

**K. Begalinova<sup>1\*</sup>**, **M. Ashilova<sup>2</sup>**, **A. Begalinov<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Kazakhstan, Almaty

<sup>2</sup> Kazakh Ablai Khan University of International Relations and World Languages, Kazakhstan, Almaty

<sup>3</sup>International IT University, Kazakhstan, Almaty

\*e-mail: kalima910@mail.ru

## TARIQA SPECIFICITY – THE PATHS OF MYSTICAL ATTAINMENT OF TRUTH

The problem of tariqa, associated with the comprehension of Allah in the phenomenal, material world, is the key one in Sufism. It reveals the essence of «I» and «You», the relationship between man and God. According to Sufism, a person is a sensual, suffering being and the cause of this suffering is nafs, which means passions, lusts, attachment to earthly existence. And the task of a person is to free himself from nafs, for which tariqa is necessary – the path of self-improvement of a person. The article reveals the peculiarities of tariqa, its stages – sharia, tariqa, maarifa and haqiqa. Each of these stages has its own forms of cognition, which are transmitted in symbolic form through various liquids – water, milk, honey and wine. These forms of cognition are analyzed in close connection with the stages and maqams, stations, each of which symbolizes certain moral and psychological states on the path of knowing the God. Various approaches to tariqa that exist in the scientific literature are considered. Particular attention is paid to the principles and methodology of considering this complex problem. When investigating the path of mystical comprehension of the God, the authors also relied on source literature. The value of this research and its practical significance are revealed.

**Key words:** Sufism, tariqa, sharia, maarifa, haqiqa.

К. Бегалинова<sup>1\*</sup>, М. Әшілова<sup>2</sup>, Ә. Бегалинов<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Әл-Фараби атындағы Қазақ ұлттық университеті, Қазақстан, Алматы қ.

<sup>2</sup>Абылай хан атындағы Қазақ халықаралық қатынастар және әлем тілдер университеті, Қазақстан, Алматы қ.

<sup>3</sup>Халықаралық ақпараттық технологиялар университеті, Қазақстан, Алматы қ.

\*e-mail: kalima910@mail.ru

### Тариқаттың ерекшелігі – шындықты мистикамен ұғыну жолы

Алланы феноменальды және материалдық әлемде түсінуге байланысты тариқат мәселесі сопылықтың түйіні болып табылады. Ол «Мен» және «Сен» мәнін, сондай-ақ адам мен Құдай арасындағы қарым-қатынасты ашады. Сопылық іліміне сәйкес, адам сезімтал, азап шеккен тіршілік иесі болып табылады және оған лайық болған осы азаптың себебі – нафс деп аталады. Бұл құмарлық, қорқыныш, жердегі тіршілікке деген сүйіспеншілік. Адамның міндеті – өзін нафстен босату, ол үшін тариқат, яғни адамның өзін-өзі жетілдіру жолы қажет. Мақалада тариқаттың ерекшеліктері, оның кезеңдері – шариғат, тариқат, маарифат және хақиқат терминдері кеңінен ашылады. Осы кезеңдердің әрқайсысының өзіндік таным формалары бар, олар символдық түрде әртүрлі сұйықтықтар – су, сүт, бал және шарап арқылы беріледі. Білімнің бұл формалары кезеңдер мен мақамамен, тұрақтармен тығыз байланысы талданады, олардың әрқайсысы Құдайды білу жолындағы белгілі бір моральдық-психологиялық жағдайларды білдіреді. Ғылыми әдебиеттерде бар тариқатқа әртүрлі көзқарастар қарастырылады. Осы күрделі мәселені қарастыру принциптеріне, әдіснамасына ерекше назар аударылады. Құдайды мистикалық түсіну жолын зерттеу кезінде авторлар деректану әдебиетіне сүйенді. Осы зерттеудің құндылығы, оның практикалық маңыздылығы ашылады.

**Түйін сөздер:** суфизм, тариқат, шариғат, мәрифат, ақиқат.

К. Бегалинова<sup>1\*</sup>, М. Ашилова<sup>2</sup>, А. Бегалинов<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Казахский национальный университет имени аль-Фараби, Казахстан, г. Алматы

<sup>2</sup> Казахский университет международных отношений и мировых языков имени Абылай хана, Казахстан, г. Алматы

<sup>3</sup>Международный университет информационных технологий, Казахстан, г. Алматы

\*e-mail: kalima910@mail.ru

### Специфика тарикат – пути мистического постижения истины

Проблема тариката, связанная с постижением Аллаха в феноменальном, материальном мире, является узловой в суфизме. Она раскрывает сущность «Я» и «Ты», взаимоотношения человека и Бога. Согласно суфизму, человек является чувственным, страдающим существом и причина этих страданий – нафс, под которым понимаются страсти, похоти, привязанность к земному бытию. И задачей человека является освобождение от нафс, для чего и необходим тарикат – путь самосовершенствования человека. В статье раскрываются особенности тариката, его этапы – шариат, тарикат, маарифат и хакикат. Каждому из этих этапов присущи свои формы познания, которые в символической форме передаются посредством различных жидкостей – воды, молока, меда и вина. Анализируются эти формы познания в тесной связи с этапами и макамами, стоянками, каждая из которых символизирует определенные морально-психологические состояния на пути познания Бога. Рассматриваются различные подходы к тарикату, существующие в научной литературе. Особое внимание уделяется принципам, методологии рассмотрения этой сложной проблемы. При исследовании пути мистического постижения Бога авторы опирались на историко-философскую литературу. Раскрываются ценность данного исследования, ее практическая значимость.

**Ключевые слова:** суфизм, тарикат, шариат, маарифат, хакикат.

### Introduction

The problem of Sufism is associated with the study of human problems, his capabilities and undisclosed essence, which is relevant at all times. In this respect, our time is no exception. Having faced tough problems, the person of the digital age is often prone to irrational interpretation of reality. Therefore, the demand for Sufism and mysticism in general is primarily explained by the spiritual crisis of society, the lack of faith and the search for new values. It is becoming even more relevant since, in the traditions of modern science and philosophy, this aspect of the human problem was reduced mainly to rational. In practice, this led to the human unawareness and unforeseen difficulties in the personality formation. Ignorance of the differences in human thinking in terms of rational and irrational, ethno-national and other characteristics had a negative impact on the practice of social development. Therefore, today, in the conditions of sovereign Kazakhstan, there is a unique opportunity to study human thinking and psychology, taking into account his lifestyle and mentality.

#### Justification for the choice of topic, goals and objectives

The choice of the topic is due to the significance of the Sufi personal development issue, implicitly related to the human's perception of Allah through feelings, mind and intuition. The connection of the

person with supernatural is revealed through such knowledge, which is individual, singular, and internalized. Therefore, Sufism was skeptical about such human study, which was not aimed at comprehension of the human's inner world, but the external one, the individual's connection with the universe as a whole. Bringing in to the picture the knowability problems of the diversity of the universe, the world, Sufism developed a tariqa, a way of personality advancement; put forward various schemes of epiphany, which enrich philosophical, religious and psychological knowledge about a person. Disclosure of the mystical path of the person's self-improvement, definition of Sufism as a multifaceted phenomenon of spiritual culture is the goal of this article. In accordance with this goal, the following tasks are solved: identifying the originality and specificity of the tariqa, defining the problems of «I» and «You», God-man and knowledge of God, etc., which help to comprehend the content, essence of Sufi knowledge at a deep level.

#### Scientific research methodology

The methodological basis was formed by dialectical, concrete-historical, comprehensive approaches to the consideration of Sufism, its theory and practice. One of the main principles of writing this article was the Hegelian principle of unity and coincidence of ontology and epistemology, which provides for the consideration of epistemological

problems based on unity with ontological ones. The ideas of human multidimensionality and multilevelness, the world, the problem of macro- and microspace were used. In addition, other general philosophical, scientific methods and principles are also used.

### Main part

In many Sufi concepts, the human acts as a sensual, suffering being. Sufis teach that human suffering does not depend on natural, social or biological reasons, but on the person himself. The cause of suffering lies primarily in the sinful nature of a man, in his passions, nafs (desiring soul). «Nafs is considered as an evil founding in human, a place of passion and lust, and mortification of nafs is the main task of the wanderer» (John, 2005: 56). The human can free himself from suffering, this should be the goal of any person – the soul liberation from the evil of physical body, from mortal, earthly existence and its introduction to celestial life. This cannot be achieved by mind. The only way to reach it is ecstasy, a state in which a person stops to be aware of himself as something individual. In addition, the soul liberation from nafs can also be achieved through food fasting, silence and loneliness, which are based on the process of «dying inside». Thus, the goal of Sufi is to attain unity with God, the Absolute. E.E. Bertels correctly notes that «Knowledge of God falls into two types: the first is knowledge that penetrates to the very substance, separating the emanation of names, attributes and the veils of external world. It is accessible only to the God himself, as the God is shielded from the world by the veil of greatness. Trying to expound the substance of the God is useless. The second type: cognition of God in its various manifestations. It, in turn, falls into two subspecies: knowledge in the broad sense of the word – human comprehends the God, but does not know that he exactly comprehends his being, and complex cognition – the human thinks about what he comprehends and realizes that his discoveries relate exactly the God's being in its manifestations» (Bertels, 1995: 453-454).

Sufism theorists divide the path of comprehending the Absolute, the path of mystical self-improvement, mainly into three stages: sharia, i.e. tariqa and haqiqa. Most Sufis have four stages: 1) Sharia – «law», i.e. «Pious» life, according to the provisions of Muslim religion common to all believers; for the Sufis, this stage was considered only as preparation for the mystical path; 2) tariqa – «the mystical path, which consists in voluntary poverty,

torture, withdrawal from the world and from one's own will; the Sufi had to become a murid of the chosen sheikh – murshid; 3) marifa – (mystical) knowledge, at this stage the Sufi, who renounced sensual desires, was claimed to be capable of getting some temporary communication – vasil (connection – in one of the meanings – «connect, tie with a single God») at some certain moments of ecstasy (chol); 4) haqiqa (truth) – the stage which can be reached by rarely few Sufis, when the Sufi was in constant and intimate communication with the «absolute truth» – God» (Mamatov, 2011: 80). As Lynn Wilcox says, «Sharia is a wax, tariqat – a wick, haqiqah – light» (Lynn Wilcox, 2005: 198).

Each of these paths of self-improvement has its own forms of cognition, which are revealed in symbolic form in literature through various types of liquid. Thus, for the first form it is perception, which studies the world with the help of five senses and mind, the symbol is water, which is easily absorbed by a human body. For the second form it is intuitive knowledge, where imagination plays an essential role, the symbol of cognition is milk, a more nutritious substance than water. The third form is connected with mystical knowledge, Sufism, honey, a nutritious and tasty product, is a symbol of it. For the fourth form, related to the experience of the highest reality – revelation, the symbol is wine, which destroys the human's individual borders (al-Hallaj, al-Bistami).

Let's have a closer look at these stages.

The first stage – Sharia – still cannot fully relate only to Sufism, it is obligatory for every faithful Muslim. The Sharia stage means literal fulfillment of the God's law. The essence of this stage can be conveyed in the following words: «God is our only deity (ilah), that is, only He is our sovereign, Master and Helper. We worship only God and we ask only Him for help in everything we desire: «We worship only You, we ask for help only from You» (The world of Validdin, 2004: 16). For the Sufi, the stage of Sharia is obligatory if he wants to embark on the second path of self-improvement, as it presupposes the assimilation of basic dogmas of Islam.

At the second stage – tariqa (word-for-word translation: «way», «road»), a person's moral and psychological self-improvement takes place. The Sufis compare tariqa to a wick representing the inner parts of a human's body. At this stage, the concepts of stations, so-called maqams, which a person must pass through, are introduced. «Maqam (Arabic, derived from the word ikoma) means abidance, life, deed, stations. For Sufis, maqam is considered a certain step on the way to knowledge of the truth,

where the traveler is at the moment» (Mukhammedhodjaev, 1990: 30). Each of the maqams represents a certain mental state. Sufi authors do not have complete unity in the classification of stations. But the main of them are called as seven states.

This is tauba (repentance) – the beginning of the path, which means the determination to abandon the usual formal attitude to Sharia and give in to real self-improvement. The concept of «tauba» is often found in Sharia and it means a human's understanding of his sin, his repentance. For the Sufi, it is unacceptable to reflect on his sins, because sin recognition means recognition of his individual's reality, and this is the deepest delusion. According to Sufism, there is no true reality apart from the God.

On the second path, maqam of wara', which means discretion, there is a distinction between what is permitted (halal) and what is forbidden (haram) by the Sufis. This discretion leads to zuhd, abstinence, which is characteristic of the third path. In this regard, it should be noted that all Sufis were ascetics by their way of life. They were told to abstain from sin and excess, from everything that separates from God. The consequence of abstinence is fakr (poverty), which is characteristic of the fourth stage. At this stage, there is a voluntary dooming of oneself to adversity, a rejection of earthly goods, which leads to the fifth and sixth stages – tawakkul, which means «trust in God.» It means that, at these stages, the human completely surrenders to the power of God, he throws away all worries about tomorrow, is content only with the current moments. Therefore, the extreme interpretation of tawakkul posed a social danger, because a man was turned into unnecessary inactive ballast. In later Sufism, this concept is already being rethought.

Shukr (gratitude) is also characteristic of this stage. With the aid of his tongue and heart, the traveler expresses his gratitude to the God. At the same time, two groups of shukra are distinguished: mubtillon (fruitless), expressing gratitude for extraneous goodness and earthly goods, muhiqon (doing the right thing), showing gratitude for both this worldly and otherworldly benefits.

Eventually, the final stage of tariqah is rida, obedience. At this stage, for a person, the surrounding reality loses its whole sense, he practically does not feel it, does not perceive it, since he is absorbed by the highest mission – comprehension of the Absolute.

It is followed by the stage of maarifat. This is how this process of knowledge of God at the maarifat stage proceeds in the understanding of al Junayd: «Know that the beginning of worshipping God ('ibāda) is knowledge about Him (ma'rifa) and the

basis ('asl) of knowledge about God is the assertion of His oneness and unity (tawhid). Thanks to Him they seek the way to Him, and the reason for seeking the way to Him through Him was His assistance (taufik). Thanks to His assistance, there is an affirmation of oneness and unity for Him (tavhud). From the affirmation of His oneness and unity comes the belief in His truth (tasdik), from the belief in His truth comes the attainment of His truth (tahkik), and from the attainment of His truth comes the knowledge of Him (ma'rifa). From the cognition of Him (ma'rifa) comes the answer to Him which He called for, and from the answer to Him there is an ascent to Him (tarakkin), from the ascent to Him there is a union with Him (ittasal bi hi), from the union with Him happens clarity (explanation) for a human (bayan), from clarity for a person there is a «whirlpool» (hira) [or confusion]. From confusion (hira), the human loses clarity (bayan), and because of the disappearance of his clarity, a description of the God becomes inaccessible to him. Because of the disappearance of the ability to describe, the human falls into the truth of existence for the God, and because of falling into the truth of existence for the God, he falls into the truth of contemplation because of disappearance from his existence. Thanks to the loss of his existence, his being becomes pure, and thanks to its purification, the man purifies of his qualities of his being, and thanks to this, he appears in the presence of the [God] with his entire totality. The man was existent (mavjud) and «lost» (mafjud), nothing and existent, he existed and at the same time did not exist, and he did not exist when he existed. Then he existed after he did not – he was as he was. And after he was not, it was him. And he is being (mavjud), existent after being existent-non-existent (mavjud mafjud), for he came out of the state of intoxication of being overpowered [by his God] to the clarity of «sobriety» (sahv)» (Mukhammedhodjaev, 1990: 73).

This understanding is characteristic of the last third stage – haqiqa, which means «real authentic being». When analyzing haqiqa, Sufism develops the phenomena of spiritual sphere in great detail, also including short-term states – hal. Hal is sent down from above for a moment, therefore it is a divine compassion. There is no clear classification of hal in Sufism. Many of the thinkers study nine states of hal. The following states are often mentioned: qurb-nearness – a person in this state feels the deity's gaze, directed at him; mahabba – love – during which a person is seized with ardent love for the God; shawk – passion, mushahada – contemplation – during which the human not only feels God himself, but, as it were, sees him and other states of hal.

Many researchers of Sufism consider baka (eternity) as the highest state of Hal. This is the recognition of your immortality.

Having passed all the stages of tariqa, Sufi enters the last stage – haqiqa, the real divine being. At this stage, he attains and receives the truth of Light, feels the destruction of his temporary transient «I» and plunges into the sea of the Absolute, being more acutely aware of his existence as eternal as the divine essence is. This awareness of immortality is the highest of the states attainable for a traveler. It symbolizes Truth.

### Results and discussion

There are other approaches to the steps or stages of tariqa. In the book of John A. Subhan «Sufism. Its Saints and Shrines» there are seven stages: 1. Ubudiyat, the stage of courage, where the traveler is eager to purify his soul and prepares for the higher stages of his journey. At this stage, the first thing that is required of him is repentance ... 2. Ishq, love, when the Divine influence inclines a soul to love the God. 3. Zuhd – self-denial. Under the influence of Divine Love, all laic desires are expelled from the heart. 4. Marifa, knowledge, or gnosis, when the one walking along the Path reflects on the Nature, Qualities and Actions of the God. 5. Wajd – ecstasy, a state in which mental excitement is caused through the contemplation of the only existing reality – God. 6. Haqiqa is a reality, now the heart is already illuminated by the true nature of the God. 7. Vasil is a union in which a mystic as such meets face to face with the God. This stage precedes the last experience of baka wa fana, dissolution and existence in God (Shure, 1997: 51-53). As we can see, in principle, there are many similarities between the two described stages of the tariqa path. There are also stations (maqamas), symbolizing the «standing» of the man on his path to the God and the fulfillment of certain duties by travelers. There are four basic states» along this path, which are essential. This is «1. Nasut – humanity. The natural state of every human being, in which the God follower is obliged to comply with Sharia law. 2. Malakut – the nature of angels, when travelers embark on the Path of spiritual travel – at-Tariqa. 3. Jabarut – the possession of power for which there is a marifa. 4. Lakhut – the Divinity of dissolution state in the Divine, in which he reaches reality – haqiqa» (John, 2005: 55). In some Sufi sources, the tariqa path is divided into three interconnected journeys: sair ilallah – «journey to the God», it ends in haqiqa-i-Muhammadi; sair fillah – «journey in the God», during which the seeker is drawn into the essence of the God.

As we can see, the Sufi path is very specific. Al-Ghazali spoke about this, noting that tariqa is not a simple path of spiritual and moral hunt and it is beyond the power of an uninitiated murid to overcome it. Although mystical experience is a purely personal experience and it is impossible to express it in verbal forms, because mystical is inexpressible, we will try to generalize and summarize what is in the arsenal of religious-mystical science. Many mystics describe the attainment and being in this state as follows: initially, the original Sound, the divine Word, which generates Light, is heard; the music of spheres, which shakes the stars and worlds, is heard. Carried away on the waves of this harmony, they see the sparkling of the spiritual Sun, the creative Verb. Here the highest desire for love is identified with the fiery joy of the sacred. Here everything penetrates into everything, for you can see how the time flow leaves eternity and returns to it again. Nothing is separated here, and they altogether form the fullness of being. Here they hover over all sorrows, for they can be transformed into joys. Here, all sufferings are rooted into a unique bliss, like prism colors in a sunbeam. Here one achieves peace in sublime action, and the state of a higher individuality – in absolute self-giving. Life is not condemned here, because they drink the divine essence in their source. Free, completely unchained and henceforth not subject to the fate blows, they return here to make it even more beautiful again. The Gods descend from this sphere of Resurrection (Shure, 1997: 131).

The Sufi, having experienced such a state, having touched the secrets of the Absolute, becomes truly blissful, free, whose spirit from then on experiences only the harmony, beauty, greatness inherent in the deity. One of the early Sufis, Ahmad ben Isa al-Kharraz (d. in 899), describes this state in the following way: «he approaches the God, and the God fills his heart and sets aim. Then he will speak and his heart will radiate thoughts about the God. The love of the God is hidden deep in his heart, makes its way to consciousness and does not leave him. Then the human's heart fills with joy, invisibly communicating with God, talking lively with Him and diligently studying Him. This is what he is: when he eats, drinks, sleeps (and wakes up), in all his actions, as the God's proximity now wins the human heart and embraces everything else – both goals that have appeared inside and external movements. And so this person lives on; whether he comes, leaves, gives or takes – the goal that rules his consciousness prevails in him, namely the God's love and His closeness» (Arberry, 2002: 91). Many researchers of Sufism call this state as a suffering soul's return

after the separation from the Absolute into the sea of pure and divine Light, into the bosom of the eternal Truth – the state of fana, which is the ultimate goal of tariqa. But some researchers believe that fana is also followed by the state of baka, where the «attachment» of the Sufi's soul to the Absolute takes place.

Sometimes in the literature, fana is unjustifiably confused or equated with the ecstasy itself, with the help of which fana is achieved. The Sufis, following al-Junaid, distinguish between the states of fana and ecstasy, denoting the latter with the term «shath». Based on the meaning of the verb «shataha» (to seethe, being constrained by the banks), Sufi theoreticians defined shath as «splashing out» the feelings that seized the mystic's soul as a result of the God's vision (musha-hadat al-Haqq), the destruction of his own «I» in him (fana al-nafsihi), the feeling of one's unity with him (ittihad). From our point of view, the differences between fana and shath are not so significant to draw attention to them.

One of the first to describe these states in the treatise «Mawaqif» was a medieval thinker Niffari (X<sup>th</sup> century), who distinguished four journeys of the murid's consciousness at the moment of immersion into the bosom of the Absolute. The first of them he calls the state of fana, the state of achieving harmony with the phenomenally noumenal and transcendental worlds. This is followed by the baka stage (constancy), where the perfect human is no longer «a man besotted by the God,» he is a teacher endowed with special rights. He bears the title «Qutb», «Magnetic Center». Al-Ghazali in «The Resurrection of the Faith Sciences», analyzing these stages, likens them to a walnut (from Persian «possessing four essences» or «four minds»). Thus, the nut consists of a hard shell, inner skin, kernel and oil. The bitter-tasting shell serves as a cover for a specific period of time and is discarded when the nut kernel is removed. The skin is more valuable than the shell, but it still cannot be compared to the kernel itself. The kernel is a goal of the one who wants to get oil; however, even this inner pulp contains substances that are discarded after the oil extraction (Shah, 1994: 340). It should be noted that these states, especially fana, baka, shath, etc., are poorly studied mental phenomena. Unfortunately, until now in the oriental scientific literature there are no monographs devoted to the study of the psychological aspect of Sufism. The work of a psychiatrist Kazansky K. «Sufism from the modern psychopathology's viewpoint», written in 1905 is an exception. Kazansky K., who once observed the joy of Turkestan dervishes, came to the conclusion that «all types of

activities and psychological organ of the dervishes bear a pathological imprint. Masturbation is widely spread among them... But besides the anomaly of sexual desire... there are other forms of impulsive action in the dervishes, their organic motives which lie either under the influence of inherited feelings or in the habits acquired due to the social conditions. For example, an excessive use of opium, cannabis, ecstatic exercises, a passion for vagrancy» (Kazansky, 1905: 108).

As it can be seen, K. Kazansky as a whole describes the Sufi union with the God as a perverted physiological act. Nevertheless, he correctly defined the state of ecstasy among the Sufis as a «hallucinatory» state (Kazansky, 1905: 125). In this state, the human still «sees» the images within himself, «hears» the inner voice as something completely real. One can agree with C. Jung's assumption that «the world of gods and spirits is, in essence, is nothing more than the collective unconscious being inside me. To change this statement to the opposite, i.e., to assert that the collective unconscious is the world of gods and spirits outside me, no mental acrobatics is required, but it will take a whole human life, perhaps even many lives of increasing fullness. In addition, I do not say «increasing perfection», because those who are «perfect» make discoveries of a completely different kind» (Jung, 1998: 42-43]. This truly real mental phenomenon has, unfortunately, been studied not much in the modern psychology. It seems that I.P. Petrushevsky was right, when he noted that: «People with a neuropathic mindset, brought up in a mystical ideology, are prone to imaginary perceptions that arise independently of real objects. These perceptions, however, are subjectively experienced as brightly and vividly as the perceptions of real objects» (Petrushevsky, 1966: 315).

### Conclusion and key findings

As we can see, the aim of tariqa is the union of human with the God, the knowledge of the God, which the Sufis see as the meaning of their self-improvement. This is the value of the tariqa study, its practical significance connected with the all-round development of a person, in particular, and spiritual development. As rightly noted by J. Khujviri, in the state of fana, the spirit, liberated from earthly bonds, becomes capable of reflecting the divine light. The stages of tariqa (paths of mystical self-improvement) are compulsory for all Sufi orders. However, the set of methods, tariqa stations differ at Sufi schools and orders. Thus, al-Ghazali in his mystical system describes nine stages of

tariqa, based on three ideas: 1) the idea of mystical nearness to the God, 2) the paths to this proximity, where the «stations» are marked, 3) a set of certain moral and ethical standards and requirements (Al-Ghazali Abu Hamid, 1980: 78-81).

However, Ibn Arabi determinates 19 stations and up to 360 inns or stopping places. The first stations he calls trust, patience, and obedience to the God's will and gratitude to his good deeds. Dwelling on the problem of hal, Ibn-Arabi defines 7 of his states: with the God, in the God, next to the God, through the God, to the God, on the God and for the God's sake (an example of verbigation or word chewing). According to Ibn-Arabi, the two poles of Sufism are

reflections and memories of the God's name. In the God, essence and properties are subdivided, and the traveler, passing from properties to essence, rises to union with the God (Ibn Arabi, 1980: 130). His ultimate goal is haqiqa.

Thus, having reached haqiqa, the Sufi intuitively cognizes a true nature of the Absolute. The human's goal, therefore, is to cognize and unite with the divine Truth, the Absolute, and rise above all other mortal plain. Only through this connection, according to the Sufis, does a human receive all his bliss, the knowledge of another transcendental being. This is the highest goal of Sufi psychology, epistemology and educational theory.

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