

Pursuit of Happiness:

The Path of Philosophy and Counselling

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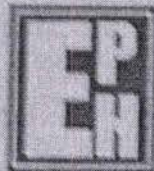
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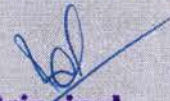
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Theosophical Sufism: Means to Eternal Spiritual Bliss

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Abstract

Theosophical Sufism is a dynamic Islamic movement that believes in the mystical, intuitive, first-hand ecstatic experience of God leading to self-realization and eternal spiritual bliss. The movement incorporates the Hellenistic philosophy, Neo-Platonism and Gnosticism. At the same time the local spiritual ideologies of agrarian communities of Iran, Iraq and the Eastern Mediterranean regions. The paper will concentrate on two prominent theosophical Sufis, Ibn al Arabi and Ibn al Farid. The philosophy of *ishraa* (illumination), Angelology (theory of Angels), *Hadith qudsi* (the Holy Traditions), Theophany (a physical manifestation of deity) and matter being evil, spirit being good is upheld. Obviously this leads to eternal spiritual bliss. Ibn al Arabi hailed from Muslim Spain (11th century AD) emphasized on "the unity of being", his poems in *Tarjuman al-ashwaq* (Interpreter of Yearning), *Fusus al-hikam* (The Ringstone of Wisdom) and *al-Futuh al-Makkiyyah* (The Meccan Revelations) are remarkable works of literature, where the utmost valuable concept is "love". Ibn al-Farid is contemporary to Ibn al-Arabi, a mystical poet known for his work *Talyat al-Kubra* (Poem of the Journey) [that seems similar to *Nazm as-suluk* (The Poem of the Way)] and *Khamriyah* (The Wine Ode), where aesthetic element is in amalgamation with religious-spiritual feelings.

The paper will end with some critical analysis and defense of these two theosophical Sufis – those who carved a niche for human beings' eternal spiritual bliss.

Keywords: Theosophical Sufism, Islamic Philosophy, Mysticism, Eternal Bliss, Spiritualism, Love.

If words come out of the heart, they will enter the heart, but if they come from the tongue, they will not pass beyond the ears."

- Al-Suhrawardi¹

If men knew themselves, they would know God, and if they really knew God, they would be satisfied with Him and would think of Him alone.

- Ibn 'Arabi²

My request is not for bliss of the Garden, I only desire to see You.

- Ibn al-Farid³

The rise of Sufism was in the concept of 'asceticism', absolute mystical and intuitive claim of divine love and its spread in the likeminded people. The early Umayyad period stretching from 661-749 AD that concentrated more on worldly life and over indulgence gave rise to a revolutionary movement against it, which was 'Sufism'. The word Sufi comes from *suf* meaning wool, the woolen simple garment wore by the Sufi mystics. But mainly they concentrated on *Quranic* injunctions, followed them strictly leading ascetic life. They weep as they consider this world the place of sorrows. Therefore they lead a very simple life being a *faqir*, a *darvish* (in Persian for 'poor'). As noted by Nile Green, "Sufism has often been defined as Islamic "mysticism", comprising a set of techniques by which Muslims have sought a direct personal encounter with the divine. While it is true that Sufism encompasses many mystical elements, the broad social reach that it acquired over centuries of expansion rendered it much more than the path of an esoteric elite. In recognition of this problem, in his highly influential introduction to Sufism the Cambridge orientalist A. J. Arberry recognized that Sufism comprised the religious way of both the masses and the smaller number of elevated mystics."⁴ So the history of Sufism is similar to medieval mystical movement of India where along with the elite, the masses found affiliation to the *bhakti* movement (the path of devotion) as well. This does not mean they are avert to "happiness", only that they derive happiness in the truth

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Journal of Happiness: The Quest of Philosophy and Christianity
Love, Psyche is Love, Religion is Love

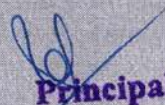
from the smallest grain of sand to the highest heavens
is measured by Love."¹⁹ (Angha, Nahid [Seyyedeh], Vol. 17 N. 3)

What more can be asked for? Nothing short of Eternal Spiritual Bliss!

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