

## **The Origin of Mysticism and Sufism in Hadith**

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Islamic mysticism or Sufism is one of the most outstanding appearances of Islamic culture that has had a fundamental and undeniable role in the history of Islam. A careful study of the history and development of the movements of Islamic culture shows that this movement, like most other ones, has been originated from, developed, and cultivated in an Islamic environment, though it has undoubtedly been affected by Hellenistic, Christian, Iranian, and other cultures in its historical process. The purpose of this article is to show the origin of Islamic mysticism and Sufism in Hadith through citing examples of some hadiths of the holy Prophet (s) and Imam 'Alī (a) that clearly represent some mystical beliefs, methods, principles, and practices. It will be proved that in the early sources of Islam, especially in hadith sources, there have been abundant grounds for the emergence of Islamic mysticism and Sufism, without any need for other cultures. Proving this point, we reject the view that Islamic mysticism has originated from foreign cultures.

**Keywords:** The Origin of Islamic Sufism, Hadith, piety, asceticism, remembrance, self- knowledge, forty days' seclusion

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### **Introduction**

Undoubtedly Islamic mysticism or Sufism is one of the most significant aspects of Islamic culture that has had an undeniably fundamental role in the history of Islam. An unbiased study reveals that this aspect of Islamic culture, like many others, originated from Islam and developed in its realm, although it has been affected by Hellenistic, Christian, Iranian, and other cultures during its development in history. For, on the one hand, in the earliest sources of Islamic culture that are the Qur'an and hadith the spiritual background

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was so powerful that it could easily give rise to mystical and spiritual inclinations in the Muslim people of that age; inclinations that soon became special and later took the name of Sufism and mysticism. This movement has become one of the most influential moral and educational movements in Islam.

On the other hand, the interaction of Muslims with other cultures started in the middle of the second century AH and grew during the following centuries. For this reason, it is not right to consider any sources other than the Qur'an and hadith for the emergence of Islamic mysticism in the two first centuries, especially the first century which was the time of the Prophet (s) and the Rightly Guided caliphs till the time of the sixth SHĪ'Ī Imam when these relations did not have any importance yet.

Some Western orientalists, followed by some Eastern scholars, suggested the wrong idea that Islamic mysticism was imported from other cultures. Inside Islamic culture, especially in the earlier centuries and among the pioneers of this tradition, not only nobody had such a belief, but there was not even the question of it. Not only the pioneers of mysticism in the earlier centuries but also their leaders in later times believed that their way and mottos were those of the Prophet (s) and that they were the true followers of Islam and the Qur'an. Indeed they truly had a more objective and subjective connection to the Qur'an and tradition than other Muslims. They took the teachings of the religion as a leading light and achieved genuine points by pondering over them. They could reach a special state that was later called station, unveiling, and vision.

The fact that people like al-Kilābādī in his *al-Ta'arruf li-madhab ahl al-taṣawwuf*, Abū Tālib al-Makkī in his *Qūt al-qulūb*, al-Qushayrī in his *al-Risālah*, Abū Naṣr al-Sirāj in his *al-Luma'*, al-Hujwīrī in his *Kashf al-maḥjūb*, and others began every chapter of their books with a verse from the Qur'an or hadith, based their arguments on those verses and hadiths, and quoted a lot from these two sources shows that their belief and way was rooted in these two important sources of Islam. In this regard, al-Muqaddas's efforts were more prominent than others, as he sought in his invaluable book, *Ṣafwat al-taṣawwuf*, to show that all insight, beliefs, and manners of Sufis were supported by the sayings and conducts of Prophet Muhammad (s). The above-mentioned writers complained of some deviations from the true path among Sufis in the introductions of their books and confirmed that they composed their books with the intention of showing clearly that the true Sufism was the very practice and conduct of Prophet Muhammad (s) and his loyal companions.

The words reached to us from the earlier spiritual sheikhs regarding the definition and description of mysticism and Sufism also indicate that according to them mysticism is nothing but following and achieving the teachings of the Qur'an, the Prophet's (s) way of life and *Sharia* (religious law) and to be adorned by divine commandments. Nicholson has gathered a lot of examples of these definitions in his work regarding Sufism.<sup>3</sup>

However, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when oriental studies flourished among Westerners, based on the idea that the spirit, thought, and way of Arabs among whom Islam emerged did not match mysticism, some concluded that Islamic mysticism or Sufism was originated from other cultures to which Muslims found a connection later. But very soon great orientalists, such as Reynold Nicholson, Louis Massignon, Henry Corbin, and others, negated their predecessors by deep and vast studies they conducted on Islamic mysticism and acknowledged Islam as the origin of mysticism.<sup>4</sup> This Islamic origin was, above all, the Qur'an and hadith. Reflecting on these two sources and living according to them led some Muslims in the first century to some beliefs, manners, behaviors, approaches, and states that were developed later into mysticism and Sufism. Of course, in its evolution it was influenced by some other cultures too.

The Qur'anic and hadith sources of mysticism from one hand, and the spiritual connection of Muslims with these two sources from the other leads a truth seeking researcher to the belief that even if the Muslims did not come to a connection with other cultures, they would still found mysticism on the basis of the Qur'an and Hadith.

This study concentrates on the origin of mysticism in Hadith and works on some hadiths that manifest the mystical teachings or values that have been used repeatedly by mystics.

### **The Connection between Mysticism and Piety**

Today, it seems obvious for historians and researchers that what is called Islamic Sufism is a sort of excellent and sometimes exaggerated and excessive form of asceticism, piety, God-fearing, and *tawakkul* (trust in God) of some earlier Muslims.

Broadly speaking, a little attention to the original sources of Islam—that is, the Qur'an and hadith and the manner and personality

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3. Reynold Nicholson, *Mystics of Islam* (London: Forgotten books, 1914).

4. See Abd al-Rahman Badawi, *Tārīkh al-taṣawwuf al-islāmī* (Kuwait: Wikalat Al-Matbuat, 1978); Abd al-Hosein Zarrinkub, *Arzish-i mirāth-i ṣūfīyyah* (Tehran: Entesharat Amir Kabir, 1380 Sh).

of the Prophet (s)—reveals that Islam is the religion of purity, piety, spirituality, and gnosis. One of the prominent characteristics of this religion is avoiding the inferior and abased things (or the material world) and inclining toward purity (or the Hereafter), which is greatly reflected in the Prophet's (s) conduct, practice, and way of life more than anyone else. According to all the reports of his life, his manner was the most elegant, and his behavior the most admirable, and there is no hint of dishonesty or impurity in his personality. The Qur'an certifies the summit of his conduct: "Indeed you possess a great character" (Q 68:4).

This way and manner of the Prophet (s) sufficed to lead many early Muslims to the same way. Based on the saying that "people follow the religion of their kings," the ways and manners of the leaders—especially charismatic religious leaders—influence the souls, conducts, and behaviors of their followers and make them, intentionally or unintentionally, be the same. In addition, this Qur'anic order that "In the Apostle of Allah there is certainly for you a good exemplar, for those who look forward to Allah and the Last Day" (Q 33:21) encourages Muslims, especially God-seekers, to take the Prophet (s) as an example for their behavior and conduct.

Moreover, man is a mixture of divine spirit and dust, and there is always a conflict inside him between divine and evil inclinations. Many times evil forces overcome and lead people to meanness and impurity, and according to religious teachings to worldliness and mammonism. Many Muslims whose desires were stronger than divine spiritual inclinations did not try enough to follow the Prophet's (s) example and gradually moved away from him and forgot the purity which is the basic foundation of Islam. This caused the separation of those who insisted on purity and piety from others and made them distinguished as ascetics, devotees, and the pious.

Since piety, God-fearing, worship, and asceticism cleanse the soul, clear the spirit, open the eyes and ears, and consequently change a man's world and view and open a new way of understanding and knowledge, these ascetics and pious people reached a new kind of knowledge and way of looking at the world, for which they were called mystics. These earlier pious and God-fearing people who were the true followers and companions of the Prophet (s), such as Salmān al-Farsī, Abū Dharr, 'Ammār, Abū Dardā', Uways al-Qaranī and those who were called *aṣḥāb al-suffa* were the core of a movement that was called Sufism and mysticism later. For almost three centuries, this movement was based on asceticism, remembrance, abstinence, piety, God-fearing, trust, patience, truthfulness, contentment, sincerity,

having good thoughts and deeds, avoiding wrong deeds, and in one word following the way of life and conduct of the Prophet (s). Later, like other historical movements, it underwent some changes that was somehow the result of exaggeration in the original way, or the consequence of their surroundings and sometimes taken from other teachings. In other words, Islamic Sufism is nothing but a developed, improved, and sometimes exaggerated and deviated life of these earlier pious people.

Now that we know what Sufism is, if we observe the sources of religion that are the Qur'an and hadiths, we see that, more than anything else, there is a lot of emphasis on piety and purity. In addition to the many verses of the Qur'an in this regard, there are a large number of hadiths from the Prophet (s) and Imam 'Alī (a) in which they advised people to be pious and God-fearing, and emphasize that these characteristics are the criteria for human value and transcendence. Considering these, one can see the relation of hadith and Sufism and the role of these kinds of hadiths in leading people to that kind of life. The number of these kinds of hadiths is so great that makes their content undeniable as widely transmitted and makes up for any deficiencies in their chains of transmission.

### **Some Examples of Mystic Principles and Their Relation to Hadiths**

To show the relation between mysticism or Sufism and hadiths, an attempt is made in this article to study the mystical teachings and ways that have their roots in hadiths. It should be mentioned that in this study, the related hadiths are mostly from the Prophet (s) and Imam 'Alī (a), for the statements of these two great figures have had the greatest influence, as almost all Islamic spiritual masters and Sufis<sup>5</sup> relate their chains to Imam 'Alī (a) and from him to the Prophet (s).<sup>5</sup> Also, their statements belong to the time when Muslims did not have any interaction with other cultures and, as a result, were not influenced by them. In addition, the hadiths that are referred to in this article are tried to be chosen from the ones with the least weakness in their chains of transmission, as their reputation in the words and works of great people or their conformity with the Qur'an and sound hadiths can make up for any deficiency in their chains of transmission. Most of Imam 'Alī's (a) words are taken from *Nahj al-balāghah* whose authenticity is accepted by almost all after thorough

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5. Muḥammad Ma'sūm 'Alī Shāh, *Ṭarā'iq al-ḥaqīqah*, vol. 1 (Tehran: Entesharat Ketabkhaneh Sana'ei); Mustafa Kamil Shibi, *al-Ṣilah bayn al-taṣawuf wa al-tashayyuf*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dar Al-Andolos, 1982).

research.<sup>6</sup> However, there is no statement from other Infallible Imams (a) in this study despite their deep mystical teachings and their close connection to mysticism and Sufism. They will be dealt with in another article.

### 1. Asceticism and Piety

As was said, asceticism and piety are the most prominent and distinguishing characteristics of mystics and Sufis in the early Islamic centuries; rather, they have both been the origin and background of Islamic mysticism. In fact, it can be said that mysticism or Sufism is a completed form of the asceticism and piety. The emphasis of the Qur'an and Prophetic hadiths on these two features is so clear that there is no need to mention any example. Suffice it to quote passages from *Nahj al-balaghah* which can be called *the book of piety*, for in every page of it one can see Imam 'Alī's (a) words of piety and God-wariness. As an example, we can refer to a sermon in which the Imam (a) describes the pious in response to a devoted man, named Hammām. The content of this sermon, more than anything, is an attractive account of the personality, disposition, behaviors, conducts, and states of the true mystics. Here are selections of the sermon:

The God-fearing in this world are the people of distinction. Their speech is to the point, their dress moderate and their gait is humble. They keep their eyes closed to what Allah has made unlawful for them, and they put their ears to that knowledge which is beneficial to them... If there had not been fixed periods of life ordained for each, their spirits would not have remained in their bodies even for the twinkling of an eye because of their eagerness for the reward and fear of chastisement. The greatness of the Creator is seated in their hearts, and, so, everything else appears small in their eyes... Their bodies are thin, their needs are scanty, and their souls are chaste... The world aimed at them, but they did not aim at it. It captured them, but they freed themselves from it by a ransom. During the night they are standing on their feet reading portions of the Qur'an and reciting it in a well-measured way, creating through it grief for themselves and seeking by it the cure for their ailments... During the day they are enduring, learned, virtuous and God-fearing. Fear of Allah has made them thin like arrows. If any one looks at them he believes they are sick, although they are not sick, and he says that they have gone mad. In fact, great concern has made them mad... He performs virtuous

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6. There are several researches on the authenticity of the chains of transmission of *Nahj al-balāgha*. See, for instance, Seyyed Abd al-Zahra Hoseini Khatib, *Maṣādir nahj al-balāghah*; Emtiyaz Ali Khan Arshi, *Istinād nahj al-balāghah*; Abdollah Ni'mah, *Maṣādir nahj al-balāghah*. See also two articles by Abol Fazl Hafezian "Nahj al-balāghah" and Seyyed Kazim Tabatabaei, "Asnād-i nahj al-balāgha" in Ali Akbar Rashad, *Danesh-nameh Imam Ali*, vol. 12 (Tehran: Pajoheshgah Farhang va Andisheh Islami, 1380 Sh).

deeds but still feels afraid. In the evening he is anxious to offer thanks to Allah. He passes the night in fear and rises in the morning in joy... You will see his hopes simple, his shortcomings few, his heart fearing, his spirit contented, his meal small and simple, his religion safe, his desires dead and his anger suppressed... He forgives him who is unjust to him, and he gives to him who deprives him. He behaves well with him who behaves ill with him. (*Nahj al-balāgha*, Sermon 193)

It is related that at the end of the sermon, and after hearing the Imam's (a) wonderful speech, Hammān groaned, fell down, and passed away. Undoubtedly, this is a true speech or encountering unusual events, some examples of which have been mentioned in Sufi sources.<sup>7</sup>

## 2. Remembrance of God

Another characteristic which shows the connection of mysticism and Sufism with the Qur'an and hadiths, is remembrance of God. A study of mystics' writings indicates that remembrance is one of their most fundamental teachings, for which, particularly in the later periods, special rites and manners have been assigned.<sup>8</sup> Apart from special chapters in Sufi works that discuss remembrance, several monographs are written about it, one of which is the famous and important book *Awrād al-aḥbāb* by Abū al-Mafākhir Yaḥyā Bākharzī.

Mystics in their works have divided the remembrance into hidden and manifest, general and particular, verbal and spiritual. It is accompanied by spiritual unveiling and vision, and even a number of mystics have their spiritual experience at the time of remembrance. It is also a method for educating the novice and disciples. Sheikhs or spiritual guides teach them special types of remembrance to purify their hearts and go through high stations. Anyway, this mystical characteristic has been highly emphasized in both the Qur'an and hadiths. God says,

Remember Your Lord greatly, and glorify Him morning and evening.  
(Q 3:41)

O you have faith! Remember Allah with frequent remembrance.  
(Q 33:41)

The hearts find rest in Allah's remembrance. (Q 13:28)

Hurry toward the remembrance of Allah. (Q 62:9)

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7. See 'Alī b. 'Uthmān al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-maḥjūb*, ed. Mahmood Abedi (Tehran: Entesharat Soroush, 1383 Sh)

8. See Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mirṣād al-ʿibād*, ed. M. Amin Riyahi (Tehrn: Entesharat Ilmi Farhangi, 1365 Sh). Sayyid Maḥdī Baḥr al-'Ulūm, *Risāla-yi sayr wa sulūk*, Introduced by M. Hoseini Tehrani (Mashad: Entesharat Allameh Tabatabaei, 1417 AH). Sayyed Muhammad Hosein Tabatabaei, *Risālat al-wilāyah*, (Qum, Kitabsara Ishraq, 1382 Sh).

From the religious leaders, we refer to Imam ‘Alī’s (a) following speech that impressively shows the influence of remembrance in the hearts and spirits of God's saints:

Certainly, Allah, the Glorified, the sublime, has made His remembrance the light for hearts which hear with its help despite deafness, see with its help despite blindness, and become submissive with its help despite unruliness. In all the periods and times when there were no prophets, there have been persons with whom Allah, precious are His bounties, whispered through their wits and spoke through their minds. With the help of the bright awaking of their ears, eyes, and hearts, they keep reminding others of the remembrance of the days of Allah. (*Nahj al-balāghah*, Sermon, 222)

Continuing this speech, Imam ‘Alī (a) mentions the characteristic of mystics, the people of remembrance:

There are some people devoted to the remembrance (of Allah) who have adopted it in place of worldly matters so that commerce or trade does not turn them away from it. They pass their life in it. They speak into the ears of neglectful persons warning against matters held unlawful by Allah, they order them to practice justice and themselves keep practicing it, and they refrain them from the unlawful and themselves refrain from it. It is as though they have finished the journey of this world toward the next world and have beheld what lies beyond it. Consequently, they have become acquainted with all that befell them in the interstice during their long stay therein, and the Day of Judgment fulfills its promises for them. Therefore, they removed the curtain from these things for the people of the world, till it was as though they were seeing what people did not see and were hearing what people did not hear. (*Nahj al-balāghah*, Sermon, 222)

### **3. Undergoing a Forty-day Period of Seclusion and Sitting in Solitude**

One of the known customs of the Sufis is undergoing a forty-day period of seclusion and sitting in solitude in order to purify the heart or the inner soul (*bāṭin*), and to achieve spiritual perfections. Leaving the others, the wayfarer retreats into a world of spirituality to fast, maintain the prayer, and remember God, in order to purify the soul, enlighten the heart, and achieve spiritual vision. Such a custom that has found special disciplines in different periods has its origins in both the Qur’an and the practice of Prophet Muhammad (s). In the story of Moses' (a) encounter with God we read:

We made an appointment with Moses for thirty nights, and completed them with ten more; thus the tryst of his Lord was completed in forty nights. (Q 7:147)

Likewise, one can see this tradition in the practice of the Prophet (s), especially before starting his Prophetic mission when he used to go to the cave in Mount Ḥirā' and stay there more than a month for seclusion, spiritual retreat, and private communion with God. Furthermore, he urges his followers to perform this practice:

Whosoever devotes himself purely to Allah for forty days, the springs of wisdom will flow from his heart onto his tongue.

It should be said that undergoing a forty-day period of seclusion for spiritual perfection is counted as a type of spiritual retreat which is in turn a kind of worship and maintaining divine remembrance, about which there are a lot of hadiths from the Prophet (s) and the Shiite Imams (a).<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, it has a special position in the jurisprudential sources. Accordingly, such a custom and practice can firmly be connected to hadiths and the narrations of the Infallibles (a).

#### 4. Visible World and Supreme Domain

One of the most outstanding characteristics of the mystical worldview is that they believe the world and its phenomena, besides the exoteric aspect which is visible for all, have an inner or esoteric aspect which is hidden except from the pure ones. According to such a belief, they divide the existence and its phenomena as dual parts such as *the visible world* and *the supreme dominion*, *the world* and *the Hereafter*, *the unseen* and *the visible*, and so forth. From their viewpoint, people, with the help of the five senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch, are only dealing with the visible and external aspect of the world and its phenomena. However, the pure mystics and Sufis by practicing asceticism, remembrance, God-wariness, devotion, abstinence, and piety, acquire the inner sense by which they become aware of the hidden levels of existence; subsequently, they can see and hear what the others cannot. In 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'i's words, "Some doors of supreme dominion (*malakūt*) open for them, through which they can watch a number of wonderful and sweet divine signs and enjoy cheering rays of Ever-shining Light of their Lord."<sup>11</sup> This is what a lot of mystics have experienced, tasted, and explained in their books.

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9. This valid hadith has been transmitted from the Prophet (s) in different ways and has been mentioned in a number of hadith collections: Muhammad b. Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya, 1407 AH), 2:16; Al-Shaykh al-Sadūq, *'Uyūn akhbār al-Riḍā* (Tehran: Nashr-i Jahān, 1378 AH), 2:69.

10. See Abd Al-Amir Salim, "Itikāf," in *Dā'irat al-ma'ārif al-Islāmiyyah* (*Greet Islamic Encyclopedia*) ed. Mosavi Bojnordi, 9:355.

11. Muhammad Hosein Tabatabaei, *al-Mīzān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-A'lamī, 1974), 5:270.

At any rate, this mystical practice, about which we cannot write extensively here, has its own origins in the Qur'anic teachings and the hadiths of the Prophet (s) and Imams (a). Undoubtedly, such a heritage has urged Muslims to learn those teachings and put them into practice, and in its turn have led them to reach a degree of knowledge and awareness in spirituality. Some examples are mentioned here:

Were it not for your excessive prolixity and the<sup>12</sup> tumult in your heart, you would see what I see and hear what I hear.

If it was not for the devils circling around the hearts of<sup>13</sup> the sons of Adam, they would see the kingdom of heavens and earth.

Also, these are Imam 'Alī's (a) words regarding ascetics:

As though they see what people do not see, and hear what people do not hear... Angels would be surrounding them, peace would be descending upon them, the doors of the sky would be opened for them and positions of honour would be assigned to them. (*Nahj al-balāgha*, Sermon 222)

### 5. The Outward and Inward aspects of the Qur'an

Another characteristic of mysticism and Sufism, which is connected with the previous one, is the mystical belief regarding the esoteric levels of the Qur'an. They believe that the Qur'an has an exoteric aspect that everyone may get access to, but its hidden meanings are reserved for the pure and godly people. The exoteric aspect of the Qur'an is its literal meaning which every person can understand and interpret, like that of any other text. On the other hand, the esoteric aspects of the Qur'an are those truths and types of knowledge which can be reached only by the pure depending on the degree of their spirituality. As a result of this viewpoint, the exegesis of the Qur'an among mystics has gradually incorporated particular approaches such as allegorical, esoteric, and allusive, as sometimes compared to the "exegesis" of the Qur'an, its *ta'wīl* (allegorical interpretation) has been set forth. In the following centuries, the latter approach has been led to such an excess that the exoteric aspects of the Qur'an have been completely ignored by Esotericists (*Batiniyyah*) and a number of Sufis. They have so much emphasized on the hidden meanings that

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12. Ibid. See also Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Kitāb ṣarīḥ al-sunnah* (Kuwait: Dār al-Khulafā' li l-Kitāb al-Islāmī, 1405 AH), 29; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir), 5:266.

13. Muḥammad Hosein Tabatabaei, *al-Mizān fi tafsīr Al-Qur'ān*, 5:270; 'Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Bihār al-anwār* (Beirut: Dār lhyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1403/1983), 56:163.

sometimes no connection can be found between those meanings and the literal sense of the Qur'an.<sup>14</sup>

In short, the mystical belief regarding the outward and inward aspects of the Qur'an has originated from different narrations which indicate that the Qur'an has both exoteric and esoteric aspects:

The Qur'an has an exterior and an interior, and its interior has an interior up to seven interiors.<sup>15</sup>

The Qur'an has an exterior and an interior, and a beginning and an end.<sup>16</sup>

The Qur'an has an exterior and an interior. Its exterior is the law and its interior is knowledge. Its exterior is beautiful and its interior deep. It has landmarks, and there are further landmarks on its landmarks. Its marvels are endless, and its wonders never get old.<sup>17</sup>

## 6. Self-Knowledge

Self-knowledge is another characteristic of the mystical world-view. A brief examination of mystical principles and beliefs shows that mystics have emphasized self-knowledge in such a way that it is inseparable from knowing God, and in fact both are two sides of one coin. Furthermore, this emphasis can be seen in the heritage of religious leaders, especially in the speeches of the Prophet (s) and Imam 'Alī (a). Therefore, beyond any doubt it can be said mystics must have learned this teaching from narrations and hadiths. For example, consider the following hadith which is widely narrated among mystics and can be seen in almost all mystical writings: "He who knows his soul knows his Lord."<sup>18</sup>

Other examples of this kind can be found in what remained from Muslim leaders, especially Imam 'Alī (a):

The greatest wisdom is man's knowledge of his soul.<sup>19</sup>  
 The best knowledge is man's knowledge of his soul.<sup>20</sup>  
 The ultimate end of knowledge is man's knowledge of his soul.<sup>21</sup>  
 All knowledge is man's knowledge of his soul.<sup>22</sup>

14. See Muhammad Hosein Tabatabaei, *al-Mīzān fi tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, 7:270.

15. Ibn Abī Jumhūr, *'Awālī al-la'ālī* (Qum: Maṭba'at al-Shuhada', 1983), 4:107.

16. *Ibid.*

17. Muhammad Hosein Tabatabaei, *al-Mīzān fi tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, 3:72.

18. Ibn Abī Jumhūr, *'Awālī al-la'ālī*, 1:54; 'Allāma al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol.32; Hasan Hasanzadeh Amoli, *Hizār wa yik kalimah* (Qum: Daftar Tablighat Howzeh, 1379 Sh), 3:189.

19. Hasan Hasanzadeh Amoli, *Hizār wa yik kalimah*, 3:189.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*

The knower is he who knows his soul and delivers it and purifies it from whatsoever that distances it [from Allah].<sup>23</sup>

### 7. Godlike Quality of Man

Another characteristic of mystical world-view, which is related to self-knowledge, is the principle of Perfect Man and godlike quality, according to which man has a divine personality and if he prevails upon sensuality and his desires and crosses this routine life, he can reach the high position of divinity, obtain godlike qualities, and finally be a mirror for all divine names and attributes. This principle is confirmed by some verses of the Qur'an, such as the following: "I breathed into him of My spirit" (Q 15:29) and "Indeed we belong to Allah, and to Him do we indeed return" (Q 2:156).

Accordingly, mystics believe that human beings have a sublime soul that is hidden in the curtain of his low ego. It can be said this belief is almost identical with what is called *higher or complete nature* in the teaching of Hermeticists. It is also connected with what the Jungian psychoanalysts call the *unconscious*.

The reality of the sublime soul is the very divine breathing in man, so mystics believe that man's lost possession is hidden in himself. They enjoin him to dig deep into his self and have a spiritual journey.<sup>24</sup>

Whatever is in the world is not out of you,  
So ask for whatever you want, since you are what you want.<sup>25</sup>

Anyhow, this principle—which is experienced by some mystics according to their own accounts of their encounters with this heavenly sublime soul—is confirmed by hadiths. For example, the Prophet (s) says,

God has created Adam on His *ṣūrah* (form/image).<sup>26</sup>

Since the form of everything is its reality and identity, this hadith means that the reality of man is divine; accordingly, they call man the *comprehensive name*, because he is the mirror of all divine names and

23. Ibid

24. For the discussion of the sublime soul, see Taqī Poornamdariyan, *Dīdār bā sīmurgh*, (Tehran: Pajuheshgah Ulum Ensani va Motale'at Farhangi, 1382 Sh), 50; Seyyed Muhammad Rastgoo, *Trfān dar ghazal-i fārsī*, (Tehran: Entesharat Ilmi- Farhangi, 1380 Sh)

25. Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mirṣād al-ʿibād*, ed. M. Amin Riyahi, (Tehrn, Entesharat Ilmi-Farhangi, 1365 AH), 3.

26. 'Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 4:11. See also Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī, *al-Ṣaḥīh* (Beirut: Dar Al-Fikr, 1401/1981), 7:125.

attributes; in other words, man is the earthly manifestation of heavenly God.

What needs to be said is that this hadith can be found in most of the mystical works, as can be seen in the following verse in Rumi's *Mathnawī*:

God created us in His image:

Our qualities are instructed by (or are modelled upon) His qualities.<sup>27</sup>

Since the book of Genesis also states that "God proceeded to create the man in His image" (Genesis 1:27), some researchers, such as Afifi in his introduction to *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, have maintained that this saying was taken from the Jewish tradition and wrongly attributed to the Prophet (s) by Sufis.<sup>28</sup>

However, it is clear that a true remark may have been mentioned in the Bible and later stated by another prophet as well. Moses (a) and Muhammad (s) are both messengers of the One God, and they got their teachings from that same source. Shiite narrations of this hadith show that the hadith was known among early Muslims—especially traditionists, who made it the focus of their attention.<sup>29</sup>

Another hadith, called *hadīth qurb al-nawāfil* (the hadith on the nearness caused by supererogatory acts of worship), also denotes that man can ascend to a heavenly position and become Godlike:

Indeed he draws nearer to Me gradually through supererogatory acts until I love him, and when I love him, I become the hearing with which he hears, the sight wherewith he sees,<sup>30</sup> the tongue wherewith he speaks, and the hand wherewith he holds.

A similar idea is denoted by the following hadith:

O son of Adam! I created you to live eternally, and I am the living that never dies. Obey Me in what I have commanded you and refrain from what I prohibited you from, and I will make you like Me, the living that does not die. I am He Who tells a thing to be and it is there. Obey

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27. Jalāl al-Dīn Mawlavī Rūmī, *Mathnawī ma ḥawī*, ed. Nicholson (Tehran: Entesharat Amir Kabir, 1362 Sh), Book IV, verse 1194.

28. See Afifi's introduction to Ibn 'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (Tehran: Entesharat Al-Zahra, 1357 Sh).

29. Some nice descriptions of this hadith can be seen in Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini, *Chihil hadith* (Tehran: Markaz Nashr Farhangi Raja, 1368 Sh), 529; Qasem Kakaie, *Waḥdat-i wujūd bi riwayat-i Ibn 'Arabī wa M. Ekhart* (Tehran: Entesharat Hermes, 1381 Sh).

30. Hujwīrī Ghaznawī, *Kashf al-mahjūb* (Tehran: Tahoori, 1358), 326; Musavi Khomeini, *Chihil hadith* (Tehran: Markaz Nashr Farhangi Raja, 1368), 487. Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, ed. A. Afifi (Tehran, Entesharat Al-Zahra, 1357 AH), 55.

Me in what I have commanded you and I will make you like Me, so that when you tell a thing to be it is there.<sup>31</sup>

Another hadith also reports that the following message will be delivered to the inhabitants of Paradise from their Lord:

From the living everlasting Who never dies, to the living everlasting that never dies: Know that I tell a thing to be and it is there, and I have decreed that you tell a thing to be and it is there.<sup>32</sup>

## 8. The Divine Value of Man

Another feature of mystical worldview, which has a firm connection with self-knowledge and being Godlike, is the belief in the dignity of man, that man is the most valuable and the nearest creature to God. Due to this belief, the perfect mystics have always urged the spiritual wayfarers not to sell themselves cheap but to appreciate their real value and dignity and not to prostrate for anyone except God.

Furthermore, their call to freedom from worldly desires and attachment originates from the mentioned feature. Rumi shows this viewpoint in the following poems:

I am the devoted slave of him who will not sell his existence save to that bounteous and munificent sovereign.<sup>33</sup>

I am the slave of that high-aspiring copper which humbles itself to naught but the Elixir.<sup>34</sup>

Hāfīz also says,

I am the servant of the determination of that man,  
Who is free from any trace of dependence.<sup>35</sup>

In short, this worthy point—namely, not to sell one's soul to worldly gains, or, in other words, not to contaminate the pure Godly spirit with the base worldly matters—is clearly mentioned in the sayings of the pure religious leaders, to some of which we refer here:

31. Muhsin Fayḍ al-Kāshānī, *Ilm al-yaqīn* (Qum, Entesharat Bidar, 1358), 2:1061.

32. Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini, *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah ilā al-khilāfah wa al-wilāyah*, introduced by Seyyed Jalal Ashtiyani (Tehran: Mo'aseseh Tanzim va Nashr Asar Imam Khomeini, 1372 AH).

33. Jalāl al-Dīn Mawlawī Rūmī, *Mathnawī ma ḥawī*, Book V, verse 490.

34. Ibid, verse 492.

35. Hāfīz Shīrāzī, *Dīwān Ḥāfīz Shīrāzī*, ed. Khalil Khatib Rahbar, (Tehran: Entesharat Safi Ali Shah, 1363), Ghazal 37.

Keep yourself away from every low thing, even though they may take you to your desired aims. (*Nahj al-balāghah*, Letter 31)

How bad is the transaction that you allow this world to be a price for yourself as an alternative for what there is with Allah for you. (*Nahj al-balāghah*, Sermon 32)

There is no price for your souls other than paradise; so do not sell it for less than that, for he who is<sup>36</sup> satisfied with the world instead of Allah is satisfied with the lowest.

## Conclusion

From the few examples given above—and indeed many others may be added to them—it was made clear that what is called Islamic mysticism and Sufism, which is essentially nothing but a particular way of being a Muslim, originated from the very Islamic teachings. In the primary sources of Islam—namely, the Qur'an and especially Hadith—the mystical or Sufi trend is so obvious that it resulted in the formation of a movement which was later called Sufism and mysticism, and there is no need to resort to any external sources to explain this. It was also made clear that Sufism or mysticism in its original form was nothing but a vigorous emphasis on fundamental teachings of Islam such as God-fearing, devotion, asceticism, remembrance, abstinence, piety, and moral virtues. However, later, like any other religious and cultural movement, it was subject to exaggeration, excess, and deviation and was influenced in its development by other cultures, which made it diverge from its original form.

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36. Morteza Motahhari, *Hamāsa-yi husaynī* (Tehran: Entesharat Sadra, 1366 Sh), 3:229, 371.