

The Contribution of Sufism to Islamic Revivalism in the Third Century Hijri

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ABSTRACT

Sufism played a significant role in shaping and sustaining Islamic spirituality during the 3rd century A.H./9th century A.D. This study addresses the problem of widespread materialism and spiritual detachment observed under the Abbasid rule, which threatened to erode core Islamic values. Key questions raised include: How did Sufis link their teachings back to the fundamentals of Islam? In what ways did Sufi practices influence society and provide solutions to political and social unrest? This research employs a qualitative methodology, analyzing historical accounts, literary works, and spiritual practices of prominent Sufi figures. By exploring the contributions of major Sufi schools and their emphasis on spiritual discipline and *Sharī'ah*, the study demonstrates how Sufism became a driving force in the revival and preservation of Islamic traditions.

Introduction

The 9th century Sufis' work is important in revivalism of Islam as they linked Sufism back to the basic thoughts of Islam. They balanced Sufism with Sahriya thoughts. They made it compulsory to practice Islamic and then spirituality. They mentioned clearly without Islamic law based on only spirituality you cannot practice spirituality. They provided a way for long lasting connectivity with God by inner transformation. Sufis of this century believed that under the rule of Abbasids, Muslims were indulged in worldliness and materialism. They spent their lives in the collection of world needs only. To link them with God and to spare time spirituality it is important to address this deviation from Islam. They thought the believers

in the early century of Islam were for way from these desires. They felt it is important to practice this path, and it appealed to the Muslims and a large number adopted this way (Sa'ari, 1999, p.7).

In Islamic world 9th & 10th centuries are marked for instability in terms of political and social. Sufism provided the solid ground to the Sufis of face these challenges by sitting together and attain knowledge of God and spend some part of the day in remembrance of God. Sufism offered them to trust in God and comfort in the time of unrest. (Dickson, 2022, p.6). They segregated and addressed directly the thoughts and practices which are not according to Islam

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such as Intoxication and seeking help from other than God. They produced literature and preached the Muslims about God and tried their level best to develop a link between God and the Muslims. For Sufi ideas and practices, they contributed to developing

Sufi literature, poems and hagiographies. (Sa'ari, 1999, p.8). They faced opposition because of the orthodox thoughts of the people and did not like to allow to think with different perspective but they broadened the scope of Islamic tradition for centuries to come. (Melchert, 2015.p3). They established terminologies, ways to practice and lodges where Muslims can practice their beliefs. Sufis united the Muslims in ties of love, brotherhood, patience and discipline for this they used poetry and stories to explain the difficult conspectus. Sufism is a term that means to purify oneself to attain the attention of God (Chittick, 2005, p.18). Islamic mysticism and asceticism are also used for Sufism. The people who do these acts of purification and spend a part of their life in doing these practices are known as Sufis (Schimmel, 1975, p.1).

During the Abbasids reign different philosophies were discussed in the courts of Caliphs, and it was the need of the hour to provide the other religious aspects before society. A They provided them with stuff to stay away from unnecessary indulgence in this world and showed them the practical path to practice their faith. They need to purify their hearts and let love grow in it (Chittick, 2005, p. 101). After a certain time, they can reach a stage where they can experience this truth (Schimmel, 1975, p. 26).

This century produced the main pillars of Sufism and specially in Baghdad School of Sufism. Among the list of the prominent personalities in Sufism following are some outstanding ones. Sufis believe that inner or spirituality is the medium through which they can

have a personal experience of God (Chittick, 2005, p.15). For this they need devotion, dedication and improvement in the soul (Chittick, 2005, p. 23).

Initially, it started when Muslims recited Quran sitting in gatherings. Sufis believed they cannot encounter God unless they are clean and pure (Schimmel, 1975, p. 25). For their purification they started to explore certain acts in the name of Ibadat or purification. One is to stay away from worldly matters (Schimmel, 1975, p. 347). For this purpose, they sat alone and made themselves busy in meditation. They believed when they involve in the routine matters of this ending world, they are far away from achieving ultimate happiness which means encountering God (Schimmel, 1975, p. 347). They left the worldly matters aside and focused only on themselves for purification which will help the soul to experience the God. Purification of the soul is a key element in the way of God (Chittick, 2005, p. 23). As much as they are staying away from this world, they are closer to God. Whatever is happening around them is none of their business such as state matters, private matters, family matters, social matters, religious matters and business. They emerged in response to the involvement with this worldliness and focused on personal experiential approach and taught society to practice it that leads towards spiritual revivalism. (Sa'ari, 1999, p.18). Masters of this field added philosophy and theology of Islam. Their writings explored the nature of God, universe and human soul for spiritual practices. (Zarrabi-Zadeh, 2024). They addressed social problems and provided service to others by hospitals and schools. (Dickson, 2022p.2).

Sufis also provided different dimension to the cultural landscape in Islamic world. They worked on poetry, music and art. Sufis contribution in these fields provided the ground for the next generations. Theses aspects of Sufism

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became an integral part of one of school of thought of Sufism. Poetry, music and dance are the icons to them. They played very a key role in the revivalism of Islam. They taught society and linked them with religion and made their focus on spirituality and meditation. They talked about difficult topics such as expressing beauty and explain the experiences in mystical world. Their tombs were the central points of activities, visiting place for Sufis, artists and scholars. (aljunied, 2019 p.41). The emergence of Sufism was challenged by the orthodox Islamic scholars, and they considered it as deviation from the previous path. Their such challenges made the Sufism controversial (Dickson, 2022, p2).

Second is to deal very harshly with the body (Schimmel, 1975, p. 37). They believed due to this body they cannot reach the height of spirituality, so it is important to punish this body. They stayed away from marriage, and believed this relationship will pull them to be involved in this world (Schimmel, 1975, p. 36). They stayed away from this responsibility and kept themselves busy in rituals. They wore less clothes to realize this world is meaningless. To them a warm dress in winter provides the body a comfort which is not liked by them and the body should suffer with cold. In summer they like to wear minimum dress to bear the pain (Schimmel, 1975, p. 37). They ate less to make the body weak to attain this level of Happiness. (Melchert, 2015, p.4)

The ways in which Sufi teaches his followers the details of practice in known as tariqas. Followers sit around or before the spiritual guide known as Shaykh. Who explains to them the practices and disciples. These details cultivate a sense of community among practitioners (Ernest, 2003, p.169).

They set their different standards and methods to make themselves pure such as staying

away from this world, attire, punishing themselves and less intake of food. A main belief is Spiritual Excellence (Ihsan), that is means to worship God as you are seeing Him if not, he is seeing you (Chittick, 2005, p.12). This belief helps Sufis continues connectivity with God during worship. Another concept to purify is Remembrance of God (Dhikr), is to remember God through His Attributive names. This is the most important act and often in rhythmic movement or music. It is to develop deep connection with God and continuous connection with Him. (Shah, 1971, p.156). Meditation (Muraqaba) is another practice in which Sufis engage themselves to purify their hearts to divine light with quiet mind. They focus on God's attributes for a long time in this meditation. (Chittick, 2005, p.15). Spiritual Music and Dance (Sama), some Sufis practice this by listening music to keep their ego away from them. They listen to and practice devotional music and dance. (During, 1988, p.234). All this developed between the 8th and 13th century. Prominent personalities of Sufism can be seen in this era. Specially during the Abbasid Caliphate focused on searching the strong connection with God and they led some Muslims. This desire evolved into the mystical of Sufism.

Dhu al- Nun defined Sufis "The Sufi is he whose language, when he speaks, is the reality of his state, i.e. He says nothing which he is not, and when he is silent his conduct explains his state, and his state proclaims that he has cut all worldly ties." (Saari, C.Z. 1999, p.29)

Al- Al-Muhasibi said "When love is made firm in the servant's heart, he has nothing left over for remembering man or jinn, heavens or hell-nothing but the recollection of the beloved." (Saari, C.Z. 1999, p.30). Sufism has no one-unit type of practices but a wide range understandings and interpretations. It differs with Sufi teachers and his followers. These different ways and

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practices made the Sufi spirituality deep, rich and adaptable (Ernst, 2003, p.164).

Key Concepts of the Sufis

Sufis interpreted God in different ways for their personal experience and introduced terminologies to understand God (Dickson, 2022, p. 4). *Wahdat al-Wujud* means that God is present everywhere and in everything. We can find Him in all His own creations (Chittick, 2005, p. 19). Means God is present in all the living and existing things such as in tables, trees, animals, rivers etc. This idea was strongly criticized by counter arguments that how God the Creator can be seen in His own creations? (Dickson, 2022, p. 4). Sufis also explained another idea that is *Wahdat al-Shahood* means we can find God by observing His signs that He has created and then we can experience Him personally (Chittick, 2005, p. 19). Such as sun, moon, skies etc. are His signs and we can recognize Him by these signs. This idea is also criticized by the counterargument that God has created these things, how can He be experienced when He is not in them? (Dickson, 2022, p. 4).

Another term is *Halool*, which means after a lot of meditation we can experience God in such a way that God can penetrate in us. He becomes us and we can become Him. This idea is also addressed that how a human can become God? Another important term introduced by the Sufis is *Etihad*, which means after very special meditations we can lift ourselves up to join God and can experience Him (Chittick, 2005, p. 19). This point is also criticized that how with meditation you can reach a point where you can be the part of God? These terminologies were introduced to experience the God personally. All these experiences are based on the self-experiences explained by the Sufi teachers and taught to their practicing followers. These

thoughts are the foundation of Sufism and played vital role in the revivalism of Islam.

Two Schools of Thought in Sufism (Persian and Bagdad)

These two schools provided us the basics of Sufism and helped us understand their role in the revivalism of Islam

Persian School of Sufism

This school is also known as Khorasan School Located in Khorasan region and now this region is divided in two countries Iran and Afghanistan. It was established in the 9th century when Abbasid Caliph was facing internal conflicts and external threats that led to the sense of the alternative spiritual path. The thought of this school is based on *Wahda tul Wujud*. Their focus is on divine love and through experiences you can reach to the heights of Sufism. They encountered with the non-Muslims and adopted breath control that led to the *dhikr* and *sama* in sufism. This school of thought is being practiced today and has very vital role in shaping the thoughts of Sufism. (Dickson, 2022, p.4)

Spiritual Intoxication is the key component of Persian School of thought. Their thought is while in the state of Spiritual Intoxication (*Sukr*) you can go beyond the boundaries of your ego, and you can have the experience of the God. They believe that Spiritual Intoxication is the marked change to experience God. They consider it essential to reach the point for union with God. In Rumi's poetry at many places, it is evident.

In Persian school of thought another most important belief is *Wahda tul Wajood*. This means that ultimately all things are God. All the existences at the end becomes one with God. In this school of thought poets played a very

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important role in expressing this thought through symbols and poetic verses, concept of interconnectedness of all as one (Shah, 1979, p.142). This concept, the unity of beings is very complicated and has many dimensions. Sufi mystics who joined this school on later stage they explained this concept in their work.

Due to the deep influence of poetry and literature in Persian Sufism it lasted a long impact on Iranian culture and tradition. The symbolism and imagery of Persian culture shaped this Persian school of Sufism. This culture provided literature and term to this school that became the identity of this thought such as *Insan e Kamil* (Perfect Man). (Dickson, 2022, p. 4)

Some key figures related to Persian school of Sufism are Bayazid Bastami (d.879), Abu Hafs Haddad (d.879), Mansur al-Hallaj (d.922), Abu al-Qasim al- Junaid (d.910).

They did not produce concept of revivalism in relation with Sufism, but their work can be interpreted as contribution of starting of the movement of Sufism and its impact within Islamic society can be seen in 10th century. Bayazid Bastami focused on the complete destruction of self to have a divine presence. This point can be interpreted as a form of revivalism as to develop individual awakening. His teachings challenged the uncritical traditional practices of religion. Importantly his thoughts for direct experience of God. (Shah, 1979, p.107). Abu Hafs Haddad taught Tawakal means trust in God and showed his detachment from God's will could be seen as a part of revivalism as he rerouted individuals to the deep relation with God. He addressed the uncertainty of society politically and socially. He helped society to make inner strength against external challenges. (al-Hujwiri, 2012, p.124). Mansur al-Hallaj was controversial in his teaching when he said I am the Truth (Ana al-Haq). He claimed Wahda tul

wajood (the unity of being) that challenged the set thoughts of the people of the time, and he explained the relationship between God and creature. His thoughts can be seen as a part of revivalism that he realized the people for improvement of inner self too. He taught about the presence of God within self and the world outside. He challenged the set pattern of thinking in the religion and was executed. (Khodamoradi & Ernst, 2024). Abu al-Qasim al-junaid's work regarding Sahw and the Shariya can be counted for revivalism as he provided the ground to the Sufis based on Shariyah. His focus in the spiritual path on knowledge and discipline can be considered as the response to the other Sufis of the time. (Melchert, 2015, p.3)

Baghdad School of Sufism

This school is also known as Sober school and was established in Baghdad in the 9th century. The thought of this school is within Islamic mysticism. The key term in this Sufism is Soberity (Sahw) blended with Islamic law (Shariya) and focus on practical virtues. This school of Sufism stands in contrast with the Persian School of Sufism of Khorasan which stands on spiritual Intoxication and unity of being. (Melchert, 2015, p.3)

Baghdad school provided more disciplined way for the sobers in Sufism. Sobriety requires close attachment with Islamic laws and present easy spiritual excess (Melchert, 2015, p.3). In spiritual practices, balance is required to avoid extremes. It is not the denial of spiritualism but to provide ground of Shariya. This school of thought provided basics of Islamic law to practice spirituality. It focused not only the outward observations but also addressed the moral character and inner virtues (Dickson, 2022, p.6). Teachings of this school focused on that without understanding of Islamic law you cannot grow in

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spirituality. They attracted people from different walks of life such as artisans, merchants, scholars and they also attached members from ruling elite class. This school of thought was established by the jurists and scholars, so they attracted the same class of society and used their intellect for their developed thoughts. They spread their thoughts and practices throughout society along with the Islamic art and societies. They focused on Sobriety so Merchants and Artisans liked this thought as this is attached with their occupations and can help them in spending righteous life. This school of thought did not like to address the elite or ruling class of society but al-Junayd had good relations with the ruling class and he served them as spiritual guide. Self-Examination (Muhasaba) is the key practice in Baghdad school of Sufism that is very keen observation of your intentions and thoughts. Practitioners must scrutinize their actions and thoughts and make them purify to stay on the path of righteousness (Sa'ari, 1999, p.19). Through stations or stages followers can grow in spirituality. This process of gradual development is considered very important. Solid knowledge and practice can only provide a strong basis to attain spiritual maturity.

Some key figures related to Baghdad school of Sufism are al-Muhasibi (d.857), al-Junayd al-baghdadi (d.910), Al-Sarraj (d.988). Al-Muhasibi's work can be seen as against the materialism and worldliness that was an integral part of Abbasid reign. He focused on self-examination with the purification of the soul. He worked for piety promoted in the Islamic society. (Sa'ari, 1999, p.19). Junaid al-Baghdadi focused on Sobriety and his work can be interpreted as response to the early Sufis who focused that faith alone is necessary. He also added that mystical experiences can be done within the limitations of religious norms. (Melchet, 2015, p.3). Al-Sarraj's comprehensive work can be interpreted as the clear guideline to the Sufis of that time as they

were growing and need codified teachings. His work, *Kitab al-Luma' fi al-Tasawwuf*, can be considered as the attempt to systematize Sufism and make it practical and understandable for a wider range of audience. (Sa'ari, 1999, p.19).

Important figures of Sufism (in 9th Century)

- Sari al-Saqati
- Sahl al-Tustari
- Dhu'l-Nun al-Misri
- Abu Bakr al-Wasiti
- Al Hakim al-tirmidhi
- Abu' Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Al Hasan al-Rudhabari

Role of Sufis in revivalism in 9th Century

1. Sari al- Saqati

Sari al- Saqati is one of the key figures in Baghdad School of Sufism in 9th century. He was born in Baghdad in the Abbasid Asid era. He received his early education in deep intellectual and spiritual surrounding in the subjects of Quran, Hadith and Islamic law. After completion of primary education of Sufism, he moved to Ma'ruf al-Karki to be his disciple. Al-Karki was among the well-known Sufis and very famous for his asceticism and piety (Al-Hujwiri, 2012, p.110). Saqati developed himself under the guidance of Al-Karki in Muraqaba (meditation) and Dhikr (remembrance of God). He focused on his purification and self-discipline as society was indulging in worldliness and materialism. He faced many challenges in spirituality. He was questioned about his teachings and practices by the traditional scholars of the time. His commitment to his path earned him a grate name at that time. He was admired by the prominent contemporaries of his time including, Junayd al-Baghdadi, his nephew who became the most important figure in the history of Sufism. (Schimmel, 1975, p.56). Divine unity is the key concept of Saqati's teachings along with the

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purification of heart from worldly desires. He elaborated his thoughts by explaining that practitioners can only get the knowledge of God when their inner is clean, and they encountered with God. He used very rich imagery of the Quran to express his thoughts with symbolic language. He used metaphors for this purpose too. He emphasized spiritual practices but with the importance of sobriety. His important contribution for the followers is not to focus too much on emotions and mystical states for own sake. Inner virtues can only be cultivated on the ground on maintaining a significant balance between spiritual path and Islamic law (Melchert, 2015, p.3). He did not leave any writings, but it was his influence on the society that after him his nephew Al-junayd compiled his work. Al-junayd is marked among the remarkable Sufis of the Century. Saqati left a visible influence on society by addressing directly about the purification of inner self as the society was drown in the river of outer world. In his school of thought he was the one who worked on Islamic mysticism and developed it. (Dickson, 2022, p.2).

Saqati became the hall mark of Baghdad school of thought (Sa'ari, 1999). His ideology was followed by Junaid and provided ground to the Sufis for later centuries that established permanent school of thought such as Naqshbandi Sufi order (Dickson, 2022, p. 86). They cultivated the inner awareness in the influence of Saqati's teaching of remembrance of God (Shah, 1979, p. 7). He established Majlis (gathering area) at his house for his followers to share spiritual experiences and spiritual matters. They also received guidance from him. This practice is still followed by the Sufis for learning from each other, deepen their knowledge and understanding their path altogether (Dickson, 2022, p.86). Saqati's this platform served as important component in Sufism where Sufis sat and discussed religious matters while it was

considered, only in masjid religious talks can be conducted. This platform played a vital role in revivalism's activities. (Shah, 1979, p. 7) In his teachings he used metaphors and symbols for the explanation of challenging and complex concepts. His teachings bridged practical guidance with spiritual practices to attain the virtues in this century he was the one who introduced spiritual practice that played significant role in the revivalism of Islam (Sa'ari, 1999). In his gatherings Sufis gather for certain time to engage themselves in dhakr, Muraqaba and other such spiritual disciplines (Shah, 1979, p. 7). These spiritual activities developed a strong bond of brotherhood and unity as a key point for revivalism. His contribution for the revivalism of Islam is unforgettable and left significant for-reaching effect to Sufism. His very specific teachings about revivalism of Islam were the landmark for Sufism such as importance of sobriety, purification of heart and clear concept of Tawhid is being practiced by the Sufis after centuries (Dickson, 2022, p. 2). His majils were the base camp for the Sufi community and spiritual seekers in 10th century in Baghdad (Shah, 1979, p. 7). His legacy served him for centuries in Baghdad of school of thought (Dickson, 2022, p. 2).

2. *Sahl al-Tustari*

Sahl ibn 'Abd Allah al-Tustari was born in Persia (modern-day Shustar, Iran) and was the founder of the Salimiyya school of Sufi thought (Dickson, 2022, p. 2). He was raised in a very religious family and learned the knowledge of Quran, Hadith, and Jurisprudence (Schimmel, 1975, p. 42). His desire to learn knowledge led him to Sufi masters, among them Dhu'l-Nun al-Misri (Schimmel, 1975, p. 42). He linked Quran and Prophet's teachings with ma'rifa and divine love. His teachings were also connected with the previous Sufis masters, and Neoplatonic philosophy was a key element. W p to his

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teachings, he faced opposition from his contemporaries who practiced orthodox teachings (Melchert, 2015, p. 3). He remained steadfast with his commitment, and in the end, he gained the status of a leading spiritual authority (Dickson, 2022, p. 2). His teachings played a vital role in the revivalism of Islam. His followers were not only in the region but also spread across the region (Melchert, 2015, p. 3). His established Sufi center in Tustar was the main place for spiritual seekers from different areas. His teachings regarding ma'rifa were practiced by his followers and lasted for a long time and helped them with the purification of the inner self and the mobilization of Sufi movement in terms of spiritual, social and political movement.

Divine attraction (jadhb) was his most distinctive concept. He believed that seekers are attracted by the Divine power of God Himself. God attracts them with the irresistible force of love (Sa'ari, 1999). He believed this attraction cannot be achieved by efforts; it is God's gift. He elaborates that through surrender to God you can reach to this height. Union with Divine is the last stage in the path of Sufism and it can be achieved by spiritual purification and enlightenment, he explained (Chittick, 2005, p. 12). His teachings regarding love were inspirational, motivational and influential; these were accepted by the Sufis of his school of thought and practiced by them even after his death for the sake of personal and direct experience of God (Melchert, 2015, p.57). Al-Tustari's impact on the society was long lasting when he used the symbolic language and metaphor to explain his thoughts with the help of Islamic tradition and imagery of Quran. Followers admired him and his thoughts flourished in society. He guided his disciples on the path of enlightenment through poetic verses, stories and parables and to understand the spiritual experiences. He influenced his disciples through practical guidance and spiritual practices

along with theoretical discussions (Schimmel, 1975, p. 42). His followers kept themselves busy in the practical rituals of Sufism such as Remembrance of God (Dhikr), Meditation (Muraqaba) along with gratitude, patience and humility for cultivation of virtues (Sa'ari, 1999). His teachings provided the foundation to the Salimiyya school of Sufism, but he did not give this name to his school of thought. His one disciple, Muhammad ibn Salim named it Salimiyya School of thought (Sa'ari, 1999). This school patronized Sufism in the society by developing the sophisticated understanding of Ahwal (spiritual states) and Muqamat (Stations) which provided a framework for the Sufis to come in later years. His thoughts revolve around attaining the power of divine love by inner knowledge and divine love. Al-Tustari was also criticized by the traditional scholars. They made him controversial by saying that Tustari focused on mystical experiences more and less on external religious practices. However, they maintained their practices of inner experiences on the ground of Islamic religion for the understanding of Islamic practices. Tustari's teachings influenced a large number of Sufis across different traditions (Sa'ari, 1999, p. 19). Even after his death his legacy extended to spiritual seekers far beyond his own life. His Salimiyya school became the most important school in Central Asia region and in Persia. His school played a crucial role in the development of Sufism. His impact was not only on his school of thought but also on other Sufis too. He contributed to Sufism diversely and richly (Sa'ari, 1999). For example, Najmuddin Kubra founded Kubrawiyya order, and he was inspired by the Tustari's thoughts regarding spiritual state and spiritual guidance (Melchert, 2015, p. 57).

3. *Dhu'l-Nun al-Misri*

Abu al-Faiz Thawban ibn Ibrahim al-Misri was born in Akhmim, upper Egypt, known as Dhu'l-

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Nun (Shah, 1979, p. 7). He is among the well-known figures of 9th century who developed the shape of early Sufism and played an important role in the society (Shah, 1979, p. 7). His teachings and spiritual concepts linked his followers with the Quran and the Teachings of the Prophet. He shaped the trajectory of Sufi thoughts, and his work can be seen as the revivalism of Islam. He addressed the impurities of the inner self and provided the solution for it. His teachings hunted the weakness in the spiritualities and developed Sufi doctrine and left his impact on Islamic spirituality (Shah, 1979, p. 7). For the best to produce for the revivalism on Islam he traveled throughout the Muslim area to seek the knowledge. He traveled to Macca, Madinah and Damascus for this purpose and gained knowledge and guidance from different mystics and scholars (Sa'ari, 1999). He learnt from various scholars in different areas to enrich his knowledge such as Malik ibn Anas, a famous jurist. His thrust for seeking knowledge helped him to combine different point of views about Sufism and produce a comprehensive thought and understanding about Sufism. Dhu'l-Nun Misri is considered as the first person in Sufism who supported the Sufi doctrine and specially of Ma'rifah (the theory of gnosis). He explored the personal dimensions of Sufism and explained Uns (the intimacy with God) (Sa'ari, 1999). In society he developed the practice of Remembrance of God (Dhikr) and Meditaion (Muraqaba) to experience God. He realized his followers with his speeches to associate yourself with God. For the revival of Islam, he used the symbolic language and imagery to express difficult concepts about the religion. To associate society with the Islamic practices and virtues he combined spiritual practice with practical guidance. He explained the ineffable nature of soul and spiritual experiences to his disciples (Shah, 1979, p. 156). He developed and explained the doctrine of states (Ahwal) and stations

(Maqamat) which played a vital role in the revivalism of Islam in the society. His most significant contribution to Sufism was to identify the stages for the seekers of spirituality such as love, awe and ecstasy. His work was the roadmap for Sufis (Sa'ari, 1999, p. 19). He established Ma'rifah (gnosis) which is considered as the significant shift in the understanding of the Islamic spirituality (Sa'ari, 1999, p. 19). He believed only based on intellect true knowledge of God cannot be gotten but with the help of religious practices. Most importantly purification of the heart with spiritual practice can be achieved. Al-Misri's teachings about Ma'rifah are taken from the Quran and the concept of Tawhid (divine unity). To know the absolute oneness of God's presence in the world and in human heart too. This concept became the corner stone of Sufism and in present days it is being practiced (Sa'ari, 1999, p. 21).

Al-Misri was a poet and a writer along with the teacher (Schimmel, 1975, p. 42). He works in the form of poems and composition played an important role in the revivalism of Islam (Schimmel, 1975, p. 42). Although, most of his work is not present these days as it was lost to history. His impact lasting writings were known for eloquence. His use of symbolic language left a deep impact on spirituality. His few works were survived which reflects his expression of love and longing of God. He used the imagery to present his love for divine. He explored the nature of the soul in his work (Schimmel, 1975, p. 42). In different stages he explained the joys and difficulties on this way of Sufism. Sufis of later time often quoted his poetic work and referred it back to al-Misri. His work is multifaceted and spread over many aspects. His teachings were practiced for centuries after him including importance of love, intimacy with God and gnosis. His spiritual experience shaped Sufism

and his legacy as a pioneer of Islamic mystics (Schimmel, 1975, p. 42).

4. *Al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi*

Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad ibn’ Ali al-Hakim Al- Tirmidhi was a prominent figure during the Islamic mysticism period (Dickson, 2022, p. 4). He was born in Termez, which is in Uzbekistan, in the present day. He received his early education, and after the completion of his studies, he played a vital role in the revivalism of Islam (Schimmel, 1975, p. 60). He received his education in the subjects of Quran, Hadith, and Islamic Shariah. He contributed to the society of that time by writing and covering a wide range of topics (Schimmel, 1975, p. 60). His writings supported Sufism and his school of thought and provided the followers a path of spiritualism. His areas of interest were the interpretation of dreams, the nature of the soul, spiritual stations, and states. His works and teachings played a crucial part in shaping early practices and thoughts in Sufism. He emphasized on Islamic law as a foundation of spiritual development. His work continues to be studied and revered by Sufis and scholars. He was considered as a key spiritual figure during this century. His work marked him among the top Sufis of the time and made him part of history. His work examines the contribution of the development of Sufi doctrine, and the other part is its impact on Islamic spirituality (Schimmel, 1975, p. 60).

His interest in spirituality helped him learn more and left an impact on society that lasted his impression of the revivalism of Islam. He connected the followers with the Divine. In search of deeper knowledge, he turned to the other Sufi masters. He became a disciple of a renowned Sufi master of his time, Abu Turab al-Nakhsabi (Schimmel, 1975, p. 60). Al-Tirmidhi groomed himself under the guidance of Abu

Turab and learned the path of self-purification and spiritual discipline. He focused on remembrance of God (Dhikr) and imitation (Muraqaba) (Schimmel, 1975, p. 60). Spiritually, Al-Tirmidhi engaged his thoughts with the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet (Schimmel, 1975, p. 60). In society, people were staying away from the basics of Islam, the Quran, and the traditions of the Prophet. To have a better command about Sufism, He studied Islamic science, philosophy, theology, and Islamic Shariah. His studying of these subjects helped him understand the exact problems of society to whom he had to address at a later stage (Schimmel, 1975, p. 60). For the society of that time, he developed a unique and comprehensive approach to Islamic spirituality. Al-Tirmidhi emphasized the heart as the key to life in spirituality. He believed that to attain the true Ma’rifa heart, one should purify all worldly attachments. Without divine knowledge, Ma’rifa cannot be achieved. He taught society spiritual practices for achieving the purification of the heart. He explained different practices such as dhikr, Muraqaba, and the virtues of humility, patience, and gratitude (Schimmel, 1975, p. 60).

His remarkable work for revivalism is an emphasis on the key figure of Islam, The Prophet (Schimmel, 1975, p. 60). He presented the prophet as a role model for the Sufis of the time. He taught them that without practicing the traditions of the prophet, spiritual purification cannot be attained. His work related to portraying the prophet as the perfect human being (insan e kamil) is his distinctive feature. He taught that the prophet embodied all of God’s attributes, so if Sufis want spiritual purification, they must adopt the same path. He focused on this key factor: that the prophet is a role model and after following the role model, spiritual heights can be attained. This thought became the central theme for Sufism (Schimmel, 1975, p. 60) Tirmidhi’s work covered

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various topics which addressed many important factors in society (Sa'ari, 1999, p. 21). He was a good writer, and his work played an important role in revivalism (Dickson, 2022, p. 4). He wrote about Sufism and Islamic spirituality (Aljunied, 2019, p. 41). He wrote about devotion, love, service to God and, most importantly, the qualities of the saints (walis) (Sa'ari, 1999, p. 21). His book 'The Seal of the Saints' (Kham al-Awliya), talked about the concept of sainthood (walaya) (Chih, 2019, p. 10). He explained the qualities of those who reached the highest level of realization in spirituality (Sa'ari, 1999, p. 21). His work revived the thoughts of the Sufis to the standards of Islam (Sa'ari, 1999, p. 21). His other book, 'The Explanation of the Difference between the Chest, the Heart, the Intellect and the Secret' (Bayan al-Farq bayn al sadr wa al Qalb al-Fu'ad wa al-Lubb), explores the different faculties and their role in the development of spiritual climax (Sa'ari, 1999, p. 21). In detail, He explained the role of heart, sirr and intellect in their relationship with each other on the path of spiritualism (Sa'ari, 1999, p. 21). He pointed out how important they are for each other in spiritual development (Sa'ari, 1999, p. 21). He elaborated in such a beautiful way that the reader or Sufis connected themselves back to the original format of the religion (Hofer, 2015, p. 2). Another important book that was important for the purification of the inner and for revivalists too, is 'Adab al-Nafs (the Etiquette of the Soul) (Sa'ari, 1999, p. 21). His work was very important for getting the society back to the standard format of Islam (Sa'ari, 1999, p. 21). Al-Tirmidi focused on the practical guidance of how to purify the soul (Dickson, 2022, p. 4). He explained how, in society, Sufis can cultivate inner virtues (Sa'ari, 1999, p. 21). He addressed the importance of self-examination and constant remembrance of God (Sa'ari, 1999, p. 21). He declared these two factors as essential components for spiritual growth (Aljunied, 2019, p. 41). Al-Tirmidi's

other life-changing book for Sufis is Kitab al-Manazil (The Book of Stations), which outlines the ways Sufis can grow in spirituality towards the path of God (Sa'ari, 1999, p. 21). His work explained the stages in this path of Sufism, the challenges faced by them, and the rewards they will get in the end (Sa'ari, 1999, p. 21). His work helped the revivalists reform society with the help of Al-Tirmidi's work (Dickson, 2022, p. 4). The contemporary world felt the legacy of Al-Tirmidi for centuries to come (Sa'ari, 1999, p. 21). His work is studied by scholars and practitioners (Sa'ari, 1999, p. 21). Al-Tirmidi's work is regarded as multifaceted and provided the foundations for revivalism (Sa'ari, 1999, p. 21).

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