

The Philosophy of  
**SUFISM**  
and Its Impact on  
Indian Society and Culture

R. Subramony



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## The Philosophy of Sufism

Unless one is God's chosen man, with the inherent natural spark of Divine love, piety and religious devotion, and is also fit for the necessary hard *mujahedas* (probations and strivings), one cannot become a perfect sufi.

Malik Mohamed states in *The Foundations of the Composite Culture in India*:

The origin of the term 'sufi' is rather complex, but in general it signifies one who wears the garments of 'soof', i.e. wool. In the beginning, it was a mark of personal penitence. In the second century of Islam, a particular group of ascetics of Kufa were generally called al-Sufiya, on account of their dress. But by the tenth century AD, wearing of woollen garments became the recognized badge of the sufis of Iraq and hence the term was commonly applied to all Muslim mystics. In the same century, groups of these ascetics used to assemble to recite aloud the Holy Quran and other religious pieces, which practice gradually took on a liturgical character called dhikr evolving into spiritual concerts named sama. (160)

Gradually a change was coming over the general character of Sufism, its basis was 'fear of God and His wrath to come' with the mystical element of love and adoration. According to the woman saint Rabia al-Adawiya (died AD. 801) the



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