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## What the Salaf said about the Soofees

Transcribed & compiled by: Akram bin Muhammad ‘Abdul-Qaadir as-Saylaanee an-Najdee

Source: Towards Understanding Salafiyyah

Version 1.1

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*“May Allaah have Mercy upon you, the Madhhab (way) of the Soofiyyah is Baatil”*

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There were a group of people who were known in their time to sing and make poetry which exceeded the boundaries of the Sharee'ah, they were a new group who went into extremes regarding Zuhd (abstinence from the worldly life) and innovated into the Religion, they called themselves the Soofees.

To gain a correct understanding of this group then we shall look at the statement of Ibn Taymiyyah on the sect of the Soofees and their beginnings.

Shaykh ul-Islam Ahmad bin 'Abdul-Haleem Ibn Taymiyyah al-Harraanee says in his Majmoo' al-Fataawa about their beginning:

(الصوفية): فإنه لم يكن مشهوراً في القرون الثلاثة أما لفظ

((As for the term, "as-Soofiyyah" was not known in the first three generations of al-Islam))

زيد وأول من بنى دويرة الصوفية بعض أصحاب عبد الواحد بن

((The first who set up small soofee meetings were some of the companions of 'Abdil-Waahid bin Zayd))

And he said:

أصحاب الحسن، وكان في البصرة من المبالغة في الزهد وعبد الواحد من  
يكن في سائر أهل الأمصار؛ ولهذا كان والعبادة والخوف ونحو ذلك، /مالم  
بصرية يقال : فقه كوفي، وعبادة

((Abdul-Waahid was from the companions of al-Hasan (al-Basree). In al-Basrah, he was from the exaggerators in asceticism, worship, fear and similar to that, of whatever did

*not exist in the rest of the people of cities. And because of that, it used to be said, "Koofan jurisprudence, Basran worship."))*

Imaam adh-Dhahabee said in his biography of him in Volume 7, pages 178 to 180 of his Siyaar A'laam an-Nubalaa:

الزاهد القدوة شيخ العباد أبو عبيدة البصري حدث عن عبد الواحد بن زيد  
الله بن راشد وعبادة ابن نسي وعدة وعنه الحسن وعطاء بن أبي رباح وعبد  
سليمان الداراني ومسلم بن محمد بن السماك ووكيعة وزيد بن الحباب وأبو  
تركوه وقال إبراهيم وآخرون وحديثه من قبيل الواهي عندهم قال البخاري  
النسائي متروك الحديث

*(('Abdul Waahid bin Zaid, the Ascetic (Zaahid), the example, the Shaykh of the worshippers, Aboo 'Ubaydah al-Basree. He narrated from al-Hasan (al-Basree) and 'Ataa bin Abee Rabaah and 'Abdullaah bin Raashid and 'Ubaadah ibn Nasee and many more. And from him Muhammad bin as-Samaak and Wakee' and Zayd bin al-Habbaab and Aboo Sulaymaan ad-Daarinee and Muslim bin Ibraaheem and others.*

*And his Hadeeth are unsound from him. Imaam al-Bukhaaree said: "Leave him" Imaam an-Nasaa'ee said: Abandoned in hadeeth"))*

Ibn Taymiyyah also mentioned concerning the Soofiyyah in his Majmoo' al-Fataawa:

واحد من الأئمة والشيوخ؛ كالإمام أحمد ابن حنبل، وقد نقل التكلم به عن غير  
وقد روى عن سفيان الثوري أنه تكلم به، وأبي سليمان الداراني، وغيرهما.  
في المعنى الذي / أضيف وبعضهم يذكر ذلك عن الحسن البصري، وتنازعوا  
ذلك. إليه الصوفي، فإنه من أسماء النسب؛ كالقرشي، والمدني، وأمثال

لقليل: صُفِّي. فقليل: إنه نسبة إلى (أهل الصفة) وهو غلط؛ لأنه لو كان كذلك  
فإنه لو كان كذلك وقيل: نسبة إلى الصف المقدم بين يدي الله، وهو أيضاً غلط؛  
غلط؛ لأنه لو كان كذلك لقليل: صُفِّي. وقيل: نسبة إلى الصفة من خلق الله وهو  
طابخة، قبيلة من لقليل: صفوي. وقيل: نسبة إلى صوفة بن بشر بن أد بن  
وهذا وإن العرب كانوا يجاورون بمكة من الزمن القديم، ينسب إليهم النساك،  
كان موافقاً للنسب من جهة اللفظ، فإنه ضعيف أيضاً؛ لأن هؤلاء غير  
ولا معروفين عند أكثر النساك، ولأنه لو نسب النساك إلى هؤلاء مشهورين،  
الصحابة والتابعين وتابعيهم أولى، ولأن غالب من لكان هذا النسب في زمن  
القبيلة، ولا يرضى أن يكون مضافاً إلى تكلم باسم (الصوفي) لا يعرف هذه

*((Speaking of it has been conveyed from more than one of the imaams and the shaikhs; such as al-Imaam Ahmad bin Hanbal, Abee Sulaimaan ad-Daaraanee and others. And it has been narrated about Sufyaan ath-Thawree that he spoke of it. And some of them mention that about al-Hasan al-Basree. And they dispute about the meaning that as-soofee is linked to, for indeed, it is from the names of ascription; such as al-Qurashee, al-Madaneer and the likes of that.*

*So, it is said: that it is an ascription to the people of suffah. It is wrong because if it were like that, it would be said "suffee". It is said: [it is] an ascription to the front row (as-saff al-muqaddam) between Allaah's hands, and it is wrong because if it were like that, it would be said: "saffee". It is said: [it is] an ascription to the chosen one (safwah) from Allaah's creation. It is wrong because if it were like that, it would be said: "safwee". It is said: [it is] an ascription to Soorah bin Bishr bin Add bin Taabikhah, a tribe from the Arabs neighbouring Makkah from ancient times. The ascetics are ascribed to them, and this, even if it was in agreement with the ascription from the angle of wording, then indeed, it is weak also because [(i)] those ones are not famous, nor well-known with most of the ascetics. And [(ii)] because if the ascetics were ascribed to these ones, this ascription would surely have existed during the time of the Companions, the Taabi'een and their followers first. And [(iii)] because the majority of those who speak of the name "as-soofee" do not know this tribe and it is not favourable that it be linked to a tribe in*

*jaahiliyyah that does not have an existence in Islaam.*

*It is said – and it is well-known –: that it is an ascription to clothes of wool. For indeed, the first of what appeared of the Soofiyyah was from al-Basrah. The first who set up small soofee meetings were some of the companions of ‘Abdil-Waahid bin Zaid. ‘Abdul-Waahid was from the companions of al-Hasan. In al-Basrah, he was from the exaggerators in asceticism, worship, fear and similar to that, of whatever did not exist in the rest of the people of cities. And because of that, it used to be said, “Koofan jurisprudence, Basran worship.” Abush-Shaikh al-Asbahaanee had narrated with a chain from Muhammad bin Seereen that it reached him that a people used to give preference to clothes of wool, so he said, “Indeed, a people make wool better saying that they are of those who resemble the Messiah, son of Mary. And we say the guidance of our Prophet is more beloved to us. The Prophet used to wear cotton and other than it,” or words similar to this.))*

Imaam Abul Faraj ibnul Jawzee said in his Talbees Iblees:

اليها بالسماع والتصوف كان ابتداءؤها الزهد الكلي ثم ترخص المنتسبون  
والرقص فمال اليهم طلاب الآخرة من العوام لما يظهرونه من التزهد، وما  
اليهم طلاب الدنيا لما يرون عندهم من الراحة واللعب

*((Tasawwuf (Soofism) is a way whose beginning was complete avoidance of the affairs of worldly life (Zuhd), then those who attached themselves to it became lax in allowing singing and dancing. Therefore, the seekers of the Hereafter from the common people became attracted to them due to the avoidance of the worldly life which they manifested, and the seekers after this world were also attracted to them due to the life of ease and frivolity which they were seen to live))*

Then Ibnul Jawzee further stated:

ويدل على الفرق بينهما أن الزهد فالتصوف مذهب معروف يزيد على الزهد  
لم يذمه أحد وقد ذموا التصوف على ما سيأتي ذكره

*((Tasawwuf (Soofism) is a way that is well known for exceeding in abstinence of worldly luxuries (zuhd). What shows the difference between them is that no one ever condemned abstinence (zuhd), whereas Soofism was condemned because of what we will mention later.))*

Concerning the Soofiyyah, al-Bayhaqee recorded in his Manaaqib ash-Shaafi'iyah in volume 2 on page 208 that Imaam ash-Shaafi'ee said:

أول النهار لم يأت عليه الظهر إلا وجدته أحرق لو أن رجلاً تصوَّف من

*((If a person practiced Tasawwuf (soofism) in the first part of the day, he does not arrive at Dhuhur except as an Idiot))*

Al-Bayhaqee also reported that ash-Shaafi'ee said:

ما رأيت صوفياً عاقلاً قط إلا مسلم الخوَّاص

*((I have not met a sane Soofee ever, except Muslim al-Khawaas))*

Al-Bayhaqee also mentioned on the same page that ash-Shaafi'ee said:

لا يكون الصوفي صوفياً حتى يكون فيه أربع خصال كسول أكل نؤم كثير  
الفضول.

*((A Soofee does not become a Soofee until he has with him four traits: Laziness, Eating a lot, Sleeping a lot, and Curiosity))*

Aboo Nu'aym al-Asbahaanee reported in his Hilyatul Awliyaa (9/136 to 137) that ash-Shaafi'ee said:

أسس التصوف على الكسل

*((The foundation of Tasawwuf is in laziness))*

Al-Khattaabee reported in his al-'Azlah from 'Alee bin Yahya al-Warraaq that he said about Imaam ash-Shaafi'ee:

وكان إلى جنبه إنسان من الصوفية ، وكان يُسمى الشافعي البطل ! يقول: هذا  
البطل ! وهذا البطل

*((And he used to protect the people from the Soofiyyah, and ash-Shaafi'ee used to known them as Falsehood! He would say: "This is Falsehood! And this is Falsehood))*

Ibnul Jawzee recorded on page 371 of his Talbees Iblees that Imaam ash-Shaafi'ee said:

فعاد عقله أبداً ما لزم أحد الصوفيين أربعين يوماً

*((No one accompanies the Soofiyyeen for forty days and has his brain return with him ever))*

Concerning their actions of singing and over indulgence in poetry, Imaam ash-Shaafi'ee had said about them:

التغيير، يزعمون أنه يرقق القلوب، خلفت ببغداد شيئاً أحدثته الزنادقة، يسمونه  
يصدون به الناس عن القرآن

((I left behind something in Baghdaad which is innovated by the heretics, they call it “at-Taghbeer”, they think that it softens the hearts, they use it to distract the people from the Qur’aan)) (Reported by Shaykh ul-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah in his Majmoo’ al Fataawa in volume 11)

Shaykh ul-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah said in volume 11 of his Majmoo’ al-Fataawa, narrating about the Soofees and their poetry:

فقال: محدث، فقيل له: أنجلس معهم فيه؟ فقال: لا يجلس وسئل الإمام أحمد عنه  
معهم.

((And Imaam Ahmad was asked about it so he said: “Newly Invented”, so it was said to him “Shall we sit with them in it?” He said: “No do not sit with them”))

Al-Qaadhee ‘Iyyaad said in his Tarteeb al-Madaarik wa Taqreeb al-Masaalik li Ma’rifatu A’laam Madhhab Maalik (2/54) that ‘Abdullaah bin Yoosuf at-Taneese said:

كنا عند مالك وأصحابه حوله فقال رجل من أهل نصيبين: يا أبا عبد الله عندنا  
قوم يقال لهم الصوفية يأكلون كثيراً ثم يأخذون في القصائد ثم يقومون  
فيرقصون.

فقال مالك: أصيبان هم؟ قال: لا.

قال: أمجانين؟ قال: لا، قوم مشائخ وغير ذلك عقلاء.

قال مالك: ما سمعت أن أحداً من أهل الإسلام يفعل هذا.

قال الرجل: بل يأكلون ثم يقومون فيرقصون نوابب ويلطم بعضهم رأسه

وبعضهم وجهه. فضحك مالك ثم قام فدخل منزله.

فقال أصحاب مالك للرجل: لقد كنت يا هذا مشؤوماً على صاحبنا، لقد جالسناه

نيفاً وثلاثين سنة فما رأينا ضحك إلا في هذا اليوم

((We were with Maalik and his companions were with him so a man from the people of Naseeben said: “O Abaa ‘Abdillaah, there is a group of people with us who are known as the Soofiyyah, they eat a lot then they take part in poetry then they stand and dance.”

So Maalik said: “Are they children?” He said: “No” He said: “Are they insane?” He said: “No they are old men and other than that from sane people.” Maalik said: “I have not heard anyone from the people of Islaam doing this.”

*The man said: "Rather they eat then they stand and dance and some of them slap their heads and faces." So Maalik laughed then stood and entered his home.*

*So the companions of Maalik said to the man: "This is something ominous amongst our companions, we have sat with him for over thirty years and we have not seen him laugh except on this day")*

It is recorded in Tahdheeb at-Tahdheeb in volume 2 on page 135 that Abee Zur'ah ar-Razee was asked about al-Haarith al-Muhaasibee's books and he said:

إياك و هذه الكتب بدع و ضلالات

*((Beware of these books of Bid'ah and Misguidance))*

Ibn Muflih has a chapter in his book Aadaab ash-Sharee'ah in volume 2 called:

كَرَاهَةُ الْكَلَامِ فِي الْوَسَاوِسِ وَخَطَرَاتِ الْمُتَصَوِّفَةِ

*((Repugnance of speaking in whispers and the dangers of the practitioners of Soofism))*

Ibn Muflih recorded in his Aadaab ash-Sharee'ah (1/235) that Ibn 'Aqeel said:

مَا عَلَى الشَّرِيعَةِ أَضْرٌ مِنْ الْمُتَكَلِّمِينَ وَالْمُتَصَوِّفِينَ

*((There is nothing more harmful to the Sharee'ah than the Mutakallimeen (those involved in theological rhetoric) and the practitioners of Soofism))*

Imaam al-Qurtubee recorded in his Jaami' al-Ahkaam al-Quraan in volume 11 on page 237 that at-Tartoosee said:

الله، مذهب الصوفية بطالة وجهالة وضلالة، وما الإسلام إلا الكتاب يرحمك  
...الله، وسنة رسوله

*((May Allaah have Mercy upon you, the Madhhab (way) of the Soofiyyah is Baatil (Falsehood), and Ignorant and misguided, and Islaam is only the Book of Allaah and the Sunnah of His Messenger...))*

