

## **Islam and Sufism (Tasawwuf) - 100 Questions**

### **Hidayat e Shuyukh- Part 1**

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## **Question 1. What is the definition of Islam, Iman and Ehsaan?**

The shaykh quotes the famous hadith of Jibreel AS first and begins by saying that according to this hadith, there are three levels in Islam; beginner, intermediate and advanced. The beginner level is Islam, the intermediate level is Iman and the highest level is Ehsan.

Linguistically, **Islam** means to submit or follow. Hence, the definition of Islam is to accept and follow the orders of Allah and the Prophet ﷺ.

Islam is identified by the 5 pillars without which following Islam would not be complete:

1. There is none worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad ﷺ is the Prophet of Allah سبحانہ و تعالیٰ
2. Performing the prayer 5 times daily
3. Giving out Zakah according to the rulings
4. Fasting the full month of Ramadan
5. Performing Hajj once in your lifetime according to the rulings, and if eligible

A person who accepts these 5 pillars would be deemed a Muslim in a court of law. This is irrespective of whether the acceptance is sincere or for some worldly purpose. The hypocrites (Munafiqun) were considered in the fold of Islam. Thus, anybody who accepts these 5 principles is treated as a Muslim regarding all aspects of Islamic law.

Islam deals with the external aspects of religion. One must realize that Islam by itself is not enough for success in the hereafter. It has to be coupled with Iman which is described in the next section.

**Iman** literally means truly believing in something after a process of verification. Iman separates a believer from a hypocrite even though their external actions may be similar. Iman can be a means for the forgiveness of Allah سبحانہ و تعالیٰ in the hereafter. Iman means to truly believe in the following:

1. Allah (سبحانہ و تعالیٰ) is one in his being and attributes
2. His angels who are always busy in carrying out His commands

3. His Prophets and messengers who are His chosen and accepted slaves. The Prophets were chosen and sent to every nation for the guidance and improvement of the people.
4. All His books that were sent through His messengers; Torah to Musa (AS), Zaboor to Dawud (AS) and Injeel to Esa (AS). Finally, the Quran to Muhammad ﷺ.
5. Day of Judgement or Qiyamah is true where we would be recompensed for our deeds
6. Destiny is true and all good and bad matters in this life are from Him

**Ihsan** literally means to do good works or excellence. The best thing to do in this world is to do what we were created for; that is to know Allah سبحانه و تعالى and inculcate His manners and attributes to the extent humanly possible and become His true vicegerent in this world. The path to gain this vicegerency is known as Tasawwuf or the knowledge of Tariqat. The essence of this path is to be mindful of Allah سبحانه و تعالى in every moment and do everything for His sake with the belief that one is witnessing Him or that He witnesses you. In fact, remembering Him every moment with the belief that you are witnessing Him or that He witnesses you is the end goal of every Sufi or seeker (Salik). Different types of worship have been established just to reach this goal.

## Question 2. What are the pillars of Islam?

1. Shahadah
2. Prayer
3. Fasting
4. Zakah
5. Hajj

## Question 3. What are the 6 pillars of Iman?

1. Unity of Allah سبحانه و تعالى
2. Existence of Angels
3. His Books
4. His Prophets and messengers
5. Day of Judgement
6. Destiny - Good and bad are all from Him

## Question 4. What is the definition of Sharia?

Sharia is the name given to the commandments of Allah سبحانه و تعالى and his Prophet ﷺ which are established through the Quran and Sahih Ahadith. By following these commandments a person attains success and goodness in this world and the hereafter. Following the Sharia leads to refinement in one's spiritual and physical states. It also leads to elevation and success in one's religion.

Shariah is like a wide road/path on which one travels to reach the ultimate destination. Straying away from this path leads to difficulty and anxiety both in this world and hereafter. Shariah is based on four pillars:

1. Quran
2. Hadith of the Prophet ﷺ
3. Consensus of the community
4. Individual rulings

## Question 5. Who are the Imam's of Shariah and what is their status?

The Imams' of the Sharia are the deputies of the Prophet ﷺ. The four main Imams are:

- **Abu Hanifa Noman bin Thabit Al-Kufi (Ra)** also known as Imam-e-Azam. He is the Imam of the Hanafis and his way is followed by the majority of Sunni muslims especially in Syria, Khurasan (Iran), Russian Turkistan, Turkey, Afghanistan and Indian sub-continent.
- **Abu Abdullah Malik bin Anas Al-Madani (Ra)** is the Imam of Malikis. His followers are mostly in North Africa.
- **Abu Abdullah Mohammed bin Idrees Al-Shafee (Ra)** is the Imam of the Shafaees. His creed is mostly followed in Syria, Iraq, Egypt and the Arab world.
- **Abu Abdullah Ahmad bin Hanbal Ash-Shaybani (Ra)** is the Imam of the Hanbalees. His creed is mostly followed in Arabia and Iraq.

All of the Imams above spent their entire life in understanding and teaching the Quran and Hadees. Most of the scholars of Islam follow one of the above Imams. Thus, following the above Imams is following the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. All four of these Imams are deputies of the Prophet ﷺ in the **external aspects** of our religion.

## Question 6. What is Tariqa (or Tariqat)?

Linguistically, Tariqah is a way that is made by the signs of one's footsteps while walking on a path. According to Sufis, Tariqa is the path made by signs of ones deeds. In other words, Sharia is the main path to the destination while the tariqah refers to the signs of footsteps (deeds) made on the path.

## Question 7. What is Ma'arifa and Haqeeqah?

Identifying the Being (Zaat) and Attributes (Sifaat) of Allah سبحانه و تعالى as befits Him while adhering to the Sharia is known as Ma'arifa. The one who has Ma'arifa is known as an Arif. Allah SWT may reveal the reality of the existence (Haqeeqah) of this universe to an Arif. The Arif then becomes a complete human being (Insan al-Kamil) and a true vicegerent or Khalifa of Allah SWT in this world. This is the goal of every seeker and all efforts are towards attaining this goal.

## Question 8. What is the meaning of Sulook according to Sufis?

Sharia is the main path while Tariqa are the signs of a seekers footsteps (deeds) on this path which takes him towards the ultimate goal of Ma'arifa and Haqeeqah. The act of walking towards this goal is known as Sulook which in essence is complete adherence to the Sharia. However, every Salik or seeker's deeds are different due to differences in one's relationship with Allah SWT.

The Quran states in Surah 55:29 (Ar-Rahman) كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأنٍ - meaning He reveals Himself in a new light every moment. Every human being has a unique relationship with Allah SWT and this relationship guides a seeker towards Him. Another verse in the Quran 17:84 (Al-Isra) كُلُّ يَوْمٍ - means every person walks on his or her own path but your Lord knows who is on the right path. The Quran further states 2:148 (Al-Baqarah) وَلَكُلِّ أُنْجَةٍ هُوَ - فَاسْتَبِّعُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ أَيْنَ مَا تَكُونُوا يَا أَيُّهُمْ أَنْ يُمْلِئَ اللَّهُ جَمِيعاً مُؤْمِنِيْهَا meaning to each is a direction that Allah SWT turns him; so strive towards what is good. Allah SWT will gather all towards Him. A seekers footsteps (Tariqa) on the path of sharia may be different but they all lead to the same destination.

## Question 9. What are the four Tariqas and to whom are they attributed to?

The four Tariqas are Qadriaya, Chishtiya, Naqshbandiya and Suharwardiya.

**Qadriya** is attributed to Hazrat Shyakh Abu Mohammed Muhiuddin Sayyid Abdul Khadir Jeelani (RA). It is also known as Tariqa-e-Jeelani especially in the Arab world.

**Chishtiya** is attributed to Hazrat Qutub-ul-Hind Khwaja-e-Khwajagaan Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Hasan Sanjari Chishti (RA)

**Naqshbandiya** is attributed to Hazrat Khwaja Bahauddin Syed Naqshband (RA) whose mausoleum is in Bukhara.

**Suharwardiya** is attributed to Hazrat Khwaja Shahabuddin Abu Hafs Umar Al-Suharwardy (RA) whose resting place is in Iraq.

**Note:** In addition to the four mentioned above, there is another old interpretation which refers to the 4 tariqas as : Ameer ul Momineen our Master Ali Ibn-e-Abi Talib Karramallahu Wajhu and his 4 Khalifas - First Hazrat Imam Hasan Mujtaba (RA), then Hazrat Imam Husain (RA), then Hazrat Khwaja Hasan Basri (RA) and then Hazrat Khwaja Kumail bin Ziyaad (RA)

## Question 10. How many Khanwadas are there and who are they attributed to?

There are 14 Khanwadas and the chain of these Khanwadas is connected to the two Khalifas of Hazarat Hasan Basri (RA); 5 Khanwadas are attributed to Hazrat Khwaja Abdul Wahid bin Zaid (RA) and 9 to Hazrat Khwaja Habib Ajami (RA).

The five attributed to Hazrat Abdul Wahin bin Zaid (RA)

1. Zaidiya - Hazrat Khwaja Abdul Wahid bin Zaid (RA)
2. Ayazia - Hazrat Fuzail bin Ayaz Zaid (RA)
3. Adhamiya - Hazrat Ibrahim bin Adham (RA)
4. Haybariya - Hazrat Khwaja Abu Haibar Basri (RA)
5. Chistiya - Hazrat Khwaja Ahmed Abdal Chishti (RA)

The 9 attributed to Hazrat Khwaja Habib Ajami (RA).

1. Habibiya - Hazrat Khwaja Habib Ajami (RA)
2. Taifuria - Hazrat Khwaja BaYazid Bustami (RA)
3. Karkhiya - Hazrat Khwaja Maroof Karkhi (RA)
4. Saqatiya - Hazrat Khwaja Sirri bin Mughlis Al-Saqati (RA)
5. Junaidiya - Hazrat Khwaja Junaid Baghdadi (RA)
6. Gazdaruniya - Hazrat Khwaja Gazdaruni (RA)
7. Tusia - Hazrat Khwaja Tusi(RA)
8. Firdausia - Hazrat Khwaja Firdausi (RA)
9. Suharwardiya - Hazrat Khwaja Shahabuddin Shuarwardy (RA)

## **Question 11. To which Sahaba (RA) are the above Tariqas linked to ?**

The above mentioned tariqas are linked to Hazrat Shah-e-Wilayat (Shah of Auliya), Sayyidna Abul Hasan Ali ibn Abi Talib Karramallahu Wajhu except Naqshbandiyya which is linked to our first Khalifa, Sayyidna Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (RA).

## **Question 12. What is Imamat (leadership) and what are its types and conditions?**

There are two branches of Imamat - 1.Kubra and 2. Sughra.

**Imamat-e-Kubra** is a position or role that is responsible for arranging and maintaining the worldly and religious activities of muslims. This includes governance, making and enforcing laws etc. Leading the prayer is also a branch of this Imamat. Establishing this leadership or Imamat is wajib on Muslims as the institution of Prophethood has ended. Without this leadership establishing a functioning society is not possible.

A person is expected to fulfill the following conditions in order to be an Imam in the context of Imamat-e-Kubra ; Male, adult, just, courageous and be from the Quraish. Some scholars don't consider being from the Quraish to be a condition of Imamat and cite the following hadith in its support - 'Obey (your leader) even if a slave were to become your Ameer' (Abu Dawud and Tirmidhi, Hadith 28 in Imam Nawawi's 40 hadith).

**Imamat-e-Sughra** refers to the community of Ulema (scholars) and Sufis (may Allah be pleased with them) who are the inheritors of the ‘ilm’ or knowledge of the Prophet ﷺ. This is confirmed by the following hadith - ‘The scholars are the inheritors of the Prophets’ ( Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud). Seekers of the path go to these scholars and Sufis to learn about the outward and inward aspects of our religion. This book primarily deals with Imamat-e-Sughra.

Hazrat Shah Abdul Azeez (RA) in his book Fatawa-e-Azizia says that the definition of ‘bayt’ is to give your allegiance to a Murshid. An Imam or Murshid is supposed to have sound knowledge of external and internal aspects of religion.

Imam Malik (RA) states that the one who learns Tasawwuf (internal or spiritual aspects) and ignores learning the external aspects (Fiqh) becomes a ‘zindeeq’ or a rejector of external aspects of religion. Similarly, a person who learns external aspects (Fiqh) and leaves internal aspects (Tasawwuf) become a ‘Fasiq’ or depraved. The one who combines both ‘Fiqh’ and ‘Tasawwuf’ will be on the right path.

Hazrat Shah Waliullah (RA) in his book ‘Qual-al-Jameel’ says that it is necessary for a Shyakh or Murshid to have enough knowledge of Quran and Hadith to guide his Mureeds in following the commandments and staying away from the prohibitions of Sharia. The Shyakh should also have the ability to build the character of his Mureeds and be just and pious. In addition, the Shyakh should have acquired the knowledge of Tasawwuf and be connected to Allah SWT.

Imam Sha'rani (RA) in his book Al-Tabaqat-ul-Kubra states that it is the consensus of the scholars that one who does not know the sciences of Sharia does not have the ability to guide people towards the right path.

Hazrat Shyakh Abu Najeeb Abdul Qahar Suharwardy (RA) says in his book ‘Irshad-ut-Talibeen’ that the person who is worthy of wearing a Khirkha (Shyakh) is the one who has adorned his ‘Nafs’ with the manners or ‘adaabs’ of the Sufis. He should have striven and worked hard on the path of Allah and should be free from desires of this world (duniya). He should have been in the company of the truthful ones (Sufis) and be fully aware of Sharia. It is not permissible for a person to be a Shyakh if the above qualities are missing.

Hazrat Junaid Baghdadi (RA) says not to teach Tasawwuf to a person unless that person has learned the Quran and Hadith. This is because Tasawwuf is bounded by the Quran and Hadith.

## **Question 13. Is taking ‘bayt’ or allegiance with an Imam necessary? If so, why is it necessary?**

There are two types of Imamat - Kubra and Sughra and thus the ‘bayt’ or allegiance is also of two types.

The first is the ‘bayt-e-Ita’at’ or the allegiance to an Imam or a king who is responsible for the establishment and maintenance of the worldly and religious activities of Muslims. Taking this

'baith' is 'wajib' because without this the establishment of a functioning society is difficult. This 'baith' has been emphasized in different hadiths and one hadith states that one who passes away without taking this 'baith' is like the one who passed away in a state of ignorance.

The second type of 'bayt' is known as 'bayt-e-taqwa' which is the allegiance given to a Shaykh, Murshid or Sufi for the purpose of gaining the knowledge of the sciences of Tariqat or Tasawwuf. Taking this 'bayt' can be 'farz', 'wajib' or 'sunnat' and there is a difference of opinion.

**The famous hadith of the Prophet ﷺ states that 'Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim' ( Ibn Majah 224).**

According to some scholars taking 'bayt' is 'Farz' or obligatory because of the above hadith and the knowledge being referred to in this hadith is the knowledge of Tasawwuf which takes a person closer to his Lord. Other scholars consider this to be the knowledge of the basics of the religion like Quran, Hadith and Fiqh without which practicing religion is not possible.

Shaykh Abu Talib Makki (RA) in this book 'Quwwat-ul-Quloob' states that Islam is based on taking the shahadah, prayer, fasting, zakat and Hajj. So, only obtaining the knowledge of these 5 things is 'wajib' on every Muslim.

Imam Ghazzali in his book 'Ihya Uloom-ad-Deen' says that there are two types of knowledge, 'Ilm-e-Ma'ama' or knowledge of transactions or day to day affairs and 'Ilm-e-Mukashifa' which is the knowledge of spiritual matters. According to Imam Ghazzali (RA) The knowledge referred to in the Hadith above is related to 'Ilm-e-Ma'ama' which is learning the kalima, 'Wudu' and 'Ghusl' (bodily purity), prayer, fasting, zakat and Hajj. In addition if one is a trader, it becomes incumbent on a Muslim to learn the sharia rulings on buying/selling. Similarly, if one wants to get married, learning about Nikah and the rights of the spouse is also necessary. In other words, according to Imam Ghazzali, it is obligatory for a person to learn the sharia rulings of all the different types of transactions one gets involved with whether it is trade, marriage or something else.

As for 'Ilm-e-Mukashifa' or the knowledge of spiritual matters, Imam Ghazzali considers it to be 'Farz-e-Kifaya' which means even if one person in a community acquired this knowledge, the 'Farz' or obligation of all other community members is complete. However acquiring this knowledge is a source of 'Fazilat' or excellence for anybody who acquires it.

Hazrat Shah Waliullah (RA) says in his book 'Qual-al-Jameel' that giving 'bayt' or allegiance to a Shaykh is a sunnah and not wajib. The companions (Sahaba - RA) gave the 'bayt' to the Prophet ﷺ to gain closeness to Allah SWT. However, there is no proof that not giving 'bayt' is a sin so it cannot be wajib.

**Verdict:** Based on the opinions of these great scholars and Sufis, we can conclude that giving 'bayt' to a Shaykh is a sunnah and is a source of excellence and blessing. However, anyone

who wants to attain the knowledge of spiritual path should find a sound Shyakh. Acquiring this knowledge on your own is fraught with risk because traveling the spiritual path requires awareness of the tricks of Shaytaan/Nafs. In addition one needs an ability to distinguish whether one's thoughts are angelic, demonic etc. which is very difficult to do without the help of a Shyakh. Otherwise, the pursuit of this path may lead to Kufr (disbelief) and Zalalat (deviation). That's why it has been said that if one is without a shaykh, his shaykh is the Shaytaan.

## Question 14. What is Tasawwuf?

In reality, Tasawwuf is fixing one's thoughts towards Allah SWT and having sincere intentions. In other words, having a heartfelt connection to Allah SWT in all of one's states is Tasawwuf. This is also the station of Ehsan discussed in Chapter 1.

For our guidance, Allah SWT tells his Habib ﷺ in Surah An'aam (6:162, 163):

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ مَطْوِيلُكَ أَمْرُثُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

Say: Lo! my worship and, my sacrifice and my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the Worlds. He has no partner. This am I commanded, and I am the first of those who surrender (unto Him).

Thus, pure Tasawwuf is maintaining a heartfelt connection to Allah SWT with

- a firm belief that He is ever present and witnessing you
- a sincere intention that one's life and death is only for Him

The famous Hadith (1st in Imam Nawawi's 40 hadith and also narrated in Bukhari and Muslim) also points us to the above meaning:

"Actions are according to intentions, and everyone will get what was intended. Whoever migrates with an intention for Allah and His messenger, the migration will be for the sake of Allah and his Messenger. And whoever migrates for worldly gain or to marry a woman, then his migration will be for the sake of whatever he migrated for."

## Question 15. What is the meaning of 'Faqeeri'? What is the meaning of 'Al-Faqr Faqeeri'?

In Arabic language, 'Faqeeri' means dependency or helplessness or being a beggar. As we have seen in the definition of Tasawwuf and Ehsan, a Sufi in all his affairs realizes that he is totally dependent on the good graces of Allah SWT. This has been described in a famous saying of the auliya:

'A Sufi with Allah SWT is like a dead body in the hands of a Ghassal (one who washes the dead body)'.

In other words, a Sufi realizes that he is totally dependent on Allah SWT every moment of his life. The Prophet ﷺ was appreciative and grateful for his total dependence on Allah SWT. Begging people for your worldly needs is discouraged and condemned for those who have an ability to earn and it may even take them close to Kufr or disbelief. The Prophet ﷺ prayed to be free from begging from others as indicated in the Hadiths below

- "O Allah, I seek refuge with You from Kufr and poverty." (Sunan Nasai)
- "A man who continues to beg, will not have any flesh on his face on the Day of Qiyamah" (Bukhari and Muslim)

The Prophet ﷺ was completely dependent on Allah SWT and implored us to do the same as Hadiths below indicate:

- Ask Allah SWT when your shoestring breaks
- Ask Allah SWT if you run out of salt in your home

The reason Prophet ﷺ asked us to implore Allah SWT for everything is that one who forms a habit of asking Allah SWT for everything will automatically not ask others. In addition, one will always be turned towards Allah SWT which is the main goal of a Sufi. A sufi may obtain the station indicated by the Ayah (Surah Anfal, 17) below if he or she is steadfast on complete dependence on Allah SWT :

وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكَنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَى

Translation - '[O Muhammad], when you threw, but it was Allah who threw '

The saying from the Awliya - أَلْقَرْ إِذَا تَمَّ أَلْهَ means that when dependence on Allah SWT is complete, He reveals himself to his slave. Maulana Jami has a Farsi couplet regarding this dependence on Allah.

An 'Arif' or 'knower' realizes that he is totally dependent on Allah SWT every moment as his very existence is between two timeless realms. As an example, a lamp is dependent on oil to burn and give light. If the oil is cut off even for a moment, the lamp is extinguished. Similarly, the existence of man is dependent in every moment on the grace of Allah SWT.

In conclusion, 'faqeeri' means dependence. The more this dependence is on Allah SWT, the more a seeker may get closer to Allah SWT. As opposed to this, the more this dependence is

on creation, the more a seeker will be distant from Allah SWT. This dependence on creation may even lead to Kufr. It should be clear to us now that 'faqeer' is not being a beggar and renouncing the world which is against Islam but being completely dependent on Allah SWT. A person having the riches of this world can still be a 'faqeer' or beggar if he only begs Allah SWT for all his affairs. Some of the Prophets including Dawud (David) AS and Sulayman AS were kings but in reality they were 'faqees' as they were completely dependent on Allah SWT.

## **Question 16. What is the difference between 'Faqeer', Sufi and Shyakh?**

These three terms usually refer to one person but convey a different meaning. Being a 'Faqeer' conveys total dependence and helplessness in front of Allah SWT while being a Sufi conveys a connection to Allah SWT in every moment. Being a Shyakh conveys the meaning of religious leadership.

## **Question 17. What is the difference between the 'Batiniyah' (باطنية) sect and Sufis?**

Batiniyah is a sect that rejects the outer or external aspects of Sharia (zahir) based on an inner or esoteric meaning derived from scripture. Thus, they don't have any halal or haram or farz or sunnat. On the other hand, Sufis insist on complete adherence to both the outer (zahir) and inner aspects of Sharia. Tariqat (spiritual path) is not separate from Sharia. As indicated above, Sharia is a path to reach the destination while Tariqa are the signs of one's footsteps on that path.

There are two aspects of Sharia; outer (zahir) and inner (batin). The outer aspects are related to the establishment of a civilization, culture, a good society and the rights of other creation. The inner aspects are related to establishing a close connection with Allah SWT and improving one's inner. As our sharia is the last and complete sharia to be established, it has complete guidance for our physical, spiritual, societal and religious affairs. Allah SWT created man with two different and opposite things; the body which is from this world of witnessing (Shahadat) and soul which is from the angelic realm. These two aspects of human beings have different and opposing attributes and needs.

A man is torn between these bodily and spiritual aspects of his nature and eventually one side becomes dominant over the other. This leads to needs of one side not being fulfilled. Human perfection is to have a balance between these two aspects and which is the purpose of his creation.

The rights of society, culture and other creation upon a human being are related to his external or bodily aspects. In other words, these are Huquq-ul-Ibaad. The rights of Allah SWT that He has made responsible for are all related to inner or spiritual aspects. It is necessary for a human being to fulfill both these rights and keep a balance without being extreme on either side. This is very difficult to achieve and many people have failed in this endeavor. However, Allah SWT in

his infinite Mercy has sent us such a merciful guide ﷺ who has shown us the way to balance these opposing sides. The Prophet ﷺ, the rightly guided caliphs (Khalifas), Sufis (Kamileen) through their example have shown us how to establish a close connection to Allah SWT and also fulfill the rights of creation (Huqq-ul-Ibaad).

This is the straight path that we strive to follow through our supplication and prayers. Different communities or groups in this world attempt to achieve this balance but are unsuccessful except for the Sufis. If we take a look at the different groups/religions there are some who consider leaving this world completely as a means to closeness to Allah SWT and success in the Hereafter. This includes philosophers from olden days, Hindus and Christians. The 'Batinis' are somewhat similar in their approach as well. There are other groups who are focused only on the external and materialistic success as their ultimate achievement like the Jews. According to one interpretation, the first group is astray and the second group has evoked the anger of Allah SWT. The religion of the Sufis is Islam and they follow the footsteps of the Prophet ﷺ. Their religion is between these two extremes. They are always in the remembrance of Allah SWT in their hearts but they are seen discharging their duties towards other creations. Their renouncing of this world is greater than those who leave society and become monks. They balance the spiritual and bodily aspects of their nature.

The Prophet ﷺ prohibited us from becoming monks and leading a lonely existence. At the same time he ﷺ also prohibited becoming too materialistic and being overly focused on our external actions. The following is an ayah related to this aspect:

**"It is neither their meat nor their blood that reaches Allah, but it is Taqwa from you that reaches Him."** (Al-Hajj 22:33)

People in Jahiliyya (ignorance) thought that they could reach their Lord only through sacrifice. The Quran clarifies that one cannot reach the Lord through the blood and meat of a sacrificial animal but through 'Taqwa'. This means getting closer to Him is to realize that He is 'Hazir' (present) all the time and 'Nazir' (witnessing) all our affairs rather than to just focus on external rituals or worship.

The following are a few hadiths on this topic -

**Piety is here and he (ﷺ) pointed to his chest three times - (Sahih Muslim)**

**Verily, Allah does not look at your bodies or your shapes. But He looks at your hearts. - (Sahih Muslim)**

**There lies within the body a piece of flesh. If this is sound, the whole body is sound. If it is corrupted, the whole body is corrupted. Verily, this piece is the heart - (Sahih Bukhari & Muslim)**

In addition to these there are many hadiths that make it clear that focusing on the outer and forgetting our inner is not acceptable in front of Allah SWT.

Some of the hadiths regarding the outer are:

**There is no monasticism in Islam - Sahih**

**Your body has a right over you, your eyes have a right over you and your wife has a right over you - Sahih Bukhari**

There are many more hadiths on these subjects which make it clear that monasticism and giving up the world like what monks do is not a condition for getting closer to Allah SWT.

Thus, Islam is the straight path and we should not just be concerned with the spiritual like the 'Batiniyah' nor we should just be concerned with the external like some other groups. It is clear from this that only Sufis are on the right path of Islam.

## **Question 18. What is meant by 'Zindeeq'?**

It means being irreligious. It also means rejecting or proclaiming independence from the external or outer rulings of the Sharia. As we have seen earlier, here is a hadith from the Prophet SAWs -

**"None of you [truly] believes until his desires are subservient to that which I have brought."**

**(Hadith 41, Imam Nawawi 40 hadith)**

Religion (deen) consists of both external and internal aspects and rejecting the external aspects or commands is like rejecting the deen itself. One thing that should be mentioned here is that certain ignorant people claim themselves to be Sufis and don't distinguish between Tasawwuf and Batiniyah. They present (without understanding) couplets or sayings from earlier generations that are really deep in meaning and point towards the reality of Allah SWT as proof of their position even though the meanings they derive are against the Sharia. Not only do these people become ill-famed in this world, they also become 'Zindeeq' as a result of believing in something that is against the Sharia.

One should not take literally any poems or saying of the pious people (no matter who that is) that seem to be against the Sharia. Always have a firm belief that the real or hidden meaning can never contradict the Sharia. As some of these sayings are from a different age and time, we may not be able to comprehend them now. We should neither consider these sayings as proof nor have a bad opinion about them. There are many sayings which in essence are not against the Sharia but people derive incorrect meanings based on their understanding.

## Question 19. What is the meaning of 'leaving the world (duniya)'? What is 'duniya'?

Maulana Rumi (RA) has aptly described duniya in his Mathnavi. He describes duniya as being unmindful of Allah SWT in the pursuit of things that you love in this world like your children, spouse and other things. As the Quran says:

**'Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire - of women and sons, heaped-up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle and tilled land. That is the enjoyment of worldly life, but Allah has with Him the best return.'** Surah Aa'li-Imran 3:14.

Thus, it should be clear that the love of things is the real duniya and not the things themselves. Using things as needed is lawful but being unmindful of Allah SWT in the pursuit of those things is blameworthy. If one is not attached to the things of this world, those things won't take him away from Allah SWT. Prophets Dawud (AS) and Sulaiman (AS) had all the things of this world but they were not away from Allah SWT. Our Prophet SAW, the rightly guided Caliphs (RA), Sufis like Shyakh Abdul Khadir Jeelani (RA) had the things of these world but instead of taking them away from Allah SWT, these same things became a means to get closer to Allah SWT. If the love of anything in this world whether it is gold or silk or an old torn piece of clothing that makes you unmindful of Allah SWT, it comes under the definition of duniya.

The word 'duniya' in the Quran rarely comes alone but is always prefixed with 'hayath' or life like 'hayath-ud-duniya' which can be translated as 'mean life'. Commonly, we translate duniya to be this world or the things of this world but the Quran always defines it as the 'mean life' or the 'hayath-ud-duniya'. One of the meanings we can infer from the Quranic use of this word is that living your life loving being attached to things of this world is being mean and blameworthy.

As opposed to this 'mean life', Quran also uses the word 'Hayath-ut-Tayyibah', the good or wholesome life which is the life of those who are close to Allah SWT. The Quran states:

**'No doubt! Verily, the friends (auliya) of Allah, no fear shall come upon them nor shall they grieve'** Surah Yunus (10:62)

We should reflect on the different lifestyles of mankind to determine which life is actually free of fear and grief. It would be clear to us after this reflection is that only the lives of Auliya Allah (Friends of Allah) and Sufs are free from any fear or grief in their hearts. A farsi couplet about this state is also mentioned by the Shyakh and he asks if any king can even utter this.

## Question 20. What is 'Sajjadgi' and what are its obligations?

'Sajjada' actually means prayer mat and 'Sajjadgi' means sitting on the prayer mat. After the passing away of a Shyakh or Murshid his successor (Khaifa) or vicegerant is known as a 'Sajjada' and this vicegerancy is known as 'Sajjadgi'. Following on the footsteps of his Murshid

and following both the outward and inward sunnahs of the Prophet SAW is an obligation on the vicegerent. He should prove himself to be an effective guide for his mureeds. Otherwise, this 'Sajjadgi' will be in name only and may even lead to sin. In addition, if the 'Sajjada' receives any financial assistance from the authorities either as pay or other assets, he should use that properly and not consider it as personal property of his ancestors. He should rather consider himself to be a custodian of public property. This financial assistance was provided so that the Shyukh would be free from the day to day work of earning a living and focus on benefiting common people and doing good actions. The intention was not for the Shyakh's or 'Sajjadahs' to behave like people running after duniya and getting involved in legal battles regarding assets and property which is commonly observed these days.

## **Question 21. What is 'Qada' and 'Qadr'?**

Linguistically, 'Qada' means a complete command. Qada here refers to that command of Allah SWT that was in His pre-eternal Knowledge regarding all the states 'haalaat' that would befall on His creation from the beginning of time to the end of time. 'Qadr' is assigning time and means to implement the commands of 'Qada' which translate to different states or 'haalaat' experienced by creation. 'Qada' is destiny about all creation written in 'Lauh Mahfooz' (the preserved tablet) while 'Qadr' is the manifestation of that destiny at an assigned time. In other words, 'Qada' is pre-eternal while 'Qadr' is current and is continuous.