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## Sufism is a Cultural Phenomenon

Eman Abdul Latif Al-Muhammad<sup>1</sup>, Prof Dr Majid Abdul Hamid Al-Kaabi<sup>2</sup>

### **Abstract**

*The research aims to talk about Sufism as a cultural phenomenon, not only related to the Islamic religion and the Arab race alone was not interested in it, but rather a phenomenon acquired by religions, sects and groups with their differences and multiple names, and this is what most comparative theologians and philosophers of religions have proven, as Sufism represents a connected spiritual aspect in all religions, according to the differences in cultures and differences among humanbeings. This is what prompted many orientalists to delve into the origin of Sufism and its influences, trying to answer the questions raised about its origins and the environment from which it emerged: Is it purely Islamic? Or are there non-Islamic influences that contributed to its emergence and crystallization? Do we have the right to attribute what is non-Islamic - motives and influences - to the crystallization of an Islamic cultural component?*

**Key words:** *Tasawwuf, culture, comparative religions*

### **Introduction**

Sufism represents an intellectual and cultural component present in all societies, whether Islamic or non-Islamic, as it is “an organized internalization of the religious experience and a human phenomenon that takes on a spiritual character that is not limited by physical boundaries of time or place, and is not limited to a specific nation, nor to a language, or a human race, the situation in philosophy and the arts is all the result of spiritual experiences that permeate human souls as they are Eastern or Western Semitic or Aryan souls(1)

This, of course, brings us to talk about the phenomenon of asceticism as an influential environment prepared for the crystallization of Sufism, which prompted major orientalists such as: Joseph von Hammer, Köldziher, Nicholson, and others who linked the ascetic movement in Islam to foreign Platonic, Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, and Persian influences...etc. Reinforcing their opinion with the Holy Qur’an, which is not required to be a reference to any Sufi doctrine.

Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and Buddhism are components that have their own origins, languages, and customs, and (spiritual manifestation) is the common and unifying element between those religions, regardless of its interpretation from one religion to another and the angle of looking at it, therefore, attributing the ascetic movement to one factor or source has no share of validity, as there are combined factors, they were highlighted and talked about by major writers and orientalists, which in turn contributed to the formation of the Sufi

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<sup>1</sup>University of Basrah, College of Education for Human Sciences, Department of Arabic Language, Iraq.  
Email: [lec.eman.abdullateef@uobasrah.edu.iq](mailto:lec.eman.abdullateef@uobasrah.edu.iq)

<sup>2</sup> University of Basrah, College of Arts, Department of Arabic Language, Iraq.  
Email: [majid.abed@uobasrah.edu.iq](mailto:majid.abed@uobasrah.edu.iq)

doctrine, which prompted many researchers to view Sufism as a cultural phenomenon that seeped into a group of religions and represented the culture of its people, since it is not right to attribute every phenomenon in an environment to factors external to it, thus, internal factors are neglected.

We do not deny that the major dilemma of Sufism is that it is a private, personal experience that is difficult to generalize to others, the reason for this is that It is based on the psychological aspects of its adherents, and this is the most prominent justification that motivates to read Sufism in different religions in a cultural manner, explaining by this the matter that prompted some historians, researchers, and orientalist to count Islamic Sufism as is a trend influenced by foreign religions.

The truth is that we are faced with a group or network of interpretations from different cultures for a single experience that represents the (spiritual appearance ) or (spiritual aspect) among human beings, and before revealing this, we must divide Sufism into;

**Philosophical Sufism (Which is Predominantly Intellectual in Nature) and is Represented in;**

**The Greek Influence Represented by (Neo-Platonism)**

**Gnostic Doctrine**

To talk about philosophical Sufism, it is necessary to prove a hypothesis based on which the attainment of Sufi knowledge in its comprehensive ontological and epistemological dimensions must seek help from philosophy and its thought, the philosophical approach is what brought Sufism out of its narrow circle of devotion to a broader space to accommodate interpretation, reflection, and contemplation, Sufism is a reduction of the philosophy of spirit and meaning, the philosophy of emancipating from the garment of clay and beautifying it with the meanings of pure spiritual breath, because matter has transcended and must be tamed with meaning, which is what prompted the researcher to prioritize philosophical Sufism over religious Sufism, this is because philosophy infiltrates religions and takes its place, which does not happen in religions, as they represent independent components that have their own doctrine and characteristics, even if those philosophical ideas infiltrate them.

**Greek Influence Represented by (Neo-Platonism)**

It is a philosophical movement that represents a transitional stage from Greek philosophy in ancient and medieval times, which expresses that ruminative and reconciliatory philosophy, which gave religion a philosophical dimension, through what the philosophers of this movement worked on in terms of projections of rational philosophy onto the religious mind, and despite the fact that the founding of this school was by Ammonius Sycas, but it was Plotinus who worked to establish its rules, foundations and principles, What is noteworthy is that Plotinus had a great impact on medieval Islamic philosophy, because of the teachings he consecrated or established that penetrated this thought, and had its dimensions among the owners of supervisory and Sufi philosophy.

Plotinus took great care of the idea of (God) and his existence, and this idea formed the axis that dominated his philosophy. The goal of his philosophy on the subjective level is to search for the path through which union with (God) or (with the First) or (with the Good) is achieved, thus, an attempt is made to build a spiritual doctrine through which the process of communication with this absolute is embodied, and in the objective framework it works to

reduce the value of the external world, given that this world is not valuable because it is harmonious, and as a result, the greatest value is only the infinite, and there is no infinite other than God, the First, or the Good, and therefore it reaches skepticism about rational knowledge, because it focuses on that Sufi, heart-subjective dimension. It is an idea whose basis is (the unity of existence) upon which quite a few Sufis built their Sufism, The words of the Sufis regarding divine overflow and manifestations, and their saying about God that He is the first and the last, the apparent and the hidden - in the philosophical sense - are nothing but an echo of the meanings called for by Neo-Platonism, and therefore Sufism is indebted to that philosophy that constitutes the special theoretical structure.(2) To the point that it became a matter of confusion among some Orientalists to differentiate between the philosophical theory (pantheism of existence) and Sufi conception such as (unity of witnesses), including Kramer and Tholok, with an understanding that prevailed among them, which was that “the one who goes to absolute transcendence cannot be considered one of the adherents of pantheism, no matter how much he expresses it in terms that indicate to this unity, because the philosophical doctrine related to the one nature of existence, deals only with one existential truth, unlike those who adhere to the unity of witnesses, who, in their commitment to the aspect of transcendence, see everything in God, but at the same time they raise God above everything, and make Him distinct from creatures. Moreover, they do not acknowledge that God is all.(3)

The philosophical current represented by Plotinus proved that the world must have a Creator and Creator who is eternal and above material and above the spirit, because in his opinion the world has many phenomena and is always changing, so it cannot have existed by itself, for one from whom the overflow resulted created the world, and the first thing that emerged from it was the mind. Who determined thinking about God and existing beings, and from the mind the human souls were created, and they are components of the spiritual world, but their center is on its margins, and they are the mediator between the tangible world and the mind that the overflow produced.

### **Gnostic Doctrine**

It is known that the Gnostic doctrine is a philosophical thought that has seeped into many religions and cultures, such as Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and Christianity, the term Gnosticism appeared in the Hellenistic era after the death of Alexander the Great, specifically BC, the relationship of the Gnostics with ancient Greece came from their belief that Demetrius I, the successor of Alexander the Great, had the spirit of God manifested in him. God was in Gnosticism, as Geowide Negrin states, “is a distant and strange God who did not create the universe and does not care about it, and he resides in the kingdom of light far away from creatures, this is because his involvement in the management of this world diminishes its perfection, and this world was created by lower gods, and these gods are the main subject of Gnostic meditations, the necessity of reconciling the existence of a good God with the existence of Satan led to the establishment of Gnostic dualism, which adopted the principle of equation between light and darkness (4), a belief that led to the distortion of original Christianity after the ideas of Gnosticism infiltrated it.

They believe that “there are particles that fell from the upper light into the prisons of human flesh, so those people deserved to receive knowledge by revelation to them. (5) Gnosticism and the mystical ideas it contained remain closely linked to its Greek origin, but Greek philosophy still has the privilege of precedence, and this precedence does not negate the existence of large relationships between original ideas and new, innovative ideas, because the

Gnostic description included all of it, while remaining affiliating to its Greek roots, Gnostics believe that their doctrine is the oldest doctrine in existence and is capable of being transferred from one class to another, and that the salvation of the followers is linked to their belief in the secrets of Gnosticism that have continuous revelation and a renewed flow always emanating from the highest flow without interruption(6)

It is the most beautiful thing that represents the state of abstraction from the world of materialism to the world of spirituality in order to obtain direct knowledge of ascension, which puts man in the stage of dispensing with God and those around him in perceiving things, and from here it gained the name Gnosticism of individualism, and the motivator of the universe is what came from God with the explosion of the great universe, and it is external spiritual, It is not limited by borders and is not bound by time . Religious Sufism, which has a predominantly devotional nature, is manifested in:

The Buddhist religion: It is one of the positive religions and is closer to philosophy than to religion, It was founded by the wise and enlightened Buddha, who lived in an environment dominated by Hinduism, so he took from it and influenced that character in his religion. The idea of (the reincarnation of souls) and placing the soul in a continuous circle governed by good deeds and evil deeds to replace after that, with great or lowly bodies as a kind of consequence for its practice and action, which is the state they called the term (karma), which requires the reincarnation of the soul into renewed bodies in a successive cycle, It is an Indian doctrine at its roots, as the author of the book "Indian Philosophy" says that reincarnation is a suspended doctrine in the minds of Hindus since ancient times, India is their original land (7). Specifically, when the Aryans invaded the country of India and wanted to undermine the Hindus and preserve their lineages and races, they proposed this principle as a punishment for the Hindus by placing them in a humiliating position to represent the lowest social class to ensure their position among the Hindus, which motivated them to rise through... Solution to the sublime spirit (Pra Mata) and they call this position the degree of (Moksha), meaning the final salvation and departure from the successive cycles of reincarnation and ending with God (Pra Mata)(8) and Buddha "followed the path of other Indian philosophers before him in his view of the universe and life, he considered life a pain that must be resisting it and fleeing from it, and he declared that the way to achieve this is to destroy all psychological desires, because desires and desires, according to his claim, are the reason for the existence of life and its recurrence."(9) So Buddha practiced several things until he reached the secret of the truth, and in the manifestation of the truth to Buddha, he realized that the path to salvation is Jihad in its three types. (Jihad of the soul, body, and mind). Through Jihad, the flame of desires and psychological pleasures is extinguished, and it is one of the meanings of (nirvana) for them. Perhaps Buddhist monasticism is the other most prominent manifestation of the compatibility between Sufism in Buddhist thought and Islamic thought after the phenomenon of (Nirvana), which represents spiritual liberation and salvation from the shackles of the soul and transcendence in the absolute realm ,.both of them - Sufi annihilation and Buddhist Nirvana - share their technical methods by following the Sheikh and the path, even if the paths differ. purification. Buddhism shares with Islamic Sufism that they are two parallel lines. The seeker, whether Buddhist or Islamic, aspires to attain and annihilate in the absolute, regardless of God, and regardless of the seeker's method of breaking down restrictions and considerations for behavior and arrival.

### **Zoroastrian Religion**

Zoroastrianism is a Persian religion that prevailed before Islam, Persian culture is filled with its spiritual and luminous dimensions, as it adopts the path of knowledge and radiance without recognizing traditional faith, which preserved a set of beliefs and opinions that existed before the birth of Christ and after that era. Rather, it coincided with the multiplicity of gods and sects that appeared in Iran, including the general and private beliefs of the Persians alike, they had a book known as "The Avesta."

Zoroastrianism is one of the ancient positive religions, and it is a monotheistic religion, It was called Mazdaism in reference to the god (Ahura Mazda), but it gained its name after the god (Ahura Mazda) came to Zoroaster later on.

As the ancient Zoroastrians say, "Zoroaster is part of the essence of the spirit of God, which was embodied in the body of the spirit of this human creature after the essence of the spirit passed through the series of higher beings and bodies, and settled in the womb of the woman who was destined to be the mother of this divine man." (10), Ahura Mazda are not alone one who acquired this sanctity among the Zoroastrians, but rather all the heavenly beings, as is the case in other religions, Christianity, Judaism, and others.

One of the established beliefs of the Zoroastrians is that Zoroaster ascended to heaven to appear before Ahura Mazda in the company of Fuhumana, which is what Zoroaster also acknowledged when he said: "O people, I am the messenger of God to you, for he does not speak to me alive through a messenger from the angels, but rather to him he raised me, and through me I am moved by the chief of the angels, and he led me to his presence, and there God appeared to me, introduced me to the law, and taught me religion, he handed me this book to you - that is, "Al-Ibstaq(11)"

This is the idea that Al-Suhrawardi crystallized and was influenced by in his book (The Wisdom of Illumination) and clearly revived the ancient wisdom of Persia, especially with Hermes and Zoroaster, who established the worldly wisdom that guided Sufi Al-Suhrawardi to the path of truth and light, they were virtuous sages and not Magi (12). According to this philosophy, knowledge is obtained by the knower from the emanation of light, not rational inference, this does not mean the complete exclusion of the effectiveness of the mind, but rather its summoning after psychological purification and inner enlightenment so that its adopter reaches the mystical revelation.

### **Christian Religion**

If we accept the statement that the precursor to Sufism in every environment is asceticism, and the transition from the behavioral aspect represented by disconnection to God, austerity, and turning away from the world to the conduct of the spiritual experience represented by Sufism and focusing on the inner, not the outer, and on the private emotional self rather than the general phenomena, then the culture of the Christian environment represents the best representation of the concepts of asceticism and Sufism, starting from the monasteries and the movement of monks in them, and the behavior of the paths of asceticism and cessation of worship, to the spiritual manifestation represented by Christian Sufism, until he achieved a significant role of influence in supporting Islamic Sufism.

Asceticism is represented in Christianity by hermits, monks, and tourist fathers who gained their name from tourism in God's country by staying away from the world and devoting their lives and times to communing with God and isolating with Him in the wilderness in an attempt to control

their desires, the goal of that is to follow the path of knowing the father and identifying with and mingling with Him. In the Gospel of John, chapter seventeen, the verse 21: Christ says, addressing the Father: "That they may all be one, O Father, just as you are in me and I in you, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that you "You sent me.

This is the transcendent dimension in Islamic Sufi thought, as the incorporation of divinity into humanity results in the perfect human being or the saint in Christianity, and it is also an Islamic meaning as evidenced by the Almighty's saying: ((When I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My Spirit, then fall down in prostration before him)(13). God, the unlimited, replaced and united with the limited, so the unlimited don't decreased and the limited did not increase, and they are in a permanent, eternal union, this connection was reflected in the union of the will of man with the will of the creator and their merging together, It is a meaning quoted and derived from Greek sources through their Neo-Platonic form and what was included in the Christian and Hellenistic sources that merged with Islam within Sufism(14)

This is what resulted in the cultural cross-fertilization and openness that occurred between nations, especially in the Abbasid era, in addition to the translation movement that nourished Islamic thought with the Christian approach and its ideas, perhaps the orientalist Goldziher noticed this when he said, "The spread of Islam, especially in the Levant, Iraq, and Egypt, opened this spiritual field to thirsty souls." Especially after it was possible for her to gain experiences in this field through mingling with Christians.

Knowing the truth of Christian mysticism as a cultural phenomenon cannot be read or understood in isolation from the philosophical foundations, especially Greek - the aforementioned - so it is not possible to isolate the philosophical tributaries (Platonism, Aristotelianism, and Neoplatonism) from understanding Christianity, this because Christian theology did not appear until Christianity was Hellenized and its culture became a Greek Hellenistic culture.

However, this Greek philosophical influence and Platonic propositions remain an expression of a common, well-established and rooted condition among a group of religions and philosophies in the world, not by way of dressing the Christian component as the Greek philosophical experience, but rather Christianity has its concepts, essence, and nature, represented by Jesus Christ, the process of crucifixion, and many others.

### **The Jewish Religion**

Since the Sufi experience tends toward privacy and confinement, not generality and participation, it is subjective and inner, entailing an inner tendency. Understanding the concept of unity between the subject and the object, which represents a common characteristic among all the experiences of Sufis in all religions; To achieve its goal, which aims to follow the path of union with the absolute, which brings scholars before a unified term and a network of reading interpretations. Judaism, which established the theory of mental emanation and through which it aimed to achieve degrees of human perfection, we find an objective approach that Ibn Arabi worked to establish in Islamic Sufi thought. It is (the unity of existence), which he relied on in formulating his concept of the perfect human being, perhaps the common denominator between Judaism and Sufism is the theory of the word and the idea of the perfect human being that emerged from Jewish thought, according to their famous saying narrated on the authority of Hammam ibn Munabbih, who is of Jewish origin: "God created Adam in his own image." In reinforcement of what was stated in the Book of Genesis (Chapter 27/1), "So

God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them, The orientalist Nöldeke and Goldziher confirm that Sufi tendencies and aspects of spiritual life in Islam are borrowed from Jewish ideas with a Gnostic wisdom orientation that were widespread in the Jewish monasteries and synagogues in the East (15), and the French orientalist Baron Caradevo goes along with them in proving the value of the influence of Christianity, its ideas and principles on Islamic Sufi thought, by placing the Christian influencer in second place because - in his opinion - “the Christian influencer created the widest trend in the Sufi literature of Muslims” (16), with the reason for the common phenomena between the two ideas, the phenomenon of the disciple’s subordination to his sheikh and his obedience and his behavior until the stage of his will being annihilated by the will of his sheikh, and this is what we witness among the pious sect, the Hasidim in Judaism, due to the beginning of the spiritual ascension of the disciple, the seeker does not achieve what he aspires to except by listening and completely submitting to his sheikh.

As for (Kabbalah), “it is a Jewish doctrine that investigates the secrets of the universe, the creator, and the creatures by resorting to unseen explanations and esoteric influences that aim to achieve the theory of God’s presence in every Jewish individual, so that this individual has the ability to influence God by his presence in him, and to confirm the idea of God’s presence.” In the Jewish people, and considering that the people of Israel are a special and distinct people, and that they are the ruler of all the peoples of the earth” (17) and the intellectual structure of the Jewish presence outside the boundaries of time and space, and the creation that existed through the divine flow, and He - God - in a state of concealment and interiority is revealed and transformed through the Shekhinah (Jamaat Yisrael), which is the female symbol of God, takes the form of ten rays that created the world and poured their light onto the world and the creator.

One of the intellectual building blocks of the culture of Sufism in Judaism is aesthetic manifestation and majesty, the manifestation referred to by the word “Rahamim” includes their sanctities, which are (the sun, the Son, the Holy King, and the Bridegroom of Israel). What leads to the aspect of majestic beauty is the marriage of the energies of love and power to produce what they termed “ "Taf'eret" is the aesthetic manifestation according to them(18)

As for the theories of pantheism and presence, they are a doctrine firmly established in Jewish Sufi thought, for them, presence are manifested by God’s connection to the Shekhinah, who is the “Mother of the World,” and with the children of Israel’s distancing themselves from worship and duties, the Shekhinah was banished or raised to heaven and usurped by Satan, and this led to the creation of non-gentiles.

The unity of existence, which requires knowing the truth of the divine essence as being, and the truth of the human self as one of the considerations of the divine essence and one of its aspects, When the human self is stripped of its existence, it becomes (it), and it is nothing but an illusion of the absolute, and this is an awareness of the position of arrival in Sufi thought. According to the Jewish Kabbalists, it is taken from the Book of Deuteronomy, the text in which it says: “You shall love the Lord your God and walk in all His ways and cling to Him.” The existence of creation depends on the existence of the Creator and is connected to him, because the existence of God is absolute and the rest of the creatures are relative. Man does not have an independent existence, but rather he exists with God. Islam

The opinions of historians, researchers, and orientalist differed regarding the reality of Islamic

Sufism, is it purely Islamic, or did the divine and positive religious branches of it contribute to its formation? Then did philosophy have an effect in its formation, or does philosophy have its own field and work, and Sufism is devoid of it? To clarify this, it is necessary to recall what was said about that, as some researchers and orientalist believe that the phenomenon of Sufism is a cultural and religious component that no religion or philosophy is devoid of, and between Islam and those religions or philosophical currents there are similarities and unintended commonalities, the basic idea is that “ The Sufi experience is the same for all Sufis, as the Sufi experiences narrated by Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, and Buddhists, as well as Sufis who did not follow any specific religious doctrine, agree, but they differ in each Sufi’s rational interpretation of his experiences derived from cultural characteristics. Interpretation is a mental addition to the experience is for the purpose of understanding it, and it may be the work of Sufis and non-Sufis(19) . The topic is the same in all Sufi experiences, regardless of their environmental, urban, and cultural conditions, and the answer to the absolute question they are looking for is one, characterized by characteristics they have in common, even if their outlook and belief in that one differ,with regard to the first stage, the influences from Turkestan seem more important, as Richard Hartmann has shown, and Ignace Goldziher before him has shown, There are similar traditions in Islamic mystical tales and Buddhist stories, but this type of similarity can easily be traced back to common sources, such as, for example, the myths of Hitu. Padishah and Panja Tanter, which were translated into the languages of the Near East before and shortly after the emergence of Islam, and the dignity of the saints is the same in the whole world” (20 ), while A.H.Balmer. believes. in his study (Eastern Sufism) in 1867 AD: “Sufism is the development of the first religion among the Aryan race, and it is a theory known to some German writers during the Nazi period, in all cases, Sufism was often considered a typical Iranian development within Islam, and there is no doubt that some important Iranian elements have been alive throughout the ages beneath its surface, as both Henry Corbin and Seyyed Hossein Nasr recently confirmed.(21)

As for the Christian connections, the first indications of which were likely to be with the beginning of the Abbasid era, which were represented by several groups, starting from the Nestorians to many of the sects that believed in one nature in Christ, and Blasius was one of the Orientalists who believed that the teachings of asceticism and the literature on taming the soul and controlling the body, as well as abstinence in seclusion, Absorption in the life of asceticism and contemplation goes back in its entirety to Christianity, and to the spiritual tendencies brought about by the religions that preceded Islam (22), and Nicholson supports him in this, who believes in the multiplicity of tributaries that influenced Islamic Sufism, and he repeatedly emphasizes the issue of the successive stages of influence, as the early Sufis were influenced with Christian asceticism, which Nicholson considered to be in conflict with the cheerful, active spirit of Islam, and with the Islamic conquests, the Sufis were gradually influenced by Greek, Manichaeian, and Buddhist influences.(23) The conquests had a significant impact on the demographic and cultural nature in vast kingdoms of the world.

As for the writers and orientalist who believed in the Greek influence, they were relying on the idea that the theory of emanation or radiance had a prominent impact in Islam. Likewise, the principle of the astronomical hierarchy of minds and souls regarding the first, which is God. Likewise, they search for aspects of influence in those sayings that see knowledge as a revelation and inspiration, or as it shines directly in the soul of the wise man as a result of his sublimation of thought and spirit and his abstraction from the worlds of sense (24).



As for Massignon, he opposes those who have proven the connection between influences. He criticizes that opinion, and believes that Sufism at its core is purely Islamic, and if it is exposed to external influences, it is similar to the emergence of religious groups and their historical and social circumstances, he says: "It can be said, for example, that the followers of Islam and the followers of Indian philosophy have met in Central Asia or in Iran, but that is not enough to prove Indian influence in Sufism. To accept this opinion, it is necessary to rely on reliable and accurate sources that prove the mutual influence of ideas in Islam and Indian beliefs on this or that person at that stage or another"(25 ) and this is what It was mentioned by the German orientalist Einmarie Schimmel when she sought to prove that Islamic Sufism was influenced in its inception by other civilizations such as Syriac monasticism, Neo-Platonism, Persian Zoroastrianism, and Vedanta...despite their abundance, in Schimmel's opinion, she did not prove these connections. She did not prove with conclusive evidence the possibility of such influences in the beginnings of Sufism in comparison. With those that we see in its later stages (26)

The truth is that we should not be certain that there is pure Islamic Sufism, pure Christian Sufism, pure Arab, Persian, Indian...etc., because Sufism means the complicity of human experience, It is either civilizational interaction and actual communication to convey information, especially the acculturation that occurs between nations and peoples through conquests, or common human nature, by which we mean the issue of peoples' search for the same truth in order to reach similar results. Massignon says in the context of talking about this: "Every religious environment whose members possess sincerity and atonement is suitable for the spirit of Sufism to appear in it. Sufism, then, is not one of the characteristics of a race, a language, or a nation, but rather It is a spiritual manifestation that is not limited by such material boundaries (27)

The truth of Sufism is one and the goal that the Sufi seeks is one, even if its form and essence differ according to his thought and culture, and "those who object to the truth of the phenomenon of Sufism are only denying the spiritual powers of the soul and its glorious transparency, while they in the field of science acknowledge that the eminent scholar reaches high spiritual heights at the pinnacle of his research, and that he feels a kind of overwhelming spiritual pleasure that shakes the depths of his soul, and it is his only reward for his success in his work. Likewise, the greatest evidence of this spiritual fulfillment is that comparative Sufism research has proven the existence of similarities between the known types of Sufism: Indian Sufism, Christian Sufism, and Islamic Sufism. So the idea of the sacred ascension according to the Sufis of Islam is the same idea as the idea of the ladder to paradise in Christianity, and the ascension to nirvana in Buddhism is the same thing among the Indians (28)

The influence of Sufi ideas in other religions may be glimpsed in Islamic Sufism, but at the same time it does not cancel Islamic Sufism or establish it, as it arose in an elaborate Islamic context, and between the two opinions, we must acknowledge that Sufism crystallized and took its name from Islam, even if some orientalist proved the effectiveness of the other tributaries and its influence on it, it is similar, and even if it is influential, it is not crystallized for Islamic Sufism, which has its own schools, figures, and disciples, to the point that its influence has prevailed over the influence of the Sufi ideas of other religions on it.

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