

STAY AWAY FROM THE SUFIS

A friend of mine told me that she was advised to stay away from the Sufis. And this is not the first time I heard this kind of “wise” advice. In the first place who are the “Sufis” that she was advised to abstain? True, there are false Sufis or “pseudo-Sufis” (as Tan Sri Prof. Syed Naquib al-Attas always terms them) out there that you must not get close to. But at the same time all the great Imams of Ahlul Sunnah wal Jamaah (Sunni) of the past are all Sufis: from Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Malik, Imam Shafie, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, Imam al-Ghazali and the list goes on...may Allah have mercy on them all!

When Sayyidina Jibril AS came to the Prophet SAW in the form a man wearing white clothes, he taught him about Islam that comprises of (i) Pillars of Islam (ii) Pillars of Iman and (iii) Ihsan (spiritual excellence), apart from the signs of the Qiyamah. A hadith later popularly known as Hadith Jibril AS. We all know very well about the Five pillars of Islam and Six pillars of Iman. But what about Ihsan? Ihsan is about khusyuk, ikhlas (sincerity), tawbah (repentance), sabr (patience), taqwa (piety) etc. and all this is taught in Sufism or tasawwuf or *tazkiyat al-nafs* or whatever name you want to call it. In essence, it deals with his spiritual aspect of man, or his inner self. The physical prayer will not be accepted without the presence of the spiritual heart (*khusyuk*) while one is praying. The rewards one will receive depends on the presence of his heart when he prays.

Imam Shafi'e RA said:

فَقِيهَا وَصُوفِيًّا فَكُنْ لَيْسَ وَاحِدًا
فَإِنِّي وَحَقِّقُ اللَّاهُ إِيسَٰكَ أَرْصَحُ

Translation:

Be both a faqih and a sufi: do not be only one of them!

Verily, by Allah's truth, I am advising you sincerely.

while Imam Malik RA said:

من تصوف ولم يتفقه فقد تزندق، ومن تفقه ولم يتصوف فقد تفسق، ومن جمع بينهما فقد تحقق

Translation:

He who practises tasawwuf without learning Sacred Law corrupts his faith, while he who learns Sacred Law without practising tasawwuf corrupts himself.

Only he who combines the two proves true.

There are numerous quotes on this from our great Imams and scholars of the earliest time of Islam (salaf) or later generation (khalaf), however, suffice for us to mention here the position of Ibn Taymiyyah RA himself regarding Sufism or *tasawwuf* since those who against Sufism mostly claiming themselves are the followers of Ibn Taymiyyah RA.

Even Ibn Taymiyyah RA himself was a Sufi!. Our teacher Sheikh Haddad mentions that "Ibn `Abd al-Hadi narrates in Bad' al-`Ilqa bi-Labs al-Khirqa that Ibn Taymiyyah boasted of having received the Qadiri Sufi Tariqah from Ibn Qudamah. For his part al-Dhahabi in his Siyar twice states he received the Suhrawardi Tariqah from his beloved Egyptian Sufi teacher Ahmad al-Abarquhi. Siyar (Fikr ed. 17:118-119 #6084, 16:302 #5655). He boasts the same in his Mu`jam al-Shuyukh. The Hafiz who surpassed both of them, Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalani, was a Shadhili Sufi – as were his students al-Sakhawi and al-Suyuti. In Sunni Islam it is unthinkable that a learned person not be a Sufi".

If you hate a Sufi, then think again whether you are truly a Sunni!

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