

The Principles of Naqshbandi Sufi Order

Amal M. A. Ibrahim*¹, Yousif Omer Babiker²

1/ College of Education - Sudan University for Science and Technology

2/ College of Language - Sudan University for Science and Technology

ABSTRACT:

The present study attempts to expound the principles of Naqshbandi Sufi Order, focusing on only three of its eleven basic principles: Essential Remembrance, *Dhikr*, Watch Your Steps, and Journey Homeward. In this study the descriptive method is used. *Dhikr* is one of the basic principles and it means the path that leads one to reach the highest level of manner to know Allah. On the other hand, Watch Your Steps; means that while walking the seeker must keep his eyes on his feet. Wherever he places his feet, his eyes must be there. He is not allowed to glance right or left, or in front of him, because unnecessary sights will veil the heart. Most veils on the heart are created by the pictures which are transmitted from the eyes to the mind in daily life. The Journey Homeward is divided into external journey and internal journey. The former has many difficulties which beginners cannot endure without committing forbidden things because they are weak in their worship. As for the latter, the seeker has to forsake his low manners and move to high manners; he throws out of his heart all worldly desires. The Sufis are considered to be people of the highest morality. Nonetheless, they are not bound by the shackles of rituals and customs. Religion for them is important only so long as it does not hinder spiritual promotion.

KEYWORDS: *Dhikr*, *Sufi*, *Sufi Orders*, *Murids*, *Sama*,

المستخلص:

تحاول هذه الدراسة شرح مبادئ الطريقة النقشبندية وهي واحدة من الطرق الصوفية. وتقوم الطريقة على احد عشر مبدأ. وتركز هذه الدراسة على ثلاثة من هذه المبادئ وهي: الذكر، مراقبة الخطوة ورحلة العودة وقد استخدمت الدراسة الطريقة الوصفية لشرح هذه المبادئ.

تُعرف الدراسة الذكر بأنه هو الطريق الذي يقود الشخص الى أعلى الدرجات لمعرفة الله، والمبدأ الثاني هو مراقبة الخطوة وتعني النظر امامك وان لا تلتفت يمينا او يساراً او امامك أي غض البصر لمنع وقوع الفتنة والنظر الى ما هو منهى

عنه .اما المبدأ الثالث فهو رحلة العودة وينقسم الى رحلتين، رحلة داخلية ورحلة خارجية، الرحلة الخارجية مليئة بالصعاب في اولها ولا بد من الصعاب حتى لا يقع الانسان في المحظورات. اما الرحلة الداخلية فهي الترفع عن الاخلاق الدونية والارتقاء الى الاخلاق الرفيعة والبعد عن الرغبات الدنيوية، لذا فأَن المتصوفة هم اناس ذوو خلق رفيع ومع ذلك فانهم ليسوا مكبلين بالطقوس والعادات .والدين في مفهومهم امرهام، طالما انه لا يمثل عائقا امام الارتقاء الروحي.

INTRODUCTION:

Sufi orders began to form in the 12th and 13th centuries centering on a master founder and stressing companionship (Suhbah, fellowship) as essential to the Sufi spiritual path.

In its first stages, Sufism had been the prerogative of limited spiritual elite. From the twelfth century onwards it succeeded in involving the Muslim masses on a large scale in its network of orders. Sufi hospices were founded all over the Muslim world from Morocco to Central Asia. The Sheikh of each order, a successor of the original founder, presided over the hospice. In this centre he taught his disciples (*Murids*) and performed with them the Sufi rituals of *dhikr* and Hearing *Sama*.

Kabbani (1995) pointed out that there was an elaborate initiation ritual for the disciple when he was admitted into full membership (usually after three years). In this ceremony he received from the Sheikh a special cloak (*Khirqa*) which symbolised poverty and devotion to God. Sufis had no rule of celibacy and most of them were married. The Sufi orders received endowments from sympathetic rulers and rich citizens and consequently some eventually became fabulously wealthy. Sufi orders had an extensive missionary outreach into Africa and into Southeast Asia where they are still very influential.

Each Sufi order developed its own specific set of styles for its *dhikr* and *Sama*'s, used by its members to attain ecstatic state. These rituals also had a social function through helping people from widely varying backgrounds to unify into a spiritual brotherhood.

The Sufi orders were thus a unifying force in society, drawing members from all social classes to *dhikr* and *Sama* ceremonies, as well as to the joyous celebrations of the anniversaries of the

deaths of their founder. They provided the masses with a spiritual and emotional dimension to religion which the hair splitting legalists could not supply.

The name of the Naqshbandi Order can be interpreted as engraver (of the heart). The way is sometimes referred to as "the sublime Sufi path" and "the way of the golden chain." The orders also established trade and craft guilds and provided hospices for travelers and merchants which were located along the great trade routes (such as the famous Silk Road). Rahman (2001) stated that between the 13th and the 18th century most Muslims belonged to some Sufi order *Tariqah*. One of the most important Sufi orders is the Naqshbandiya order which was founded in Central Asia in the thirteenth century in an attempt to defend Islam against the ravages of the Mongol invasions. It later spread to the Indian subcontinent. The Naqshbandis tried to control the political rulers so as to ensure that they implemented God's will. A Naqshbandi branch, the Khaltawiyah, played an important role in the modernization of the Ottoman Empire during the 18th and 19th centuries. Kabbani (2004) stated The Naqshbandiya developed mainly as an urban order with close links with the orthodox hierarchy. Its followers recite their dhikr silently, and music and dance, are banned in preference of contemplation to ecstasy. Their "middle way" between extreme asceticism and extreme antinomianism seemed acceptable to the orthodox hierarchy. They were involved in underground movements against the Soviet rule in Central Asia and they supported the Afghan Mujahedin against the Russians.

Zarruq (2008) stated that the core principles of Sufism are tawakkul (absolute trust in God) and "tawhid" (the truth that there is no deity but God). "Tawhid" is rich in meaning for mystics: it has been interpreted by some as meaning that nothing truly exists but God or that nature and God are but two aspects of the same reality. The love of God for man and the love of man for God are also very central to Sufism, and are the subjects of most Islamic mystical poetry and hymns.

In addition to that there are basic principles of Sufism which were given by Abdul Khaliq al-Ghujdawani, who was one of the greatest Sufi Masters of the Naqshbandi Sufi Order. Till about the 6th Century Hijri, the Sufis practised loud *dhikr*. They used to recite the name of the Almighty loudly by tongue. One day while reading the Quran, Shaikh Ghujdawani came across the *verse*: 'Call upon your Sustainer humbly, and in the secrecy of your hearts.' This prompted

him to inquire about the silent *dhikr*. He was the first one in the Sufi orders to use silent *dhikr* and was later considered the master of silent *dhikr*.

He coined the following phrases to which three more principles were added later by Muhammad Baha'uddin Shah Naqshband after whom the Order acquired its name. In his book *Faslul-Khitab* by Maulana Shah Fazle Rasool Budauni, in *dhikr* and the teachings enunciated in his Eight Principles were embraced by all the forty *orders* .

Trimingham(1998)stated that the first eight were formulated by Ghujdawani, and the last three were added by Baha ad- din:

1-Remembrance (Yad kard): Always orally and mentally repeating the *dhikr*

2-Restraint (Baz gasht) :Engaging in the heart repetition of the phrase "Al-kalimat at-tayyiba, "

3- Watchfulness (Nigah dasht): Being conscientious over wandering thoughts while repeating the phrase "Al-kalimat at-tayyiba.

4-"Recollection (Yad dasht): Concentration upon the Divine presence in a condition of *dhawq*, foretaste, intuitive anticipation or perceptiveness, not using external aids

5-Awareness while breathing (Hosh dar dam): Controlling one's breathing by not exhaling or inhaling in the forgetfulness of the Divine.

6-Journeying in one's homeland (Safar dar watan): An internal journey that moves the person from having blameworthy to praiseworthy properties. This is also referred to as the vision or revelation of the hidden side of the *shahada*,

7-Watching one's step (Nazar bar qadam): Do not be distracted from purpose of the ultimate journey, Solitude in a crowd (Khalwat dar anjuman)

8- Although journey is outwardly in this world, it is inwardly with God

9-Temporal pause (Wuquf-I zamani): Keeping account of how one spends his or her time. If time is spent rightfully give thanks and time is spent incorrectly ask for forgiveness.

10- Numerical pause (Wuquf-I adadi): Checking that the heart-dhikr has been repeated the requisite number of times, taking into account one's wandering thoughts

11- Heart pause (Wuquf-I qalbi): Forming a mental picture of one's heart with the name of God engraved to emphasize that the heart has no consciousness or goal other than God.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Of these eleven principles the present study is going to focus on three basic ones

1-Yad-Kard-Remembrance:

Remembrance, or making mention, both oral and mental. One always repeating the *dhikr* imparted to him so that one may attain the beatific vision. Algar, Hamid; Nizami, K.A. (2010) stated that Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshband said, "The aim in *dhikr* is that the heart be always aware of al-Haqq [The Truth, a Beautiful Name of Allah], for its practice banished inattention." The meaning of 'Yad' is dhikr. The meaning of '*kard*' is the essence of *dhikr*. The seeker must make *dhikr* by negation and affirmation on his tongue until he reaches the state of the contemplation of his heart. *Dhikr* polishes the heart and takes the seeker into the state of Manifestation. The person must keep the daily *dhikr*, either by heart or by tongue, repeating the name of God's Essence which encompasses all other names and Attributes, or by negation and affirmation through saying of La Ilaha Ill Alla. The daily *dhikr* will bring the seeker into the perfect presence of the One who is glorified. The *dhikr* by negation and affirmation, in the manner of the Naqshbandi Sufi Masters in which one must recite the *dhikr* through his heart, by negation and affirmation, beginning with the word LA ("No"). He lifts this "No" from under his navel up to his brain. Upon reaching his brain the word "No" brings out the word ILAHA ("god"), moves from the brain to the Right shoulder, when that word hits the heart its energy and heat spreads to all the parts of the body. The seeker who has denied all that exists in this world with the words LA ILAHA affirms with the words IL ALLAH that all that exists has been annihilated in the Divine Presence. The seeker repeats this with every breath, inhaling and

exhaling, always making it come to the heart, according to the number of times prescribed to him by his Shaikh.

2. Watch Your Step ("Nazar bar qadam") One must watch his steps while walking keeping the eyes on his feet, and not look here and there. Unnecessary sights and images create veils on the heart which block the Light of the Divine Presence. One let his ego distract him, but move steadfastly toward his goal- the Divine Presence. Imam ar-Rabbani Ahmad al-Faruqi) said in the 295th letter of his Maktubat by the gaze precedes the step and the step follows the gaze. The Ascension to the high state is first by the Vision, followed by the Step. When the Step reaches the level of the Ascension of the Gaze, then the Gaze will be lifted up to another state, to which the Step follows in its turn. Then the Gaze will be lifted even higher and the Step will follow in its turn. And so on until the Gaze reaches a state of Perfection to which it will pull the Step. We say, When the Step follows the Gaze, the *murid* has reached the state of Readiness in approaching the Footsteps of the Prophet, peace be upon him. So the Footsteps of the Prophet are considered the Origin of all steps."Shah Naqshband said, if people look at the mistakes of their friends, they will be left friendless, because no one is perfect. Footsteps signifies Will, Trying to Match our Will with the Will of our Shaykh, Then Prophets Then our Lord.(Ati Allah wa Ati Rasul wa Ulul amr minkum) He will have purified his heart, making it pure like water, transparent like crystal, polished like a mirror, showing the realities of all matters essential for his daily life, without any need for external action on his part. In his heart He will have purified his heart, making it pure like water, transparent like crystal, polished like a mirror, showing the realities of all matters essential for his daily life, without any need for external action on his part. In his heart will appear everything that is needed for his life and for the life of those around him.

3. Journey Homeward ("safar dar watan")

We shall Show them Our Portents on the horizons and within themselves until it will be manifest unto them that it is the Truth. Doth not thy Lord suffice, since He is Witness over all things? (Surah Fussilat: 53)

'Travelling on the horizons' is travelling from place to place. At the beginning of the journey, it means leaving home to find a guide or teacher. In former times, when the wayfarer had become established in a place, got accustomed to it and become familiar with its people, they took on

travelling in order to break down habit and comfort and cut themselves off from renowned. They would choose travel in order to experience complete emptying.

It also refers to travelling within oneself, looking at oneself, examining oneself and one's reactions, and how they act upon one. This reflects the stress that the Naqshbandi Order puts on the inner states. The Naqshbandi Sufi Order divides that travel into two categories. The first is external journeying and the second is internal journeying. External travel is to travel from one land to another searching for a perfect guide to take and direct people to their destination. This enables people to move to the second category, the internal journey. Seekers, once they have found a perfect guide, are forbidden to go on another external journey. In the external journey, there are many difficulties which beginners cannot endure without falling into forbidden actions, because they are weak in their worship. Internal journey requires the seeker to leave his low manners and move to high manners, to throw out of his heart all worldly desires. He will be lifted from a state of impurity to a state of purity. By this time, he will no longer be in need of more internal journeying. He will have purified his heart, making it pure like water, transparent like crystal, polished like a mirror, showing the realities of all matters essential for his daily life, without any need for external action on his part. In his heart will appear everything that is needed for his life and for the life of those around him.

So Sufism is a way which teaches people to purify themselves, improve their morals, and build up their inner and outer selves to attain everlasting bliss. Its goal is the purification of the soul and its aim is the attainment of eternal peace and blissfulness. The ultimate desire of a Sufi is to know God in this world and to be in unity with the Divine Presence. Ernst, (1997) mentioned that the large numbers of *dhikr* (glorifying Allah) is one of the basics principles of all orders therefore, *dhikr* is the path that let you reach the highest level to Allah . It is the most important work of the seeker to do, to stay firm on the *dhikr* and to ask Allah for forgiveness and prayers for the prophet during the day and night, and thus the seeker lives up in the shrines of the love to Allah and His Messenger and *dhikr* is the way of the greatest purifying of the soul and raising one's self moral beliefs. Like one who intends to reach a destination quickly, the seeker of Allah's Divine Presence is moving quickly, not looking to his right or his left, nor looking at the desires of this world, but looking only for the Divine Presence. Traveling to one's homeland, it means that the seeker travels from the world of creation to the world of the Creator. It is related

that the Prophet said, "I am going to my Lord from one state to a better state and from one station to a higher station." It is said that the seeker must travel from the Desire for the forbidden to the Desire for the Divine Presence Sufi orders nowadays spread all over the world unlike Sufi principles and Sufism concepts which are not applied all over world.

CONCLUSION

Sufism can be considered as something approaching a universal faith with Sufi Orders. Sufis distinguish spirituality from religion. To them the Almighty is not concerned with one's religion but with love. Spirituality does not need following a particular religion. The Sufis are people with an open heart. They do not have any prejudices i.e. their mind is not preoccupied with any bias against others. The Sufis are people of the highest morality. The greatest religion for them is the love of the humanity and refraining from harming others. Their objective is to become complete and perfect by improving one's character and observe the principles and practices they have adopted. A Sufi seeker has to complete the journey to self-realization. He has to find the Beloved within himself, for He can be found only in a heart that has been purified by the fire of love. The Naqshbandi Order is the way of the Companions of the Prophets and those who follow them. This Way consists of continuous worship in every action, both external and internal, with complete discipline according to the Sunnah of the Prophet. It consists in maintaining the highest level of conduct and leaving absolutely all innovations and all free interpretations in public customs and private behavior. Also it insists in keeping awareness of the Presence of God, Almighty and Exalted, on the way to self-effacement and complete experience of the Divine Presence. So it is the Way of complete reflection of the highest degree of perfection, the Way of sanctifying the self by means of the most difficult struggle, the struggle against the self.

REFERENCES:

1. Ahmed Zarruq, Zaineb Istrabadi, Hamza Yusuf Hanson (2008)"The Principles of Sufism". Amal Press.
2. -Algar, Hamid; Nizami, K.A. (2010) "Naqshbandiyya." Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E.vanDonzel and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill.
3. Bennett, J. G. (1995) *The Masters of Wisdom*, Santa Fe, New Mexico: Bennett Books.

4. Ernst, C. W. (1997) "Names of God, Meditation, and Mystical Experience." The Shambhala Guide to Sufism. Boston, Massachusetts: Shambhala, 107. Print.
5. Kabbani, M. H. (2004) The Naqshbandi Sufi Tradition Guidebook of Daily Practices and Devotions, ,
6. Kabbani, M.H. (2004) Classical Islam and the Naqshbandi Sufi Tradition, , Islamic Supreme Council of America
7. Kabbani, M.H. (1995)The Naqshbandi Sufi Way, (History and Guidebook of the Saints of the Golden Chain).. Kazi Publications, USA
8. Rahman, S. A. (2001). A Dictionary of Muslim Names. New Delhi: Goodword Books.
9. Trimingham, J. Spencer (1998). The Sufi Orders of Islam. OUP USA. 2nd revised edition. First published 1971