



Mystical interpretation of the Qur'ān

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Abstract:

Interpretation of the verses of Qur'ān, has a history back to the early revelation. Muslims believe that Qur'ān is the word of God, which is revealed to Muhammad, and therefore, understanding the real purpose of the Qur'ān, is vital. Reading the Qur'ān, for traditional Muslims was not like reading a scientific or historical text, it was rather encountering with a metaphysical reality that is formulated in the form of the letters, words, verses and chapters with the goal of educating man to realize his/her potential faculties in becoming what he/she is created for. In this encounter with a sacred reality that connected them to the both visible and invisible realm, they sought to find out the core meaning of the revealed message. The text in a way was such as a mirror in which everyone who tried to look at it saw himself. If he/she was a philosopher, jurist, theologian or a Sufi, he was interpreting through his own terms. As Shams-iTabrīzī describes it in his *Maqālāt*:

For the travelers and the wayfarers, each verse of the Koran is like a message and a love-letter [‘ishq-nāma]. They know the Koran. He presents and discloses the beauty of the Koran to them. ¹

If for the wayfarer (*Sālīk*) it is a love-letter, for jurist it seems more to be source of law, or for philosopher a book to find arguments. Commentators on the Qur'ān from the beginning of Islam to the present day have shown us the mirror in which they saw it and shared its content with us.

As noted above, the Qur'ān for Sufis was a love-letter. Not only the Qur'ān, rather the act of creation according to Sufism is result of love. Sufis mostly narrate the following tradition to allude to the reason of

¹ Chittick, In Search of the Lost Heart: Explorations in Islamic Thought, 2012, pp. 58-9



creation: "I was a hidden treasure; I loved to be known. Hence I created the world so that I would be known."²

Within the essentiality of love for Sufism, and also the necessity of knowing the creature, when a Sufi reads the Scripture, he sees a love letter in which God addresses man on how to find the path to the eternal abode. According to Sufi interpretation, the one who created the world out of love has sent man a love-letter. As it is written by love, it should be read with love.

Keywords: Qur'ān, Interpretation, Mysticism, Sufism, Ta'wīl

Mysticism, Sufism

The term "mystic" according to some, refers to something that is hidden or concealed. In religious language it alludes to "“hidden” allegorical interpretations of Scriptures and to hidden presences”³. There is however, a term like mystical experience that in a wide sense according to Gellman and Zalta refers to “granting acquaintance of realities or states of affairs that are of a kind not accessible by way of sense perception, somatosensory modalities, or standard introspection.”⁴

Webster's Third edition gives three definitions as follow:

1 : the experience of mystical union or direct

communion with ultimate reality reported by mystics

2: the belief that direct knowledge of God, spiritual truth, or ultimate reality can be attained through subjective experience (as intuition or insight)

3 a: vague speculation: a belief without sound basis

b : a theory postulating the possibility of direct and intuitive acquisition of ineffable knowledge or power.⁵

² Majlisi, 1404 H, p. 199

³ Gellman, Jerome, Edward N. Zalta, 2014

⁴ Gellman, Jerome, Edward N. Zalta, 2014)

⁵ Webster, 2014



As William Chittick shows in “mysticism in Islam,” if one accepts the first meaning of the Webster’s account of mysticism, then “Surely those who have any sympathy with religion would agree that religion, without some sort of communion with ultimate reality, would have nothing to distinguish it from a merely human construction.”⁶ In this definition as religion in its very foundation connects or communicates with the ultimate reality or God, then religion will be equal to mysticism, and as many people who follow religion in one way or another seek to communicate with the ultimate reality, then it is not a “vague speculation” as defined in the third stage by Webster, for if it is then religion per se is a vague speculation. Therefore, religiously speaking, “The experience of communion with ultimate reality lies at the foundation of religion, and the quest for such communion has always motivated the practice of religious people.”⁷ In this sense mysticism lies in the heart of religion.

For its strong negative connotations some authors prefer to use the term Sufism in Islamic content, rather than using the term mysticism.⁸ Then Sufism in Islam is a theoretical and practical tendency to ascetics, love, poverty (*faqr*) in one’s communication with God and knowledge of Him (*ma’rifah*) through self-knowledge. Therefore:

Scholars associated with Sufism developed a distinctive methodology. With good reason, their approach has often been called "mystical." Webster's second definition of mysticism tells us that it can mean "the doctrine or belief that direct knowledge of God, of spiritual truth, or ultimate reality . . . is attainable through

⁶Chittick, *Mysticism in Islam*, 2003

⁷ Chittick, *Mysticism in Islam*, 2003

⁸ . For a fine explanation of this usage, see: Chittick, William, *Mysticism and Islam*, A lecture delivered at the David M.

Kennedy Center for International Studies, Brigham Young University, May 2003.



immediate intuition, insight, or illumination and in a way differing from ordinary sense perception or ratiocination." This doctrine is certainly characteristic of the Sufi approach to understanding God and the world.⁹

Sufis, based on their understanding of the Qur'ān and prophetic narrations, have stressed that the words of Qur'ān have both inner and outer sides. One should not stop in reading the book in its outer meaning; rather should try hard to gain the inner meaning.

"Since Sufism represents the inner aspect of Islam its doctrine is in substance an esoteric commentary on the Qur'ān."¹⁰ Meanwhile they stress that their reading of Qur'ān is not neglecting the outer meaning; rather it is a way from outward to inner aspects.

Qur'ān's Mystical aspects

If mysticism alludes to inner aspects, then

the Qur'ān in a wide range is mystical. In contrary, some scholars such as Ignaz Goldziher (1850-1921) tend to interpret the mystical reading of Qur'ān as, "the reading of one's own ideas into a text". In other word, he means that the Qur'ān not only has no mystical/inner aspects; rather whatever Sufis attributed to the Qur'ān as mystical or spiritual meaning is their own readings that has no origin in Qur'ān. According to this view attributing a mystical dimension to Qur'ān is a biased reading of the text. On the other hand, scholars such as Louis Massignon, (1883-1962) and Paul Nwyia in their research tried to show how mystical reading of the Qur'ān is result of "a dialogue between personal, mystic experience, and the text of the Qur'ān"¹¹ As Sands alludes "Both Massignon and Nwyia insisted that the Qur'ānic text remains primary for the Sufi; that is to say, the Muslim mystic does not impose his own ideas on the Qur'ānic text, but rather discovers ideas in the course of his experiential dialogue with the text."¹² In fact according to Goldziher, mystical or Sufi

⁹ Chittick, 2003

¹⁰ Burckhardt, 2008

¹¹ Sands, 2006, p. 2

¹² Sands, 2006, p. 2



reading of the Qur'ān has appeared in the latter history of Islam and thereupon it is alien to it. This approach in a way searches to find any witness in the early Islamic history or in the Qur'ān to show that whether Islam supports the Sufi reading or not. It however contains historical methodology in Islamic studies, on the other hand it lacks the comprehensive understanding of it. In this reading finding a historical document may prove a dimension of Islam, while not finding it causes its denial. Historical encountering with the Sacred is not always helpful, especially when one ponders upon the mystical concepts. Qur'ān may lead to spirituality but may not use the term Sufism, historical studying of Islam, in such a way may deny the mystical aspect of Qur'ān or Islam. Not only in some Western reading of the Qur'ān, but within the Muslims scholarship of the Qur'ān, there has been disagreement of the Sufi reading of the Scripture:

“For Ebn al-Jawzī and Ebn
Taymīya *‘ilm al-bāṭen*
was an inadmissible
innovation; like all

Hanbalites, they believed that God has given his last word to humans by transmitting through the Koran and the Sunna all that He wished them to learn, and that this final revelation is intelligible to anybody without special knowledge.”¹³

As shown above, historical reading may deny mystical understanding of the Qur'ān. One way to have a more accurate reading is the phenomenological approach. In this approach even if the term Sufism, has appeared in the latter Islamic history, still one cannot ignore the mystical aspects of Qur'ān. This is for the fact that analyzing the relation between Qur'ān/Islam and mysticism/ Sufism is not assessed through asking questions such as whether mysticism could be a state within the other states of Islam. Later historical appearance of an idea or way of thought does not necessarily mean that it is not derived from Islam or has no dependence to the primary

¹³ Radtke, 1988



source. If in the nature and phenomenon of Islam, i.e. its reality, one can find the essence of Sufi understanding, even if Sufism as a term has appeared only in the later Islamic period, yet it does not mean that Sufi reading of the Qur'ān is "the reading of one's own ideas into a text".

Mystical reading of the Qur'ān

Early generation of Muslim scholars according to Allāma Tabātabā'ī used the word *Ta'wīl* (Qur'ānic hermeneutics) to refer to commentary or *tafsīr*.¹⁴ There is considerable disagreement as to the meaning of exegesis, *ta'wīl*, and it is possible to count more than ten different views. There are, however, two views which have gained general acceptance. The first one is that of the early generation of scholars who used the word exegesis, *ta'wīl*, as a synonym for commentary, or *tafsīr*.

Tabātabā'ī agrees that "According to this view all Qur'anic verses are open to *ta'wīl* although according to the verse, "nobody knows its interpretation (ta'wīl)

except God," it is the implicit verses whose interpretation (ta'wīl) is known only to God."¹⁵

The Arabic word *ta'wīl* is derived from *a-w-l*, a root that means returning to the original. Generally, in Qur'ānic sciences it also has two meanings. The first one refers to justifying the ambiguous (*Mutashabih*)_that is providing an intellectual meaning for it. The Interpreter in this case refers the ambiguous to a direction that is harmonious with its meaning. This is like what is (18:78) in the story of Moses and al-Khiḍr,: "I will inform you about the interpretation (ta'wīl) of that over which you could not maintain patience." In this example, al-Khiḍr tries to inform Moses of the secrets of things that he was not able to understand and had no patience for them. Therefore justifying the ambiguous words or actions is called *ta'wīl* and thus the first meaning of *ta'wīl* is merely to unveil the ambiguous verses of the Qur'ān.

According to the second definition, *ta'wīl* includes a meaning that the outer aspect of the verse does not mention and the

¹⁴ Tabātabā'ī, 1987

¹⁵ Tabātabā'ī, 1987, p. 54



interpreter deduces it from an external argument. Therefore it is called esoteric (bātinī) just as the first meaning of the verse is called exoteric (Ẓāhirī). Ta'wīl, as it is defined in the second definition, includes all the Qur'ānic verses, not only the ambiguous ones as mentioned in the first definition. Sufis by referring to the layers and levels of the reality and existence, apply the same levels for the verses of Qur'ān. As the Qur'ān puts it: "He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden." (57:3) Therefore, his book has such levels.

Like the Qur'ān's stress on gaining knowledge and understanding, prophetic traditions (hadith) also follow the same path: "The search for knowledge is incumbent upon every Muslim, male and female."

Asserting the unity of God and communicating with Him is not possible unless one knows whom is he/she talking to or worshipping. If the subject of knowledge is the ultimate reality then;

like any great religion,
Islam addresses three

primary domains of human concern. These can be called body, mind, and spirit; or doing, knowing, and being. The body is the realm of activity, ritual observance, and social relationships. The mind is the realm of perceiving, believing, knowing, and understanding. The spirit is the realm of the deepest awareness of self and of direct communion with ultimate reality, which is God, or true and real Being.¹⁶

As mentioned above, mystics/Sufis in Islamic tradition sought to find the real purpose of the revelation. Sufi literature indicates that Qur'ān has been revealed to educate man and show him the path of his/her perfection. Āyatullāh Khomeinī (1902-1989), while indicating that his interpretation is only a possible interpretation of the Qur'ān, (Light

¹⁶ Chittick, *Mysticism in Islam*, 2003



Within Me)in one of his mystical works alludes to this point:

If we do look at its teaching and educational side, we concern ourselves with its eloquence and syntax and its miraculous aspects, or even somewhat higher, we engage ourselves with its history, the occasions of the revelation of the *āyahs*, the times of their revelation, which *sūrah* or *āyahwas* revealed in Mecca and which in Medina, the differences in recitations and in the exegeses of the Sunnis and the Shī'ah and other secondary affairs which are outside the main objective and they themselves cause us to be barred from the Qur'an and to neglect remembering

Allah. Even our great commentators of the Qur'an are very much concerned about one or another of the said affairs, without opening the door of learning to the people.¹⁷

Nevertheless, a proper *ta'wīl* according to Sufism, aside from ones mastering in sciences of Qur'ān, requires self-purification in order to make one able to receive the lights of the inner aspects of Qur'ān.

[A short historical background \(from 8th to 12th century\)](#)

Bāṭin or inner is opposite of outer or ***ẓāhir***. ***Both Bāṭin and ẓāhir*** are among God's Most beautiful names (*al-Asma' al-Husnā*). The Qur'ān describes God as ***al-ẓāhir wa'l-bāṭin***. (57:3) Sufis by mentioning some narrations of Muhammad (sw) believe that the first person who ascribed to have inner and outer sides to the Qur'ān was Prophet himself. Ibn Mas'ud has narrated from Muhammad that he said

¹⁷ Khomeini, 1996, p. 124



Qur'ān has both *Bāṭin* and *ẓāhir*:

The messenger of God said, "The Qur'ān was sent down in seven ahraf [letters]. Each harf [letter] has a back (ẓāhir) and belly (Bāṭin). Each harf has a border (hadd) and each border has a lookout point (muttala)." 18

There are other traditions of Prophet that alludes to the point that each verses of Qur'ān has bāṭin and ẓāhir and each letter of it has ta'wīl that only God and those firmly grounded in knowledge know. The Qur'ān itself says "But no one knows its interpretation (Ta'wīl) except Allah and those firmly grounded in knowledge" (3:7).

"According to a saying of the Prophet, "no verse of the Qur'ān has been revealed which has not an external aspect and an inner aspect. Every letter has its definite sense (*hadd*) and every definition implies a place of ascent (*maṭla'*)." 19

ʿAli, the son-in-law of Muḥammad, and the first Imām of the Shi'ite Islam also ascribes Qur'ān for having the inner and outer sides. He mentions that "Certainly the outside of the Qur'an is wonderful and its inside is deep (in meaning)." 20

Or in other instances such as:

"If I had wished, I could have loaded seventy camels with commentary on the *Fātiha* of the Book....For the one who understands the Qur'ān, thereby whole bodies of knowledge are explained." 21

Companions of Muhammad have also alluded to inner interpretation of the Qur'ān. ʿAbdAllāh ibn al-ʿAbbās (born c. 619—died 687/688), as one of the early Qur'ān scholars while interpreting the chapter victory (*al-Fath*) moving beyond the outer meaning of the verses concludes that this chapter alludes to the death of Muhammad.

¹⁸ Khomeini, 1996, p. 124

¹⁹ Burckhardt, 2008

²⁰ Bihār al-Anwār, 1404 H, pp. 284, vol.2

²¹ Bihār al-Anwār, pp. 89, Vol 93



Likewise the followers (*Tābi'ūn*), have used *ta'wīl* not only in ambiguous verses but also to the other ones, that had been revealed in within a clear occasions or circumstances of revelation (*Asbāb al-nuzūl*). There exist many examples of this kind that are attributed to Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Bāqir (676-733 AD) and Ja'far ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq (702–765) both descendant of Ali. Al-Ṣādiq for instance, characterizes the letters of Qur'ān as follows:

The Book of God has four things: the clear expression (*ibāra*), the allusion (*ishāra*), subtleties (*latā'if*) and realities (*haqā'iq*). The clear expression is for the common people (*'awāmm*), the allusion is for the elite (*khawāṣ*), the subtleties are for the friends (*awlīyā'*), and the realities are for the prophets (*anbīyā'*).²²

Thus, the language of al-Ṣādiq imprint the early stages of "īrfānī interpretation" from

within the Muslim community and the Qurānīc context.

After the followers (*Tābi'ūn*), *ta'wīl* spread more in the first half of the 2nd Islamic century. The translation and spreading Greek philosophical and theological heritage among the Muslims made them to have deeper contemplations upon their own Scripture. Muslims considered *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān as a way to encounter the new cultural era. Tustari (d. 283/89) in the third Islamic century wrote a short commentary on Qur'ān that was totally an esoteric (*bāṭini*) interpretation. He mentioned that the Qur'ān "contained several levels of meaning", which included the outer or *zahir* and the inner or *batin*"²³, a century later Abu 'Abdarrahmān as-Sulamī (937-1021) wrote his *Haqa'iq at-tafsir* in which according to as-Sulamī made two essential points:

"First, he explicitly states that he combined two categories of content in his work: *ayāt*, glosses or interpretive commentson Qur'anic phrases, and

²² Sands, 2006, p. 12

²³ Glasse, 2008, p. 393



aqwāl, Sufi sayings on topics prompted by a key term drawn from such phrases.”²⁴

A good deal of attention toward inner interpretation of Qur‘ān, in fifth Islamic century appeared in the works of Abu Hāmid Muhammad al-Ghazālī (1058-1111), Ahmad Sam‘ānī (d.1140) and Abu al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (d. 1074). Ghazālī in his book, “Jawāhir al-Qur‘ān” makes it clear that dealing merely with the outward of the Qur‘ān is like staying in the shore of the sea and closing the eye to its inner wonders:

Haven’t you heard that the Qur‘ān is an ocean from which the knowledge of all ages branches out just as rivers and streams branch out from the shores of the ocean? Don’t you envy the happiness of people who have plunged into its overflowing waves and

seized red sulfur, who have dived into its depths and taken out red rubies, shining pearls and green chrysolite, who have roamed its shores and gathered gray ambergris and fresh blooming aloe wood, who have clung to its islands and found an abundance in their animals of the greatest antidote and pungent musk?²⁵

It was in this period that concept of mutual love between man and God was more than before expressed. These authors some time were calling their readers as Chevalier (Persian: Jawanmard) as Chittick puts, “indicating not who the readers are, but what they should be striving to become, namely, people of perfect virtue, wisdom, generosity, kindness, and compassion.”²⁶

Rashid al-Din Meybudīn in his *Kashf al-Asrār* made another Sufi commentary to Qur‘ān. He

²⁴ Böwering, 1996

²⁵ Al-Ghazali, 1983

²⁶ Chittick, *Divine Love*, 2013, p. xxii



gives three levels of interpretation to each verse that he interprets. In the first level he gives a Persian translation of the Arabic verse with some grammatical explanation, in the second level he deals with the history of the Qur'ānic commentary and explains how prior commentators dealt with the verse. His third level of interpretation is an esoteric interpretation of the verse. It is in the third level that he applies is a perfect use of Sufi language. Below is an example of his third level commentary to “the compassionate, the merciful”:

He is the All- Merciful who accepts the servants' obedience, even if it is little, and He is the Ever- Merciful who forgives their disobedient acts even if they are great. He is the All- Merciful who adorns outwardness and sculpts the form, and He is the Ever- Merciful who makes inwardness flourish and

guards the hearts in His grasp. He is the All- Merciful who makes subtle lights appear in your face, and He is the Ever- merciful who places secret deposits in your heart.²⁷

With emergence of Ibn 'Arabī (1165-1240) the language of mystical interpretation shifted toward a more complex terminology. He established a new style of mystical writing that after him was called the school of Ibn 'Arabī. Almost all of his writings have dealt with Qur'ānic verses, and he has suggested his commentaries based on an esoteric understanding.

Sayyed Bahā' -al-Dīn Ḥaydar **Āmoli** (1320-1385), a profound scholar of eighth Islamic century, after Ibn 'Arabi, completed his seven volume exegesis of the Qur'ān, *al-Moḥīṭ al-a'zam*, in 1375-76. He tried to join the Shi'a mystical understanding of the Qur'ān with the Sufi approach. **Āmoli's commentary is one of the very important contributions of Sufi/Shi'a approach toward understanding**

²⁷ Meybudi, Rashid al-Din, William Chittick, 2014



the Qur'ān. Kohlberg emphasizes that the significance of āmolī, remains in two point,

“First, he was an early proponent of the thesis that Imamite Shi‘ism, which combines the *ṣarī‘a*, *ṭarīqa*, and *ḥaqīqa*, is identical with Sufism... Second, Āmolī was an early example of a long line of Imamite thinkers (stretching to our own day) who incorporated the thought of Ebn al-‘Arabī and his followers into their writings.”²⁸

The mystical approach to understand Qur'ān, has continued to our present day. Nevertheless one cannot ignore the effect of Ibn ‘Arabi’s school of to the later generations.

[Sufi Terminology](#)

Sufi language and its interpretation of the Qur'ān is rather a universal language. Every one with a sense of spiritual understanding, whether a Muslim or not, can grasp the state of the author. This is exactly for the point that the main issue of Sufis in their works is a mutual love between man and God. Seeking to find

God, join his blessing, annihilating in Him, characterizing one with God’s Character traits.

On the otherhand Qur'ān, as a word of God for Sufis is a mirror by looking in which everyone finds a description of him/herself.

In their commentaries, Sufi’s more or less use same terminology. Among them one can allude to the followings: Love (*Hub*), Poverty (*Faqr*), *Fana*, *Baqa*, *Kashf*, intimacy with God, (*uns*)Unveiling (*kashf*), Taste (*dhuq*), Trust (*Amanat*).

The story of love begins with creation, God according to Sufi tradition created the man out of Love. God knows himself and loves himself, then he creates man to love him. Upon creation, God talks to (primordial) man: Am I not your Lord? Man answers: Yes. Then a covenant follows. The Qur'ān puts the story as below:

And (remember) when thy Lord brought forth from the Children of Adam, from their reins, their seed, and made them testify of themselves, (saying): Am I not your Lord? They said:

²⁸ Kohlberg, 2011



Yea, verily. We testify.
(That was) lest ye should
say at the Day of
Resurrection: Lo! of this
we were unaware. (7:172)

Man, for what Qur'ān describes as forgetfulness of God, forgets his covenant and God sends him prophets and books to remind him of that love and the fact that he/she must return to his/her everlasting abode. It is noteworthy that according to Sufi tradition, creation has two arcs. One is the arc of descent and the other one is the arc of ascent.

Now, in the position that man has, he must start his arc of ascent after being in descent. His forgetfulness makes him to be far from his Lord, whereas "Love aims to bridge the gap between man and God"²⁹. Sufi commentaries on the Qur'ān, use the language of love to remind man of his primordial love. This is also for the fact that God's love for man take precedence over man's love for God. As the Qur'ān puts: "whom He loveth and who love Him" (5:54) God's love is prior to man's love. But anyway, if you love God, then what to

do? Sufis allude to the verse wherein God ask man to:

Say, (O Muhammad, to mankind): If ye love Allah, follow me; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (3:31)

Meibodi in his mystical interpretation of the above verse, stresses upon the necessity of following and learning from the example to Muhammad:

The call came from the Real: "Whatever drink comes to you from the auspicious hand of Muhammad the Arab, the Hashimite prophet, take, for your life lies in that. Read the tablet that he writes, learn servanthood from his character traits, take seeking from his aspiration, put his Sunnah to work, walk behind him

²⁹ Chittick, Divine Love, 2013



in all states. The final goal of the traveling of the servants and the perfection of their states is My love, and My love lies in following the Sunnah and conduct of your prophet. Whoever walks straight in his tracks is in reality My friend. Say: 'If you love God, follow me, and God will love you' [3:31]."³⁰

According to Sufi tradition, Muhammad is symbol of Love, good character traits, the symbol of perfect man, and finally the best example than man should follow him. Muhammad, as Sufis described him is a sure path to salvation. He again while commenting the verse "Be you lordly ones!" (3:79), stresses that the following of Muhammad will result in the gaining of divine character traits.

Conclusion:

Sufi commentary has emerged from the early Islam. There are however, some disagreements

about whether there should be a mystical interpretation to Qur'ān, but followers of this path have made it clear in their works that what they are doing is nothing but discovering the Divine secrets through their contemplation, intuitions and mystical experiences. Their main idea is that the Qur'ān is word of God and it contains not only *Zawāhir*, but only *Bawātin*. One can gain the secrets of the Book through purification of his soul and, following the Muhammad's example and ascending the ladder of spiritual perfection. According to this tradition, remaining in the *Zawāhir* of Qur'ān, is like stopping by the shore of the ocean. If one intends to meet with the absolute Real, he/she needs to theoretically and practically realize and actualize his/her innate spiritual faculties. Therefore mystical interpretation of the Qur'ān, not only is not a "vague speculation", or "the reading of one's own ideas into a text"; rather it is discovering the different levels of existence and a path realizing the self. Sufi interpretation, takes for granted that the levels of the Qur'ān identifies with the levels of existence and man's urgent need is requiring self-knowledge

³⁰ Meybudi, Rashid al-Din, William Chittick, 2014



and self-purification rather than making him/herself busy with discursive discussion or polemic dialogues. Khomeini puts this as follow:

By learning, teaching, benefiting and being benefited we do not mean its different literary, syntactical and morphological aspects, nor its eloquence and rhetoric and other stylistic points, nor being interested in its stories, tales and episodes from the historical point of view in order to get information about the past nations. None of these is

included in the objectives of the Qur'an, and they are, in fact, far away from the main objective of this divine Book.³¹

Sufism and its methodology and approach to Qur'ān, is one of the Islam's most valuable heritage. The mystical aspects of Qur'ān not only is exhibited in the Qur'ānic commentaries, but also a wide range of poetry and literature in the Muslim societies devoted to discuss this aspect of Qur'ān. It is an important endeavor to analyze the extent and effects of mystical literature in Islamic heritage in comparison with the other disciplines and its role in making a dialogue among Muslims and the followers of the other religions.

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³¹ Khomeini, 1996, p. 123



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