

sufism



overview

- background: definition & textual foundations
- individualistic beginnings
- sufi thought: ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 1240)
- sufi practices: Rūmī (d.1273)

sufism: definition

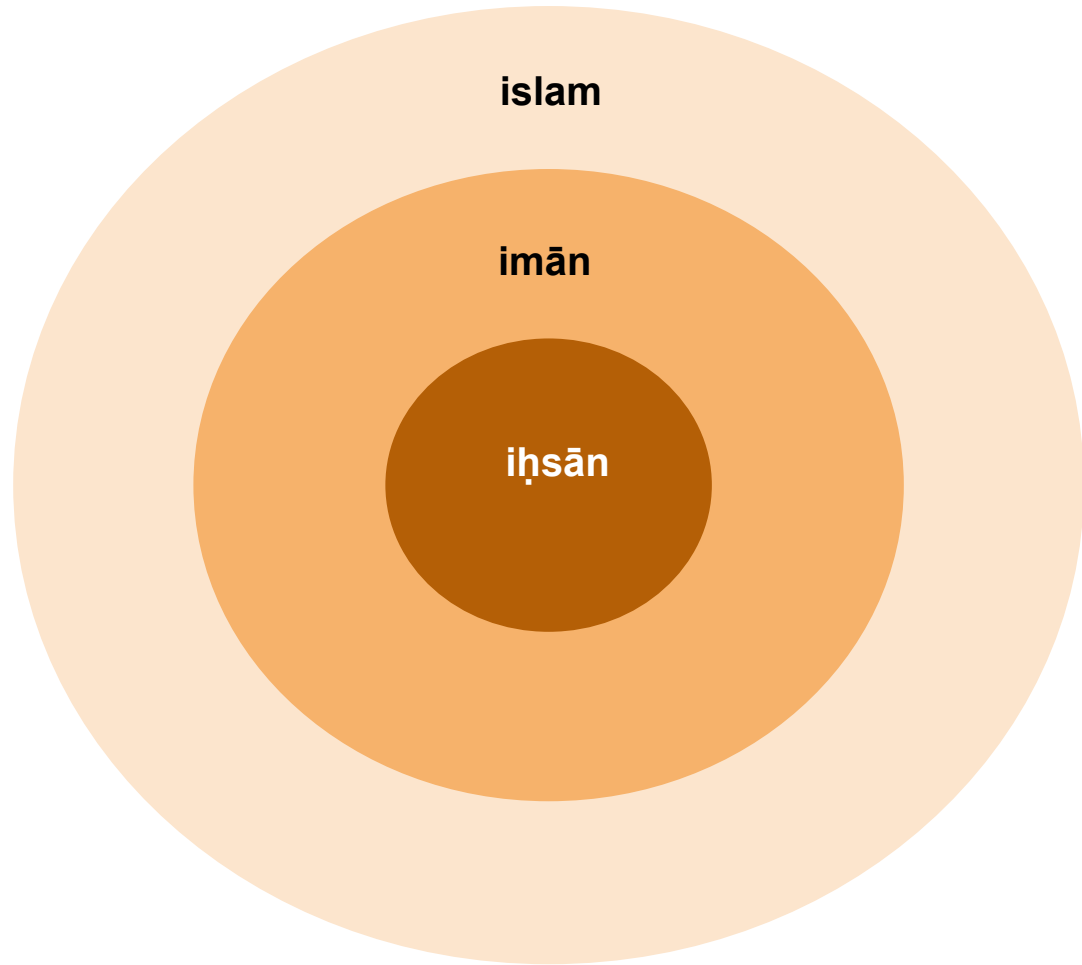
'...the intensification of Islamic faith and practice, or the tendency among Muslims to strive for a personal engagement with the Divine Reality... In general, Sufis have looked upon themselves as Muslims who take seriously God's call to perceive His presence in the world and the self. They generally stress inwardness over outwardness, contemplation over action, spiritual development over legalism, and cultivation of the soul over social interaction.'

Chittick, William C. , John O. Voll and Kazuo Ohtsuka. "Sufism." In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*. Oxford Islamic Studies Online, <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0759>

this-worldly ‘experience’

**He is the First and the Last,
the Manifest and Non-Manifest:
and He has full knowledge of all things. (Q. 57:3)**

...One day we were sitting in the company of Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) when there appeared before us a man dressed in pure white clothes, his hair extraordinarily black. There were no signs of travel on him. None amongst us recognized him. At last he sat with the Apostle (peace be upon him) He knelt before him placed his palms on his thighs and said: Muhammad, inform me about **al-Islam**. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: **Al-Islam implies that you testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, and you establish prayer, pay Zakat, observe the fast of Ramadan, and perform pilgrimage to the (House) if you are solvent enough (to bear the expense of) the journey.** He (the inquirer) said: You have told the truth. He (Umar ibn al-Khattab) said: It amazed us that he would put the question and then he would himself verify the truth. He (the inquirer) said: Inform me about **Iman**. He (the Holy Prophet) replied: **That you affirm your faith in Allah, in His angels, in His Books, in His Apostles, in the Day of Judgment, and you affirm your faith in the Divine Decree about good and evil.** He (the inquirer) said: You have told the truth. He (the inquirer) again said: Inform me about **al-Ihsan**. He (the Holy Prophet) said: **That you worship Allah as if you are seeing Him, for though you don't see Him, He, verily, sees you.**



al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 728)

- political context under the Umayyads
- this-worldliness of the Umayyad Caliphs
- asceticism (*zuhd*): this-worldly renunciation
- constant fear of Hell



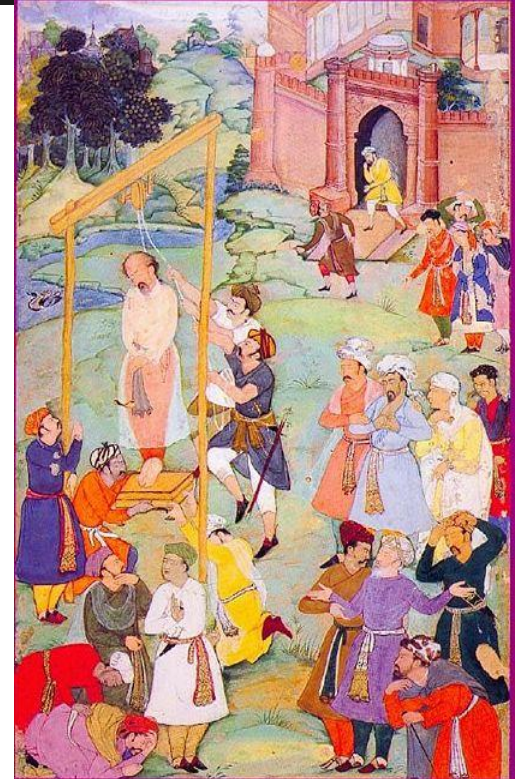
Rābi‘a al-‘Adawiyya (d. 801)

**O Lord, if I worship you out of fear of hell, burn me in hell.
If I worship you in the hope of paradise, forbid it to me.
And if I worship you for your own sake,
do not deprive me of your eternal beauty.**

**I have two ways of loving You:
A selfish one
And another way that is worthy of You.
In my selfish love, I remember You and You alone.
In that other love, You lift the veil
And let me feast my eyes on Your Living Face.**

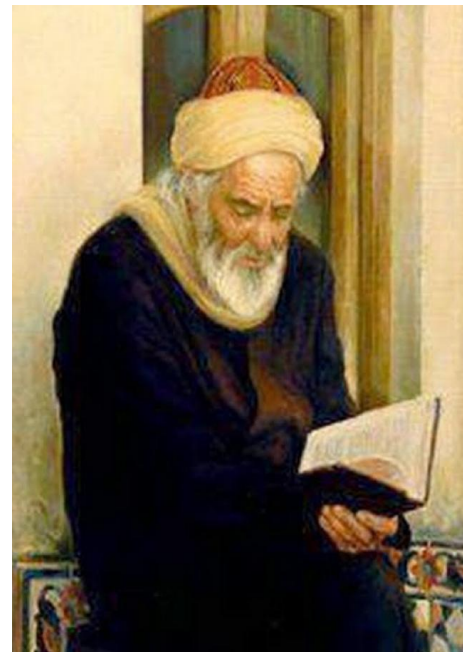
Ḥusain Mansūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 922)

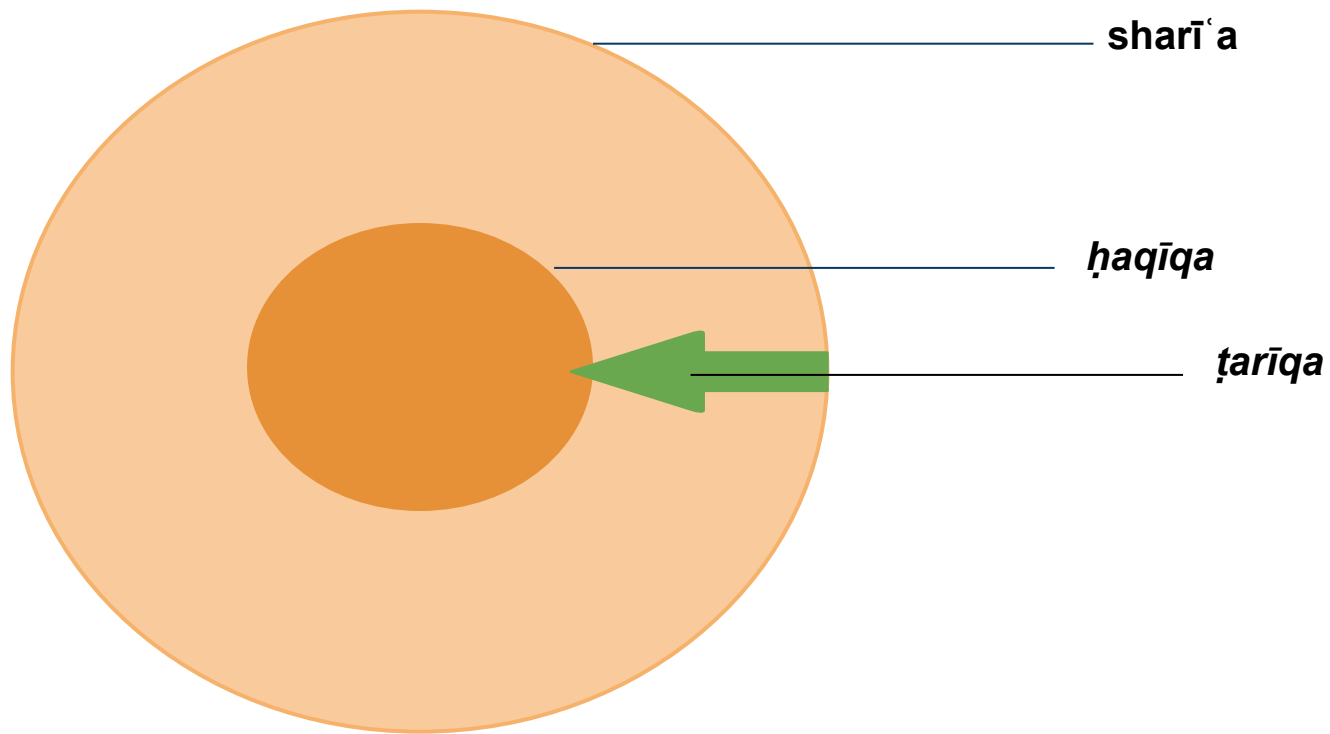
- The school of 'intoxication' (*sukr*):
based upon the concept of annihilation (*fanā*)
- “I am the Absolute Truth”
(*anā l-ḥaqq*).
- Kill me my faithful friends,
for in my killing is my life.
- I am the One whom I love,
And the One whom I love is myself.



Abū Ḥāmed al-Ghazālī (d. 1111)

- theology: *al-Iqtisad fil-I'tiqad* (Median in Belief)
- jurisprudence: *al-Mustasfa fi 'Ilm al-Usul* (The Clarified in Legal Theory)
- philosophy: *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa* (Incoherence of the Philosophers)
- sufism: *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (Revival of Religious Sciences)





Qādirīyah:	‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 1166)
Suhrawardiyah:	Abu al-Najib ‘Abd al-Qahir al-Suhrawardi (d. 1168)
Rifā‘iyah:	Ahmad al-Rifa'i (d. 1182)
Shādhiliyah:	Abu al-Hasan al-Shadhili (d. 1258)
Chishtiyah:	Mu'in al-Din Chishti (d. 1236)
Naqshabandiyah:	Baha' al-Din Naqshaband (1388)
Ni‘matullāhiyah:	Shah Ni‘mat Allah Wali (d. 1430)



sufi 'thought': Muḥammad ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 1240)

- b. Murcia 1165 CE, move to Seville
- education: Qur'an & hadith, jurisprudence, philosophy & theology
- 'sufism': begins with a dream
- early travels & 'training': Fatima of Cordoba,
- travels east at 38 to Mecca
- d. 1240 CE (reading al-Ghazali's *Iḥyā'*): Damascus
- *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* (Meccan Openings) & *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* (Bezels of Wisdom)





epistemology:

esoteric knowledge (*'ilm ladunnī*):

**So they found one of Our servants,
on whom We had bestowed Mercy from Ourselves
and whom We had taught
knowledge from Our own Presence.** (Q. 18:65)

***kashf* (unveiling)**

“It is I, he says, who recite my Book for him with his tongue while he listens to me. And that is my nocturnal conversation with him. That servant savors my Word... And just as it is I who recite and I who make him hear, it is also I who then explain my Word to him and interpret its meanings. That is my nocturnal conversation with him. He takes knowledge from me, not from his reason and his reflection; he no longer cares to think of paradise, of hell, of accounting for his actions, of the Last Judgment, of this world or of that which is to come, for he no longer considers these things with his intellect, he no longer scrutinizes each verse with his reflection: he is content to lend an ear to that which I tell him. And he is at that moment a witness, present with me; and it is I who take charge of his instruction.” Futuhat

...and My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory works so that I shall love him. When I love him

**I am his hearing with which he hears,
his seeing with which he sees,
his hand with which he strikes
and his foot with which he walks.**

Were he to ask [something] of Me, I would surely give it to him, and were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant him it.

divine transcendence & immanence

**He is the First and the Last,
the Manifest and the Non-Manifest:
and He has full knowledge of all things. (Q. 57:3)**

**...there is nothing like unto Him,
and He is the One that hears and sees (all things). (Q. 42:11)**

wujūd

- not a theory of pantheism / incarnation
- *wujūd*: Being / Existence / 'finding' / 'to be found'
- ontological Self-Disclosure of the 'names' / 'attributes': *tajallī*
- existence (entities & acts) represent the words of God
- duality strictly maintained, whilst simultaneously affirming unity
(*coincidentia oppositorum*)

the 'Perfect Human' *(al-insān al-kāmil)*

You did not kill them; it was Allah who killed them;

**and you did not throw,
when you threw;
it was Allah who threw:**

**so He might test the believers with this excellent trial from Him. Allah is All-Hearing,
All-Knowing. (Q. 8:17)**

O Marvel! a garden amidst the flames.

**My heart has become capable of every form:
it is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks,**

**and a temple for idols and the pilgrim's Ka'ba,
and the tables of the Torah and the book of the Quran.**

**I follow the religion of Love: whatever way Love's camels take,
that [love] is my religion and my faith.**

Tarjuman al-Ashwaq ("The Interpreter of Yearnings") (trans. Reynold Nicholson)

sufi 'practice': Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī (d. 1273)

***ṭarīqah*: Path or way; Sufi order or spiritual regimen of specific teacher or master, including devotional practices, recitations, and literature of piety. "**

Tariqah." In The Oxford Dictionary of Islam. Ed. John L. Esposito. Oxford Islamic Studies Online.

***dhikr*: Remembering or reminding. In Islamic devotional practice, it represents the ways of reminding oneself of God, based on Quranic injunctions such as "O you who believe, remember Allah with frequent dhikr" (33:41). In Sufi devotions, the term is used both for the regular activity of remembrance and for the litanies and prayers involved in the acts of remembering. Dhikr may be an act of individual devotion, but the term usually refers to collective devotions whose specific formulas and prayers are defined by the devotional path or tariqah that identifies the group. Each Sufi brotherhood has its own distinctive poems and prayers for the regular dhikr meetings of the order and the personal devotions of its members.**

"Dhikr." In The Oxford Dictionary of Islam. Ed. John L. Esposito. Oxford Islamic Studies Online.



- Mongols invaded central Asia between 1215 & 1220
- Hijaz - Syria - Konya (Anatolia)
- father Baha' ud-Din was a religious scholar & Sufi
- Sayyid Burhan ud-Din-Muhaqqiq trains Rumi for 9 years (1241)
- travels to Damascus for 4 years
- teaches in madrasa in Konya until 1244
- meeting with wandering dervish **Shams Tabriz** in 1244
- experiences love of God in him
- not appreciated by disciples of Rumi, Shams leaves
- perfection found in love, and wrote poetry on love
- love as the reason for creation of the world
- worship dealt with extensively in his poetry
- 'Masnavi': six books comprising of 30000 couplets

samāʿ

In the Ṣūfī context, *samāʿ* is a type of listening that, from the listener's point of view and depending on what happens during the *samāʿ*, facilitates the ecstatic trance which can manifest itself in many different ways. Thus, the *samāʿ* is both revelation and inspiration, and it is important to control these manifestations and the attendant excitement without overwhelming the participants.

Leoni, Stefano A. E. . "Samāʿ." In The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World. Oxford Islamic Studies Online.
<<http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0702>>.



**The frock is my tomb, the hat my tombstone...
Why wouldn't a corpse dance in this world
when the sound of the trumpets of death
raise him to dance?**

**Listen to the song of the reed and listen to its story.
Weeping from the pain of separation
It cries: "Since I was severed from my native land,
Men and women have longed to hear my songs
And the agony of separation has broken my heart..."**



**To Allah belong the East and the West:
Whithersoever ye turn, there is the face of Allah.
For Allah is all-Pervading, all-Knowing. (Q. 2:115)**