

# The characteristic beliefs of sufism

Religion



a) Sufis are Islamic mystics that have spiritual experiences based on the direct communication with God. The Sufis have aims to return Islam to an uncomplicated belief in God. To do this there is a long complicated route. Sufis constantly pray and worship God, however they use music and chanting and dancing instead of just the ritual prayer five times a day. In relation to taking Islam back to the simplest form Sufis possess few belongings, also the practice asceticism, such as rejection from physical pleasures, and they actually seek pain and discomfort.

Sufis believe that through their chanting and entering trances they can communicate and directly experience God. By entering these trances they hope to return to the experiences that Muhammad had. Sufis also believe that we are born with two souls. Through this simplistic life the divine soul is nourished and the human soul perishes.

Sufis believe that their "version" of Islam is the true Islam. Other Muslims (Sunnis and Shi'i) have adapted Islam in their own way but Sufis maintain that Sufism is the true religion.

They believe that many of the Qur'anic verses are in favour of their mystical practices. For example "mention God often" relates to the practice where Sufis repeat the name of God and enter trances.

Sufis prepare for death, in their forms of worship. They use "obliteration of the self" to enter the mind of God. The path that they follow consists of four states. Zuhd- detachment from worldly affairs. Sabr - patience. Shukr - gratitude to Allah. Hubb- Love of Allah.

To achieve these stages they have prolonged periods of fasting, and self inflicted pain and wearing of uncomfortable clothes.

The Shaykh guides this path. The path includes repentance, ridding themselves of earthly belongings and meditation. The Shaykh guides the Sufis, as it is difficult to do.

Sufis have varied views and practises to the better-known orthodox Muslims. Some Sufis even go further as to walk over hot coals and lie on nail beds.

b) Sufis practise self-denial, self-discipline and abstinence. They reject physical pleasures such as food and drink, sleep and human company. They also seek discomfort or pain. They believe by doing this they can have direct communication with God. However this is considered as shirk by the other Muslims. In the past Sufis have been crucified by the Abbasids for claiming that their souls had merged with Allah or they have even proclaimed themselves to be Allah while intoxicated. Sufis have been criticised further for using dancing chanting and music in their worship.

Sufis accept the mystic hadith therefore been criticised, by Sunnis. Rippin states that most Muslims still reject this mystical hadith quoted by the Sufis.

Sufis have made various advancements in the world of learning and culture, however Horrie and Chippendale have criticised this as it is seen as one of the main reasons for the " backwardness" of the Muslim nations. Westerners no longer look to God for answers but to science or human intellect.

By rejecting worldly affairs Sufis have been criticised, as they should appreciate things they have. Also Sufis claim they must be grateful to Allah

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even if they have misfortunes such as disease or death bestowed upon them.

The Sunni Muslims do not approve of these such practises however it has been pointed out that the Sunni hadith is no earlier than the Sufi mystic hadith. Therefore it cannot be discovered which is authentic.

In conclusion the Sufis raise controversy with the other orthodox Muslims by their different practises and the basic beliefs.