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## **Spiritual Practices and Relations with Other Religions Historical Contexts and Modern Impact: The Study With Be Only In the Teachings of Semitic Religions**

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### **Abstract**

The pursuit of spiritual experiences and enlightenment has been the favorite subject and spiritual need of humanity since the beginning of time. This assignment examines the experiences and core beliefs of Sufism in Semitic religions in a narrative and analytical manner. Man strives to achieve power and success in social affairs, but the other side of the picture is that soul satisfaction cannot be provided by an aristocratic lifestyle. It is a fact that history is not unaware of the experience and statements of Sufism. A group of people striving for spiritual perfections occupies a special place in the history of religions. The characteristic of the Semitic religions is their right claim, that is, Allah gave these religions unique from other religions. Then he mentioned in detail the habits, beliefs, religious and spiritual experiences and faith of these religions in comparison to other religions in his last book Quran. This research will present a comparative analysis of mystical experience, status, style, ascetic purposes and tradition of spiritual experiences in Semitic religions. Therefore, there are similarities and differences between and

among religions. Furthermore, it also sheds light on the effects of Sufism beliefs and practices in human life. Effects include individual and social, psychological and mental, worldly and hereafter etc.

**Keywords:** Semitic Religion, Mysticism, Enlightenment, Spiritual Need, Striving, Spiritual Impacts

## Introduction

In Islam, spirituality (often referred to as tazkiyah, ihsan, or tasawwuf) is the inner dimension of the Islam focusing on the purification of the heart, closeness to Allah, and sincere devotion beyond outward rituals. It complements Islamic law (shari'ah) and belief (iman) by nurturing the soul.

Here's a detailed breakdown with references from the Qur'an and Hadith:

## Spirituality in Islam

Spirituality in Islam means the journey of the heart and soul toward Allah by purifying oneself from sin, ego, and worldly attachments, and developing sincerity (ikhlas), patience (sabr), gratitude (shukr), and love for Allah.

## Core Concepts in Islamic Spirituality

There are some references to prove the core concept of Islamic Spirituality:

### i) Tazkiyah (Purification of the Soul)

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا - وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا -

" Indeed, he has succeeded who purifies his soul, and indeed, he has been ruined who has polluted it ."<sup>1</sup>

Tazkiyah involves cleaning the heart from spiritual diseases like pride, envy, and hatred etc.

### ii) Tawbah (Repentance)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا تُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا - عَلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ أَن يَغْفِرَ عَنْكُمْ  
سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيُدْخِلَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ -

<sup>1</sup> . Surah Ash-Shams, 91:9–10

O you who believed, turn to Allah with repentance that is right. It may be that your Lord will expiate your evil deeds for you and admit you to a Garden beneath which rivers flow.<sup>2</sup>

### iii) Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا-

“O believers! Keep remembering Allah abundantly.”<sup>3</sup>

Spirituality is sustained by regular remembrance and returning to Allah.

### iv) Ihsan (Excellence in Worship)

مَا الْإِحْسَانُ؟ قَالَ: أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ-

What is Ihsan? He said: It is to worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you do not see Him, then indeed He sees you.”<sup>4</sup>

Ihsan is the highest spiritual state, integrating awareness of Allah in every action.

## The Role of the Heart (Qalb)

The heart is the center of spiritual life in Islam.

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ- إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ-

“The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children, except for one who comes to Allah with a sound heart.”<sup>5</sup>

Spiritual diseases of the heart include arrogance, hypocrisy, and attachment to the dunya (worldly life), while a sound heart reflects humility, sincerity, and love of God.

## Tasawwuf (Sufism) as Spiritual Practices

While not a separate sect, Tasawwuf is often the formal study and practice of Islamic spirituality under the guidance of a teacher (murshid).

### Key Practices:

Obedience of Allah and Prophet ﷺ, Dhikr (remembrance), muraqabah (meditative awareness), khidmah (service), and mujahadah (spiritual struggle)

<sup>2</sup>. Surah Al-Tahreem, 66:08

<sup>3</sup>. Surah Al-Ahzab, 33:41

<sup>4</sup>. Sahih Muslim, Hadith:08

<sup>5</sup>. Surah Ash-Shu'ara, 26:88–89

## Prophetic Example (Sunnah)

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ often sought solitude (e.g., Cave of Hira), practiced night prayer (tahajjud), and constantly remembered Allah.

He said:

إِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ، أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ.  
“There is a piece of flesh in the body which, if it is sound, the whole body is sound, and if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt: that is the heart.”<sup>6</sup>

## Importance of Spirituality

Human life is not based solely on physical needs; rather, it also has a spiritual reality. Just as food is nourishment for the body, remembrance of God (dhikr), worship, good character, and a connection with Allah are nourishment for the soul. Focusing on this spiritual aspect is called spirituality. Spirituality is an inner process that purifies the heart, refines one's intentions, and brings a person closer to their Creator.

## Views of Scholars and Sufis:

There are listed some spiritual scholars to define the Islamic Spirituality:

### 1. Shah Wali Ullah (رحمه الله):

"The matter of the inner (spiritual) aspect concerns the acquisition of the states and conditions that result from the positive effects of righteous and obedient deeds upon the heart. This is the objective and aim of the inner dimension of religion. Thus, it becomes clear that religion has two aspects: the outer (apparent) and the inner (spiritual)."<sup>7</sup>

### 2. Allama Afeef Abdul Fattah (رحمه الله):

"Islam is based on such spiritual principles and fundamentals whose lofty nature and the soul's immediate response to them are unmatched in other religions."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup>. Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith:52

<sup>7</sup>. Dehlvi, Shah Wali Ullah, Hammat, Sindh sagar academy, Lahore: 1946, P: 37

<sup>8</sup>. Afeef Abdul Fattah, Ruhuddin Al-Islami, P: 19

### 3. Abu Nasr al-Sarraj (رحمه الله):

"Abu Nasr al-Sarraj (d. 988) explained this theory in his Kitab al-luma, one of the earliest books discussing the Sufi method of interpreting the Quran. According to Abu Nasr al-Sarraj, Sufis are characterized by the practical application (use) of verses that do not contain any virtues of the Quran. Good deeds, and high states, are all implied in the word literature."

### 4. Hazrat Syed Ali Hajveri (رحمه الله):

"Sufism is reality, and denying it is equivalent to denying all the noble prophets and the commands of Sharia."<sup>9</sup>

## Christianity and Spirituality

In Christianity, spirituality refers to the personal and inner relationship between a believer and God, inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit. It focuses on faith, love, grace, prayer, and the transformation of the heart.

Christian spirituality is not just a belief system, but a way of living in Communion with God through Jesus Christ. Empowered by the Holy Spirit:

## Biblical Foundations of Christian Spirituality:

### 1. Love for God and Others

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with your entire mind."<sup>10</sup>

This is seen as the greatest commandment, and the heart of Christian spirituality.

### 2. Life in the Spirit

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, goodness, patience, peace, faithfulness, joy, gentleness, kindness, self-control."<sup>11</sup>

Spirituality means letting the Holy Spirit guide your thoughts, emotions, and actions.

<sup>9</sup> . Ali Hajveri, Kashf-ul-Mahjoob, Maktaba Shams o Qamar, Lahore: Chap# 04, P: 136

<sup>10</sup> . Holy Bible, Matthew 22:37

<sup>11</sup> . Holy Bible, Galatians 5:22-23

### 3. Inner Transformation

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christianity, he is a new creation: old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.”<sup>12</sup>

Spirituality is about becoming a pure soul and removing all unwanted habits.

#### Key Elements of Christian Spirituality:

| Element                 | Description                              |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Prayer                  | A daily, personal connection with God    |
| Bible Reading           | Listening to God through His Word        |
| Worship                 | Expressing love and reverence for God    |
| Confession & Repentance | Seeking forgiveness and cleansing of sin |
| Service to Others       | Living out God’s love in practical ways  |

#### Types of Christian Spirituality:

The types of Christian spirituality may be different according to some scholars, types of Christian spirituality written as below.

1. **Contemplative:** Emphasizes silence, meditation, and the presence of God.
2. **Charismatic:** Focuses on gifts of the Holy Spirit (e.g. healing, speaking in tongues).
3. **Evangelical:** Emphasizes Scripture, personal salvation, and daily devotion.
4. **Liturgical:** Grounded in tradition, sacraments, and communal worship.

#### Famous Christian Voices on Spirituality:

There are some most famous saint scholars to define spirituality:

- **St. Augustine:**

"You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you. Lord, teach me to know and understand which of these should be first, to call upon You, or to praise You. And so, to know You, or to call upon You. But who is there who calls upon You without knowing You? For he knows that you will not be called upon."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> . Holy Bible, Corinthians 5:17

<sup>13</sup> . Augustine, The Confessions, book I, P: 01

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• **Prof. V.A. Demant:**

Industrial growth enriches a community that is strong in its agriculture, domestic and craft life, and its spiritual strength.<sup>14</sup>

**Benefits:**

Christian spirituality is about:

- A living relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Transformation through grace and the Holy Spirit.
- Living in love, humility, and service.
- Walking in the light of God's Word and presence

**Judaism and Spirituality**

Judaism and spirituality are deeply intertwined, though spirituality in Judaism is often expressed through communal practices, rituals, and ethical living rather than abstract or mystical contemplation alone. Here's a broad overview, with references to key sources:

**Core Spiritual Concepts in Judaism**

**a. God**

Judaism, originally, is a monotheistic religion centered on a covenantal relationship with a singular, omnipresent, and moral God.

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord is One".<sup>15</sup>

**b. The Soul**

The soul is considered divine in origin and a key aspect of human spiritual identity.

"God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life."<sup>16</sup>

- Talmud Brachot 10a speaks of the soul as something pure that returns to God.

**Ethical and Communal Spirituality**

Judaism holds the honor of being the first among the Semitic religions meaning that in the history of nations, the first formal revelation of a divine book was to the

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<sup>14</sup> . Prof. V.A. Demant, *Religion and Dec line of Capitalism*, New York, USA, 1952, p.147

<sup>15</sup> . Holy Bible, *Deuteronomy* 6:4

<sup>16</sup> . Holy Bible, *Genesis* 2:7

Jews. The call to monotheism, however, had been part of humanity's teachings since the very beginning. Similarly, the history of contemplation, reflection, and philosophy predates Judaism. Therefore, it is thought, Jewish mysticism (Kabbalah or Jewish Sufism) has been derived from other nations.

"What does the Lord need from you? To do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."<sup>17</sup>

About Jewish mysticism, Dr. Edwyn Arbion states:

"Judaism is an outwardly ritualistic religion in which there is little room for inner spirituality. From their rituals of worship and social customs, in ancient Jewish societies or religious communities, there did exist instances of revelations, prophecies, and inspirations. However, it was Philo who introduced Judaism to formal mysticism. But if one analytically study Philo's mystical ideas and experiences, it becomes evident that in such matters, Philo is not truly a Jew, but rather a follower of Greek thought."<sup>18</sup>

## **Spirituality in the modern Society/ impacts**

In modern times, the role of spirituality has expanded beyond traditional religious structures, offering individuals a deeper connection to self, others, and the Divine. Especially within Judaism, spirituality has evolved to meet the needs of contemporary life, addressing existential questions, emotional well-being, social responsibility, and community belonging. Rather than being confined to rituals or theology, spirituality now permeates art, activism, wellness, and even technology. Below is ten ways spirituality continuing to impact and shape modern life:

### **1) Actions alongside beliefs**

A distinctive feature of Islam is that it gives equal importance to actions alongside beliefs.

### **2) All-encompassing approach**

Man is simultaneously made up of body and soul, outer and inner being, harmonious and balanced evolution towards perfection requires attention to both

<sup>17</sup> . Holy Bible, Micah 6:8

<sup>18</sup> . Edwyn Arbion, Dr. Leacy of Israel, Oxford Press. 1948. P 47

these aspects of man. Sufism or spiritual culture in Islam envisages a lack of ego and an ever-increasing sense of the presence of God.<sup>19</sup>

### 3) **Balanced Approach**

In the present age and in the centuries to come, if there is any religion or school of thought that can generally be beneficial for humanity and be acceptable to all people, it is pure Sufism or Islamic Sufism. This path is characterized by a complete belief in the unity of the Divine and the unity of humanity, along with a balanced approach to religion and world life. Attaining worldly success is not a hindrance in the path of religion, provided it is pursued in accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah, and with careful regard for what is lawful and unlawful.

### 4) **Moral Impacts**

"Someone asked Sheikh Abu Muhammad Jariri, 'What is Sufism?' He replied, 'Sufism is the adoption of every noble character and the abandonment of all base morals.'<sup>20</sup>

### 5) **Social Advancement**

By adopting the sayings and actions of the noble Sufi saints in practical life, not only does an individual become a better person, but it also creates possibilities for societal development. When members of a society are enriched with spiritual peace and inner contentment, and when there is harmony among them, society will flourish, and the prospects for true progress will emerge.

### 6) **Emotional and Mental Well-being**

Modern society is divided by racial, linguistic, and religious prejudices; as a result, the personality of the contemporary human being is also fragmented. People today face numerous mental confusions and emotional troubles. One aspect of Islamic Sufism built upon noble character, service to humanity, and inclusiveness can liberate today's human being from these psychological ailments.

<sup>19</sup> . Dr. M. Hamidullah, Introduction to Islam, Centre Culturel Islamique, Paris: 1973, P: 90

<sup>20</sup> . Dr. Zaheer Ahmad Siddiqui, Tassawuf: Necessity of Men, Takhleeqat, Lahore: 2010, P:10

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## 7) Global and Interfaith Dialogue

Spirituality has become a bridge in global and interfaith efforts. Muslim thinkers and leaders increasingly participate in conversations with other faith traditions to address shared challenges like climate change, inequality, and war. These dialogues emphasize common spiritual values compassion, justice, peace and deepen mutual understanding. Spirituality contributes a rich heritage of ethical monotheism, prophetic justice, and mystical insight. In return, it is enriched by global perspectives. This spiritual openness affirms the interconnectedness of all people, fostering humility, cooperation, and a deeper sense of humanity's shared spiritual destiny.

## 8) For Inner Peace:

- a. The luxuries of the world cannot bring peace to the heart unless it is connected to the remembrance of Allah.

"Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest."<sup>21</sup>

## 9) For Sincerity in Worship:

- a. When worship lacks spirituality, it becomes nothing more than ritual movements. Spirituality gives life to worship.

## Conclusion:

Spirituality is not a separate system but the true essence of Islam. The Qur'an, Hadith, and the lives of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) teach us that the purification of the soul and closeness to Allah is the real success. In today's materialistic era, spirituality is urgently needed so that we may leave behind the darkness within and move toward the light of faith and the pleasure of Allah.

Spirituality is a unifying thread that runs through all major religions, offering individuals a path to inner peace, ethical living, and a deeper connection to the divine. Whether through prayer, meditation, service, or sacred texts, spirituality provides meaning and guidance in an often-chaotic world. While each religion has

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<sup>21</sup> . Surah Ar-Ra'd: 28

its own unique beliefs and practices, the spiritual essence seeking truth, compassion, and transcendence remains universal. In modern times, spirituality continues to evolve, bridging tradition and innovation, and fostering dialogue, healing, and unity among diverse communities. Ultimately, spirituality reminds us of our shared humanity and the sacred within and around us.

### Results:

1. Based on the study, it is inferred that Sufism is a universal concept, found in all areas in all periods of history and in semitic religions
2. Though the basic essence is found in all three religions, yet there are certain similarities and dis similarities between them.
3. It is a fact that, all three reveled religions have basics of Sufism, meaning Sufism is the basic need of human, that's the sole reason, it is found in all religions.

### Suggestions:

1. Sufism being a universal concept, and having profound application and implication in sematic religions, comprehensive comparative study should be made to harmonize and galvanize the society.
2. It's a matter of common knowledge now that, essence is found in all three religions, so Sufism can possibly be the pivotal and fountain of global and universal brotherhood.
3. Sufism plays foundational role for the well-being of mankind, mentally, emotionally, physically and psychologically, so in order to cope up with all affirmations Sufism is must to adopt in life individually and collectively alike.

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