

The Core Rejection of Sufism

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Introduction:

At the turn of the millennium, in the year 1999, Professor Abdul Kader Tayob of the University of Cape Town in South Africa wrote an essay titled *Turning to the Core: The rise of Sufism?* This essay is online at: http://web.uct.ac.za/depts/religion/documents/ARISA/1999_tayob2.pdf



A photo of Prof. Abdul Kader Tayob

The following are relevant quotations from that essay. The essay opens in these words:

The broad story of Europe is familiar to us. With the rise of science, rationalism and industrialization, the Church lost its undisputed authority in society. From the time that the sixteenth-century Polish student Copernicus demonstrated a competing theory of the earth and the solar system, the Church had to give way to other systems of truth. This did not, as it is popularly believe, lead to the immediate elimination of religion. Rather, religion was redefined as a private and personal matter.

Further on in the essay on page 3 going into page 4 Tayob elucidates:

There is certainly a turn towards the experiential dimension of Islam. Even the arch opponents of certain forms of Sufism, the Deobandis, are now publicly embracing aspects of Sufism. Dikhr circles are not uncommon as religious scholars hear the needs of ordinary Muslims. Many who had been at the forefront on the social and political mission of Islam are turning toward the mystical core of Islam, the relation with God and true self. The most prominent person in this regard is Dr. Yusuf da Costa, but there are others in Kwazulu-Natal as well. This does not mean, of course, that there is a conflict between mystical Islam and political/social/legal Islam. What is clear is that there is an implicit re-ordering of priorities and emphases.

This reordering of priorities and emphases is matched by an unwillingness to deal directly with the earlier suspicions and criticisms. The great control of the shaykhs over blind followers, the irrationalism of some of the religious claims, are examples of issues that have not been dealt with. In fact, we may even see their re-emergence in unlikely places. In this regard, it seems that the turn to Sufism may be less conscious than I have given it credit.

Like so many other South African Sufi advocates that speak at the local community radio stations, he appears to be very careful to talk about a Sufi revival in the sphere of rejuvenating personal experience; revival of lost traditions, and the rise of a new generation of soul searching Muslims. Professor Tayob has done well thus far in attempting to bring Sufi discussion to the fore. He calls his essay *Turning to the Core*. He appears to use the word core as though Sufism is the essence, or the central aspect of Islamic religion.

In the second quoted segment the second sentence of the second paragraph states: *The great control of the shaykhs over blind followers, the irrationalism of some of the religious claims, are examples of issues that have not been dealt with.* It is to this blind following of Sufi masters (“the shaykhs”) and the irrationalism, this, my essay, is written.

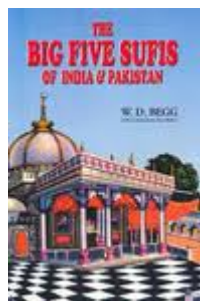
In the first paragraph of the second quoted segment Tayob mentions “*the mystical core or Islam, the relation with God and true self*”, which for some of yesteryears prominent practising Sufi’s became the core of their Sufism. Here below in this essay I will be exposing this core issue of their Sufism, which to true Muslims, is the core rejection of Sufism. In his essay Tayob does not discuss in any great length what the relation between God and true self is. He just mentions it and moves on to briefly mention “*an unwillingness to deal directly with the earlier suspicions and criticisms*”.

In the last 5 to 7 years it is my experience, in researching, writing and talking critically about this core issue of Sufism, that it is kept underground. Prominent and practising Sufis since the times of Junaid Bagdhadi, over a thousand years ago, have carefully kept this core issue of Sufism underground. Don’t misunderstand me when I say it is kept underground. I am not saying that Sufis have suppressed and distanced themselves from this core issue and, now in modern times, refined and improved their form of Sufism. By saying it is kept underground I am saying that it is hidden from public discourse because it is too explosive and too revealing to mention such things with the names of some of the most revered and followed Sufis masters. In other words, Sufis want to promote the core issue of Sufism covertly. They want to seduce you with comely richness of knowledge and wisdom all the while they are infiltrating and polluting the Umma (global Muslim community) covertly with the erring core issue of Sufism.

Thus far in this introduction I have only stated my view that there is a core issue of Sufism and that I interpret a degree of covertness in its teaching to unwary Muslim communities but I have not as yet explained why this core issue has become the core rejection of Sufism. The remainder of this essay will elucidate on this with references to the works of scholars.

1. Deceit of Qutubuddin:

The first book under examination is The Big Five Sufis of India and Pakistan, written by the Indian author W. D Begg. Below is the cover of this book.



Overview of the book and the research effort that went into writing the book:

The book is divided into 11 parts. It is a very detailed and thorough book and it is scholarly written. At the back of the book, on page 362, the author lists his biographical research. The first paragraph on this research page states: *The following is the list of the old Arabic, Persian and Urdu and many other recent publications (including some of the rare manuscripts) which were consulted in compiling these biographical accounts of the “The Big Five.”* He then list 108 works, giving the book titles, the author’s name and the language the book was written in. At the very end he states “*the research study and consultation of these rare publications cost me 7 long years.*”

Exposing the critical content:

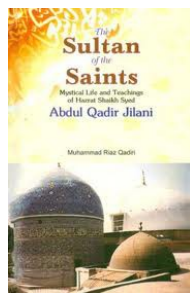
In part 1, chapter 1, on page 15, the author begins a discussion about past Sufi masters such as Al Ghazzali and Mansur al Hallaj, and then contrasts the beliefs of these Sufis with those of the orthodox theologians. Toward the end of the long paragraph, starting on the 8th line from the bottom, the author states about the orthodox theologians: “*They, therefore, passed dicta of heresy on many a sincere and innocent Sufi believer like Mansur Al-Hallaj who proclaimed “Anal haq” (I am God) and whom they hanged under the laws of Shariat.*”

The rest of the book is focused on the lives of the 5 spiritual successors of the famous Indian Sufi master Hasan Chisti Sanjari of Ajmer (pg 23, par. 4), born 1141 and died 1230 CE.. The life of the first successor of Chisti, whose name is Qutubuddin, is written in part 5 of the book, which has 2 chapters. The 2nd paragraph of the last page of chapter 2, which is page 94, reveals the stance of Qutubuddin toward divulging divine secrets. The author writes this: *‘Hazrat Khwaja Qutubuddin has strictly forbidden against the disclosure of the ‘divine secrets’ in Sufism. He says; “A Sufi must have a very strong courage, will-power and tolerance to resist the temptation of divulging divine secrets of his ‘friend’ (God).” He gives his own example and says that he never divulged the secrets of his Pir-o-Murshid under any circumstances although he stayed with him for many years together. According to him, Mansoor Hallaj (who was crucified in the wellknown episode of “Anal Haq” was not a perfect Sufi because he divulged the ‘divine secret’ and had to pay the penalty with his life, as his story goes.’*

This quotation reveals that Qutubuddin, the 1st Khalifa (spiritual successor) of Hasan Chisti, regarded Hallaj not a perfect Sufi because he divulged the divine secret of Anal Haqq for which he paid with his life. This, to me, shows that Sufi masters proclaim divinity but that while believing it, they must not tell it to others, especially Muslims authorities, because they can kill you for heresy and disbelief. This is the point I want to make from this book - that the Sufi master himself admits this belief, which Muslims regard as disbelief (kufr), but which Sufis see as their true belief. The shocking revelation is that it is the duty of perfect Sufis to hide their true belief and by implication this means to deceive the Muslim community into believing that they are Monotheistic Muslims. This Sufi concealment is important to note because there are many Sufi advocates who openly lecture in Musjids and other gatherings of Muslims and they promote Sufism as the valid spiritual path for Muslims.

2. Jilani Defends al-Hallaj:

The next Sufi book under examination concerns the Sufi Master who was the founder of the Qadiri Sufi order, who is none other than Abdul Qadir Jilani (1077 – 1166 CE). The title of the book is *The Sultan of the Saints* and the author is Muhammad Riaz Qadiri (born in 1939). Below is a picture of the Book cover:



Muhammad Riaz Qadiri has exemplary academic qualifications, as is stated on page 338 of his book:

- Graduated from the University of Punjab in 1960 and Obtained D.L.Sc in 1964.
- Earned an M.A. degree Information Management from the University of Karachi in 1967.
- Obtained M.A. in Political Science in 1968
- Obtained M.A In English Language and Literature in 1972 from University of Punjab

His Career:

- Chief of the British Council Library Lahore for 10 years.
- Librarian at King Abdul Aziz University, in Saudi Arabia for 2 years.
- Chief Librarian of the Punjab Public Library Lahore for 2 years.
- Chief Librarian of the International Islamic University, Islamabad for 14 years.
- Librarian at Faculty of Management Sciences (IIUI) for 4 years.

He has also authored 6 books in the area of Information Management for academic purposes. As for his religiosity he states at the bottom of page 338 that he is initiated into the Abbasi Qadiri Order (Gujranwala).

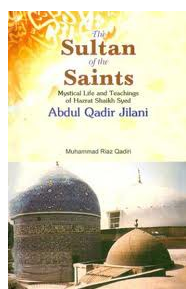
First thing under examination is that in paragraph 1 of page 131 the author quotes Abdul Qadir Jilani acknowledging Hallaj's proclamation of divinity. Toward the end of the paragraph Jilani is quoted thus: *"Hallaj stumbled; he claimed divinity that is why law of Shariah executed him. There was no competent person in his time to save him. If I were in his time, I would have saved him."* Thus, yet again another prominent Sufi master admits that Hallaj claimed divinity.

For Sufi followers the status of Jilani is somewhat higher than all the saints. The claim of this superiority stems from a well known proclamation that Jilani made toward the end of his life. On page 115, the author writes that in the year 559 AH Jilani was delivering a sermon in the Khanqah (monastery): *'All of a sudden, under divine inspiration, he proclaimed: "My foot is on the neck of all saints."'* The author reports that the sermon was attended by saint, mystics, and jurists.

In true admiration of Jilani's unique position among Sufi masters the following is written on back cover of the book and attributed to Abdul Qadir (AQ) Jilani himself: *"The holy prophet Muhammad (PBUH) himself is the Chief Celestial winebearer, the origin, the fountainhead of Sufism, Ali the Ocean of Islamic esotericism and Gaus-e-Azam (AQ Jilani), the tavern keeper after him, feeding the lovers with the wine of Divine union, and the tavern being the sanctuary of the Lord Himself."* The thing I dislike of about this metaphor is that its theme is intoxication. Wine and other alcohols are forbidden for Muslims. The Quran forbids it.

Jilani held regular gatherings for some 40 years. He gave many sermons to these gatherings. Chapter 16 is titled *Illuminative and Inspiring Sermons*. At the bottom of page 222, the 3rd paragraph begins: *"The impact of the sermon was that no congregation was seen without many deaths due to intense longing and yearning. Also on account of spiritual power and awful majesty, a number of people present there would remain in a state of intoxication (sukr) for many days after the session. The place during the sermon looked like plain of Doomsday filled by wailing, moaning and imploring public on account of divine fear. Thousands would tear out their clothes and looked half dead"*

3. Al Shibli's Pantheism is actually Polytheism:

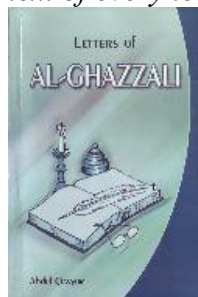


Chapter 3 in this same book *The Sultan of the Saints* by Muhammed Riaz Qadiri is titled Sufism: Origin and Development and in this chapter the author quotes the 10th century Persian Sufi scholar, Abu Bakr al-Shibli (861 – 946 CE), who was also a disciple of the Sufi master Junaid Bagdhadi. In paragraph 2 of page 41 the author states: *Most of the Sufis regard the theory of 'One God alone' as the low level of their mystical philosophy. Abu Bakr al-Shibli defines Sufism thus: "Sufism is polytheism, because it is the guarding of the heart from the vision of 'other' and 'other' does not exist".* The author's reference on page 329 is Hujwari, *Kash al-mahjub*, p-38. Back on page 41 the author continues: *"This definition of Sufism implies that the idea of any existent thing other than God cannot be accepted alongwith the idea of 'there is no God but God'".* The author has done us a great favour in this paragraph because he not only reveals the admission of Abu Bakr al-Shibli but he teaches us an important derivation of polytheistic

thought that integrates polytheism *with* pantheism. I recall a famous lecture given by Ahmed Deedat on the topic of Hinduism where he attempted to correctly portray Hindus not as polytheists but as pantheists, the difference being that polytheism is many gods and pantheism makes everything in the universe divine - insects, trees, cow dung, humans and all. I have come to disagree with Deedat's conceptual division and I accept Muhammed Riaz Qadiri's interpretation that Abu Bakr al-Shibli equated pantheism with polytheism. Since pantheism includes everything in the universe then pantheism is the most extreme form of polytheism. Translating into Arabic, polytheists are mushrikeen and there are many references in the Arabic Quran where Mushrikeen are condemned as Kafirs (disbelievers).

4. Al Ghazzali's Pantheism:

The next Sufi that I will show that has erred into pantheistic kufr is Al Ghazzali and I will be using his own letters as translated by Abdul Qayyum. Qayyum states in the preface on page ix *"The most important collection of his letters is obtainable in a Persian book...I have throughout translated the full text of every letter as given..."* Below is the cover of the book.



Twenty six letters penned by Al Ghazzali are published in Abdul Qayyum's translation. The 8th letter was written to His Excellency Shihab-ul-Islam. About half way into the letter (referenced to the 5th paragraph on page 51 of the book) Ghazzali states: *'One cannot achieve Tauhid by simply saying that Allah is One.'* He then opens the 6th paragraph with the words: *'Mystical unity (tauhid) and the path (Tariqat) consist of acquired virtues (maqamat) and mystical states (ahwal).'*

These words from Al-Ghazzali reveal that his understanding of Tauhid is different from how true Muslims understand Islamic monotheism, which is the exclusive belief in the oneness of God. Both Muslims and erring Sufis like Ghazzali use the same word of Tauhid, but while the true Muslim attaches Islamic monotheism to tauhid, Al Ghazzali attaches mystical union to Tauhid and it is this mystical union that crosses the barrier from Belief (iman) to disbelief (kufr).

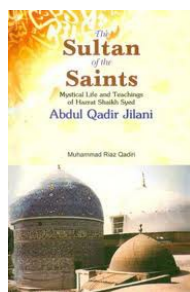
The clear cut pantheistic kufr is revealed in the 19th letter of Al Ghazzali, which was written to Khwaja Imam 'Abbasi (referenced to pages Pg 95-96 of the book). Although this is a different letter to a different person Al Ghazzali was fond of conveying his Sufis belief to people. Ghazzali opens the letter with a hadith:

'Someone asked the Prophet: "Inform me, in the matter of Islam, so that I may have no occasion to ask others about it". He replied: "Say, I believe in God, after which firmly obey the commands and abandon the things forbidden".'

This hadith is unreferenced. Nevertheless, Ghazzali explains in the next paragraph (paragraph 2), what to believe in God means and how to achieve that belief. He writes: *'To believe in God means that God and the spiritual world are ever present realities in the routine of our daily life'*. Further on in the paragraph he explains how to achieve this reality. He writes: *'We reduce our cognitive faculties to zero, to absolute inaction'*. In other words Ghazzali is explaining that a Sufi must stop thinking in his state of tauhid. He continues: *'and in this sacred silence contemplate things divine, by union not in ourselves, but by going out of ourselves entirely and becoming wholly God. The universe has flowed out from Him. It is a divine emanation and there is also a cosmic process of "return" back to the eternal one.'*

Thus al Ghazzali admits that the mystical union is WITH God and he states clearly how he understands this union. When he says in the very next sentence that the universe is a divine emanation it immediately means that the union is NOT metaphorical but physical, because emanation means to send out from someone or something. In other words, that God and creation are made of the same stuff and because he understands it this way he then stated that *'there is also a cosmic process of "return" back to the eternal one.'* The clear cut kufr part is the first part when he states *'going out of ourselves and becoming wholly God.'* In other words people merge with God and become part of God and that means that Godhead is a partnership and ascribing partners with God is polytheism, whose worst form is this very pantheism that al Ghazzali has written. To use the Arabic word, it is SHIRK (association to God.) and a clear violation of Islamic monotheism but Al Ghazzali would have you believe that it is the true Tauhid. What a neat trick this is from Satan to actually use the word Tauhid to spread disbelief? It is the destruction of concept to corrupt Iman into kufr.

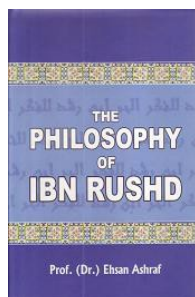
Before proceeding to the next pantheistic examination I want to discuss briefly how al Ghazzali's academic and scholarly outlook developed and changed in the course of his career. Revisiting Muhammed Riaz Qadiri's book *The Sultan of the Saints* we get more confirmation of the changing mind of al-Ghazzali.



In the 4th paragraph of page 27 Muhammed Riaz Qadiri describes al Ghazzali: *'Born in Khurasan in 1058 he was among the prominent Muslim theologians. He was appointed as professor in the Nizamiah University of Baghdad by Nizam ul Mulk the wazir of Sultan Malik Shah of the Seljuks. But at the height of his fame as doctor of Islamic law he felt tempted to leave learning and teaching and turned to a wandering dervish in search of Ultimate Truth. He remained engrossed in austerity and asceticism for sometime, and attained illumination. He thus, began to distrust intellect more as a reliable source of true knowledge and declared that rational approach and speculative methods cannot apprehend Ultimate Reality. The only method he advocated now was the direct esoteric (inner) knowledge with which God floods the heart of the believer.'*

From this quote we read that the great Muslim thinker, Al Ghazzali, after an outstanding career in academia turned away from rational and intellectual methods. He turned inward to meditation and a wandering life, having already denounced the doctrines of the philosophers.

To understand and appreciate how far off the path of science and academia al Ghazzali went off I will reference and quote from two further books, the first of which is *The philosophy of Ibn Rushd* by Prof Ehsan Ashraf



Before I begin to quote from this well written and thoughtful book I want to present the credentials of this author. The inside flap of the This Books outer jacket has a small paragraph describing the author. It says the following:

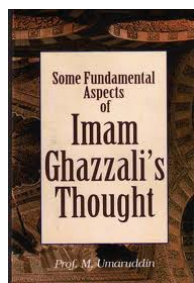
Retired from College of Commerce, Patna, Prof (Dr.) Ehsan Ashraf was the head of the Philosophy Department. He Obtained an M.A. Degree in Philosophy from Patna University in the year 1959 and later in 1968 was awarded a Ph.D. from the same university. He joined teaching profession in 1961.

Quoting from page 41, Prof Ehsan Ashraf concludes the 1st chapter of the book titled *The Philosophy of Ibn Rushd* (This chapter title is the same as the book title) with these two chilling paragraphs:

'Being dissatisfied with the doctrines of philosophers Al-Ghazzali wrote his famous book "Tahafut al-falasifa" (The incoherence of the philosophers) and attacked the philosophers on twenty points. He was offensive not only against philosophy but even scientific thought in his enthusiasm to establish the supremacy of faith.[.] Ibn Rushd tried to give his replies in his renowned book Tahafut al-Tahafut (The incoherence of Incoherence) on the points raised by Al-Ghazzali.

The two 'Incoherence' is infact one of the most interesting and thought provoking debate in Islamic society during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Al-Ghazzali shut the door of science and philosophy among Muslims for the sake of faith. Ahmed Foud El-Ehwani writes, "The Muslim, unfortunately, followed Al-Ghazzali's, 'The Authority of Islam' and neglected the study of sciences. Their once great civilization faded. On the other hand, Ibn Rushd defended science, and the medieval Europe followed the way prescribed by him."

If you didn't fully understand what was going on between Al Ghazzali and Ibn Rushd I will explain a bit with reference to another book. The third book referenced here in this section is *Some Fundamental Aspects of Imam Ghazzali's Thought*, by Prof. M. Umaruddin, published in 1946.



Professor Umaruddin obtained an M.A. in philosophy, Arabic and Persian. In the introduction of the book he explains that the contents of his book comprise a collection of research papers read before different sessions of the All India Philosophical Congress.

On page 9 of this book professor Umaruddin explains how Al Ghazzali questioned and searched for truth: *'Al Ghazzali tells us that when he emerged from this state of doubt through the Divine light which entered his heart, and as the result of which his mind recovered its sanity and equilibrium, he resumed the primary assumptions of reason with all their stringency and force and started a study of the beliefs of those who were engaged in the search for truth. These he divides into three main groups:-*

1. *Scholastic theologians,*
2. *Philosophers, and*
3. *Sufis'*

Further on, on page 10 and 11, Umaruddin explains that before entering the Sufi traditions al Ghazzali researched the works of the Theologians and the philosophers and the Sufis in that order and it was in this period of investigation that he became vituperate against Greek and Muslim philosophers or falasifah as they were known then and wrote the famous Tahafut al-Falasifah.

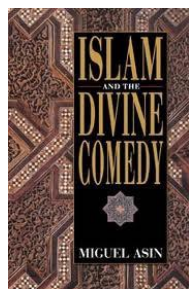
Now here I can admit that those medieval philosophers criticized by Al-Ghazzali were not scientists as you and I know of scientists in our modern era. Philosophy had the right method (reason, logic, deduction and syllogisms) but there was so much of bad content in the works of medieval philosophers mostly because they proceeded to make assertions and draw conclusions from a limited set of truths and proven laws of nature. They misunderstood much. Al-Ghazzali in his vastly superior thinking sought to point out the errors of the philosophers and the out pouring of this effort was the above mentioned book *Tahafut al-Falasifah* (or *The Incoherence of Philosophers*) and this book is set in 20 chapters in which he deals with 20 problems, mostly refutations of the accepted doctrines of the leading philosophers of his time and before him such as al Farabi, Ibn Sina.

At the end of this extensive researching and investigating he left behind his academic career in Baghdad and entered the Sufi traditions as Muhammed Riaz Qadiri explains in his book. After his Sufi wanderings he returned back to his home city of Tus, from which place he wrote some of the letters in Abdul Qayyum's above referenced book.

Ibn Rushd was born in 1126 CE, 15 years after the death of al-Ghazzali but he was keen to enter the debate of the validity of philosophy and to defend philosophy and refute the criticisms of al-Ghazzali's *Tahafut al-Falasifah*. He wrote a rebuttal called *Tahafut al-Tahafut* (or *The Incoherence of The Incoherence*). In other words Ibn Rushd regard Al-Ghazzali's *Tahafut* as a *Tahafut* in it itself, hence the title *Tahafut al-Tahafut*. That is why Prof. Ehsah Ashraf, as referenced and quoted above refers to '*the two Incoherence*' in the last paragraph of page 41 of his book. In this paragraph and in the paragraph before it Prof. Ehsah Ashraf wanted to his readers to appreciate the far reaching impact of al Ghazzali criticism of the philosophers of his times. That Ghazzali went too far in his criticism. Yes, it can be admitted that the content of medieval philosophy was lacking or erroneous but their methods were sound. The effect of al Ghazzali's criticism on philosophy was that not just the bad content was thrown out but also the sound method. In other words, science was discarded by many of the leading Ulema of their day, while in Christian Europe Ibn Rushd's works and scientism shone like a light from Heaven.

5. Ibn Arabi's Pantheism:

The information of Ibn Arabi's pantheism comes from the book *Islam and the Divine Comedy* written by the Spanish academic Miguel Asin. Miguel Asin's original book was published in Spanish. I am quoting from the abridged English translation of Mr. Harold Sunderland, who did have agreement from Asin in making the English copy. This book is a critical examination of the famously celebrated Italian poet Alighieri Dante's allegorical narrative *The Divine Comedy*. Dante lived from 1265 to 1321 CE. *The Divine Comedy* is the author's imaginary journey through the realms of the afterlife written in verse. In these verses are descriptions of hell, purgatory, and paradise. After years of careful study Miguel Asin found that the core elements of Dante's hell and paradise are largely based on the hadith of prophet Muhammed concerning the Isra and the Miraj, and the spiritual visions of the 13th century Sufi Ibn Arabi. Miguel Asin has thoroughly researched the works of the medieval Spanish Mursian Sufi Ibn Arabi. In discussing how Dante was influenced by Ibn Arabi Miguel Asin touches briefly on the pantheistic belief system of Ibn Arabi.



From the third paragraph of page 168 proceeding to the first paragraph of page 169, the author explains Ibn Arabi's conception of the celestial paradise. Ibn Arabi, he explains, '*employs circles, concentric and*

eccentric, secant and tangent, to represent the almighty, whether in His abstract individuality, in his attributes, names and relations, in his manifestations ad extra, or in His emanation.’ Further down on page 169, the author, now referencing Ibn Arabi’s Futuhat, explains: *‘The procession of beings who emanate from God the essence is also symbolised in the Fuhutat by a circle. The centre like a focus of light, is God, from Whom the contingent beings emanate, just as the radii of a circle proceed from one central point to terminate in a series of points which, when joined together, form the circumference, symbolical of the cosmos; and just as these points are in their essence indistinguishable the one from the other, so also in the emanation of God is there a unity of substance and a multiplicity of epiphanies.*’ Explaining further, now in paragraph 2 of the same page 169, it is explained: *‘All the ingenious and paradoxical similitudes which Ibn Arabi deduces from this symbol of the Divine emanation are founded upon one main idea, the basis of his pantheism, half emanative, half immanent. God and the creatures are one and the same substance.*’

Miguel Asin’s interpretation of Ibn Arabi’s pantheism is echoed in the Encarta Encyclopedia as follows: *‘Ibn Al-Arabi (1165–1240), Sufi mystic and teacher born in Andalusia (an ancient region in present-day Spain) who settled in Damascus, Syria. He was also known as Abu Bakr Muhammad bin Ali Muhyi al-Din. To Ibn Al-Arabi love was more important than knowledge, a theory rejected by traditional Muslim scholars. A prolific writer, he combined inner devotion with an analytical mind, concluding the unity of faiths despite their apparent divergency. This led some other Islamic scholars to accuse him of pantheism. He wrote an estimated 400 books and treatises, including al-Futuhat al-Makiyya (The Makkan Inspirations).*’ (Encarta, version 2005)

I began with the Sufism essay from Professor Tayob and I will end this section with a quotation from the last paragraph in Tayob’s Sufism essay. At the end he says to his readers and would be Sufi followers: *‘There is a palpable turn towards Sufism in South Africa today. Such a turn should be applauded for the hope that it provides for individuals and societies in the throes of change. The tradition of Sufism has much to offer in this regard. However, it is an option that should be taken with both eyes open, and not in a blind leap of faith in the unknown. The Prophet is told in the Qur’an, “This is my way: resting upon conscious insight accessible to reason. I am calling you all to God - I and they who follow me. (Qur’an 12: 108).’*

The last sentence as you can see is Tayob’s translation and interpretation of verse 108 from the 12th surah of the Quran. He is actually misquoting the verse with a pantheistic slant that is adopted by errant Sufis. Tayob begins the translation with the words “This is my way”. The unsuspecting reader, accepting that the Quran is the word of God will assume that God is saying in the first person “This is my way”. That is to say, that God is saying to mankind that this is God’s ways and that God is “calling you all (mankind) to God”.

If that is how you received Tayob’s translation and interpretation then you gone into error. Such a reading can be interpreted in the errant Sufi way that God is calling mankind to a merging and spiritual communion with god in the Sufi corrupted belief of unitive tauhid that negates separation between God and creation and is the brain of disbelieving pantheism. In the sentence before Tayob’s errant translation, he says: *‘The prophet is told in the Quran’.* Yes this part is true. Indeed the prophet is told in the Quran but the prophet is not told of God admitting. The prophet is told of God commanding. There is difference and the difference stems from the omission of Tayob in his translation. Tayob omitted the first word of the verse which is the word ‘Say’, and in the Arabic of the Quran it is the word ‘Kul’. When you add ‘Kul’ to the beginning of the verse the whole meaning changes from pantheistic disbelief (Kufr) to belief (Iman) of Islamic Monotheism. The right translation is: *‘Say, (Kul): This is my way.’* In other words, the prophet is commanded to admit before the people that it is his (the prophet Muhammed’s) way and the wrong reading is that God is admitting his way before the people. Once again, to repeat myself, it is not

God's admission before the people. It is God's command to prophet Muhammed that he (Muhammed) must make the admission before the people IN HIS (Muhammed's) OWN RIGHT.

Unwittingly Tayob is misrepresenting God and prophet Muhammed in his errant translation. In the sentence before the translation Tayob even tells you to undertake '*with both eyes open*'. Lastly, what was misquoted by Tayob was not the full verse. The following translation by Saheeh International is the full verse:

12:108 Say, *"This is my way; I invite to Allah with insight, I and those who follow me. And exalted is Allah; and I am not of those who associate others with Him."*

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