



## SUFISM

“Whithers ever you turn, there is the fame of God”

\_\_\_\_The Quran.

In 623 AD, about 45 devotees of the Holy Prophet, called the *Ashab-i Suffa* - formed a brotherhood, by taking an oath of fidelity to him. They considered Mohammad as the beloved of God and this universe as the gift of God to the Prophet. To them, God alone was perfect benevolence and love was the basis through which God could be understood and realized. They had detached themselves from worldly affairs and temptations. Having developed a profound sense of sacrifice and renunciation, they would remain absorbed in love of the Lord. They would eat little and would accept whatever would be given to them by their fellow Muslims. Considering themselves as lovers of the Holy Prophet, they would sit near the Prophet’s chamber at Medina. Bilal, Salman Farsi, Abu Zar Gafari, Uwaymar bin Zaid, and Abu Huraira are mentioned as early members of the *Ashab-i-Suffa*.

*“Verily in the Messenger of God is a fair example for those of you that set their hopes on God and remember God much”*

These very early mystics of Islam became in later times the forerunners of a distinct class, known as the Sufis. Uwais al - Qarni (AD.657) is credited to have established the first spiritual order of the Muslim mystic’s. He was a contemporary of the Holy Prophet and spent his hours in solitude, fasting, night vigil and prayers. He was a great lover of the Prophet but the two never met. In honor of the Holy Prophet who at the Battle of Uhud had lost two of his teeth, Uwais al- Qarni drew out his own teeth. It shows his intense love for the Holy Prophet! It is also related that the Holy Prophet loved and esteemed this mystic saint with

vivid description. After the demise of the Holy Prophet, both Ali, the Imam, Omar the Caliph went to find Uwais al - Qarni.

Sufis believe that the glorious Prophet was the recipient of a two - fold knowledge: *Ilm -i- Safina*; or the outer knowledge and *Ilm-i-Sina* or the inner knowledge. He entrusted this inner knowledge, which is also called *Ilm-i-Ludduni* to Ali ibn Talib, who was titled as Imam. Since then Ali, the Imam is looked upon as the fountainhead of mystic knowledge by all the Sufis.

Hasan al-Basri (AD 728) is said to have sat at the feet of Imam Ali and obtained spiritual guidance .It is through him that many of the Sufi orders trace their spiritual Descente back to Imam Ali .He would advise his *Murids*:

*O, son of Adam:  
You will die alone and enter the tomb alone,  
Why care so much for the perishable world!  
Be with the world as if you have never been there  
Be with the outer world as if you would never leave it*

Rabiah al- Adawiyyah (d.806) is the most celebrated woman mystic, whose poetry thrones light on her unique relationship with God filled with unselfish love says she:

*O God!  
If I worship Thee in the fear of hell, burn me in hell.  
If I worship Thee in the hope of paradise then exclude me  
But if I worship Thee for Thy sake,  
Withhold not Thy everlasting Beauty.*

It is mentioned that at night, she would go to the house top and say:

*“O God! After the days noise, the lovers are with their beloveds. But Thee I have as my lover and alone with Thee, I joy.”*

From the above, we learn that for the mystics, God alone is the perfect beauty and love for Him is true love (*ishq-i-Haqiqi*) while love for other objects besides Him is illusory love (*ishq-i-Majazi*)

*“With my beloved I alone have been, while secrets tender than evening air Passed and the vision blest was granted to my prayers”*

Dhul Nun of Egypt (D.861, who is known as the first Sufi *Qutub*, says that *Marifat* is God's providential communications of the spiritual light to our inmost hearts. According to him, Sufis are those whom God has invested with the radiance of His love, upon whose heads, He sets the crown of His joy. His grave had the following inscription:

*This is the beloved of God,  
Who died from his love for God?  
Was killed by God!*

Mansur al-Hallaj (D.922) was crucified like Jesus Christ, for claiming identity with God, for he had declared:

*I am my Beloved, my Beloved in me.  
We are two spirits in one body.  
If you see me, you see Him.  
If you see Him, you see us both*

Hallaj has been defended from the charge of blasphemy by many and designated as a martyr of love who did not distinguish himself from the beloved God.

Mansoor al Hallaj had attained the station of *Fana* or annihilation, in his journey towards God. This was the end where he had effaced himself and merged with God .He had immersed in the *Dhat*, (divine essence) and assert in his ecstasy: *Ana 'l Haqq'*. I am the Truth. By uttering these great words he had broken down the dividing line between God and man. Earlier Jesus, in his prayer had said:

*May they all be one, as you,  
Father, are in me,  
And I in you,  
So they be in us.*

With the spread of Islamic civilizations, the Sufis came into contact with esoteric and mystic traditions of the Greeks, Hebrews, Christians, Hindus and Buddhists. To their amazement, they found that hardly there was any country, where some sort of mysticism had not taken any root. To their amazement, they also found that there existed complete uniformity of ideas, aspirations, methods, rituals and doctrines in these alien philosophies with those of Sufism. It became clear that mystics, whether they were Hindus or Christians or Muslims, aspired to experience some sort of spiritual union with the Divine. Prince Dara Shikoh (d.1619), who translated the *Upnishad*, from Sanskrit into Persian, found *Advaita Vedanta* of the Hindus, essentially the same, as Sufism of the Muslims.

Proceeding further, we find that the Beatific Vision in Christianity is similar to the *Tajalli-I-dhat* (Divine Vision) of the Sufis .This concept has been explained by al-Arabi (d.1240) so beautifully in these words:

*“God manifests Himself to the elect in various forms.”*

This concept can be traced among the Hindu concept of *Sat Cit Ananda*.

The Sufis have four main orders, which obtained prominence between the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The first was the Qadiriyya order, which was founded by Sheikh Abd-el-Kader Jilani (d.1166)of Baghdad .His mystical discourses were attended not only by Muslims but also by Christians and Jews. His order spread to many countries of Asia, particularly the Indian subcontinent .A branch of this order is the Chisti *Tariqah* founded by Khwaja Moin-ud-din Chisti of Ajmer (d.1233).The great Sufi saint has said:

*Love all and hate none .Never seek any help, charity and favor from anybody except God.*

The second ,the Suharwardiyya was founded by Sheikh Shab-uddin Suhrawardi, who died at Baghdad in 1234.His *Awarif-ul-Maarif* in Arabic and *Misbah-ul-Hidayat* in Persian have been extensively read in all mystic circles. Says she:

*“After annihilation of both the desire as well as will, God maketh the slave, master of both the desire as well as will. After this, whatever the slave desired, he doeth it with the will and desire of God.”*

The third ,the Shadhiliyya Order, which is very popular in Egypt and North Africa, was founded by Sheikh Abu-Hassan-ash-Shadhili (d.1285).Its members trace their spiritual descent back to Imam Hassan and then to the Holy Prophet .They devote much of their time in reciting, *Dala-il-al-Khayrat*, a very popular manual containing invocations of blessings on the Holy Prophet.

The fourth Order was founded by the celebrated mystic poet Jalal-uddin Rumi (d.1273) and is known as the *Mawlawi Tariqah*. Its members are also recognized as the whirling Dervishes. A prominent branch of this to the Halveti-Jerrahi Order of dervishes, which is influential in Turkey, Germany and America.

The early Sufis sought to follow the ideals of the Holy Prophet, and aimed at *“fana-fil-Rasool”* or annihilation of self in love of the Holy Prophet .Later, the Sufis chose God as their object of desire, designating him as their Beloved. In order to achieve the union of *I and Thou* (mystic union), they adopted various practices, formulas and techniques.

*O God, seek me out of Thy mercy  
That I may come to Thee;  
And draw me on with Thy grace  
Thata I may turn to Thee.*

With the passage of time, the Sufis started bringing their own experiences into operation within the climate of the countries in which they lived .As such, various orders have developed but the central theme , ‘ the kingdom of God is within you ‘ has remained the same. A Sufi was asked; where are you going? To the Beloved. What is your food? The recollection of the Beloved. What is your drink? Longing for the Beloved .How long are you going on saying, The Beloved, the Beloved? Till I unite with the Beloved.

Sufism is now a way of love, purity, patience, kindness, sacrifice, indigence, humility, generosity and happiness.

*Neither Hindus nor are Momins  
Nor in mosque they go to pray  
With each breath and every moment  
Timelessly see Allah they  
Wise were they but turned wiseacres  
Perfect Essence keeps them gay  
Life of mine be ran son for them  
Bahoo! Lovers wend this way.*

The Sufis, in the words of Nasrollah Fatemi, have brought the message of harmony, happiness, hope, peace, love and friendship to the family of man. This joyful message goes beyond religion, ideology, color, creed or race.

According to Murshid Inayat Khan, the present day Sufis tries to unite members of different nations and races together in the ideals of “*Sophia*” or wisdom, which belong to human race as a whole. He has summarized the life of a Sufi in these beautiful words:

*“The Sufi shows his universal brotherhood in his adaptability. Among the Christians, he is a Christian, among Jews, he is a Jew, among Muslims, he is a Muslim, and among Hindus he is a Hindu; for he is one with all, and thus all are with him .He allows everyone to join in his brotherhood, and in the same way he allows himself to join in any other .He never questions,”  
What is your creed or nation or religion neither does he ask, what are your teachings and principles?.”*

Sufis all over the world claim that they are the lovers of God and God is the greatest concept man has found to cope with the problems of life but, they also recognize that besides them, they are others who also love God as intensely as they do. They have come out of the radius of dogma and have given wider dimensions to Sufism.

They are convinced about the inner spiritual oneness of humanity which transcends outer differences of religion, dogma or belief.

Among the Sufis, we have classical scholars, whose life and works have deeply influenced the thought of the East and West. Ibn al- Arabi (d.1240) who inspired medieval western scholars, to write books on Sufism has compiled the following beautiful poem:

*My heart is capable now of all forms.  
It is a pasture for the gazelles.  
A convent for the Christian monks.  
A temple for idols.  
The Kabah of pilgrims.  
The table of Mosaic Law.  
The book of Quran.  
I am for myself the religion of love.*

Al-Ghazzali (d.1111) made amazing observations in the field of psychology and psycho-therapy .Professor Yahia Haschmi is of the view that the Sufi literature contains the idea of evolution, the conception of the atom, of a fourth dimension of relatively, and even of the space travel.

Every religion has its own mythology and its own mysticism. So is the case with Islam and this mystical dimension is designated as *Tasawwuf* in the East and Sufism in the west. It is for this reason that a Muslim mystic is known as a Sufi. Whereas Sufism implies purity; so a Sufi is one; who is on a path leading to the purity of body, mind and soul. He keeps his body clean and pure not only by washing but eating clean and lawful foods. He wears wool or cotton and does not like synthetic clothing or food. He inhales clean air and practices *Habs-e-dam* or *Kumbhaka Pranayama* for attracting the life force that animates all living beings.

A Sufi stays in the clean place away from pollution. As such he is seen among the forests; gardens and meadows. In order to keep his mind clean and pure; a Sufi gives up worldly desires; anger; lust and pride. He is always on the inner path or *Saluk* and this path leads him to God. He is always eager to achieve *Tazkiya-i-Nafs* or purification of the ego. In order to achieve this, he undergoes various stages of evolutionary *Kriyas*, under the guidance of a Master who is designated as *Murshid*.

In Sufism, a lover is a technical term for the lover of God .It is through this love that a Sufi wants to make God a reality.

God created Adam in the image of his own love. He then created Eve in the image of Adam's love. It is clear that all the three entities; God, Adam and Eve are chained together in the everlasting bond of love .All

the three are attracted to each other in one or the other form. The ultimate aim of love is the union of hearts . In case of the illuminated souls, craving is the bond of love, while in case of the satanic beings; it is the bond of evil.

*Murshid Muzaffer Ozaak Al-Jerrahi says:*

*In heaven love, on earth love,  
To the right love; to the left love;  
Every where and everything is love.  
Love is He, the lover is He;  
The Beloved is He; the loved one is He;  
The Dear one is He; the Friend is He.  
The knight of love will reach his Beloved  
Early or late.  
Love Him, that He may love you too.  
Unless He loves, you cannot love Him;  
Unless He is seeking you, you cannot seek Him.  
Love the Beloved, for the Beloved is He.  
Love your own true self,  
For your own true self is also He.*

Our beloved God is our Creator. He loves his creation.  
He also likes His creation to recognize Him.

*I was the hidden treasure.  
I desired to be known.  
I created you all so that  
I might be known*

If you know who you are, then you are a Sufi and If you do not know your Beloved, then you have to tread on the way of the mystics, which is known as Sufism.

It is the way of Love this way cannot be determined through reading but is to be experienced by anyone himself or herself. You can know the house and what it contains only by entering into it. This house is thy heart and having installed God in the house, it is undeserving for a man to accommodate anything else in it.

*Hail to thee, O love, our sweet melancholy,  
Thou physician of all our ills,  
Thou purge of our pride and conceit.  
Thou art our Plato and our Galen.  
Our earthly body, through love, is raised to the skies,  
Mountains take to dancing and nimbleness.  
Love became the soul of Sinai, lover!*

*Muhabbat* is a strong link that binds the lover with the Beloved. It is an attraction of the beloved that draws to himself the lover. *Murshid Junaid* has said:

*Love signifies the entering into the  
Qualities of the beloved in exchange  
For the qualities of the lover.”  
Vanished are the forests, rivers,  
Oneness [Wahdat] is in flood and spate  
Lovers fight not shy of drinking  
Brimful cups of Death and Hate  
Rubbing ash on bodies graceful  
Hundreds walk the lover’s gait  
I am all for persons, Bahoo  
Valiant, brave and regenerate.*

Salutations to our Master, the Glorious Prophet who says:

“He, who knows his own self, knows *Allah*”. Remember then, that your heart is the sacred abode of our beloved God. It is here that the Holy One manifests as the lover and the beloved.

When the human soul is dominated by passions and desires, the Sufis call it *Nafs-i-Ammarah* or simply *Nafs*. On the contrary, when the human soul is controlled by reason, it is known as *Nafs-i-Mutminnah*. However, it is very difficult, nay impossible to reach the substance of *Nafs*. Indeed, so contradictory is man’s nature that it is very difficult for him to bring about harmony in his discordant tendencies.

A Sufi creates harmony, lives in harmony and offers harmony, because he is always trying to establish harmony between the mind and the matter. Guru Nanak Sahib speaks about the Sufis in these verses:

*Sear Ones, in whose heart dwells God;  
Whose inner shrine is lighted with lamp of God?  
One, who speaks and thinks of none other than God,  
Sees and feels none other than God!  
In and around, all the time everywhere,  
Verily such are the chosen Sufis of God.*

In order to create harmony and balance, the Sufis seek knowledge of the outer or inner life. After finding the purpose of life they try to realize that purpose. It is a process of awareness, which can lead to the status of the angels. The final stage is believed to be the merger with the Divine Creator.

*Sufi Lakooft fights the ghost of evil from within.  
Unfathomable he is with love of God over-ridden.*



*Serves his detractors and knows no mine or thine.  
Prides in clean existence radiating light along the path Divine.*

Murshid Rumi, the famous Sufi poet has described this process of evolution as under:

*I died as inanimate matter but became a planet,  
I died as a planet but rose again as an animal,  
I died as an animal but arose as man;  
I shall die again as a man to rise as an angel,  
To become what passes the conception of mankind,  
I shall become non-existent but return to Him.*

The whole world is in turmoil and chaos. There is no peace of mind and all suffer with some kind of stress and pain. We have achieved much in the field of material welfare. Still we are not happy! What is the reason for all this agony? The Sufis try to answer this by saying that we have lost touch with our inner self.

A Sufi tries to realize one's true nature, one's true being and one's true purpose of life. It is in self-realisation that the purpose of our whole life is hidden.

Nasir Khosrow, the famous Persian poet (d.1088) referring to the knowledge of one's inner self, states:

*Know thyself, for knowing truly thine own heart  
Thou knowest that good and Ill in thee are part.  
Discern the world f thine own being, and then  
Walk with pride amidst the common run of men.  
Know thyself, and the whole world thus discover,  
Then from all ill shall thyself deliver  
Thou knowest not thyself for thou art lowly,  
Thou shouldst behld god if thou thyself could see,  
Whereas thy soul in thought and sprit hath its roots  
See thyself full if marveks without number.*

It is true that the early Sufis sought to follow the ideals of the Holy Prophet and tried to acquire the true qualities of a devout Muslim. Later Sufis chose the image of God as their object of desire, designated Him as the Beloved. They sought the union of *I* and *Thou*. God can only be known when the human ego is extinguished. The heart is the via media between the ego and the soul. In order Seek the union of *I and Thou*, a Sufi has to motivate his heart from within. Having filled his heart with the love of God, a Sufi is on the path which leads to his union with the Beloved.

The great Sufi mystic Rumi expresses the dynamics of love:

*Through Love thorns become roses,  
 Through Love vinegar becomes sweet wine  
 Through Love the stake becomes a throne  
 Through Love the reverse of fortune seems good fortune,  
 Through Love a prison seems a rose bower  
 Through Love a great full of ashes seems a garden  
 Through Love a burning fire is a pleasing light  
 Through love a Devil becomes a Houri  
 Through Love the hard stone becomes soft as butter  
 Through Love grief's joy  
 Through Love ghouls turn into angels  
 Through sting are as honey  
 Through Love lions are harmless as mice  
 Through Love sickness is health  
 Through Love wrath is mercy*

Love is the essence of Sufism. A Sufi fearlessly loves God with a Love where there is no room for personal gain. A Sufi gives and does Not expect anything in return. Rabia celebrated prayer demonstrates The Sufi approach in respect of the Divine love:

*O God, If I worship Thee in fear of hell, burn me n the hell, and if I  
 Worship Thee in the hope of paradise, exclude me from paradise.  
 But if I worship Thee for Thine own sake, withhold nor  
 Thine everlasting beauty;*

A Sufi aims to experience a union with the Beloved God and when a Sufi becomes certain that the lover and the Beloved are one, this love in the heart of a sufi covers the entire world and all His creators.

*Murshid* Inayat has rightly said that Sufism is neither a dogma nor a doctrine; it is neither a form nor a ceremony. It has never in any period of history been a religion, rather it has always been considered as the essence of every religion and of all religions. It can be traced in any religion of the world including, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Sikhism, Confucianism and Taoism. Only the great Sufis have presented it to the world in the Islamic terminology. It is due to its latest trend that Sufism has also been described as the “heart of Islam”. However, it may be compared in many aspects with the mystic trends found in India, China, Iran, Palestine, Arabia and Egypt.

*Murshid* Idries Shah says that the Sufi law of life requires: kindness to the young, generosity to the poor, good counsel to friends, forbearance with enemies, indifference to fools and respect to the learned. Nasrollah Fatemi says that Sufism was the antithesis of arrogance, intolerance, hypocrisy and inhumanity. A Sufi wants to create a

renaissance of man's spirit, through which he might lead a simple, innocent, happy and harmonious life.

Murshid Inayat Khan, while defines in these beautiful words:

*The word 'sufi' implies purity, and purity contains two qualities. Pure means unmixed with any other element, or in other words that which exists in its own element, unalloyed and unsustained. The second quality of purity's great adaptability*

*The Sufi shows his universal brotherhood in his adaptability.*

*Among Christian he is a Christian, among Jews he is a Jew,*

*Among Muslims he is a Muslim, among Hindus is a Hindu;*

*For he is one with all, and thus all are with him. He allows everyone*

*To join in his brotherhood, and in the same way he allows himself to join in any other.*

The Sufi is a Brahman, for the word Brahmin means 'the knower of Brahma' of God' the only being. His religion lies in believing in no other existence save that of God, which the Brahmin calls Advaita. The Sufi considers the teachings of the *Avatars* to be true manifestations of the divine wisdom, and he has a perfect insight into the subtle knowledge of the *Vedanta*.

The Sufi is a Buddhist, for he reasons at every step forward on his spiritual journey. The teachings of the Sufi are very similar to the Buddhist teachings; in fact it is the Sufi who unites the believers and the unbelievers in the God-ideal and in the knowledge of unity.

The Sufi appreciates the Jain conception of harmlessness, and considers that kindness is the true path of purity and perfection. In the past Sufis have led lives of renunciation, and in the East most of them still lead a very harmless life, just like the Jains.

The Sufi, like a Zoroastrian looks at the sun and bows before the air, fire, water, and earth, recognizing the immanence of God in His manifestation, taking the sun and moon as the signs of God. The Sufi interprets fire as the symbol of wisdom and the sun as the celestial light. He not only bows before them but also absorbs their quality. As a rule in the presence of Dervishes a wood fire and incense burn continually

The Sufi is an Israelite, especially in his study and mastery of the different names of God. The miraculous powers of Moses can also be found in the lives of the Sufis both past and present, in fact the Sufis are the masters of the Hebrew mysticism; the divine voice heard by Moses on Mount Sinai in the past is audible in many a Sufi today.

The Sufi is a true Christian in regard to charity, brotherhood, and the heading of his own soul as well as the soul of another. He is not bigoted in

his adherence to a particular Church, or in forsaking the other masters and their followers who came before and after Christ, but his at-one-ment with the Christ and his appreciation and practice of his truth are as those of a true Christian.

It is in the lives of the Dervishes that one sees the real picture of the life and teachings of Christ, especially in their sharing of their roof and food with another, whether friend or foe. Even up to the present day, they continue in their pure ways.

The Sufi is a Muslim, not because many Muslims happen to be Sufis. nor because of his use of Muslim phraseology, but because in his life, he proves what a true Muslim ought to be .Muslims have such a sense of devotion that n matter how great a sinner or how cruel a man may be, the name of Allah or Mohammad at once reduces him to tears. Similarly the practices of Sufism first develop the heart qualities which are often overlooked by many other mystics. It s the purification of the heart which makes it receptive to the illumination of the soul.

*I seek no joy nor happiness.  
From Thee I seek Thee alone.  
So come, O my Lord.  
All my austerities and devotions,  
And associating with the saints have only one goal.  
It is meeting Thee.  
Jami seeks, as life's aim  
Thee and only Thee, O my God.*

### **SPIRIT OF SUFISM:**

We have heard quite early in life that “*the kingdom of heaven is within you*”, We also have heard, “*Seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.*” But how many of us have ever received any instruction about the way of seeking or art of knocking?. Ibn “Arabi, used a prayer which begins:

Enter me, O Lord, into the deep of the Ocean of Thine Infinite Oneness. From time to time a revelation flows like a great tidal wave from the ocean of infinitude to the shores of our finite world and Sufism is the vocation and the discipline and the science of plunging into the ebb of one of these waves and being drawn back with it to its eternal and Infinite Source.

We have to understand that human conscience can know everything if it is illuminated .Otherwise, it is impossible for it to comprehend the Divine

Grace. This illumination can be attained through *Fikr, Muraqaba, Shugal, Sama and Zikr*.

We have to remember that the soul and the body resemble two lovers. Until human beings keeps his body fits, the soul would love it and when the body gets rotten the soul starts thinking of departing to its own original palace, so as to obtain joy. A time comes, when the soul finally decides to leave the body and that is termed as death. To a Sufi, the day of death not the day of mourning but the day of joy, for he will meet his Beloved God on this day.

Murshid Gurdial sang before his death:

*Is the ray ever separate from the Sun!  
Will the drop exist separate from the  
The Light merges into the light!  
The Union is complete now;  
What a Holy Communion!*

Murshid, Karim compares a human heart with *Arsh* or the Divine Throne. Here sits our Creator, the Merciful and Compassionate. God has made the heart the centre of conscience, light and its mercy. It has two doors, one leading to the heaven and the other leads to the hell. It is up to you to open any door you like. The heavenly door is sealed and can be opened by the recitation of this Mantra, 99 times for every day:

*O God, all glory and praise belongs to Thee!*

The way of Love is not a creed or a dogma; it is an experiment with Truth. A Sufi is a man of God, a perfect soul, who has heard and acted upon the call:

*“Be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect”*. His is the way, the Truth and the Life and none is excluded from the offer. It has been decreed that the best of God’s lovers are those, who when seen, remind us of *Allah* – the Lord of Majesty. *Tasawwuf* or the Sufi way is the creed of Love, the dogma of Heart and the religion of Spirit.

As such, the Supreme Beauty, *Allah*, the Lord of Majesty, is the ideal, that raises a Sufi to perfection and our *Allah* is the Awakened Love!

*The destination is one,  
The Beloved is one,  
The heart is one,  
Only one!  
How long shall Ye,  
O mortal,*

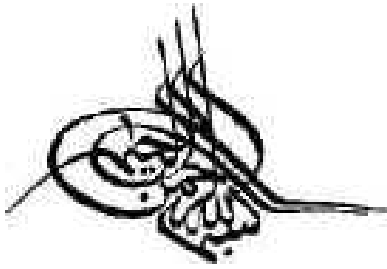
*Mortgage!*  
*One heart to a thousand deities?*

A Sufi tries to illuminate his mind with the Divine Light which is called *Irfan* or knowledge. Sufi Master, Gudri Baba, says that when a person acquires knowledge of himself, he acquires knowledge of nature of *Allah*. Our Master, once declared, “*I know Allah through Allah*”, he meant that the knowledge about God must come from God, the Merciful. It is to be understood that our God revealed His Divine secrets through His messengers. They were raised among all nations and among all people. They are known as Prophets, Apostles, Avatars and Messengers. They spoke in numerous languages and they were noted for particular qualities, which were termed as *Hal* or *Muqam* by seekers after truth. Adam manifested repentance and habituated this earth. Buddha was noted for renunciation and left his kingdom to seek illumination of the heart. Abraham resigned to his fate and offered his son at the alter of sacrifice. Krishna was noted for action while Moses kept steadfast to God. Our Master, Jesus, the Soul of *Allah*, stood for hope, for said he: “*thou are not far from the kingdom of God*”, similarly, our Glorious Prophet, was noted for *Zikr*, which is more than the prayer to *Allah*, It is a communication between man and God.

*O God!*  
*I make thee my quest*  
*And bear witness to thy Lordship.*  
*I acknowledge that*  
*Thou art my Lord*  
*And to Thee is my return.*  
*Thou originated me by*  
*Thy blessing before*

All these Messengers and prophet came to awaken in from our selfish egoism and remind us of own Divine nature; Sufism understand itself to be the wisdom realized by those great Messengers and Prophets - explicitly including Jesus, Moses, David, Solomon, Abraham, and other unnamed. If Sufism recognizes ne central truth, it s the unity of being, that we all one nr separate from the Divine. In fact, Sufism is a way of life in which a defer identity with own creator is discovered and giver.

*Kabir, the day ego perished,*  
*I was reborn!*  
*To the Eternal Friend,*  
*From whom I was torn!*  
*What bliss to be with Him!*  
*Now I sing merrily with Him!*



## THE WONDERLAND

“Unlock yourself and see Him”  
 \_\_\_\_Shah Abdul Latif.

The Sufi esoteric practices are called *the Ashgal*, which is a plural of *Shugal* meaning practice. Most of these practices are meant to activate heart, which is the store house of Love and the seat of Beloved God. Besides heart which is the hub of life force, a Sufi has to activate other centres of divine energy in his physical body. These centres are awakened through breathing and meditation. Each practice is meant to unfold unconsciousness and remove blockades in the *Chakras*.

The *ashgals* are chiefly, exercises of the *soul*, which prepare it for illumination. Precisely, these are directed towards the three goals:

The first is to clear the path towards the real; the second is to subjugate the commanding self (*Nafs-al-ammarah*) to the contented self (*Nafs-al-mutmainah*); the third is to render the heart subtle for awareness and illumination.

Imam Jafer-I-Siddiq has formulated the following rules for the disciple:

- *Keep your eyes off unlawful things and objects.*
- *Spend your most precious life in pursuit of a good cause and a pious act.*
- *Abstain from hearing unlawful gossip, lies, false statements and obscene language.*
- *Pay your attention towards sermons and learning.*
- *Do not tell lies or useless tails and do not spread rumors or do not indulge in gossip and keep aloof from falsity.*
- *Use the power of speech in spreading the word of God and in creating goodwill in the society.*
- *Do not inflict injury upon others by your actions but instead, strive to help them as far as you can.*
- *Do not go towards forbidden places, like brothels.*

- *Do not mix with the people in creating strife.*
- *Visit those places where God is remembered.*

## GUIDELINES:

Right from the day of initiation, the disciples are given the following guidelines by the Master:

1. Refrain from evil thoughts, evil actions evil speech and do not commit any sin.
2. Eat from what is truthfully earned.
3. Remember that this physical body of yours is a store-house, in which there is a secret chamber, hiding the secret of Love. Now, if you eat polluted with forbidden foods, this store house of yours will get polluted.
4. Do remember that for internal purity, you have not to devour what was acquired unlawfully; by theft, robbery cheating and bribery. God has ordained:

*“O men, eat the lawful and good things from what is in earth, and follow not the footsteps of the Satan. Surely, he is an open enemy to you”*

Murshid Ozak says that our Creator has enjoined on all learned men and doctors of law to prohibit all from speaking of what is sinful and eating of what is unlawfully acquired. We must remember that *Allah* has forbidden eating flesh of every animal having claws, and of oxen and sheep and the fat thereof.

Here, I describe the *Shugals* for you:

### a) SHUGAL-I-AINA:

In this practice, the disciple is told to sit in front of a mirror and concentrate on the reflection of his face. While fixing his eyes on the modula oblongata, one is required to go on repeating the name or names of God, 99 times every day. One must visualize that he is seeing God in ones own person. At the same time, one must practice this Shugal with this awareness:

*I am not different from God, nor is He different from me.  
I am my Beloved, my Beloved in me,  
We are two spirits in one body.  
If you see me, you see Him,  
If you see Him, you see us both.*



It was the great Sufi, Hallaj who asserted the divinity of man. God had created man in the image of his own love. As such, the main aim of the Shugal-i-Aina is to see the Creator through His creation.

b) SHUGAL-I-SULTAN NASIR:

In this practice, you have to sit at dawn or sunset, in a relaxed position and fix your half closed eyes on the tip of your nose. Without blinking, one has to go deep in contemplation, thinking of the Divine as light of a lamp or a star or the Sun. Khwaja Ajmeri has recommended this practice saying that after a practicing for a few days, one would see his own face as in a mirror. This practice leads to illumination of the heart. In the beginning, this practice puts a kind of stress on the eyes but one gets accustomed to it. You have to remain peaceful during this practice and go on watching the natural rhythm of the breath. Between the inhalation and the exhalation there is a fraction of a second which is absolutely still and peaceful.

Swami Muktananda calls it the space of the Truth and says that when focused on space, it will go on expanding day by day. In other words, this practice gives peace of mind to the aspirant, which can communicate with another mind at a distance other than through known senses.

c) SHUGAL-I-SULTAN MEHMOOD:

This is the same practice as the previous one, with a slight modification. In this practice, one has to sit fully relaxed and fix his closed eyes on Modula oblongata, the space between the eye brows. After practice of a few days, the aspirant will see his head fully effulgent. This is the first stage towards enlightenment.

Murshid Shah Imadadullah says that after covering of this stage, the secrets of cosmos get exposed to the seeker in due course of time.

*I was the Hidden Treasure;  
I desired to be known;  
I created you all so that;  
I might be known!*

It should be remembered that the space between the eye brows is known as the Third Eye and the two petals of lotus centre. It is also known to possess the power of perceiving the shape and nature of astral objects.

d) SHUGAL-I-SULTAN SARMAD:

In this practice, you have to seal your eyes, nostrils and mouth with the fingers of your both hands. Both thumbs seal hearing from the ears, the fore fingers close eyes; the middle fingers seal the nostrils and the ring fingers seal the mouth.

After controlling the five senses, you have to visualize that the rain of benediction is falling, drop after drop on the *Crown Chakra*. One must also visualize that the sound of falling rain is heard by your ears. After a few days, you will clearly hear this sound. Within forty days, this divine sound will vibrate through your body, turning itself into an echo, known *Saut-i-Hassan-vo-Hamas*. This very sound was heard by Moses near the bush on the mountain in Horeb:

*“When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see,  
God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, calling Moses, Moses.”*

This was the first revelation to Moses, and this is the echo, which is heard by the saints, seers, and Sufis.

*I will praise Thee, O Lord,  
With my whole heart;  
I will show forth,  
All Thy marvelous works.  
I will be glad and rejoice in Thee:  
I will sing praise to Thy name,  
O Thou Most High:*

e) SHUGAL-I-BISAT-AKHFA:

Says Hakim:

*“The idea of grace is very important ; unless the Divine Grace descends man’s soul does not get illumination; hence prayers , meditations and linking oneself with His Grace are essential ; pride goes before the fall and hence none can be proud and say that he is the only custodian of God’s Grace.*

Murshid Shah Imdad-u-Ullah says that the Shugal-I-Bisat be carried out in accordance with these directions:

All times are good for any *Shugal* but night is much beneficial. Remember that the centre of the cosmic consciousness is located between the pituitary body and the pineal gland. The Sufis call it *Umm-ul-Demag* or the mother of the brain, because it is the direct link between the physical and the astral planes. It is an illuminated point, which is called as Akhfa. In this practice, you have to practice the *Pranayama* by placing the tip of your tongue, upwards, attached to the plate. After this, you should close eyes and hold your breath. You should visualize that the Sun has started engulfing your fore head and this light has started covering other parts of your physical body. After a few days, you will surely, feel that a

small dot of brilliant light is circling between your eye brows. After some time, you will see yourself in a tube of light, illuminating your body.

While inhaling the breath, recites the Holy Name: *Allah* by heart and while exhaling, you have to recite the sacred word: *Hu*, by heart. During intervals, you have to hold your breath. At that time you will see many colors surrounding your body. The Sufi Masters describe it as replicas of your soul. These colors represent the four stages of your ascension into different categories of elevation. The colors, yellow, red, green and black are described in Sufism as the stages of *Nasoot* (sainthood); *Malkoot* (angelic); *Jabroot* (prophetic) and *Lahoot* (godly).

The Holy name of God and its recitation creates these splendors. Murshid Sultan Bahoo has described this mystical practice as *Shugal-i-Kalma* or the Repetition of the Divine name.

*Though this heart devoted itself,  
To the theme of Oneness, dear!  
Burning mid-night oil in plenty  
Gaining nothing sound and clear.  
Lesson one my labors gathered:  
Only name of Allah, hear.  
This also the next world, Bahoo!  
Slaves of yours will be, I swear.*

#### f) SHUGAL-I-SULTAN-UL-UL-AZKAR:

Shugal-i-Sultan- ul-Azkar is the soul of all practices, suitable for all aspirants. This practice is sure to give beneficial results only in a few days. First select a room, which can be made dark after stretching curtains. This room may be sound proof, away from noises. After entering the room, stretch out the back in *Shavasna* posture, visualizing death. After closing your eyes, seek repentance of God for sins. Then concentrate on the natural rhythm of the breath. While inhaling, visualize the sacred word: *Allah* and think that you are alive. While exhaling, visualize the sacred word: *Hu* and think you are nearing death. As the breathing becomes steady, the mind will also become steady. By and by, the recitation of the holy words will become a part of the breathing. With the gradual unfolding of your inner being, you will become an onlooker of the secrets of nature. In that *Maqam* there is only bliss.

*Allah is the Light of the heavens and earth:  
A likeness of His Light  
Is as a pillar on which is a lamp  
The lamp is in a glass,  
The glass is as it were a  
Brightly shining star:  
Lit from a blessed Olive tree,  
Neither eastern nor western,*

*The oil whereof gives Light  
Though fire touch it not,  
Light upon Light:  
Allah guides this Light whom  
He pleased:*

g) SHUGAL-I-SANOBARI:

In order to perfect their concentration on God, the Sufis write or paint the Holy Name in silver or gold ink. The aspirant is asked to look at this pattern at fixed hours, morning and evening, so that it gets visually stored in brain. After a period of time, this pattern is manifested as a magnet for attracting spiritual energy. In fact, to look at a pattern, or sign or symbol involves concentration. In order to obtain the level of serenity and to stop the process of distraction, the Sufis, on the model of other mystics, have adopted their own symbols and signs. For instance the *Qadiriyya* Order has green rose as its distinct symbol. In the same fashion, the Hindu *Sadhus* carry a *Trishool* (three pointed spear head) staff with them. The *Tantrics* have seven symbols as an aid for concentration. In the Jewish *Kaballah*, we have the six- pointed Star of David as a mystic symbol.

The six pointed star of the Hindu *Tantrics* is called *Sri-Chakra*. The votaries of the *Shakti* are required to draw the *Sri-Chakra* or the five triangles pointing upwards and for triangles pointing downwards, for rousing *Kundalini*.

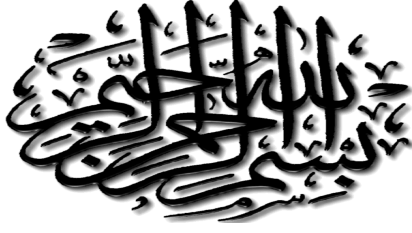
For this type of mystical practice, the aspirant can draw a symbol close to his religion or background.

The Sufis inscribe the holy name of *Allah* on a piece of paper or a plaque and fix it on a wall. Twice in a day they fix their gaze on this and concentrate. After practice, which extends to several days and weeks, this holy word gets engraved in their heart. Surely, through the blessings of the Murshid, this sacred word is turned into a magnet for attracting a spiritual energy from the cosmos. As our Creator is known by numerous names, and is not bound by any etymology, or definition. You can remember God by any good name you like.

*Righteousness comes from a secure faith, from sincere devotion to God and from unselfish service to man.*

*All bounties proceed from God. They may be physical gifts, e.g. food, clothing, houses, garden and wealth, or intangible gifts, e.g. insight into good and evil, understanding of men, the capacity for love. We are to use all in humility and moderation. But we are also to give out of every one of them something that contributes to the wellbeing of others. The Sufis to be neither ascetics nor luxurious sybarites, neither selfish misers nor thoughtless prodigious. Prosperity must be taken as referring to all kinds*

*of bounty proceeding from God. The right use of one kind leads to an increase in that and other kinds, and that is prosperity.*



## ZIKR

“We ask Thee, by every name, with which, Thou hast named thyself”

The remembrance of the Lord’s Name is known as *Zikr* among the Sufis and *Simrun* among the Hindus. *Zikr* means both the invocation and the remembrance of a Divine name. Ibn-al-Arabi has said: *The lover may remember God, by those of His Names he prefers. The lover may remember his Beloved by whichever Names and in whichever manner, he finds pleasing and delightful.*

*“The first stage of Zikr is to forget self, and the last stage is the effacement of the worshipper in the act of worship.”*

Imam Ali, to whom various Sufi Orders trace their descent, says that through *Zikr* and *Zikr* alone, it is possible to attain Divine approval. *Zikr* unified with the rhythm of life, transforms the *Murid* and establishes his identity with the Divine Supreme.

*Zikr* is the name given to the outward act of devotion by a seeker, when he engages himself in remembering the holy names of God. It is an act of recollection wherein one is required to recite and repeat:

*La-illa-ha-illal-lah* (No god but God)  
*Ya-Allah!* (O God!)  
*Ya-hoo!* (O He)  
*Ya-Haq!* (O Just One)  
*Ya Hayyi!* (O Living One)  
*Ya-Qayoom!* (O Existing One)

The statutes of many Sufi Orders require recollection of the above formulae. *Murshid* Gudri Shah Baba says that among the great Sufi saints, the best form of *Zikr* is; both negating and affirming: *La-illa-ha-illul-lah* (There is none but God)

This affirmation is the beginning of *Shariat* or the religious law and the conclusion of *Tariqat* or ways of the Sufi worship. “This invocation should be repeated one hundred and one times, in solitude. In this *Zikr*, there is affirmation of the existence of God and negation of all else.

*Zikr* means to absorb oneself in the remembrance of God and forget all that which could be termed as ante-god. During this practice, a Sufi seeks nearness to God, day and night, with the result that recollection becomes part and parcel of his life.

In certain passages where the impact of the Quranic 'substance' is given a particular direction. There lays, virtually, the entire path of the mystics. Such verses as *God leadeth to His Light whom He wills* and *Lead us along the straight path* and *He it is Who hath sent down the Spirit of Peace into the hearts of the faithful that they may increase in faith* are only limited in so far as the intelligence of one who recites them is limited. They can be of as an opening through which the immortal in man may pour itself out in escape from the mortal limitations of the soul. But anything can be said of this two-fold transcendence of words which are metaphysical in content as well as in 'fabric' applies pre-eminently to the Divine Names of God. One of the first injunctions revealed to the Prophet was: *Invoke in remembrance the Name of thy Lord, and devote thyself to Him with an utter devotion.* This verse has become the chief practice of the Sufis for approaching God.

Sidi Abu Bakr Siraj-uddin alias Martin Lings, while explaining the importance of *Zikr* says:

*It is important to remember that Invocation of God (Zikr Allah) is the name of the Prophet, and according to the Quran this invocation is greater even than the ritual prayer.* At another place he explains the same ideas in these words: *It must not be forgotten however that remembrance of God is greater than the ritual prayer, and one of the meanings of this key passage is that turning towards inner Centre is greater than turning towards Outer centre. The ideal is for the two to be simultaneous, in as much as the outward turning was above all instituted for the sake of the inward turning.*

Swami Muktananda says that another vital aspect of meditation is *Pranayama* or the breathing process. God has created both the *Prana* and the movement of the *Prana*. The mantra given by the Guru requires being coordinated with breathing by repeating it with the inhalation and the exhalation. The supreme energy *Kundalini* throbs in the form of the breathing, uttering the syllables of *Ham* and *So*. As such, *So Ham* is the natural *Mantra*, meaning I am That. If you practice it with complete awareness of the breath coming and going out, you will experience that.

*O God!*  
*Praise be to Thee, the Lord of the worlds,*  
*The Beneficent, the Merciful,*  
*Master of the Day of Requit!*  
*Thee do we serve and*  
*Thee do we beseech for help!*

*Guide us on the right path;  
The path of those upon whom  
Thou hast bestowed favors.  
Nor those upon whom raught is brought down,  
Nor those who go astray.*

#### KINDS OF ZIKR:

The Sufi Masters have divided Zikr into the following four categories:

1. *Nasooti*            Zikr of the tongue.
2. *Malkooti*         Zikr of the heart.
3. *Jabrooti*          Zikr of the spirit.
4. *Lahooti*           Zikr of the mind.

The remembrance of the sacred word or the Divine Name is required to be uttered in a suitable way but in all cases, it is co joined or connected with the life breath. If it is audible, the invocation is done through tongue in a loud voice. If you hum the sacred word, it is a Zikr of the heart or the private Zikr. A stage comes when you go deeper into a Zikr and become *Zikr-i-Jabrooti*. The final stage when a seeker merges with the Divine, his Zikr becomes a part of the Supreme Consciousness.

Initially, *Zikr-i-Nasooti* is prescribed by the *Murshid* because the audible Zikr permeates all the constituents of the body. The *Murid* is asked to repeat: *La ilaha illal lah* (No god but God) so that the sound passes with breathe into the blood cells. The repetition of the name of God constantly would result in awakening the *Murid* into super consciousness. The sound will surely imprint a sort of a picture of God on his heart. This could be his personal God created through vibrations of the audible Zikr. A time would come when the Beloved God would become a reality for the *Murid*.

Through perfection in *Habs-i-Dam*, the disciple is able to undertake *Zikr-i-Malkooti*. Evolution from *Zikr Nasooti* to *Zikr-i-Malkooti* is a very refined process and is only possible through perfection in Zikr. Contemplation on the form or picture of God, obtained through *Zikr-i-Nasooti* and concentration on the vibrations provide a sound base for undertaking *Zikr-i-Malkooti*. In this *Zikr*, the disciple is advised to repeat the sacred word : *Illal lah* .

The tranquility in the consciousness is attained by undertaking *Zikr-i-Jabrooti*. Here the *Murid* is asked to repeat the holy name of *Allah* with utmost concentration. This is a very advanced stage of Zikr not attainable by millions of the aspirants. To maintain tranquility in the self requires great Mastery in the withdrawal of senses, possible only through the grace of the *Murshid*.



It is at the level of the *Zikr-i-Jabrooti* that the aspirant is aware of the subtle differences between the mind, ego, id and intelligence. For only when the aspirant has experienced the effect of each of these, singularly as well as in combination that consciousness of the disciple is flooded with ecstasy of pure joy. But this ecstasy can be experienced only for a few minutes at a stretch rather than the few seconds of the sensual gratification of the biological needs.

In *Zikr-i-Lahooti*, the aspirant aims to reach the level of *Marifat* and from this platform projects *Muhabbat* for the All Pervading Divine. This is the last stage where an aspirant experiences the ecstasy of the spiritual climax. Only those who are lucky, win grace of the *Murshid* through the *Zikr* of the sacred word: *Hu*.

*Murshid* Shah Imdad-Ullah says that the best way to undertake *Zikr* is to sit alone in a quite and a solitary room. It is important that the palms be kept open to receive the heavenly imprint. It is equally important that the spine be kept straight. After having closed the eyes, one should start recitation of the secret word by tongue or by heart. When the stage of ecstasy comes, the disciple feels a sensation through his body and some limbs do tremble and shake. Even the aspirant may laugh or weep. It is important that the *Murid* should give no importance to these unexpected happenings and keep himself busy in *Zikr*.

*No occupation for the heart is efficient,  
Other than recitation of the Kalma.  
It takes the rust away from the heart,  
And scrapes off the dirt.  
The Kalma is more precious than the precious gems,  
Diamond and Ruby  
Here and there in both the worlds,  
The Kalma is all the wealth.*

*Dressed in God, I come home,  
To earn the Name is my profession.  
Neither are there stages of paganism and Islam,  
Nor is there death and life.  
He will pass nearer than the jugular vein;  
Just throw a glance inside!  
He is in us and we in Him,  
Falsity has gone away!*

*Zikr* in nutshell means remembering and reciting the good names of God. The seekers remember Him with love and the Name gets itself established in their tongues, heart and soul.

While giving instructions to his *Murids*, a Sufi Master says:

*Remember, that when your tongue is busy in Zikr, it will not occupy itself in foul and filthy language. When your heart is busy in Zikr, it will free itself from dangers of wickedness. When your spirit is engaged with Zikr, you become the very part of Zikr and thus united with the Divine Bliss. This is the last stage of the Divine Love, when the lover absorbs himself in the self of the Beloved and it is the final merge. In this state of mind you will see nothing in this universe except the Beloved God. In this way, the great souls engage themselves in Zikr and unite with the Beloved God.*

God Arjan Dev says that when the Divine Name gets fully settled in the heart, one is rid of all doubts. His body, mind and speech become pure. He alone realizes Him and unites with Him.

*Murshid* Sultan Bahoo describes *Shugal Kalima* as highly potent spiritual exercises, which in the Sufi terminology means the incantation of the Divine Name.

There are various forms of Zikr and an aspirant can adopt any form of his liking or the one, which is prescribed by the *Murshid*.

a) *ZIKR-I-PAS-O-ANFAS:*

This Zikr is performed with the rhythm of the breath in which the word ‘*Allah*’ is mentally repeated while inhaling and the word ‘*Hu*’ repeated while exhaling, accompanied by a motion of the trunk and head. During this practice, the aspirant should sit with closed eyes and bent head. This may be done 101 times in the beginning.

Later the practice is mixed with the breath, so that it becomes an automatic rhythm of the breath. This practice is the elementary practice, known also as *Jaroor-i-Qalb*, meaning the cleaning of the heart. It must be noted that the recitation of *Zikr* should be performed in the evening, better in the solitude of night.

*Murshid* Shah Imdad-Ullah says:

*Pas-o-Infas is done in several ways. Some repeat the Divine Name of Allah with every inhalation, while others go on repeating Hu. Some are advised by their Masters to repeat Haq or Haq. All attain their objective by Grace of the Murshid.*

Since the dawn of the civilization, different people have coined different names for God. By whatever name, you remember Him, it refers to Him alone. The Divine Name you have to repeat must come from the Master. It can be in the language you know and understand. The Name in itself is God and you have to go on repeating it with love.

Santh Kabir says:

*Remember the name of the Lord with the same intensity of love as the fish has for water.*

Invocation of the Divine Name is the most universal form of a prayer to God since ancient times. It is amazing that the invocation of the name of God, its literal meaning, becomes the real nature of the invoker. All names of God are pleasing, since each name is great and there is no small name of God by whatever name he likes.

*Murshid* Abubabaji liked us to invoke the three Divine Names:

*Ya Quddus, Ya Momin, Ya Jabbar*, each 1, 25000 times during a period of time. *Zikr* according to him is the basic practice of the Sufis, which establishes and connects their identity with the Divine Supreme.

Imam Ali , the son in law of the Holy Prophet , used to recite the Divine Names of *Ya Hoo , Ya Qayoom , Ya Rahim* , several thousand times , during day and night.

b) **ZIKR-I-ISMA-I-RABBANI:**

In this *Zikr* any of the prescribed Divine Names is to be repeated 1, 24000 times every day. If it is not possible, the number is reduced to 24,000 times because a human being breathes 24,000 times a day. *Murshid* Shah Imdad-Ullah says that the number can be reduced to 12,000 times a day. He further adds that some Masters have reduced this number to 6,000 times a day. Some Masters opine that one may invoke the Divine name 101 times daily and it is permissible to practice this *Zikr* by tongue or by heart. It all depends on the will of the *Murid* or the convenience of the *Murid*.

It must be understood that the increase in the repetitions enables the disciple to flood their consciousness with pure ecstasy of intoxication without using the substitutes such as alcohol. If the aspirant has a dominant urge for the Divine, the *Murshid* may prescribe *Zikr* of a hundred thousand repetitions a day. However the perfect *Zikr, Fikr, Muraqaba, Habs-I-Dham and Khalvat*- all these *Sufi* practices depend on the Spiritual development of the seeker. His advance from one *Maqam* to another *Maqam* is by God's grace and not of his own acquisition. However, God is Merciful and Kind; the *Murid* can advance in proportion to his faith in the *Murshid*. It should be remembered that *Zikr* is a living force and releases energy, which if not channeled would result in gratification of the sensual desires. It requires to be noted that this life force is a combination of two aspects- feminine and masculine. That is why the guidance of the Master is necessary and for this guidance, surrender of ones will to the will of the *Murshid* is a must.

Renunciation from the world is not possible but renunciation of desires is possible by seeking guidance from the *Murshid*.

So sings Santh Kabir:

*Verily the truth I state, and over and over again,  
Even to the beat of the drum:  
Every breath that you draw must be passed in  
Remembrance of the Lord  
It is worth more than the value of this world  
And the next.*

The remembrance of God with love is the key to *Marifat* or access to the Devine Mysteries. It is so amazingly intoxicating that those who attain it do not wish to be separated from the Beloved God even for a second.

God can be remembered by any of the following names:

<b>Arabic</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Sanskrit</b>
<i>Ya Rahman</i>	<i>Gracious</i>	<i>Sundaha</i>
<i>Ya Latif</i>	<i>Subtle</i>	<i>Sukshamaha</i>
<i>Ya Rahim</i>	<i>Merciful</i>	<i>Dayanidhi</i>
<i>Ya Malik</i>	<i>Master</i>	<i>Prabhu</i>
<i>Ya Azim</i>	<i>Mighty</i>	<i>Anantha</i>
<i>Ya Quddus</i>	<i>Holy</i>	<i>Pavitram</i>
<i>Ya Shakir</i>	<i>Grateful</i>	<i>Dhanyaha</i>
<i>Ya Kabir</i>	<i>Great</i>	<i>Mahabutaha</i>
<i>Ya Hafiz</i>	<i>Protector</i>	<i>Sarvasunilayaha</i>
<i>Ya Khaliq</i>	<i>Creator</i>	<i>Bhutbhawnaha</i>
<i>Ya Jamil</i>	<i>Beautiful</i>	<i>Manoharaha</i>
<i>Ya Karim</i>	<i>Generous</i>	<i>Dayaloo</i>
<i>Ya Raqib</i>	<i>Watcher</i>	<i>Sarvadruk</i>
<i>Ya Wasi</i>	<i>All- Embracing</i>	<i>Vishnuhu</i>
<i>Ya Hakim</i>	<i>Absolute Judge</i>	<i>Nyahaya</i>
<i>Ya Wadud</i>	<i>Loving</i>	<i>Vatsalha</i>
<i>Ya Majid</i>	<i>Glorious</i>	<i>Mahatejaha</i>
<i>Ya Haqq</i>	<i>Truth</i>	<i>Satyaha</i>
<i>Ya Wakil</i>	<i>defender</i>	<i>Rakshamaha</i>
<i>Ya Qauwly</i>	<i>Powerful</i>	<i>Ujritaha</i>
<i>Ya Hamid</i>	<i>Praiseworthy</i>	<i>Auhaha</i>
<i>Ya Muhyi</i>	<i>Giver of Life</i>	<i>Prandaha</i>
<i>Ya Mumit</i>	<i>Giver of Death</i>	<i>Pratardnaha</i>
<i>Ya Haiy</i>	<i>Living</i>	<i>Pranaha</i>

<i>Ya Qaiyum</i>	<i>Eternal</i>	<i>Anantatmaha</i>
<i>Ya Yuid</i>	<i>Affectionate</i>	<i>Priyakrut</i>
<i>Ya Wahid</i>	<i>One</i>	<i>Ekaha</i>
<i>Ya Samad</i>	<i>Resource of</i>	<i>Bharataha</i>
	<i>All</i>	
<i>Ya Qadir</i>	<i>Capable</i>	<i>Mahashaktiha</i>
<i>Ya Qarib</i>	<i>Near</i>	<i>An-ulaha</i>
<i>Ya Awwal</i>	<i>First</i>	<i>Adidevaha</i>
<i>Ya Akhir</i>	<i>Last</i>	<i>Viramaha</i>
<i>Ya Batin</i>	<i>Unmanifest</i>	<i>Amovatamaha</i>
<i>Ya Wali</i>	<i>Assister</i>	<i>Sidhidaha</i>
<i>Ya Muta al</i>	<i>Exalted</i>	<i>Prabhuhu</i>
<i>Ya Barr</i>	<i>Just</i>	<i>Pranaha</i>
<i>Ya Tauwab</i>	<i>Relenting</i>	<i>Akruraha</i>
<i>Ya Affuw</i>	<i>Mild</i>	<i>Sahishnu</i>
<i>Ya Ghalib</i>	<i>Triumphant</i>	<i>Jayaha</i>
<i>Ya Ghani</i>	<i>Absolute</i>	<i>Swayambhuh</i>
<i>Ya Nuafi</i>	<i>Profitable</i>	<i>Sidhidaha</i>
<i>Ya Nasir</i>	<i>Helper</i>	<i>Kampradhaha</i>
<i>Ya Nur</i>	<i>Light</i>	<i>Bhrajishanu</i>
<i>Ya Hadi</i>	<i>Leader</i>	<i>Neta</i>
<i>Ya Raziq</i>	<i>Sustainer</i>	<i>Sahishnu</i>
<i>Ya Baqi</i>	<i>Everlasting</i>	<i>Amrutyuhu</i>
<i>Ya Azaliy</i>	<i>Prifier</i>	<i>Pavansha</i>
<i>Ya Rashid</i>	<i>Pioneer</i>	<i>Sargaha</i>
<i>Ya Malik</i>	<i>King</i>	<i>Loknathaha</i>
<i>Ya Ghafoor</i>	<i>Benign</i>	<i>Sarvadihi,</i>
		<i>Vasumanaha</i>
<i>Ya Rabbul Alamin</i>	<i>lord of all</i>	<i>Janoshwaraha</i>
	<i>Creatures</i>	

The recitation of God's name is termed as the *Wird* to be done with the aid of a rosary. Before recitation of the Holy Name, the *Murid* asks forgiveness of God, then invokes blessings of God for the Prophet and then affirms the Divine Unity.

The three formulae are as under:

1. *O God! I seek forgiveness.*
2. *O god! Bless our Prophet.*
3. *There is no god but God*

It appears that the three formulae correspond to the three stages known to the mystics of Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Iran and India: purification, perfection and union. The three formulae also correspond to the three universal aspects of spirituality, humility and truth. For recitation of the holy names of God, a rosary containing 101 beads is used.

Some of the holy names of God to be bestowed by the *Murshid* are:

<i>Ya Allah</i>	O God
<i>Ya Hu</i>	O He
<i>Ya Haqq</i>	O Just
<i>Ya Hayy</i>	O Living
<i>Ya Qayyum</i>	O Existing

Rosaries are made of amber, sandalwood, pearls and gem stones. Both Western and Eastern rosaries have usually ninety-nine beads with the piece at the end called the *alif*, about the length and shape of the finger, to make up the hundred, this being the number most often specified by the Prophet for the recitation of formulae. When a formula is to be repeated a thousand times, the Sufis often put ten pebbles or other objects in front of them, one of which they remove after each hundred. As to the shorter litany each formula is usually repeated thirty-three times and to facilitate this, most of the rosaries have a small *alif* or other shaped division mark after the thirty-third bead and another after the sixty-sixth.

Invocation of a Divine Name is the most universal form of prayer, existing in other ancient traditions. It must be emphasized that with the passage of time, the invocation of the name of God becomes the real nature of the invoker.

One should remember God by whatever name one finds pleasing. It must be remembered that all the names of God are pleasing, each name is great and there is no small name of God. Imam Abu Bakr recited the Divine names of *Ya-Rahman-o-Ya-Rahim*. In the same way, our reverend mother, Aisha, preferred the divine name of *Ya Rabb*. My Master Abubabaji, told me that the greatest *Zikr* which gives joy to God is to praise him with sincere devotion, with the realization that God is in you and hears you even if you pray inwardly. According to him, God likes us to invoke the three Divine names: *Ya Quddus, Ya Momin, and Ya Jabbar*, each one by one, 1, 25,000 times.

c) **ZIKR-I-ZARABI:**

The *Zarb* means a thrust and this thrust is used to scan the heart. Sufis all over the world attach much importance to the heart, for it is a sort of a mirror in which one can see his Beloved God. This mirror gets covered with dirt and is rusted due to our carnal and materialistic desires. This rust requires to be cleaned so as to see the face of the Beloved. In order to scan the heart, the Sufis prescribe thrusts of the head towards the heart. At the time, this thrust is made manifest by repeating the Divine Name.

In the *Zikr-i-Zarbi*, the *Murid* is directed to apply these thrusts on the heart. First, the head is raised towards the sky and cast down in a vertical thrust on the heart. These thrusts are repeated 101 times. In every

thrust the focus of attention is the heart. *Murshid* Imdad-Ullah says that one can activate any *Chakra* by inflicting these thrusts on it.

This *Zikr* may be of two thrusts or four thrusts. Some repeat these thrusts, first on spine and then on heart.

In four *Zarbi Zikr*, the Divine Name is repeated four times with a thrust on the right ankle, then the left ankle, then the right side of the chest and lastly the left side of the chest.

Khawaja says that there are many veils between you and the Beloved God and *Zikr-i-Zarbi* tears off these veils.

d) **ZIKR-I-ARA:**

In this *Zikr*, the *Murid* is directed by the *Murshid* to visualize sawing of the of the Satan by the divine saw of the *Zikr*. With eyes closed and the tongue fixed upwards with the palate, the Divine Name is to be extracted from the centre of the spine and the thrust of *Hu* is to be struck on the heart. The *Murid* is asked to visualize that at the time of striking his heart, he is bisected the Satan. This practice is performed by the *Murid* for 10 days.

If you are a lover of God, always remember him, during day and night, through your head, heart and soul. Understand that the Glorious Messenger of God, taught *Zikr* to Imam Ali and our Master Abu Bakr, during his migration to Medina. God taught *Zikr* to our Beloved Prophet, may God bless him, and he in turn taught it to our Imam Ali, saying:

*O Ali, close your eyes and be still!  
Let me make Zikr thrice,  
Listen and then make Zikr thrice,  
So that I listen.*

e) **ZIKR-I-SULTAN-UL-AZKAR:**

It is common that the false *Murids* want instant illumination and that too, without any effort and discipline. But genuine lovers of God work hard and annihilate themselves to attain the Beatific Vision. As such, any *Murid* who is introduced to this *Zikr* by the *Murshid* must consider himself very fortunate.

*Murshid* Shah Imdad-Ullah says that a *Murid* can undertake this *Zikr* after bath; secondly, it is also permissible to close your ears with rose-perfumed cotton and holding of nostrils with the fore-fingers. He adds further:

*When the aspirant reaches this stage, the secrets of nature get revealed in an instant before him. The seeker finds his personality involved in running the affairs of the world. He even starts equating his qualities with those of*

*the Creator. It is a very dangerous Muqam and the aspirant is advised to consider himself as an insignificant creature of the Divine. All bounties are from God and none else.*

The Zikr-i-Sultan-ul-Azkar is considered as the king of all *Zikr* and there are several ways of performing this *Zikr*. One important way is to activate the six *Chakras* which are termed as *Latifas* by the *Sufis*. It can be done by the deep concentration on the *Latifas* without *Habs-i-Dam* or *Pranayama*, but it is essential to go on repeating the Divine Name, granted by the *Murshid*.

During the process of activating these *Chakras*, you are required to repeat the Holy Name 21 times, on each *Latifa*, It must be understood that 21 is a powerful number as it comprises three sevens. This number signifies continuity of life, a proper sense of proportion and attainment of success.

This *Zikr* lays final focus on senses. The net result is that our mind starts conceiving various dimensions. It is as such, we become capable of understanding many of the secrets of nature and this universe. Our modern technology has given us the tools to feel with our five senses the dimensional aspects of matter and the energy it contains.

#### f) ZIKR-I-LATIFA:

Sufi Master Sammani has expounded a wonderful Zikr which is known as Zikr-i-Latifa, because during its practice, the aspirant has to concentrate on the six centres of nervous system in a body. Each plexus is to be awakened one by one, through the practice of *Zikr*. These six centers are:

1. *Akhfa* in brain.
2. *Khafi* in the forehead.
3. *Sirr* in the Chest.
4. *Qalbi* in the heart.
5. *Rohi* in the hypogastric plexus.
6. *Nafsi* in the sacral plexus.

All these centers have been assigned different colors. In the *Sufi* terminology, all colors have definite characteristics for different people. For lovers of God these have a special significance and for followers of Satan, a definite attribute

It will be seen that colors have a definite connection with psychology and can be used to control the mind. It is due to this reason that the Sufis have assigned colors to these force centers in the body of men.



In the *Zikr-i-Latifa*, the aspirant has to first concentrate on a particular *Latifa* while inhalation as well as exhalation. During this practice, the eyes should be closed and your heart should recite the Divine Name of Allah. In this way, the most Merciful God, will be pleased to reveal His secrets to you and bestow His Bliss upon you. It is only through the grace of the *Murshid* that will reach the Beloved God.

The Messenger of God, Mohammad, may God bless him and his descendants, his family and his friends, once prayed:

*O lord:  
Grant to me the love of Thee;  
Grant that I may do the deeds that win Thy love;  
Make Thy love dearer to me:  
Than self, family or wealth!*

The constant and unbroken recitation of God's name during the waking state and during the sleep, endows the mind with the all important quality of one pointed focus. In this context Sathya Sai Baba explains the power of God's name in these names:

*The Divine Name is highly potent.  
Each one of the several names of God has one type of power specific to it.  
If you wish to make good use of this power and derive lasting benefit out of it, you have to participate in Akhand Bhajna or the unbroken chanting of Gods Name*



## DERVISHES

“Thou seest the angels going round about the Throne.”

-----The Quran.

An etymology for the term Dervish is shrouded in Mystery. Some among the Sufis are designated as the Dervishes, which denotes ascetic mendicant, who stays poor and leaves without comfort and pleasures. However, among them have been highly learned men, whose tales, parables and stories contains hidden wisdom about pains, sorrows and joys of life.

Just as the planets revolve around the Sun, the angels go around the exalted Throne of God, glorifying their Lord with praises. Muslims go around the sacred Kaaba in Makah, reciting the holy name of God. Hindus circumambulate the *Lingam* at the time of the whirling ritual. In the same way, the Sufis perform the circular dance, called Sama.

*From East to West, whichever the way you go,  
That Lovers are legion experience will show;  
For man in our age is longing Truth to know,  
In the depths of his heart he will find it at last.*

*Calling illa-lah the spheres are gyrating,  
Calling illah-llah the angels rotating,  
Calling illa-llah the hearts are vibrating,  
The cure for his pain must each one find at last.*

*On love's rough path the way is easily lost;  
The way to union is not so quickly crossed.  
The secret can be known but not without cost;  
The genuine lover finds God's grace at last.*

The Sufis consider themselves as the lovers of God. For them, the Sama is an act of devotion, devised to draw the attention of their Beloved Lord. The Sama means hearing of music but for the Sufis, it means singing as well as dancing. Some Sufi Orders permit the Sama, in which music is played, songs are sung and the Dervishes are permitted to dance.

*Sometimes Christ, sometimes Moses myself;  
Sometimes Pharaoh I have ruled and issued orders:*

*Sometimes as Mansur, sometimes as Shams-al-Haqq*  
*I have invited troubles on my head;*  
*Sometimes as Darius, sometimes as Alexander*  
*I have overrun domains;*  
*Sometimes Ayaz, sometimes Mehmood,*  
*Sometimes a slave I have called myself;*  
*Sometimes as Laila, sometimes as Majnun*  
*I have wailed in the lanes;*  
*Sometimes as Zulaikha, sometimes as Yusuf,*  
*Sometimes as the Emperor of Egypt I have appeared;*  
*Sometimes Rama-Sita, sometimes Lakshman,*  
*Sometimes I have also been Ravana;*  
*Sometimes I have preached a lot (like a Mullah),*  
*Sometimes I have dilated on Mystery;*  
*Presently I have come here assuming the name of Sachal*  
*And sung many a song of the spirit.*

Such a practice has been allowed, so that the consciousness may open its perception of the soul. The music acts as a way of bringing illumination into one's consciousness. Just like *Mantra* set to music is soothing to the consciousness, so are the Ragas in the Indian Music, *Mega* for invoking rain, and *Deepika* for igniting lamps. It is clear that the whole purpose of music is to help one stimulate one's consciousness.

Says Murshid Shah Latif:

*My body is my rosary;*  
*My consciousness its beads;*  
*My heart its beads;*  
*My longing for the Beloved its threads:*  
*Thus I am a song within.*

Of Imam Ali, it is said that when he heard the sound of a conch, he asked his companions: *Do you know what this conch said?* When none could reply this question, he said: *It said: Praise is to God. O God! Thou are eternal Master.* Perhaps the sound of the conch represents the vibration of A.U.M\_\_the three sacred syllables of the redeeming *Mantra*.

*Blame not us wild rogues and gay*  
*As if our score thou must pay.*  
*Saint or sinner, everyone*  
*Reaps at last what he hath sown.*  
*Am I given to wine or prayer?*  
*Pardon that, which is my affair.*  
*If I from virtue fell to vice*  
*My father lost a paradise.*  
*Thou who bidd'st me hopeless be*  
*Of God's predestined charity.*

*Dost thou know behind the veil  
Who laughs in bliss, who weeps in bale?<sup>2</sup>  
Drunk or dry, the world entire  
Hath one object of desire.*

#### MUGA DANCE:

Sayo, Kitamura says that the *Muga* dance leads to the kingdom of God. According to her, none can enter this kingdom without shedding ego. In order to attain such a state of mind, a person should be perfectly pure on every level of consciousness. Her non-ego *Muga* dance is performed by a group, in which each member after closing the eyes lets himself or herself whirl and rock like in the arms of the mother. All motions are spontaneous and come in a natural way, resulting in the unity of body, mind and spirit.

The *Mevlevi* and the *Naqashbandi Dervishes*, also go in a whirling motion, which is a symbol of the rotation of the universe in presence of God. Their ecstatic dances are a means to attain a full awareness of the divine presence. To a Sufi, it is possible to go into the ecstasy, resulting in a swift flight towards the Beloved God. This ecstasy of the Sufis can be termed as the *Kundalini*. It is only, when a Sufi or a Yogi, through the grace of God, is free from lust and desire that *Kundalini* rises from *Muladhara Chakra* to *Sahasrara Chakra*. Of course, the union of esoteric *Parvati* with esoteric Shiva is when *Kundalini* unites with the soul. It is a moment of supreme bliss, vitality and magnetism.

*I know not, O friends, what I really am!  
Sometimes I think I am a puppet,  
Sometimes the thread with which it is tied;  
Perhaps I am a ball in the Beloved's hand,  
Or perhaps a top spin  
Or I am a horse, the Rider drives;  
Or I am a wave which drowse the external shore;  
Or I am a henna flower with redness within it;  
Or I am a rose, full of fragrance;  
Perhaps I am a fountain,  
The water of which reflects the sun and the moon  
Or I am a reflection of Truth from the very beginning  
Or that which is nothing, I am not;  
Sachal has understood from his Preceptor this much only:  
That I am not different from God, I am the Master always.  
I am restless without it,  
But with it,  
I commune with the Creator.*

## MUSIC:

When there was nothing, there was the *Word* and the *Word* was God. Now, these very words are woven into songs by lovers in a praise of the Beloved. In each song, mystery will be found which when unveiled will show the Beauty. Thus, it is evident that both music and poetry are a necessary medium for inner development. In ecstasy, *Murshid* Inayat Khan would speak of music as a dream, a meditation and a paradise. It needs to be noted that the music of the Sufis, which is known as the *Sufiana*, is to be sung very softly in a whisper like tone and rhythm. It is an established fact that such a kind of music is soothing and has harmonious effect on temper.

None can deny that every uttered sound has vibrations and these affect mind, heart and soul. Our whole life, nay our cosmos is anguished in sound. Music is a harmonic sound and is liked due to its sweetness. When we hear music, it creates different patterns on our heart. Godly music creates Godly pattern while ugly music materializes into fearful demons. *Murshid* Inayat who was himself a gifted musician, says:

*In all the occupation of life where beauty has been the inspiration; where the divine wine has been poured out, there is music.*

*Murshid* Shah Latif, sang in praise of God:

*Body their rosary,  
Mind their beads,  
Their heart is the harp,  
The threads of longing singing in utter unity.  
The One, the only One, is the song within.  
They whose sleep is prayer wake even in sleep.*

In the Holy *Tora*, it is said: *We made you our lover but you did not respond. We made music for you, but you were not in ecstasy.* There is no doubt that with music, the soul comes into propinquity to God. A Sufi is a traveler on the mystic path and he suffers a long and a tedious journey. With *Sama*, it is a swift flight towards his Beloved God.

## RULES:

According to *Murshid* Suharwardi, the rules of the *Sama* are as under:

- a) It shall be an assembly of those who are true seekers Of God, who wish to comprehend the blessings of God, who wish to address themselves to God and want to be united with God.
- b) The true seekers shall shun an assembly, if it has been called for a lustful desire.

- c) It should not include women, immature youth, Orthodox, fundamentalists and the men of world.
- d) All present should sit with respect and gravity , Should not become agitated and should not murmur.
- e) It is permissible in the Sama to go into ecstasy but one should be careful in expressing his emotions.

#### WHIRLING DANCE:

The circular dance of the Sama is conducted by the *Murshid* in the prescribed manner. The *Murids*, nine to thirteen sit for half an hour on the floor, with eyes closed, heads bowed and arms folded. The *Murshid* invites all the assembled to raise their hands in prayer and chants:

*To thee, O God----glory!*  
*To thee, O God----praise!*  
*Thou are the Most Merciful of the Merciful!*  
*Mercy, O God, mercy!*  
*We have come to your gate, grant us admittance!*  
*We seek refuge, grant us protection!*  
*Fill us with your love, O Majestic Lord!*  
*Include us in the fellowship of your servants!*  
*Record our names among the servants you love!*  
*There is none worthy of worship than Thee!*  
*Illuminate our hearts with your love!*  
*Save us from fears and anxieties!*  
*Let our eyes behold your Beauty!*  
*Glorified and exalted are Thee, O Lord!*  
*We do love Thee, O God!*  
*We worship Thee, O lord!*  
*Gladden us with Thy grace and Guidance!*

After the prayers, the Dervishes approach the *Murshid*, one by one, salute him with the gesture of hand and begin the dance. Every Dervish advances slowly, turning on the left heel, till they form one circle. Their arms are open or raised but their eyes are closed. All visualize beholding the beauty of the Beloved God. The dance may continue for an hour or two, during which time, sweet music is played or interrupted by poetic compositions sung by musicians and singers. Every Dervish tries to search inward purity and tranquility in the Sama. Surely music, singing and dancing delights the soul of the sincere devotees. Says *Murshid* Suharwardi:

*For those engaged in love of God, Sama is an aid for perfection but for those filled with lust , the cause of disaster. Whose Sama is constant and sincere, ever present in their heart is He.*

In the assembly of the Sama, some dervishes go into emotional upsurge known as *Wajid*. They become the agitated and may manifest the excess of motion, crying and weeping. Surely, such dervishes who are in ecstasy are those whom God has bestowed a special gift. Towards the close of the dance, the *Murshid* may join the dance of the Sama for a few minutes and then make the closing prayer to conclude the Sama.

Watching the Dervishes dancing in worship may appear a superficial dance but remembrance of God, the Lord of Majesty is altogether different and distinct from an ordinary dance. God knows best, whatever their mode of remembrance, the Sufis are not unbelievers. The Imams of the faith have given seventy definitions of dance and Sama is not an unlawful dance.

Are we not aware of the Quranic injunction?

*Remember Allah standing, sitting and on your sides.*

Reza Arasteb has described the Sufi dance in a beautiful manner and I quote:

*One of the most interesting mechanisms for drawing the attention of the lover towards his beloved was a five step dance that revealed the total outlook of the Sufis towards the process of I-Thou relationship. The dance started with meditation, intense concentration on one self so that one could empty himself, de-embed himself resent size and gain his state of naturalness. However this was not enough. The Sufis knew that regaining of naturalness must occur through action. The dance served this purpose.*

*In dancing the seeker took steps and moved his closed palm towards his chest (first act) ; then he took a step again and opened his palm and moved his hand towards the ground , symbolizing that he was released from "self" (second act).*

*In the second step he raised his hand towards heaven, symbolizing the nature of God.*

*In the fifth act, the seeker pointed his right hand fingers towards his object of desire, symbolizing that all that exists is thou and thou.*

*The seeker performed this dance with great concentration on his object of desire, often symbolized in the guide or perfect man, or his earthly beloved.*



## MEDITATION

“I have found the shrine where I am one with Thee.”  
 \_\_\_\_Hallaj.

Meditation can be defined as a silent communication with the Divine. Is a state of intimate quest by the heart, mind and soul for the ultimate reality in plain words, the *Muraqaba* means meditation but for the *Sufis*, it is something more than simple meditation? *Murshid* Rumi (d.1273) wrote that the degree of necessity determines the development of mind. During all these millions of years, man has passed through numerous forms of perception. Accordingly, as time passes, he will go on changing these forms of perception. Naturally, his mind will undergo an evolutionary change towards higher and higher perceptions. The *Sufis* claim that during *Zikr* and *Muraqaba*, they are sure to accelerate higher working of the mind leading to special perceptions.

For the *Sufis*, the *Muraqaba* is an extra-ordinary experience of super consciousness. After diving deep within oneself, the aspirant can fly into the higher Cosmo. It is a special kind of the thought - process, in which *Khayal* or imagination materializes into a visible shape. The *Sufis* term it as a miracle, transcending all limitations.

When the spirit of God moved in the cosmos, he wished to create everything in six days. And it so happened that the earth and the heavens were created. God said; *Let there be light and there was light*. Hence it is evident that imagination is the basis of the existence of God and hence our Lord has become a reality for us. Imagination is the creative faculty of mind which converts itself into external objects not present to the senses. This very imagination is the basis of all worlds. Every idea is bound to materialize into some concrete image or shape in the future.

It is evident that our existence is bound in a chain of conception. Every human being and every living creature is enslaved by imagination. Persons with material bent of mind imagine themselves rich. A student, who is absorbed in studies, imagines or conceives his success in examination. In fact the basis of life is imagination, nay, our life is also imagination. Even this world is imagination. Anyone who imagines himself in the company of God will surely find His grace. He is an illuminated person, who may show you this miracle.



In the same way, when a scientist or an inventor contemplates or imagines, his imagination materializes into a discovery or an invention. Same is the case with the Sufi, who contemplates on his *Murshid* in the first instance and then his Prophet and afterwards his God, in the three stages of his spiritual development. The process of enlightenment covers his mind, heart and soul with the result that he becomes a Super Mind.

In order to experience inner piece and joy. The Sufis prescribe different type of Meditation for their disciples. However, it can not be denied that those who experience the joy of Meditation, for them there is nothing more enjoyable and interesting in the world.

In the Sufi terminology, Meditation means the realization of spiritual nature. In other words, a seeker has to attain that state where he tries to know the Self. The *Murshid*, when satisfied with your progress towards love of the Beloved, will lead you to the second stage. Now he will be required to meditate as an obedient servant. You are required to win over the Beloved by a show of extreme love, bending your head, detached from environment and completely absorbed in mystical contemplation. It is an endeavor the state of the soul in union with God.

*The lovers never count the odds.  
They shed tears at the Beloved's door.  
Silently, they go on contemplating.  
All this they do to woo the Beloved.  
One's own thought is one's world.*

#### STAGES OF THE MURQABA:

Various techniques are available to the Sufi Masters to engage their disciples into Meditation. Without the *Murshid* there is no Muraqaba. He is the guide to lead the disciple in the right direction. For this, he invites to practice a technique, suitable for the disciples. Muraqaba means presenting oneself before the Creator. Hence the behavior of the disciple should be agreeable to God's sight. Purity is the main characteristic of the Sufis. Prior to his engagement in Muraqaba, a disciple will be required to purify his physical body with ablution. Secondly, one is required to purify his mind by casting away all evil thoughts. Before presenting him before the Beloved God, the *Murshid* may prescribe the following *Hals* or states and *Muqams* or stages:

- a) *The disciple may be told to sit in a dark cell, open his eyes and concentrate on a single point.*
- b) *The disciple may be required to observe silence for some days.*
- c) *The disciple may be told to consider himself as a drop of water, from the sea of God.*

- d) *The disciple may be required to consider himself a ray of light, from the Eternal Light.*

After a period, when the *Murshid* is satisfied, he out of grace may prescribe the following Muraqaba

#### MURQABA ROYAT:

During the practice of *Fikr*, the *Murid* has to visualize that the Beloved God is looking at him. He has to keep this verse from the Holy Quran in his mind:

*Are you not aware of the fact that Allah sees everything?*

#### MURQABA MMAEYAT:

The *Murid* has to think that his Beloved God is always with him.

#### MURQABA AQRIBIAYAT:

The *Murid* has to think that his Beloved God is very near to him.

#### MURQABA WHADIT:

The *Murid* has to think that his Beloved God rests in everything of this world. He must recite this verse:

*He is the Beginning;*

*He is the End.*

#### MURQABA FANA:

In this Meditation, the *Murid* is instructed to lie down in *Shavasna* and visualize his death. After bathing, the corpse is wrapped in a coffin and then starts the final journey towards the grave-yard or cremation ground. All the relatives, dear and near ones, friends and others return to their work, leaving the dead *Murid* to his fate.

The *Murid* has to understand that all have to die. Death is the end of one's life and all of us have to leave this world empty-handed. This Muraqaba removes the fear of death from heart of the *Murid*. Secondly, he attains the power to contact the departed souls. Sit near a grave and say: *Ya Rabb* 21 times. Then looking towards the sky, repeat: *Ya Rohh* 21 times. Then look at the grave and repeat *Ya Rohh* 21 times. God willing, one will see the dead person during sleep.

#### MURQABA TOWHID-I-AFALI:

A *Murid* must remember that the infinite Universe of universes is the creation of that Supreme Power, whom we call God. All creation is under His orders and we are just like petty instruments under Him. He alone is the Creator and Mover of all actions and all movements. In this

Muraqaba, one has to activate his mental activity, with confidence so that one's activity becomes God's activity. A time will come when our effort will produce certain forms of perceptions, which can be termed as miracles.

Our lives are very short in this world. It is better to surrender ourselves to the will of God. All bounties come from God. Whatever of bad befalls upon us from ourselves?

#### MURQABA TOWHD-I-SIFATI:

In this Meditation, one has to consider that oneself and this world, as a shadow or a replica of the Creator. He must absorb deeply and more deeply in this Muraqaba so that other forms of the mind are opened. By and by one will feel engulfing the whole cosmos. All secrets of the nature will get exposed before oneself. One should remain humble and content. Absorbing oneself in this Muraqaba, it is possible to attain the capacity and power to know secret things. But one is advised to conceal all that which is revealed to him. It is better to desire tranquility of the heart and freedom of mind. There are many chances that the Satan may put dark veils between the seeker and the Creator. One must avoid these pitfalls and be a seer.

#### MURQABA TOWHD-I-ZATI:

In this Meditation, a seeker is asked to consider the vegetable, animal and mineral kingdom, all elements and the heavens as God. It is for this reason that some Masters abstain from teaching this Muraqaba. Having completely absorbed in God, the aspirant becomes conscious only of God. He may later consider himself as one with God.

*Swift for thy sake, I sped over land and sea,  
And clove a way through world and steep heart free,  
And Turned aside from all I met, until  
I found the shrine where I am one with Thee.*

#### MURQABA NOORI:

In this Meditation, one has to visualize God as the radiant light, covering the whole existence. One has to feel that this Divine Light is pouring into every cell of our physical body. Go on repeating this Mantra by heart:

*Light, Light, I am Light.*

With constant practice, one will create an aura of light around his face.

This light is the supreme consciousness, which the Sufis term as *Noor-i-Mutlaq* and the Yogis call Kundalini. It will shine like the flash of lightening and cover the whole body from the spine to the head.

*God is the light of the heavens and the earth.*

*God is my light and salvation.*

*Walk, o Lord, in the light of Thy Consciousness.*

*Let us walk in the light of the Lord.*

Those *Murids*, who obtain grace through the *Murshid*, are able to still the mind with the aim of making their soul an ocean of light. The bounties of this Meditation cannot be explained by writing but require to be experienced. It enables one to acquire the qualities of effluence and flying from the world of human beings to the world of *Jinn* and from that to the sphere of angels. All these achievements are of smaller value for a real Sufi, whose main aim is to experience the Beatific Vision. Seeking is one thing, understanding another; but the Sun's form; we can see but cannot comprehend. Just practices cannot lead one to success. It is a simple question of *Yaqin* or faith in oneself and *Yaqin* in his *Murshid*. It is said that without the *Murshid*, no *Murid* can advance and this advance is in proportion to his *Yaqin* or faith. It is only through the grace of your *Murshid* has to give you can achieve some result. For this, the *Murshid* has to give one *Shaktipat* by *Pass-o-Anfass*; inhaling and exhaling of breath in conjunction with the sacred word. If the *Murid* is too innocent to comprehend *Shaktipat*, then the *Murshid* has to find out the *Ism-i-Azam* or the Great Name and imprint the same on the heart of the *Murid*.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## KHALWAT

“In Thee our refuge; in Thee our shelter.”

Khalwat is a Sufi technical term meaning “*To be inwardly with Allah while being outwardly with people*”. The idea is to withdraw for a time from the attachments and distraction of the world for the sake of one’s inner work. A disciple who desires to purify needs to enjoy close proximity (*Khalwat*) with God. As such, the objective of drawing to closer to God is to seek purification of the self and to strive against one’s carnal desires. This will ultimately lead the individual to attain a higher state of close proximity with God \_the state of self annihilation (*Fana-fil-lla*). A poet wrote...

*“As for the friend of God nothing is closed to him except God.  
He always remembers God and weeps, out of reverence  
Over His greatness”*

Khalwat means going into seclusion or retreat .Sometimes, this practice is termed as the *Chilla*, when the *Murshid* directs his *Murid*, to remain confined to a cell for usually forty days. In this special assignment, the aspirant is given a live Mantra, by his *Murshid* for self-realization.

In fact, the main purpose of Khalwat is to slow down the emergence of unnecessary tensions. Khalwat is an old tradition and goes right up to Adam.

When God wished to appoint Adam as his viceroy in this world, he gave him a composition of elements of earth, fit for this world, so that these elements could be made ferment during forty mornings. Each morning signified addition of Adam’s attachment to this world and forgetting of his past association with eternity. Every morning signified a veil of forgetfulness of past and thus going far away from the secret world and going nearer and nearer to the material world of the present. On the fortieth morning, the process became *heavy* and Adam became fit for his work in this world. Hence these forty mornings are the basis of Khalwat, in which an aspirant has to remove veils of forgetfulness so as to attain nearness to God. This forty fold veil requires to be lifted up if one aspires to have a vision of God.

Moses, the Prophet of the Hebrews, went into Khalwat for forty days. During this period, he engaged himself in supplications and implored God to give him the *Darshan*. Accordingly, all seekers of God go into Khalwat, because God has revealed:

*All that is on Earth will perish but (forever)  
Will abide the face of your lord, full of  
Majesty, bounty and honor.  
Which them of the bounties of your Lord will you deny.*

The Holy Prophet used to remain in Seclusion in the *cave of Hira*. He would keep himself absorbed in *Zikr* and supplications. He used to provide himself with water and barley porridge, sufficient for the period of Khalwat. Retreat from the impurities of life and meditation for long hours brought his soul into close communion with the Divine Power. When he was forty years old, the light of Revelation burst upon him.

*Read! In the Name of your Lord,  
Who has created (all that exists),  
Has created man from a clot.  
Read! Your Lord is most gracious.*

This tradition of the Holy Prophet is firmly held by the Sufis, who also go into Khalwat, once every year. They go into seclusion for perfecting with drawl of senses of perception from seeking sense gratification of the external environment. During the period one has to abandon pleasures of this world for those of Hereafter.

In Khalwat the following conditions are to be observed:

- Constant ablution: It is essential to remain clean and purified during the period of Khalwat.
- Constant fasting: Those who observe Khalwat need to fast during the day.
- Little eating: It is advised to eat less and reduce and restrict food to bread, water and salt only.
- Little sleep: As far as possible, it is better to reduce the duration of sleep by constant ablutions.
- Little Talking: Khalwat means retirement from the material world and observance of silence. One must avoid talking with others and if required, speak necessary.
- Constant contemplation: One must absorb one's consciousness in contemplation so as to repel over-

crowding of thoughts. It is necessary to reflect on the greatness of God and humbleness of self. One must regret over sins and seek pardon.

- Constant Zikr: The aspirant must engage himself in *Zikr* and *Muraqaba* during every moment of the *Khalwat*.

In the *Khalwat*, a seeker experiences his own imagery by putting himself in a new situation. Having retreated from the active world, he enters in to static world, where solitude and seclusion accelerate uplifting of the soul. It is for this reason that the mystics in every culture are attracted towards the *Khalwat*.

The Sufis who retire to a corner of solitude do it for the remembrance of God and also pursue the conquest of nature thinking that it is all creation of God. On the one hand, they remember God in the mist of all worldly pursuits, being fully conscious of the Divine presence everywhere. They also set out for the conquest of nature with the full consciousness that nothing has been created in vain. During “*Fikr*”, a seeker has to be conscious of this fact that there is a definite purpose behind all creation.

*In the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alteration of the night and the day, there are surely signs for men of understanding. Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth:  
Exclaim: Our Lord, Thou hast not created this in vain!*

*Murshid* Gudri Shah Baba has described *Fikr* as concentrated observation of the Divine nature. The man is the sum total of all existing things and through concentrated observation; he obtains knowledge of the universe-visible or invisible. Self knowledge through *Fikr* leads to the knowledge of God. A seeker wants to know in what world he was hidden before his birth and where he will go after his death. The practice of *Fikr* leads him to the truth about our existence. It also guides him to the ultimate truth. A seeker of truth observes the hidden secrets of nature.

By going into retreat, a seeker tries to reach the Ultimate Truth. No doubt the true reality is beyond the boundaries of human perception but still a sincere attempt requires to be made to take notice of signs that ultimately lead to God.

During the *Khalwat* a seeker has to be conscious of this fact that there is a definite purpose behind all creation. The Quran demands of a believer to contemplate on the purpose of creation and the Author of this creation. No doubt the true reality is beyond the boundaries of human

perception but still a sincere attempt requires to be made to take notice of signs that ultimately lead to God. *Murshid* Abubabaji has said:

*In our spiritual contemplation, the first words should be those of Praise. If the praise is from our innermost being, it brings us into union with God's will. Then our eyes are all good, peace and harmony. Evil, rebellion and the conflict are purged out. They do not exist for us, for our eyes are lifted up above them in praise. There we see God's attributes better. This leads us to the attitude of worship and acknowledgement. And finally comes prayer for guidance, and a contemplation of what guidance means.*

The Khalwat should not be treated as an escape from problems. Going into retreat has been a life style of saints, sages, mystics, poets, authors and thinkers. In order to drive out negative thoughts from the mind and obtain tranquility, the Sufis go into the Khalwat. It should aim at self-purification and inner illumination.

Zun Nun, who is considered the first Sufi Qutub, says:

*I have not experienced anything better than the Khalwat to free oneself from pretence or deceit. Hence, the one, who takes to The Khalwat obtains the qualities of sincerity and acquires great perceptions of truth and Reality.*

Ibnu Fareed in his poem states:

*You take medication to preserve your body which will be destroyed,  
But neglect your soul which lives on forever.  
I sought close proximity with God after which I wept reflecting upon  
His magnificence and greatness in relation to me which is proof of it*





## ILLUMINATION

“O Hidden Glory! Come forth and manifest thyself”  
 \_\_\_\_Sarmad.

Illumination, in the literary sense means, self-manifestation of God, but it is understood in different ways by the mystics. To the Jews, it may mean, face to face vision of the Creator but for the Christians, it may mean, Transfiguration, as it was in Christ. In the Hindu concept, it may be equated with *Sat, Cit Ananda*. It is the highest stage of union with God resulting in total absorption.

According to *Murshid* Suharwardi, a seeker reaches the stage of *Yaqin*, when he is blessed with the glance in this world.

*I underwent millions of hardships,  
 To see the Beloved outside:  
 But when I looked into myself,  
 I found my Friend within me.*

Ibn Arabi says that in the Beatific Vision, God manifests to the elect in various forms corresponding to their mental conception. The Sufis call it, *Tajalli-i-dhat*, which signifies the manifestation of the Glory of God during *Wajd* or ecstasy.

*“Allah guides to His light whom He pleases”*

Every Sufi is blessed by God to have a natural ability to illuminate his soul with *Noor-i-Nubuwat (Prophetic Blessings)*. When ever the light of faith touches his heart, his soul is illuminated as if lamp is lighted. Such a person life is indeed on the right path. What can be more; he also becomes source of gaudiness for humanity. When such a person reaches in the company of an accomplished Sufi master than this illumination of soul is increased manifold. Than his heart is illuminated like brighter sun and he becomes a source of spreading these blessing in the world. This is an essence of Sufism

A mystic sees a vision in the space, not before his eyes. For others, it may see only imagination, yet for a mystic it is a reality. Moses the Prophet of Hebrews saw a smoke rising on the top of mountain. He climbs to see the fire but experience a flash of light and fell down unconscious. When he arose he a\was a different man, for he had found himself in a state of *Tajalli* or Illumination. He had seen God in the space, which the others could not find in the material form. Man believes in the reality of a thing that he can see and touch. But it cannot be true in case of God. A person thinks that there is a God while the other person sees God. A Sufi sees God and recognizes God in the beauty, in humanity and in all creation. A believer in God conceives God as a being separate from Him, while the Sufi does not think himself apart from God. The God of Sufi is not in heaven above but he is everywhere. Murshid Rumi says:

*“The Believed is all in all,  
The lover only veils Him.  
The believed is all that lives,  
The lover is a dead thing”.*

A Sufi after his or her annihilation in the personality of God experiences a mystic union with God which means Illumination or *Tajalli*.

The vision of the Divine being in glory is the ideal and the chief aim of the Sufis. It is only possible when the body, mind and soul of the aspirant is intoxicated in the love of God. The Beatific Vision assumes different forms corresponding to the degree of this love. As the lovers of the Divine being, we are happy to open this secret wisdom for the benefit of our *Murids*.

For trying to obtain this holy vision, the *Murshid* will direct the *Murid* to meditate upon the six *Latifas* (*Chakras*) of the body, which are to be activated with *Fikr* and *Zikr*.

The six esoteric astral centres of the Sufi's are:

<i>Akhfa Latifa</i>	:	<i>Sahasra Chakra</i>
<i>Khafi Latifa</i>	:	<i>Ajna Chakra</i>
<i>Siri Latifa</i>	:	<i>Visuddhhi Chakra</i>
<i>Qalbi latifa</i>	:	<i>Anhata Chakra</i>
<i>Rohi Latifa</i>	:	<i>Manipura Chakra</i>
<i>Nafsi Latifa</i>	:	<i>Svadhistana Chakra</i>

The *Nafsi Latifa* controls the reproductive forces of sex. The *Rohi Latifa* controls the assimilative systems of nutrition. The *Qalbi Latifa* is a seat of innermost thoughts and emotions. The *Sirri Latifa* controls respiratory system. The *Khafi Latifa* is connected with the sense organ. The *Akhfaa Latifa* pertains to the *Umm-ul-Damag* or the “mother of the brain”. It will be seen that the Sufis do not include any base *Chakra* or *Muladhara Chakra* in their system. Secondly, the colors assigned to these

*Latifas* are different from those of in the Indian system. Further, in the Sufi metaphysics, the colors have different meanings for different people. For the lovers of God, these colors have a special significance, while for the satanic people, a definite attribute. The following chart explains this distinction:

<i>Color</i>	<i>For Godly persons</i>	<i>For Satanic persons</i>
Black	Spirituality	Malice
Blue	Devotion	Selfishness
Green	Toleration	Jealousy
Red	Love	Sensuality
White	Purity	Ugliness
Yellow	Mercy	Pride

The saints and seers obtain divine inspiration (*Ilham-i-Rabbani*) from God during wakefulness or dream (*Khwab*)

The main purpose of human life is to achieve union with the Creator and it cannot be achieved by professing a particular religion. It is possible to see God within and that can be experienced by loving God and His creation. God Himself is the embodiment of love and He wants all of us to experience love.

*Murshid Junaid* has said: *that love signifies the entering into the qualities of the Beloved in exchange for the qualities of the lover.*

*I underwent millions of hardships*

*To see the Beloved outside;*

*But it was by looking into my self that I found Him:*

*My Friend is within me.*

*First, lose yourself:*

*One who annihilates oneself will attain Him;*

*Turn your face within,*

*He is in you.*



## SUPPLICATIONS

“I answer when he calls on me.”

All religions teach us some kind of a prayer to God. The main aim of a prayer is thanks-giving and then beseeching for a favor. Every religion teaches us some sort of a ritual prayer and its main aim is to beseech a favor or a reward. Various forms have been given to the ritual prayers, such as prostration, bowing, and whirling, chanting, singing, blowing of breath and revolving around an object of worship.

Prayer means a solemn request or thanks-giving to God and this practice is as old as humanity itself. Prayers have a power to bring solace to the practitioner. In the doldrums of remove our anxieties, worries and difficulties, it is essential to perform some kind of a prayer.

*Murshid* Inayat Khan states that there are three kinds of people among those who offer prayer. The first kind of the people is in a majority and they follow the tradition of their family or community. Such a person thinks that it is one of his duties to pray to the object of worship and he must do what others do. Such a prayer is mechanical and customary. The second category is of those, who have been taught to pray to God or any other object of worship. He may be praying and his mind may be full of uncertainty as to whether his prayer is really heard. Then the third category is of those, who pray to God with full faith. Once imagination has helped a man to bring the presence of God before him, God is awakened in his own heart. Then every word of prayer he utters is a living word.

In prayers, one does what is told to him. As such, the prayers signify outward devotion to God, while *Duaa* (supplication) signifies inward devotion. Says *Murshid* Sultan Bahoo:

*Rites of fasting, praying, abstaining  
 Cries in wilderness are, ho!  
 Rituals do not lead to Allah  
 Read thyself and thyself know  
 Never, never, meets Beloved*

*Through the rituals, no, Oh no!  
Burn yourself with Love, O Bahoo:  
And be one with One and glow!*

#### NAMAZ:

Among the Muslims, the ritual of prayers is known as *Namaz*. It involves bodily postures, breath control, meditative concentration and recitation. A Muslim is required to cleanse various parts of his body before the hour of prayer. Islam enjoins *Namaz* five times a day and takes only 60 minutes to perform these five ritual prayers.

Our being consists of body, mind and soul. In the performance of *Namaz*, recitals are combined with postures. After cleaning oneself, a *Namazi* has to stand erect facing towards *Al-Kaaba* (The house of God) in *Makah*. He has then to declare his intention of performing the *Namaz* of the specific time. This is the first posture of readiness for *Namaz*.

After reciting the words *Allah-u-Akbar*, God is great; both hands are raised up to the ears, then dropped down in the natural position or folded over the navel. Then the following is recited:

*Glory to Thee, O Allah!  
Thine is the praise,  
Blessed is Thy name,  
Exalted is Thy Majesty,  
There is none to be served besides Thee.*

This is followed by the recitation:

*In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.  
All praise is due to God, the Lord of the worlds,  
The Compassionate, the Merciful; Master of the Day of Requital.  
Thee do we worship and Thee do we beseech for help.  
Guide us on the right path,  
Not the path of those upon whom wrath is brought down,  
Nor of those who go astray.*

This recital is known as the *Fatiha*, or the opening chapter of the Holy Quran, which holds the same position with the Muslims as the Lord's Prayer does with the Christians. After the *Fatiha*, any portion of the Holy Quran is recited and one of the shorter chapter is as under:

*Say: Allah is one.  
Allah is He on whom all depends,  
He begets not,  
Nor is He begotten,  
None is like unto Him.*

Then saying *Allah-u-Akbar*, the *Namazi* lowers down his head in a manner that the palms reach the knees. During this posture, the following words are repeated three times:

*Glory to my Lord the Great!*

After this, the standing posture is resumed and the following words are recited:

*Allah accepts him who gives praise to him!  
O, our Lord! Thine is the praise!*

After saying *Allah-u-Akbar*, the *Namazi* prostrates himself so that the toes of both feet, both knees, both hands and the forehead touch the ground. The following words are recited at least three times:

*Glory to my Lord the Most High!*

Then saying *Allah-u-Akbar*, the *Namazi* raises his head from the ground and then makes the second prostration. He repeats the above words three times and then assumes the standing position. This completes on *Rakaat* and he completes the second *Rakaat* in the same manner. After completion of the second *Rakaat*, the *Namazi* instead of standing remains sitting and recites the following prayer:

*All prayers and worship rendered through words, actions and wealth are due to God. Peace be on thee, O Prophet and the mercy of Allah and His blessings. Peace be upon us and the righteous servants of Allah. I bear witness that none deserves to be worshipped but Allah. I bear witness that Mohammad is His servant and apostle.*

In this final sitting of two *Rakaats*, the following prayer of blessing for the Holy Prophet is recited:

*O God! Exalt Mohammad and the progeny of Mohammad!  
As you exalted Abraham and the progeny of Abraham!  
Thou are the most laudable and glorious.  
O Lord, Bless Mohammad and the progeny of Mohammad!  
As Thou blessed Abraham and the progeny of Abraham!  
Thou are the most laudable and glorious.*

The termination of the prayer is marked by *Salam* as under:  
*Peace be with you and Mercy of God!*

This brings the service to the close, which is performed in Arabic, despite the fact whether one knows that language or not. But after each prayer, personal supplications can be made in mother tongue.

*O God! We ask Thee, by every name,  
With which Thou hast named thyself,  
In all Thy scriptures:  
Include us, among Thy servants.  
Favor us, with Thy Vision.  
Grant us, health, happiness and contentment.  
Mercy! Mercy! Mercy!*

#### SUPPLICATIONS:

Mandatory prayers are considered religious duty but this is not the case with supplications. It is a mechanical process in which one glorifies God by repeating His praise in Arabic only. But this is not the case when one offers a supplication, because here he makes a personal contact with God in his mother tongue. This is the difference between a prayer and a supplication. In prayers, you do what you have been told to do. But in a supplication, you make a personal petition to God in deep reverence and with upmost devotion. It is clear that while a prayer signifies outward devotion, a supplication denotes inward devotion.

Supplications are just like humble petitions to God for solutions of difficulties, problems and troubles. By making himself humble before God one does not lose any virtue. God is the Creator, the Protector, the Preserver, the Reckoner, the Guide, the Inventor, the First and the Last. He is the Possessor of science and wisdom. He is Glorious and great and possesses supreme excellence in goodness, beauty and sublimity. His blessings are open to all creatures and He is not partial in His bounties. He listens to our supplications and wards off impending troubles.

Al- Ghazzali says that at the time of supplications, both the hands may be raised, up to face, palms towards the sky. After concluding the supplication, both the palms may be rolled over the face, chest and thighs. All supplications are to be made in secret and in a low tone. The seeker has to make his supplication with faith and vigor. It is better to make your supplications to God when it is night.

*Seek Me as the birds seek its nest.  
Seek Me as the shepherd seeks the flock.  
If you shall adopt Me, I shall adopt you.  
If you truly seek Me, I shall meet you.  
If you remember Me, I shall remember you.*

Murshid Inayat Khan has composed this beautiful supplication:

*Save me, my lord,  
From the earthly passions and attachments  
Which blind, mankind?  
Save me, my lord,  
From the temptations of power, fame and wealth which keep man  
away from thy glorious vision*

*Save me, my lord,  
From the souls who are constantly occupied  
In hurting and harming their fellow men and who take pleasure in  
the pain of another.*

*Save me, my lord,  
From evil eye of envy and jealousy  
Which falleth upon thy bountiful gifts?*

*Save me, my lord,  
From falling into the hands of playful hands of children of earth,  
they might play with me  
And break me in the end as children destroy their toys.*

*Save me, my lord,  
From all manner of injury  
That cometh from the bitterness of my adversaries and from the  
ignorance of my loving friends.*

#### THE LORD'S PRAYERS:

The hypocrites pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets. Their main aim is publicity so that they could be seen by men and called pious. According to Jesus Christ, the son of God, such people have their reward. But the real prayer is to enter your closet, shut the door and pray to your Father in secret. God hears and knows each word of your supplication and you need not use vain repetitions. Your Father knows about things you need before you ask for them. Here is the Lord's Prayer:

*Our Father which art in heaven,  
Hallowed be Thy name.  
Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done.  
In earth, as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
As we forgive our debtors.  
Lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil:  
For Thine is the kingdom  
And the power,  
And the glory,  
For ever.  
Amen!*



## DUAA:

In Arabic, *the Duaa* is the name given to the supplication, which cannot be defined in so many sentences but can only be perceived by studying the lives of holy saints. Special supplications are given as under:

*O God! Forgive my sins;  
Provide me with lawful livelihood;  
Grant me generosity of conduct;  
Grant me contentment with what Thou hast bestowed upon me;  
Efface all desire from my heart for what Thou hast taken away from me!  
Allah is Great; Allah is Great!  
I invoke the blessings of Allah, for my soul, faith, family, property and  
whatever my Lord hast bestowed upon me.*

*O God!  
Thou art the Creator possessed of greatness;  
Thou hearth and knoweth everything;  
Thou art forgiving;  
Thou art merciful;  
Thou art extremely benevolent, generous and kind:  
Forgive me and have mercy on me.  
Grant me peace and sustenance.  
Over my faults.  
Grant me moral elevation.  
Elevate me.  
Guide me aright and let me not go astray.  
Admit me to paradise by Thy mercy.  
O Thou Most Gracious and Merciful!*

Supplications are always voluntary and free because no hard and fast rules can be prescribed in this regard. One may supplicate at any time and without any set formulae. It is just like opening your heart to a friend and a comforter. One may cry or weep to express his pain and anguish. One may raise his hands towards the heavens and beseech earnestly for solutions.

The Holy Prophet has said:

*Supplication is the essence of worship.  
It is real worship because God says:  
Call Me; I will accept your supplications!*

## SOLUTION:

Shoghi Effendi has suggested the following five steps as a means of finding a solution to a problem:

The first step is to supplicate and then remain in silence for a few minutes. Arrive at a decision and ask for a favor. Hold it as a way of solving the problem. This is the second step in this process. Now take the

third step, which is to have determination to carry the decision through. The fourth step is to have faith and confidence that the power will flow through you, right way will appear, the door will open and the right message will be given to you. The fifth step is to feel that your supplication has all been answered. How true are these words!

#### ACCEPTANCE:

All supplications and prayers are answered, may these relate to personal problems or to society. The Holy Prophet prayed before the battle of *Badr* for victory. His supplications were accepted by God and the Muslims defeated a much more powerful invader. How did it happen? It was at bottom the silent supplications of a lonely man who had annihilated himself in God.

In the Quran God says:

*And when My servants ask thee concerning Me, surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he calls on Me, so they should hear My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way.*

It is wrong to assume that supplications are of no use and every happening is determined by laws of nature. However, it should be borne in mind that there are other laws of nature besides those discovered so far. When a supplication is accepted, God brings about the causes which produce the effect. Sometimes a supplication remains unfulfilled. The secret of such apparent rejection is that the good of the supplicant lies along this line. God is the real well-wisher of man and can see the ill-effects of the prayer so addressed. Such a rejection is, really in the interests of the applicant. One should not follow one's wrong urges and desires.

#### RULE:

Al-Ghazzali, the great eleventh century Sufi has laid down the following rules regarding supplications:

- Both the hands may be raised up during supplications and at the end both the hands may be rolled over the face and body.
- It should be borne in mind that God will surely accept your supplication.
- Supplications should be made in secret and in low tones.

Nothing is hidden from God and He knows the whereabouts of all things. He is fully aware of our needs and requirements. He acts rightly and justly. In the Holy Quran, it is written:

*Call your Lord in complete humility and in secret.  
Call me and I will grant your supplications.*

## ULTIMATE REALITY:

Eternal is the God of all humanity, who has spoken to Hindu, Buddhist, Jew, Taoist, Zoroastrian, Christian and Muslim. No people or nation has been excluded from receiving guidance from the source of Ultimate Reality, which is one, but has many expressions. When mind is freed from worldly preoccupations, it is possible to draw ourselves closer to the Source through the medium of supplications:

*O God!*  
*Thou art the Creator, possessed of greatness.*  
*Thou hearth and knoweth everything.*  
*Thou art forgiving.*  
*Thou art merciful.*  
*Thou art benevolent, generous and kind.*  
*Forgive me and have mercy on me.*  
*Grant me peace and sustenance.*  
*Cover my faults.*  
*Elevate me.*  
*Guide me on the straight path.*  
*Let me not go astray.*  
*O Thou Most Gracious and Merciful.*

## DELIVERANCE:

In the Psalms of the Bible, there are potent prayers and supplications. Here is a supplication for guidance and deliverance for the enemies:

*Hear my prayer, O Lord!*  
*Give ear to my supplications.*  
*Hear me speedily, O Lord!*  
*My spirit faileth.*  
*Hide not Thy face from me.*  
*Deliver me, O Lord, from my enemies.*  
*I flee unto thee to hide me.*  
*Teach me to do thy will.*  
*For thou art my God!*

## REPANTACE:

Here is a potent supplication of repentance inspired by the great Sufi scholar, *Al-Ghazzali*:

*O Lord God!*  
*You have created me.*  
*I am your servant.*  
*I rely on your covenant.*  
*I have sinned and I am ashamed.*  
*I have done evil but you are my refuge.*  
*O Merciful God!*

*I plead for your mercy on me.  
Forgive me for my actions.  
Wash off my sins.  
For you and the only one who forgives.  
O Lord God!  
Mercy! Mercy! Mercy!*

#### HEALING:

Mirza Husayn Ali surnamed Bahauallah, who expounded the teachings of the *Bahia* Faith, in 1852, says that the following prayers and supplications should be recited to heal both the soul and the body:

*Thy Name is my healing, O my God, and  
Remembrance of Thee is my remedy.  
Nearness to Thee is my hope and love for  
Thee is my companion.  
Thy mercy to me is my healing and my succor  
In both this world and the world to come.  
Thou, verily, art the All-Bountiful, the  
All-Knowing, the All-Wise.*

#### SEEK THY PROTECTION:

One must understand that tears chase laughter and goodness pain. Freedom consists in acceptance of this reality. As the pleasure follows pain, so does the mercy of God bring an end to the suffering? A potent supplication for seeking protection is explained on next page:

- *O God! I seek Thy protection from vexation in this world.*
- *O God! Be pleased to liberate me from the worry I am in and help me in solving the difficulty which has overtaken me.*
- *O God! Grant me prosperity and success.*
- *O God! Forgive me and have mercy on me and guide me on to the most direct and best course.*
- *O God! I seek Thy protection from the befalling of sudden misfortune.*

#### LOVE:

*Murshid*, Sheikh Muzaffar Ozak writes that to the human being, love is absolutely necessary. This love be it metaphorical or real, is a feeling and the attribute power to mankind. By way of *Laila* the Lord is reached. From the idol we turn to the Everlasting. One afflicted with the sickness of love is called a lover. There are two categories of lovers: The lovers suffering from metaphorical love and the lovers smitten with the love of God. However this metaphorical love can lead to real love of God. Unless there is metaphorical love, Real Love will not be found. Rend the veil of metaphor, so that you come to awareness of Reality. Love is

essentially a mystery and should always be kept secret. Here is a supplication for love:

*O Beloved God!  
Thy radiant holiness is revealed to those  
Who love Thee?  
Thy majesty inspires the desires in hearts  
That loves Thee.  
Only Thou are capable of fulfilling the hopes  
Of those who love Thee.  
O Beloved God!  
Bestow heavenly gift of love on me.  
Be my Only Beloved One.  
Grant me the vision of Thy Beauty.  
Amen!*

### GAYATRI:

*The Gayatri* is a Sanskrit word meaning sacred supplication. It was inspired by *Murshid Inayat Khan*.

*Praise be to Thee, Most Supreme God,  
Omnipotent, Omniscient, All-pervading,  
The Only Being.  
Take us in Thy Parental Arms,  
Raise us from the denseness of the earth.  
Thy Beauty do we worship,  
To Thee do; we give willing surrender,  
Most Merciful and Compassionate God,  
The idealized Lord of the whole humanity.  
Thee only do we worship and towards Thee  
Alone we aspire.  
Open our hearts towards Thy Beauty,  
Illuminate our souls with Divine light,  
O Thou, the Perfection of Love, Harmony  
And Beauty!  
All-Powerful Creator, Sustainer, Judge and  
Forgiver of our shortcomings,  
Lord God of the East and of the West, of  
The worlds above and below,  
And of the seen and unseen beings.  
Pour upon us Thy Love and Thy Light  
Give sustenance to our bodies, hearts and souls.  
Use us for the purpose that Thy wisdom chooseth,  
Draw us closer to Thee every moment of our life,  
Until in us be reflected Thy Grace, Thy Glory,  
Thy Wisdom, Thy Joy and Thy Peace.  
Amen!*



## INITIATION

“And God hath set some in the church,  
First apostles, secondly prophets and thirdly teachers.”  
-----1. Corinthians.

In the Sufi terminology, a teacher is called a *Murshid* or *Sheikh*. In the Hindu spiritual hierarchy, he is termed as *Guru* and his disciple is known as *Chela*. According to Swami Gitananda, the role of a *Guru* is that of a “friend, philosopher and guide” as that of Sri Krishna with his deranged disciple *Arjuna*, as given in the *Bhagvad Gita*. As a friend, the Guru can touch upon matters of ego, *Asmitta*, probe into the vanities of the *Vasanas*; as philosopher and then guide the student through the maze of *Samskaras*, habit moulds or psychic conditioning, until the *Chela* is put into touch with the “*Guru within*”.

The way to the Beloved God is to be ascertained from the Master. For this, it is essential to enter into a pledge with the *Murshid*, and this initiation ceremony is called the *Baiyyat*. A disciple has to seek guidance with penitence, sincerity and true submission. The Master has to accept the responsibility of guiding the disciple on the path of *Marifat*.

Is it necessary to go into the Baiyyat, at the hands of a *Murshid*?<sup>2</sup> When this question was put to Gurumaye Chidvilasananda, by a disciple, she replied:

*You need a Guru for all kinds of knowledge. Our first Guru is our mother. We learn from her how to eat, how to drink, how to walk and so on. Then we go to school. The teachers in the school are also our Gurus, because they give us elementary knowledge. In the same way, for the knowledge of the Self, for realization of the Self, it is necessary to have a Guru. To obtain complete knowledge in your daily life, you need a living Guru.*

Murshid Suharwardi has defined the task of a Murshid in these words:

*The Master’s main aim is to cleanse the rust of lust and of nature from the heart of a disciple. His first duty is to ascertain the reason and purpose of a person desiring to be admitted as a Murid. If he sees that God’s purpose is that he should instruct the seeker, he must follow God’s order. He must provide guidance to his Murids for treading the path towards the Divine.*

*Just as the moon reflects the light of the Sun and dispels darkness, a Murshid is able to reflect the Divine Light of God, the Murshid is the ultimate perfection in evolution and on leaving his body, dissolves his soul in the Supreme Soul, in the same way as the water drop merges with the ocean. If one really yearns for God in sincerity and truth, then the Murshid is the towering light-house, which guides the boat of Murids consciousness to achieve immortality.*

John the Baptist who preached in the wildness of Judea says:

*I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is the mightier than I: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.*

Each *Murid* requires to be baptized thrice: for the first time with water, for the second time with air and for the third time with fire. The *Murid* has to cross the three stages which are:

- a) *Fana-fil-Murshid.* (Merger with the Master)
- b) *Fana-fil-Rasool.* (Merger with the Prophet)
- c) *Fana-fil-Allah.* (Merger with the Lord)

One must remember that the life mission of *Murids* is to have the glimpse of the Beloved. As such, they must strive to obtain inner and outer purity.

#### CEREMONY:

The procedure of the Baiyyat or the initiation ceremony is described in detail hereafter. At the appointed time, a *Murid*, desirous of taking the pledge comes and sits towards the right hand side of his *Murshid*.

- a) At that time, the *Murshid* shall make this prayer:

*O God: All glory and praise belongs to Thee:  
Let Thee guide and escort us on the right path  
And let our hearts may never be away from Thy love.  
A seeker of truth has approached me for guidance.  
I am so unworthy, so ignorant and so dull that  
I tremble with fear. Have mercy on me and bless  
Me with the Divine light. I beseech Thee that  
Innocent seeker, who is before me, may be  
Blessed with success. Amen:*

b) The *Murid* shall repeat the following pledge :

*In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful and His all messengers, who have come to this world, I pledge my life, my love and my devotion in the pursuit of the Beloved God. Placing my trust in the esteemed Murshid, I shall hold fast his hand. In all things from today, I leave for all times to come, the ten traits of greed, lust, anger, untruth, back-biting, miserliness, hate, cunning, arrogance and revenge.*

*In its place, I will espouse forbearance, generosity, contentment, abstinence, toleration and love of humanity. I shall hold fast to my Murshid, love him with all my life and breathe.*

c) After this pledge, the *Murid* shall change his sitting position and shall now sit in *Dozano* posture facing the *Murshid*. As directed, the *Murid* has to close his eyes and meditate upon the face of the *Murshid* for about five minutes. During this posture the *Murid* has to place his both palms, upside down, on the palms of his *Murid*, who will also meditate upon the face of his *Murid*, with close eyes then the *Murshid*, shall recite the *Fatiha*.

Then the *Murshid* shall blow his breath in the glass of water placed near by and request the *Murid* to drink.

d) Then the *Murshid* shall offer prayers for pardon and the *Murid* shall repeat it with raised hands:

*O Great God:  
We beseech thee to pardon us,  
To Thee, we repent of our sins  
To Thee, we ask for pardon!  
O Great God!  
Accept our repentance.  
Lead us on the true path.  
Have Mercy on us.*

e) While the disciple drinks water, the *Murshid* pronounces as under:

*In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, I do accept you as my Murid and permit you to join the Brotherhood. I do hereby purify you with this cup of water. I pray to Allah to sanctify your body, mind and soul and enlighten you with his 'Tajalli'. Amen!*

f) Finally, the *Murshid*, asking the *Murid* to close his eyes, places his right hand upon the chest of the *Murid* and recites the Mantra three times:



*O God: Let this heart be blessed by Thy Divine Light.*

At that time, the Murshid must blow his breath towards the *Murid's* heart.

g) Then the Murshid will ask the *Murid* to clasp his left hand with the right hand, the two thumbs raised against each other. Then the *Murid* kisses the hand of his Murshid and raises it to his eyes. Then the *Murshid* can request the *Murid* to sit on his left side next to him.

Now the genuine *Nesbit* or alliance has been formed between them and they are allied together in focussing their attention on the Beloved. Every thing is within them but they are not aware of it.

Our Master, the Messenger of God, on him be peace has said:

*He, who knows his own self, knows Allah”.*

Our Master, the Soul of God, Jesus, on him be peace has said:  
*the kingdom of God is within you.*

#### DUTIES:

Now when one has been baptized, it is one's first duty is to keep the *Murshid* in one's mind. His second duty is to maintain noble conduct towards all human beings. His third duty is to serve his *Murshid* with faith and love. The *Murshid* watches with the greatest interest and care and knows when to ignite the flame of Love. When the field is ready, a shower of divine choice shall come to scatter the seeds:

*Sorry plaint, Mentor of mentors*

*If you hear not, who will then?*

*Like you, I have none, my dear*

*Like me you have million men,*

*Unroll not my scroll of evils*

*Push me not out of your pen*

*Had Bahoo been not so sinful*

*Whom would you forgive and when?*

The behavior of the *Murid* towards the *Murshid* should be such, that he makes his place in the heart of his guide. After dwelling in the heart of the *Murshid*, the *Murid* must start assimilating the Sufi thought and practices. He must have perfect faith in the *Murshid*: otherwise the bond of love is weekend. It has been said that “save by attending on the *Murshid*, no door is opened.” He must take perfect resolve to attend upon the *Murshid*. If rejected, he must try again and again so that he is welcomed by the *Murshid*. It is important that the *Murid* makes complete submission before the *Murshid* and admit his sway over his soul and wealth. He should sincerely follow the instructions of the *Murshid* in respect of the contemplation, meditation, prayers and other instructions. He must recognize that the *Murshid's* tongue is the link of God's speech, for it is God who spoke through him. When in the society of the *Murshid*, he should not raise his voice. Neither by deed nor by word should the *Murid*

tread the path of mirth. He must keep concealed the *Murshids* mysteries but should reveal his mysteries to the *Murshid* for his judgement.

The *Murshid* has to discover the capacity of the *Murid* and then elucidate the stages of spiritual attainment. He should not show any greed for the service or for the property of his *Murid*. He should display kindness towards his *Murid*.

Thus says Murshid Inayat Khan, in praise of his *Per-o-Murshid*:

*O inspiring Guide through life's puzzling ways,  
In thee I feel safe abundance of blessing.  
Thy presence lifeth me from earth to heaven,  
Thy words flow as the sacred river,  
Thy thoughts riseth as a divine spring,  
Thy tender feelings waken sympathy in my heart.  
Beloved Teacher, thy very being is forgiveness.  
The clouds of doubts and fear are scattered  
Thy piercing glance;  
All ignorance vanishes in thy illuminating  
Presence;  
A new hope is born in my heart by breathing  
Thy peaceful atmosphere.*

#### WORDS OF WISDOM:

The primary aim of a *Murshid* is to clean the heart of a *Murid* of its impurities and make it luminous. In order to attain this *Murid* has to through out the ten melodies out of his heart and these are:

greed, desire, anger, lying enmity, backbiting, stinginess, jealousy, partiality and egoism.

After a period of time when a *Murid* becomes fully aware of the above drawbacks, he/she is fit to proceed on the journey. For this the *Murshid* tries to inculcate the following seven qualities in the mindset of the *Murid* and these are:

- Sabr or patience in favorable or unfavorable circumstances.
- Shukr or thankfulness in joy as well as sorrow.
- Kanaat or obligation to remain in limit.
- Yaqin or faith in God that He is our creator, nourisher and destroyer.
- Zahd or concentration on certain values and internal serenity.
- Tavakul or trust in what ever is done to us by God.
- Raza or satisfaction that what ever He does is good for us.

The above are the stages which a *Murid* has to cover till he/she receives final lesson pertaining to *Fana and Baqa*. In order to reach the final stages of embarking on the flight towards heaven, a *Murid* has to disintegrate (*Fana*) and then reintegrate (*Baqa*). In the first process *the Murid* foregoes the conventional self by the removal of the “*I*” and by assuming the cosmic self or affirmation of truth and love. This means that at the attainment of this stage a *Murid* has killed the *Nafs-i-Ammarah* and or impulses of evil and instead obtained the *Nafs-i-Mutmainah* or the impulses of harmony and tranquility.

## NOTES

- Sufi Inayat Khan (1882-1927) was a famous Indian musician during his young years. Between 1910 and the 20's, he performed music in the great concert halls of Europe and America. Later, he preached Sufism not as an orthodox sect, but as a forward looking world message of inter-religious brotherhood. His lectures which cover all aspects of mysticism have been compiled in 14 volumes and are available at the International Headquarters of the Sufi Movement, Geneva or at the Motical Banarsidass, Publishers, Delhi, Madras and Bangalore, India. The Sufi message has got an inspiring centre at the grave of the Murshid himself, near the Dargah of the great Sufi saint, Hazrat Nizam-uddin Auliya, New-Delhi.
- Al-Ghazzali, the great eleventh century Sufi has produced some famous authoritative works on Sufism i.e. *The revival of the Sciences of the Religion; Niche of Lights; The Savior from Error.* Having become one of the foremost jurists in Baghdad he reached a point of crises when he was in doubt about the truth of religion. It was a contact with Sufism that saved him from apostasy.
- Sheikh Muzaffar Ozak-al-Jerrahi, al- Jerrahi, al- Halveti, Head of the Halvet-Jerrahi Order of Dervishes was born in the Karagumuruk quarter of Istanbul, Turkey in 1916. From the age of five years, he studied the Holy Quran, Hadith and Islamic law and qualified as a Muezzin for the Grand Mosque of Bayazit. Later he rose to the position of a Imam. He performed the pilgrimage to Makah and Medina eleven times. During his tender years, he obtained guidance from the well-known Sufi Sheikh Samiyyi Sahurani Ushshakiyul-Halveti. His next Murshid was Seyyid Sheikh Nureddin Jerrahi; he became the head of Halveti-Jerrahi Order of Sufis. His disciples are scattered in Germany, England, Holland, Australia, France and America. One of his books has been translated into English by Muhtar Holland from Turkish, under the title, *The Unveiling of Love, 1981.* I had the honor of obtaining his patronage in January 1985.
- Mir Syed Ali Hamdani was born at Hamadan, Iran in 1314. At young age he mastered all the available knowledge of the Holy Quran, Hadith, Jurisprudence and Sufism. He traveled extensively preaching Islam and its mystical dimensions. His piety, kindness and generosity attracted a large number of non-Muslims to Islam in Kashmir. He not only brought new light to the Kashmiris but also introduced several arts and crafts, for which Kashmir has become a legend in the world. In the field of *Sufism*, his great contribution is a treatise of prayers,

known as *Aurad-i-Fatiha* which is being recited, up to the present times after Fajar prayers in mosques in Kashmir.

- Remembrance of God is a selection of Bahia Prayers and Holy Writings was published at New-Delhi in 1990. The Bahia Faith upholds the unity of God, recognizes the unity of His Prophets, and inculcates principles of oneness and wholeness of the entire human race. This faith was expounded by Mirza Husayn Ali, surnamed Bahauallah of Mazindran and Iran in 1852. He was banished first to Baghdad, then to Constantinople and finally to the prison city of Akka in Israel. Before his passing away in 1892, he laid the foundation of his faith, which has become popular in the west.
- Jalal-uddin Rumi (d. 1273) was born in Iran and obtained spiritual guidance from a great Sufi saint, Shamas Tabriz. He compiled the world famous Maathnavi in 6 volumes, which has been translated in almost all languages of the world. He founded the Mevlevi Sufi Order of the whirling Dervishes. His tomb in Konia in Turkey is a sanctuary of the Mevlevi dervishes. Rumi was a great thinker and he perceived inwardly what science has only proven after many centuries.

*Only you were clay, from being mineral  
You became vegetable. From vegetable, you became animal, man. You  
have to go through a hundred different worlds yet.*

- Rabia Basri (d. 801) holds an important status among the great Sufi saints. She attained the Beatific Vision at an early age due to her intense love for God. She spent her whole life, as a mendicant singing praises of the Beloved.
- Sultan Bahoo (d. 1691) is considered to be among the greatest mystics of south Asia. He was born at Avan, shortkot in Jhang, Punjab, to a rich family of landlords. He was brought up in an aristocratic atmosphere where life was luxury and fun. He had four wives and seventeen mistresses. When he had several children from his wives, a sudden change occurred in his life. He left his family and wives and initiated himself in the Qadiria Order of Sufis. He wrote in all a hundred and forty books in Persian and Arabic. He composed verses in Punjabi also and it is these verses, which had preserved his name and fame as a great Sufi.

*Neither are they Hindus, nor are they Muslims,  
Nor in the mosques they bow in obeisance,  
In each and every breath they behold God:  
They came wise and became mad but did not distort their lives.  
They traded in the real substance.  
I am, Bahoo, a sacrifice for them,*

*Who have selected their profession of love?*

- Moses (1200-1080 B.C) is the Prophet of the Jews. He was born in Egypt. The Pharaoh of Egypt tried to kill him but failed. He led the 14 tribes of Israel, out of slavery from Egypt to Palestine. The vision of the divine being in glory was granted to him at the Mount Tor. He also received the Ten Commandments, which form the fundamental beliefs of the followers of Judaism.
- Gurumaye Chidvilasananda is a living Master of the *Siddha* lineage, guiding Siddha Yoga ashrams and meditation centres in India and abroad. She bestows the treasured gift of *Shaktipat*, awakening the inner energy of seekers of all nationalities. Says Gurumaye :

*Look within Meditate, you will find  
Your own peace. You will find your  
Own treasure.*

- Guru Nanak (1469-1539), the first Guru of Sikhism, was born at Tailwind near Lahore in Punjab. He preached harmony and brotherhood among all people and laid great stress on love of God and man. He undertook four major tours to preach devotion to the Lord. He says that God cannot be realized by practicing austerities, by keeping fasts and other customary methods. He can be found by following the divine dispensation, divine law and divine will.
- Bayazit Bistami (d.875) is regarded as one of the founders of the pantheistic school in Sufism. He never followed religious rites of rituals saying *I have no leisure to pray, I am roaming the spiritual world and whenever I see anyone fallen and in need of service, I do my best to help him.* He would often say that a Sufi belongs to the sect of God. His poetry preaches total absorption (*Fana Fila*) in God.
- Mansur Al Hallaj (d.922) was born in Iran. He remained in the company of the great Sufi, Junaid for several years but lived most of his life in Baghdad. He also journeyed through Iraq, Persia, Gujarat and Kashmir to the periphery of China. He is the most controversial figure among the Sufis for his revolutionary pantheistic beliefs in the unity with God. He declared that when man is completely absorbed in God, he abandons self and becomes conscious only of his God. In this state he is one with God. He was crucified in Baghdad for claiming identity with God (Anal Haq).
- Lal Shah Baaz Qaladar, whose real name was Usman, was born in Marwand, Armania in 1143 A.D. having acquired mastery of Arabic and Persian, he was drawn towards mysticism. He was initiated into

the Sufi path by a great saint of his time, called Ibrahim Majzoub Qandozi. He came to India in his young age and settled in Sehwan and Sind. There stands today, his tomb, which attracts people from all walks of life. His poetry of high spiritual order has influenced the Sindhis through out all these years. He preached love of humanity irrespective of caste, creed and status.

*Abide with me ye! Musicians of the Feast Divine,  
Strand I stand on the shores of eternity and pine,  
No boat! No oarsman, either in sight there,  
To carry me across I do not know where!*

- Dhul Nun (d.861) was the Egyptian Sufi, alchemist and philosopher, who introduced the idea of gnosis into Sufi doctrines. He says that the mystical knowledge is revealed only to the few who belong to God. He emphasized that the mystical knowledge of God is attained by means of ecstasy.

*The Gnostics see God in every thing. They move as God causes them to move. Their words are the words of God. Their sight is the sight of God*

- Khwaja Moin-u-ddin Chisti was born at Chisti, Persia in 1141 A.D he spent last 30 years of his life at Ajmer, Rajasthan, India and passed away in 1236 A.D. He is the founder of the Chisti Order, which is very popular in the Indian sub continent. He holds the highest position among the Sufi saints and is titled *Hind-un-Nabi* or the prophet of India. Every year thousands of devotees come from India and abroad through his magnificent tomb at Ajmer, India. He preached tolerance, advocating respect for all religions and love of mankind
- Sarmad Shaheed (d.1661 A.D) was born at Kashan in Iran in a Jewish family. After conversion to Islam, he engaged himself in trade and commerce. In this connection he visited India during the reign of Shahjahan and settled at Thatha in Sind. Here he has come into contact into with the Sufi mystics of Sind and Resume a mendicant. Having joined the group of mystic, he roamed in Sind, Punjab, and Rajasthan and reaches Delhi, the capital of the Mughal kingdom in India. Here he came into contact with Prince Dara Sukoh who was himself a great mystic. He would roam in the lanes of old Delhi reciting his verses. Aurangzeb, the Mughal Emperor of India got this mystic killed in 1661 A.D on the allegation that he was teaching un-Islamic thoughts. His grave exists near the stairs of the Jamia Mosque, Delhi.

- Shah Abdul Latif (1689-1747) is admittedly the greatest among the mystical poets of Sindh. Though he was born in a particular religious community he belongs to the one family of man. His poetic work have made him the Sufi poet of all people and of all times.

Shah Abdul Latif says:

*Why be a slave to the people of world,  
Why not serve the Omnipotent and surrender to Him  
He will confer the boons of happiness,  
You shall enjoy eternal beatitude in return of love  
The ways of the world and the beloved look similar  
Both woo and enchant  
However both differ in substance as  
Loves chief activities is to make one  
God intoxicated.*

- Murshid Shah Imadadullah belonged to the Chistiya Order of Sufis in India. Born in a family of scholars he studied the Quran, the Hadith and Jurisprudence and became proficient in Persian, Urdu and Arabic. Having been initiated in to the Mystic path by a great saint Murshid Mian Jeo Noor Mohammed of Janjah UP India, he attained the status of Murshid and made many Murids. He wrote several treatises on Sufism, out of which Zia-al-Qallob is a master piece on the subject. He passed away at Makah Arabia at the age of about 85 years.
- Bullah Shah (1680-1768) was born at Lulani in Punjab in a family of Sayyids. At his young age he left his house in search of his Guru and found him in the personality of Shah Inayat, a great spiritual mentor. Having earned the grace of God he composes *Kafis* or songs in His praise. He was much influence by the songs of Iranian Sufis and the Hindus devotes of Krishna. Bullah Shah lived a life of Fakir and never even clothed himself. He considered this world as a place of fleeting objects and him self as a traveler.
- Imam Ali (d.661 AD) was the cousin and the son-in-law of the Glorious Prophet. Right from his childhood He was devoted to the Prophet of Islam. Brave and courageous he slept on the bed of the Prophet when the enemies were searching him. He was the first to acknowledge and accept the message of Islam. The Glorious Prophet became pleased with him and granted him *Ilm-i-Ludduni* or knowledge of the sacred Word declaring:

*I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate.*



Thus the Prophet transmitted his esoteric knowledge to Imam Ali, making him the fountainhead of all mystic orders.

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