated mainly for convers1on and to establish the Perso-Arabian cultural domination in South Asia. Even though the Sufi saints got convinced with non-Islamic worldview on metaphysics in course of their interaction with non-Muslim saints, they did not allow their followers to accommodate it in the straight jacket of Islamic theology. Sufi saints commonly viewed as symbol of secularism however, never opposed Jejiya (Tax imposed on non-believers) levied on Hindus in Islamic India. Sufis had accompanied the Muslim marauders in their conquest and brought Islam in contact with Hindu priests and saints. They were receptive to some of the local Hindu traditions may be for a tactical reason to entice the locals towards Islam but ensured that local norms are not accommodated against the watertight Islamic belief, dogma and practice of Quran, Hadith and Sharia which were the fountainheads of Sufism. Their deeply rooted belief and practice of Islamic norms within Perso-Arabic traditions remained the bedrock of the mystic movement. Therefore, in stead of advising the Muslim marauders against their inhuman deeds, the Sufis overlooked the plight of Hindu priests and saints, who were forced to flee and hide themselves.

**Sufism in the sultanate period:** During the period of Sultanate in India these mystics were supposed to guarantee the prosperity to Islamic kingdom. They were patronized by the state for spreading Islam among the non-believers with their acclaimed spiritual influences in the mass. The gift and land provided to the Islamic mystics were used for hospice and their tombs became a place of pilgrimage after their death. "On paper, the Sultanate seemed to be a perfectly Islamized state (but) religious leaders often of Arab origin and the religion (Islam) were subordinated to the political exigencies of the Turko-Afghans, who were in power" ). "No document attests to the peaceful preaching of the Sufis that most defenders of Islam put forward today" The attraction exercised by the politico-economic benefits that Islam offered seemed to have been the primary motivation for conversion, which particularly affected the middle strata of society".

Even though the majority of Sufi orders have a Sunni orientation, early Shia Imams were also revered commonly in Sufi circles. However Nakshbandi order of Sufism, which reached the Prophet via Abu Bakra was notably known for anti-Shia views. Suhrawardiyya and Naqshbandiyya orders of Sufism had more support of Muslim political powers in India." The numerous Sufi religious establishments in India were the major means of spreading Islam and adapting it to indigenous cultural tradition"

Shaikh ali Hujwari of Data Gunj was the first reputed sufi in India. Earlier some other sufies like Shaikh Mohammad also visited India but their preceptors did not permit them to stay here. Shaikh Ali Hujwari on the exhortation of his guide lived here to preach Islam to the native people. He successfully performed his task of proselytism in and around Sindh. Hujweri belonged to the early phase of sufism and emphasized the basic doctrines of sufism like worship of God,love of God, knowledge of God, purification and annihilation. He paved the path for the future sufis in India by writing a monumental book *Kashful-ul-Mehjoob*.

SILSILAHS/ or ORDERS: The establishment of Silsilahs placed Sufism on a firm and organised footing. It connected Sufis with a spiritual hierarchy and they achieved much respect for their liberal and philanthropic attitudes.The term Silsilah is of Arabic origin whose literal meaning is ‘chain’. This chain relates to the link between the spiritual director and his disciples. Hughes has defined it briefly as” the line of succession in any religious order traced either to some directed Khalifa or the prophet himself as it is an unbroken tradition.”

Sufi Silsilahs were started to systematise spiritual training from about 10th Century A.D. These developed gradually and divided into a number of branches. However, despite their division, almost all had some inherent links with one another. In the 12th century A.D. the system was established in an organised form and the basis of these silsilahs( chain), the Sufis linked themselves with Propher Mohammad through either the first Khalifa, Abu Bakr or the fourth Khalifa Hadsat Ali. Sufi Silsilahs are numerous in the world. Each and every Silsilahs has its own particular method. Each school of guidance, as well as its own particular rituals and ceremonies which are followed by its later generations sincerely and enthusiastically.

The silsilahs of India are mainly divided into two categories:

1. Ba- Sharia ( with law) and ii. Be-Sharia ( without law).

Those who follow the Islamic Shariah or fundamental rules such as creeds, daily prayers, fastings, pilgrimage etc. are called Ba- Sharia and those who do not maintain this discipline and rituals belong to Be-Sharia.

In India four Ba- Sharia Silsilahs(Orders) are popularly known . they are :

1. Chistiyas, B. Suharwardiya C. Qadiariya and D. Naqshbandique
2. **The Chishti Silsilah:** The growth of the Chishti order in India during the Sultanate period took place in two phases. The first phase ended with the death of Shaik Nasiruddin in 1356. The second phase started during the later part of the 14th century. The Chishti order which later became most influential and popular Sufi order in India was introduced by Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti (1143-1234).
3. Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti (1143-1234): He came to India during the time of conquest of Muhammad Ghory. He finally settled in Ajmer around 1206 and won the respect of both Muslims and non- Muslims. He was not actively involved in conversion and his attitude towards non-Muslims was one of tolerance. His tomb in Ajmer became a famous centre of pilgrimage in later centuries. Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti pursued the task of proselytism in the country. He travelled to Bangal and other states and converted a great number of natives to Islam. The religion Islam was greatly welcomed in the caste- ridden Indian society because of the fact that Islam in its original form admitted no barriers. The Indian socio-political scene was quite conducive to the fulfilment of the mission in mind. No, renowned sufi unlike the Hindu yogis or Buddhist mystics ever led a life of complete detachment. They only shunned worldly luxuries; Khwaja Moinuddin followed the legacy of the earliest sufis like Abu-zar Ghaffari. The Khwaja participated in the battles against the natives in the days of wars and offered them spiritual remedies in the days of peace. He, however, pleaded always for the communal harmony, spiritual satisfaction to all, and religious tolerance with all humility and integrity. He mixed freely with the lower classes of both Hindus and Muslims. He used to hold devotional musical gatherings. On account of his virtues of renunciation, meditation and selfless service, people from different parts of India came to his place at Ajmer. His ‘dargah’ (tomb) at Ajmer (Ajmer Sharif) has become a place of pilgrimage for the Muslims as well as the Hindus. His devotees believe that by offering prayer at his tomb, their wishes (‘minit’) are fulfilled.
4. The Successor of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti in Delhi was Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar kaki (1235), Shaik Hamidduddin Nagauri (1274), who madeNagaur in Rajasthan, the centre of his activities. They lived like ordinary men anddissociated themselves from those in authority. They were strict vegetarians.They and their successors translated many Persian Sufi verses in the local language called Hindavi.
5. **Baba Farid-ud-Din Ganj-i-Shakar (13th century):** His outlook was broad and humane. Some of his devotional verses are found in ‘Adi-Granth’ of the Sikhs. Thousands of his devotees visit his tomb at Faridkot in the Punjab.
6. **Nizam-ud-Din Aulia (14th century):** He laid great stress on love as a means of the realization of God. He said, “O Muslims! I swear by God that he holds dear those who love Him for the sake of human beings and also those who love human beings for the sake of Him. This is the only way to love and adore Him.” During his life time he was held in great esteem by several Sultans of Delhi as well as the general public. He also used Hindi in his teachings. His tomb at Nizam-ud-Din in Delhi has become a place of pilgrimage for both Muslims and Hindus.

**Image4: *Mausoleum of the 13th century Sufi saint, Nizamuddin Auliya, Delhi, India***



1. SUHARAWARDIYA: Apart from the Chisti order another Sufi order that dominated the Muslim thought during the thirteenth and early years of the fourteenth centuries was Suhrawardiya order founded by Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya. Suharawardy order of Sufism was founded by Shihabud-Din Suharawardy of Baghdad and introduced in India by his disciple Baha-ud-Din Zakariya of Multan. Suhara\vardiyya order of Sufism became popular in Bengal. In the fourteenth century, however, the influence of the Sufis declined due to anti-Sufi attitude of Muhammad bin Tughluq and Sunni orthodoxy of Firuz Tughluq which gave opportunity to the Ulamas to oppose the Sufi heterodoxy with greater vehemence.The result was that greater emphasis was laid on religious ceremonies and rituals thus reducing religion into a mere formalism. The predominance of the Ulamas, Mullas, Pirs continued from the latter half of the fourteenth century to the first half of the sixteenth.
2. Qadiariya order founded by Abdul Qadir whose tomb is at Baghdad. Its influence is extensively among the Muslims of south India. the Shattaris by Shaikh Abdul Shattari in the fifteenth century.
3. NAQSHBANDI: Baha-ud-Din Naqshband (1318-1389) of Turkistan founded Naqshbandi order of Sufism. Insistence on rigid adherence to Shariat and nurturing love for prophet was the essence of this order that established its hold in India under the patronage of Mogul rulers, as its founder was their ancestral 'Pir' (Spiritual guide). "The conquest of India by Babur in 1526 gave considerable impetus to the Naqshbandiyya order”. Its disciples remained loyal to the throne because of the common Turk origin. With the royal patronage of most of the Mogul rulers Naqshbandi order served the cause for revival of Islam in its pristine form. Khwaja Mohhammad Baqi Billah Berang whose tomb is in Delhi introduced Naqshbandi order in India in the sixteenth century. Though, the Sufis of this order were lying low during the period of Akbar, Khalifa Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, (1564- 1624), a favourite disciple of Baqi Billah achieved increasing importance and popularised this order when the Great Mogul became bed ridden. Baqi Billah, nicknamed him as 'Mujaddid (Reformer or reviver of Islam for the second millenium). The mission of the Naqsh bandi saints was similar but they emphasized the eradication of alien elements crept in Islam from the native religions. Khwaja Kalan and his other compatriots propogated the teachings of their predecessors Ubaid ulah Ahrar and Baha ul- dinNaqsh bandya order was less tolerant as compared to the Chishties ,Qadries and Suhawardies. There was another important distinction. The three above mentioned orders claimed themselves to be the descendents of Ali whereas the Naqshbandies traced their origin from the first caliph, Abu Bakr. Their puritanical approach made them austere and obstinately hard liners. They wanted to convert India into a Islamic state and recommended to the Mughal kings to impose jaziya (kind of tax) on the Hindu subjects. The Mughal kings however never acted upon their advice. Shaikh Ahmad Sir Hindi, a noted Naqsh bandi Saint, vehemently criticized Akbar for his policy of “Sulah-e-Kul” (compromise with all and his religion “Deen-e-Ilahi” the religion of God which he founded for the fulfilment of his mission. The early Nakshbandies were inclined towards wahadata-ul-wadjood the unity of existence, the theory of Ibnul-Arabi. Later on Shaikh Ahmad Sir Hindi propounded another theory known as the unity of appearance, wahadul-ul-shahood. All his disciples and some other noted Nakshbandis were impressed with his theory and followed it rather strictly. Since then, there arose a serious controversy between the followers of the two schools. It gave way to a severe conflict inviting harsh and bitter criticism against each other. Instead of a healthy debate it generated a controversy leading to acrimonious consequences. Nakshbanya order received better cognizance in India. It produced many notable saints like Khwaja Khurd, Ahmad Sir Hindi, Khawaja Masoom, Shah wali-ulah his son Shah Abdul Azeez. Shiakh Abu Ahmad Sir Hindi, although an exalted saint, was quite controversial because of his alleged heresies and mystic experiences. Jahangir imprisoned him for his political interventions when he criticized his father Akbar for his policies. Shah Wali-ullah was another outstanding sufi of this order. Besides being a noted Sufi he was an eminent scholar of all theological sciences. Although he was trained and initiated in the other three orders as well, yet he chose to practice Nakshbandi teachings. As sufi Shah wali-ullah tried to resolve the age old controversy between the two school, namely the unity of existence and the unity of appearance. He offered reconciliation between the two and argued that the thought content of the two schools is similar and that they express the same ideas in different words. He also asserted that the *wahdut-ul-wujood* and *wahdut-ul-Shahood* are simply two stages in the mystic journey. Ibn-ul-Arabi reached one stage and Ahmad Sir Hindi soared higher to the next stage. This argument shows his inclination to the later school. His son Shah Abdul Azeez carried forward the movement of his father in the field of politics and Sufism. The two father and the son assume importance due to changing political scene in India. The Mughal dynasty was dying out. The British were gaining control. There was an all round decay and decline. Shah Abdul-Azeez tried to inspire the Muslims for the restoration of their political power. He thus like other Nakshbandi saints attempted at reestablishing the supremacy of Islam in the realm of politics and religion. He also inherited the puritanical attitude which however proved to be detrimental for the Muslims in India.

**Sufi Khanqah**: To organise the work of the Sufis and their followers they formed the Sufi Khanqah ( hospice). The first Khanqah was built by Abu- Hashim of Kufa( befor 800 A.D.). in the early stage these Khanqahs( hospice) were the place of personal worship. From the 11th century A.D. Khanqahs were established as a temporary rest houses for the wandering sufis . In the 12th Century A.D. Kanqahs appeared in a new character. The inhabitants of Kanqahs maintained some institutional rules during their dwelling period. They became centres for mystic discipline and organization from the beginning of 13th century A.D. Sufi hospices became mystical schools. Later these were directed by particular spiritual preceptors on definite spiritual paths ( tariqas). Each such tariqas was intermingled through a continuous chain or mystical Isnad.

### One reason why [Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam) became more favourable in India was due to the establishment of [khanqah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khanqah). A khanqah is commonly defined as a hospice, lodge, community center, or dormitory ran by Sufis. Khanqahs were also known as [Jama'at Khana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jama%27at_Khana), large gathering halls. Structurally, a khanqah could be one large room or have additional dwelling space.  Although some khanqah establishments were independent of royal funding or patronage, many received fiscal grants ([waqf](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waqf)) and donations from benefactors for continuing services. Over time, the function of traditional Sufi khanqahs evolved as Sufism solidified in India.

Initially, the Sufi khanqah life emphasized a close and fruitful relationship between the master-teacher ([sheikh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheikh)) and their students. For example, students in khanqahs would pray, worship, study, and read works together. Sufi literature had more academic concerns besides just the jurisprudential and theological works seen in [madrasa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madrasa).  There were three major categories of mystical works studied in South Asia: hagiographical writing, discourses of the teacher, and letters of the master.  Sufis also studied various other manuals describing code of conduct, [adab (Islam)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adab_(Islam)). In fact, the text (trans.) "Path of God's Bondsmen from Origin to Return" written by a Persian Sufi saint, Najm al-Din Razi, spread throughout India during the authors' lifetime. Sharing that Sufi thought was becoming increasingly favourable to study in India. Even today, preserved mystical literature has proved invaluable as a source of religious and social history of Sufi Muslims in India.

The other major function of a khanqah was of a community shelter. Many of these facilities were built in low caste, rural, Hindu vicinities. The Chishti Order Sufis in India, especially, crystallized khanqahs with the highest form of modest hospitality and generosity. Keeping a "visitors welcome" policy, khanqahs in India offered spiritual guidance, psychological support, and counselling that was free and open to all people. The spiritually hungry and depressed caste members were both fed with a free kitchen service and provided basic education. By creating egalitarian communities within stratified caste systems, Sufis successfully spread their teachings of love, spirituality, and harmony. It was this example of Sufi brotherhood and equity that drew people to the religion of Islam. Soon these khanqahs became social, cultural, and theological epicentres for people of all ethnic and religious backgrounds and both genders. Through a khanqah's services, Sufis presented a form of Islam that forged a way for voluntary large scale conversions of lower class Hindustanis

DEVELOPMENT IN SUFI LITERATURES

During the sixteenth and earlier part of the eighteenth the Sufi poets made great contribution to Punjabi literature. Sufi poetry appealed to the heart of the common people and became very popular among all classes of people of the Punjab. Spiritual urges are expressed in terms of simple objects familiar to common folk, such as the spinning wheel, the Persian wheel, the dancing Dervishes, Characters drawn from popular mythology Hindu as well as Muslim. Among the Sufis of this period the names of Hafiz Barkhudar Vajid, Ali Haidar, Sultan Bahu, Shah Hussain and Bulhe Shah deserve mention. Sultan Bahu was a mystic dervish. He expressed himself in passionate poetry of devotion and renunciation. Shah Hussain was a fakir given to free way of life, loved by the people for his sincerity of passion and devotion, but reproved by the orthodox Muslims.

The song-lyrics practiced by Hussain and other Sufi poets is known as Kafi. Bulhe Shah was, however, the prince of the Sufi poets. Some sects were founded in the seventeenth century which emphasised the unity of religions between the Hindus and the Muslims. The name of Dadu (1544- 1603) stands foremost among the founders of such sects. Dadu founded the Parabrahma Sampradaya with a view to uniting different faiths in one bond of love and comradeship.

A Kshatriya of Malwa named Baba Lai gave seven interviews to Dara Shukoh in 1648 and their conversations are recorded in a Persian work named Nadu un Mikat which is an admixture of the Vedanta and Sufi doctrines. A few other sects apart from Parabrahma Sampradaya were those of Qalandar and Jangam. The followers of the latter were fakirs who like Hindu Sannyasis kept long matted hair and wandered about. Under Shah Jahan the renowned Sufi and author Muhibbullah Illahabadi wrote a commentary on Quran from sufistic view point, entitled Maratib al-Arbaah.

Lastly, it may be pointed out that Sufis helped the spread of Islam in India by emphasising social equality of all men. Many of the Sufis were men of great learning; they were guides to good life. They are “thought of as forming a bridge of understanding with the Hindu Bhakti movement, with their emphasis on the inner life and the unity of all believers in one God.”

**Sufi music in India**

Music is one of the many aspects of Sufism and plays a crucial role in Sufism. It is a medium to connect and get closer to God. In India, Sufi music flourished in the form of Qawwali. Shankar-Shambu and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan are known to have popularised Qawwali globally. Qawwali uses Farsi, Hindi or Urdu language. Sufi music is still the central ritual at the shrines of Shaikh Nizammudin Auliya and Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti.

**Impact of Sufism:**

1. **Religions impact:** The efforts of Sufi saints helped to lessen religious fanaticism in India. Hindus in larger numbers became followers of Sufi saints. The tombs built after their death has continued to become places of worship for the Muslims as well as the Hindus. Their belief in unity of God helped to remove mutual differences.
2. **Social Impact:** Their stress on social welfare led to the establishment of works of charitable nature i.e. opening of orphanages and women service centres. The efforts of Sufi saints helped to promote equality and lessen the evils of casteism. They also tried to infuse a spirit of piety and morality.
3. **Political Impact:** Some of the renowned Sufi saints on account of their virtuous and saintly life motivated some of the Delhi Sultans to follow a liberal policy.
4. **Cultural Impact:**The sacred places built in the memory of the Sufi saints clearly demonstrate the development of a new type of architecture. The Dargah’ of Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chisti at Ajmer and the Tomb of Nizam-ud-Din Aulia at Delhi have a special place in architecture. Sufi saints popularized devotional music and songs. Several Sufi saints composed literary works in vernacular languages.

**Amir Khusro (** born 1253, Patiāli [now in [Uttar Pradesh](https://www.britannica.com/place/Uttar-Pradesh), India]—died 1325, Delhi),: **Abu'l Hasan Yaminuddin Khusro**, better known as **Amir Khusro (also Khusrau, Khusrow) Dehlavi**, was the poet laureate of the Indian subcontinent and enjoys ever-lasting fame as one of the most versatile poets and prolific prose-writers of the 13th and 14th centuries. A disciple of Nizam-ud-Din Aulia, and a noted poet. The poetry of Khusro was so full of sweetness that he was called ‘Tutiy-i-Hind( parrot of India). He is credited with more than 90 works on different subjects i.e. historical and romantic as well. Amir Khusrow is considered to be the founder of certain styles of classical Pakistani and Indian music. According to his standard biography he used his music to bring the message of Islam closer to the common people. [On a daily basis, his songs are still performed from Islamabad to Delhi and his spiritual verses are sang at marriages and in sanctuaries.](https://www.amazon.com/Jashn-e-Khusrau-2013-Celebrating-Genius-Khusrau/dp/1935677438/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1475492795&sr=8-1&keywords=jashn-e-khusrau)He is traditionally considered to be the founder of *qawwali* and lyrical poetry in Hindustani (Urdu), credited with enriching Hindustani classical music by introducing Persian and Arabic elements in it. The invention of the *sitar* and the musical styles known as *khyal* and *tarana* are also attributed to him. His poetical composition, the amalgamation of Persian and Hindi in particular, was aimed at cementing the bonds of culture and friendship between the Hindus and Muslims of India.

He was an intellectual giant of many languages, with knowledge of Turkish, Arabic, Persian and the vernaculars of northern India - the Khariboli, (Urdu and Hindi both being developed forms of it), Braj Bhasha and Awadhi. It was during his stay in Awadh, Delhi and Punjab that he learned these northern languages. He also learned Sanskrit which he placed before all other languages, except Arabic, the language of his religion.

Amīr Khosro wrote numerous works, among them five divans, which were compiled at different periods in his life, and his [*Khamsah*](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Khamsah) (“Pentalogy”), a group of five long idylls in emulation of the Khamseh of the celebrated Persian poet Neẓāmī (c. 1141–1209). Amīr Khosrow’s pentalogy deals with general themes famous in Islāmic [literature](https://www.britannica.com/art/literature). In addition to his [poetry](https://www.britannica.com/art/poetry), he is known for a number of prose works, including the Khazāʾin al-futūḥ (“The Treasure-Chambers of the Victories”), also known by the title Tārīkh-e ʿAlāʾī (“The History of Ala”). Two historical poems for which he is well known are Nuh Sipihr (“The Nine Heavens”) and the Tughluq-nāmah (“The Book of Tughluq”).

Image of Khusro



**Significance of Sufism:**

Sufism has helped to shape large parts of Muslim society. The orthodox disagree with such aspects of Sufism as saint [worship](https://www.britannica.com/topic/worship), visiting of tombs, musical performances, miracle mongering, degeneration into jugglery, and the [adaptation](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/adaptation) of pre-Islamic and un-Islamic customs; and the reformers object to the influences of the monistic interpretation of [Islam](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Islam) upon [moral](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/moral) life and human activities. The importance given to the figure of the master is accused of yielding negative results; the *shaykh* as the almost infallible leader of his [disciples](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/disciples) and admirers could gain dangerous authority and political influence, for the illiterate villagers in rural areas used to rely completely upon the “saint.” Yet, other masters have raised their voices against social inequality and have tried, even at the cost of their lives, to change social and political conditions for the better and to spiritually revive the masses. The missionary activities of the Sufis have enlarged the fold of the faithful. The importance of Sufism for spiritual education, and inculcation in the faithful of the virtues of trust in God, piety, [faith](https://www.britannica.com/topic/faith) in God’s love, and veneration of the Prophet, cannot be overrated. The *dhikr* formulas still preserve their consoling and quieting power even for the illiterate. Mysticism permeates [Persian literature](https://www.britannica.com/art/Persian-literature) and other literatures influenced by it. Such poetry has always been a source of happiness for millions, although some modernists have [disdained](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/disdained) its “narcotic” influence on Muslim thinking. Industrialization and modern life have led to a constant decrease in the influence of Sufi orders in many countries. The spiritual heritage is preserved by individuals who sometimes try to show that mystical experience conforms to modern science. Today in the West, Sufism is popularized, but the genuinely and authentically devout are aware that it requires strict [discipline](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/discipline), and that its goal can be reached, ‘if at all’ as they say, only by throwing oneself into the consuming fire of divine love.

**Difference between Islam and Sufism:** Islam is a dogmatic and monotheistic religion founded by Prophet Muhammad about 1400 years ago on the basis of revelations of Allah contained in the holy book of Quran. Islam is a strictly enforced way of life according to dictates of Quran and Hadith (subsequent explanations of Muhammad’s sayings) that every believer of Islam is mandated to follow. Islam believes there is only one God and that is Allah and no other God. According to Islam the purpose of life is to live according to Quran and Hadith and thereby serve Allah. Sufism, on the other hand is spiritual dimension of God-man union. It is claimed that the idea of Sufism has been expressed by Hindu and Christian hermits and later influenced Islam. Nevertheless it is safe to say that Sufism has been blossomed in the structure and practices of Islam. Some believe Sufism among Muslims developed out of disenchantment of the materialistic and luxurious life-styles of moneyed Muslims, especially the Umayyad Caliphate. According to Ali Hujwiri, Ali Talib was the founder of Sufism within Islam. Many scholars of Islam and Sufism believe that Sufism is all about internalisation of Islam that includes such practices as recitation, meditation, and other ritualistic activities. It is also claimed by some scholars that Sufism means emulation of the life of Muhammad, and striving to be exactly as Muhammad was.

1. **Perception about the right path to God**: The fundamental difference between Islam and Sufism pivots around the path of attaining union with Allah. According orthodox mainstream Islam, it is the Quranic teachings of Muhammad, Sharia Law, and Hadith that set the guidelines to be strictly followed by Muslims in order to attain eternal closeness with Allah, the divine.  
   Sufism, on the other hand gives less emphasis on Hadith and Sharia, and focuses on mystical and ritualistic practices of praising Allah.
2. **Importance of Sharia:** The traditional orthodox Muslims believe serving Allah without strict adherence to the Islamic Sharia law is impossible. This major Muslim block believes Sharia is sacrosanct not only in the context or religious belief, but is at the root of Islamic identity politics. Importance of Sharia in the collective psyche of orthodox Muslims is so much so that it has been the point of discontent in matters of governance of states in many democratic set-ups. Mainstream Muslims believe any legal system other than Sharia is anti-Islam. Followers of Sufism believe that strict adherence to Sharia is no guarantee to attaining union with God. They believe that progressive ritual practices and meditation would bring a Muslim in the close proximity of Allah. They also do not believe that Sharia should be the only legal system for Muslims, and nurses no intolerance to democratic system.
3. **When to Attain God**: Mainstream Muslims believe that by strictly following the Quran and the Hadith, a Muslim can attain divine closeness in the paradise after death. Hadith announces priceless gifts for strict adherents to Quran and Hadith in paradise after death. Believers of Sufism are of the [view](http://www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous/culture-miscellaneous/difference-between-renaissance-world-view-and-enlightenment-world-view/) that by meditation and ritualistic practices a Muslim need not wait for death, rather can embrace divine closeness with God in this life itself.
4. **Materialistic luxury**: Mainstream Islam does not forbid materialistic pleasure and luxury, although there are instructions in Quran to give grants and donations to the poorer members of the community. Those who believe in Sufism voluntarily accept poverty and celibacy, and refrain from any kind of worldly pleasure.
5. **Spirituality**: Mainstream Islam is more allied to hard-core dictates and lacks spiritual value. The concept of Sufism, on the other hand is based upon the search for deeper spiritual meaning of Islam. Sufism fill-up the spiritual void created by Islamic law centric religious system. According to famous Sufi philosopher Baba Garib Shah, Islamic law is not conducive to attaining oneness with God, but it is Sufism that leads to God.
6. **Viewing Hajj**: Mainstream Islam believes that pilgrimage to Mecca, known as Hajj, would purify the mind of a Muslim and would make him Hajji. But Sufism does not believe pilgrimage to Mecca would amount to Hajj.
7. **Dhikr**: According to Sufis Dhikr or [state](http://www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous/politics/difference-between-state-and-society/) of ecstasy by ritualistic practices is the way towards God. Orthodox Muslims believe that only Muhammad could experience such a phenomenon, and experienced God in lifetime, and no other human being can ever experience that in lifetime.
8. **Place of Music and Dance**: In mainstream Islam, music of any kind other than chanting of Quranic verses are disallowed. Sufism on the other hand not only takes recourse to music in praising God, but also introduced dance in the realm of worshipping Allah. Orthodox Muslims believe that dance and music are leisure activities and would distract the performer from truly serving God.