



SOURCE STUDY ANALYSIS OF SUFI OLLOYOR’S WORK “MUROD AL-ORIFIYN”

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Abstract

This paper presents a source-study analysis of Sufi Olloyor’s work “Murod al-Orifiyn” The study examines the historical background of the treatise, its manuscript tradition, and the scholarly interpretations that have shaped its understanding in the field of Islamic studies. Special attention is given to the work’s theological, ethical, and mystical dimensions, as well as its significance within the intellectual heritage of the region. The analysis also highlights the contribution of Sufi Olloyor to the development of spiritual and moral teachings in the broader context of Sufi literature.

Keywords: Sufi Olloyor, Murod al-Orifiyn, manuscript studies, Islamic studies, Sufism, spiritual ethics, source analysis, intellectual heritage.

Introduction

Sufi Olloyor (1644-1724) was a prominent representative of the people of Sufism, a follower of the Naqshbandiyya order, and an interpreter of the Maturidi creed. He is described as a Sufi scholar and poet who conveyed Islamic theology (‘aqida) and Shari’a-based jurisprudence through poetic ghazal form, and at times through prose. His works were unique in their synthesis and served as educational manuals already during his lifetime. They were taught in madrasas, and this tradition continued up to the early twentieth century.

At the beginning of his work Murod al-Orifin (“The Desire of the Gnostics”), the word “Sufi” is explained by the author himself through spiritual insights and concepts rooted in Islamic creed. In this particular text, the author focuses on the scholarly clarity of the subjects he discusses. Even when explaining a single term such as “Sufi,” he cites the Qur’an, Hadith, and credible earlier sources.



Among the works he cites, Abu Bakr Muhammad Kalabadhi's *Sharḥ al-Ta'arruf fi Madhhab al-Taṣawwuf* holds an important place. In this book, the qualities of the Sufis are described as follows: "The reason why they are called Sufi' is that their inner secret (sirr) is pure and purified. The sign of their purity is their outward cleanliness. They keep their hearts free from anything other than God. They do not place their hopes in anyone but Him. They fear none but Him. They love none but Him. They find rest in none but Him. They rely on none but Him. If they lose something, their hearts do not become preoccupied with it."

In explaining the term "Sufi," Sufi Olloyor expands on the inner qualities of the Sufis by bringing evidence primarily from the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith. According to his interpretation: "The secrets of the Sufis are pure, and the signs of this purity are manifested in their outward cleanliness. A Sufi is one who never seeks ostentation (riya') in what he does, does not allow self-admiration (ujb), nor does he show greed regarding his deeds. No matter how much service he renders, he remains humble. A humble person must guard himself against greed and should fear claiming someone else's work as his own. Such behavior is arrogance, and it is an act close to associating partners with God (shirk)."

He also explains that some scholars have said: "The reason they are called 'Sufi' is because they stand in the first row (in worship). A Sufi is one who does not allow his heart to become heedless of the remembrance of the Truth (Allah) even for a moment. Prayer is an act of servitude, and one must face the qibla. Turning one's face away from the Ka'ba during prayer is prohibited. Completely turning away from the qibla invalidates the prayer. The heart is the place of spiritual witnessing, and its qibla is the Lord of the Ka'ba. Turning the heart away from this qibla is the most prohibited and most corrupt action."

Sufi Olloyor also emphasizes that the word "Sufi" is derived from the term *Ahl al-Suffa* from the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him): "Some say that they are called Sufi because they are closer to the *Ahl al-Suffa*. They were those who lived near the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) during his lifetime."

This citation shows that Sufi Olloyor approached the subject with depth and thorough study. He regards the poor emigrants who migrated from Makkah to Madinah as people of the Sufi rank and cites the Qur'anic verses revealed about the *Muhajirun* to illustrate this. Although the terms Sufi and *Tasawwuf* appeared later,



he emphasizes that their essential qualities existed from the earliest period of Islam and affirms that these qualities were present in the Muhajirun.

He supports this with the Qur'anic verse that describes them: "Those poor emigrants who were driven from their homes and their properties..." He also interprets the inability of Sufis to fully engage in worldly occupations through the verse:

Restrained in the path of Allah, unable to move about in the land (to earn)." And he cites the verse describing their lack of greed: "They do not beg of people persistently."

Based on these verses, he states: "Whoever is truly a Sufi, his qualities must be like this so that he may be worthy of this name. Those who describe the Sufis with the qualities of the Ahl al-Suffa attribute them to that group because they were driven from their homeland, walked hungry, thirsty, and unclothed; they ate only to prevent death from hunger and dressed only enough to cover their modesty and to bear hardship. Though they lived in the world, they passed their days without being attached to the world. For worldly wealth belongs only to those who hoard and boast."

Sufi Olloyor then interprets some Sufi qualities through verses of the Qur'an: "They are those who repent, worship, praise Allah, fast, bow, prostrate, enjoin good, forbid evil, and observe the limits set by Allah."

He explains that these qualities, mentioned in the verse, are noble attributes that should be manifested in believers and are essential traits of the Sufis.

Another characteristic of the Sufis is that they travel throughout the earth. As proof, he cites the verse: "Travel through the land." When the polytheists of Makkah persecuted the believers, Allah reproached those who did not migrate, saying: "Was not the earth of Allah spacious enough for you to emigrate therein?"

While interpreting these verses according to their spiritual meaning, Sufi Olloyor explains the attributes of Sufis who journey for the sake of Allah: "The reason the Sufis leave their homeland is that people become overly attached to their native land. The Sufis have no attachment to anything other than Allah. Their separation from their homeland corresponds to the life of the Messenger (peace be upon him) and his noble Companions. They left their homelands, lived in foreign lands, and died as strangers. There is benefit in this, for the one who lives



in estrangement knows his limits and cannot behave immorally. Whoever claims to follow the path of the Messenger (peace be upon him) and his Companions must align himself with them.

The reason they separate from friends and relatives is that such people can become sources of reliance. Reliance upon servants (people) is not proper. How can reliance upon people be proper when, in times of need, one may not find them? The Sufi community is a group that has chosen humiliation over honor and poverty over wealth.”

Continuing his definition of the term Sufi, Sufi Olloyor explains that the rank of the Sufis is superior to that of the ascetics (zahids) and illustrates this with the story of Hatam al-Asamm:

“It is narrated that Hatam al-Asamm came to Baghdad. People informed the Caliph that such a person had arrived. The Caliph sent someone to bring him. Hatam came and said, ‘Peace be upon you, O ascetic!’ The Caliph replied, ‘I am not an ascetic; the world is under my command. You are the ascetic!’ Hatam said, ‘No, rather you are the ascetic.’ Allah the Exalted has said: ‘The worldly goods are but little.’ An ascetic is someone who is content with little. As for me, until I achieve my true spiritual goal, I cannot be content. How then can I be considered an ascetic?”

Another essential trait of the Sufis is trust in Allah (tawakkul). Sufi Olloyor cites the Qur’anic verse:

“And rely upon the Ever-Living who does not die”. He then explains the nature of such reliance:

“One must place trust in the One who is alive, who never dies, and never changes. Whoever you accompany among people seeks his own desires, and when he does not find them in you, he turns away from you.”

While defining the qualities of the Sufis, Sufi Olloyor also notes that it is permissible for them to seek a small portion of worldly means. He explains their relationship with the world as follows:

“The reason the Sufis do not choose the world is that the world has been criticized. It is permissible to seek from the world only enough to prevent hunger and to cover one’s modesty. There are three reasons for acquiring worldly goods. For one reason, it is forbidden (haram); for another, it is permissible (mubah); and for another, it is obligatory (farz). Out of fear of the punishment of the Hereafter, acquiring worldly goods is forbidden. To avoid reckoning, turning away from the world is permissible.



To seek enough worldly means to prevent hunger and to cover one's modesty is obligatory. For this, there is no punishment or reckoning, but rather reward.”

Sufi Olloyor also addresses the view that the word Sufi originates from the word *ṣuf* (wool):

“Some scholars say that they were called Sufi because they wore woolen garments. It is narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him): ‘Whoever wears wool, his heart becomes soft.’ Their wearing wool in ancient times is not like the woolen garments worn by some today. There are many reasons for their being called by this name; here we have mentioned it briefly.”

This demonstrates that the author thoroughly studied the sources and gathered all relevant information on the subject. He further notes that Sufis do not always live in settled conditions; sometimes they depart on spiritual journeys: “It is mentioned in the books that some from this group, during times of hardship, wandered in deserts and entered caves in order to preserve their religion. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

A time will come upon people when a person's religion will not remain safe unless he flees from mountain peak to mountain peak. The origin of their choosing caves goes back to the People of the Cave (Aṣḥab al-Kahf). When they became disheartened by their people, they fled and entered the cave. Allah the Exalted called them ‘young men’ in the verse: ‘Indeed, they were young men who believed in their Lord.’

They also followed the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him), who went to the cave with Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him). Allah says regarding this: ‘When the two of them were in the cave, he said to his companion: Do not grieve; indeed Allah is with us.’”

In conclusion, it can be said that Sufi Olloyor himself was a spiritual guide and leader of a Sufi path. He showed the nature of the Sufi rank and how one may attain it in practice. From his views we understand that although the terms Sufi and Tasawwuf do not appear in the earliest Islamic sources and emerged later as terminology, the individuals possessing these spiritual qualities existed from the beginning of Islam. Some critics of Sufism reject the entire discipline simply because these terms are not found in the earliest Islamic texts. Sufi Olloyor, however, considers every noble deed performed by a believer—from the moment



revelation descended upon the Prophet (peace be upon him)—as part of the qualities of the Sufis.

In short, any Muslim who adheres steadfastly to the teachings of Islam embodies the qualities of a Sufi. The purpose of promoting Sufi qualities is to encourage people toward purity, honesty, and moral-spiritual refinement.

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