
The disbelief of those who believe in the Unity of Being [Wahdatul-Wujood]

Translated by Ahmed Abu Turaab

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Questioner: The Soofees have recently come to our city, what advice can you give us?

Shaykh al-Albaanee (rahimahullaah)¹: There is an old difference between the Muslims about the Soofees. The reality is that this name, Soofism [*tasawwuf*], and those who affiliate themselves to it, the Soofees, have many different meanings.

We know from our interaction with many of them that when the proof is established against them they say, ‘Soofism is nothing except clinging to the manners of Allaah’s Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)², like abstaining from the world and desiring the Hereafter,’ this is what they say when the proof is established against them.

Thus we say that if this is what Soofism is in your opinion, then the difference between us and you regarding the word remains. Remove this word, ‘*tasawwuf*,’ because it has become a word having a great many meanings. One of which we mentioned just now, [i.e.,] sticking to noble manners and abstaining from the world and turning to the Hereafter. There is no need for us to use this name whose meaning is dubious when referring to that affair which [the Muslims] are united upon, i.e., sticking to the manners of Allaah’s Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and abstaining from the world and devoting oneself to the Hereafter.

But the reality is that [the word] *tasawwuf* [Soofism] has meanings far removed from this correct meaning [mentioned above]. And sometimes this distance [from the Truth] takes the one who is upon it out of the fold of Islaam, and sometimes it will place him among one of the misguided groups.

As for the first group [i.e., the people who have left the fold of Islaam], then it refers to those who believe in what the people of knowledge refer to as the creed of unity, or The Unity of Being/Existence [Wahdatul-Wujood] to be more precise. The Unity of Being, which is pure denial [of Allaah, *ilhaad*], means Nature, as expressed by naturalists (believers in naturalism), i.e. there is nothing but matter.

One of them says, ‘Everything that you see with your very eye is Allaah.’ So it’s nature, everything that you see with your eye is Allaah!

A second says:

*And the dog and the pig are nothing but our God.
And Allaah is nothing but a monk in a church.*

¹ (rahimahullaah) May Allaah the Most High have mercy on him

² (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) Salla Allaahu ‘alayhi wa salaam May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him

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A third [Ibn Arabee, the Soofee] says:

*God [Rabb] is man and man is God
How I wish to know who the one ordered (to perform worship) is*

*If you say man (is the one ordered), then that is a denial (of the presence of a God, based on the concept that God is man and man is God!)
And if you say God, how can He be obligated?!*

A fourth:

*When the Magians worshipped the fire
They worshipped nothing but the One, the Irresistible Subduer
[i.e., Al-Qahhaar, Allaah]*

All of these are statements written down in their books through which they seek blessings. A belief [‘Aqeedah] such as this takes one outside the fold of Islaam, for it is a creed greater in disbelief than that of the Jews and Christians.

This reminds me of the saying of one their extremists, ‘The Jews and Christians only disbelieved because the Jews restricted Allaah to being in Uzair, and the Christians confined Him to being in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—but as for us, we have generalized Him to be in all things.’

For this reason from their words of remembrance [*dhikr*]-and their *dhikr* is not from that of the Muslims, that which the Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned [when he (ﷺ) said], ‘**The best form of remembrance is, ‘Laa ilaaha illallaah,**’³—their remembrance is, ‘He, He ...’

And they [also] say other phrases which, regretfully, some of the general masses with us in Syria have latched on to. You’ll find one of them sitting, wanting to remember Allaah, and so he will say, ‘There is nothing other than Him.’ What does, ‘There is nothing other than Him,’ mean? [This is incorrect because] there is a Creator and then there is the creation.

So this is the creed of The Unity of Being [Wahdatul-Wujood], wording which is mentioned by some people, but they have not paid attention to the misguidance found therein.

Like these phrases totally is the saying of many of the common folk and their scholars, ‘Allaah is present in all that exists, Allaah is everywhere ...’ [this is] the creed of The Unity of Being [Wahdatul-Wujood], but along with that it is the creed [‘Aqeedah] of the Ash’arees and Matureedees of the end of time.

[They say], ‘Allaah is in all places,’ this [i.e., where we are sitting right now] is a place, is Allaah here? What is here? Zaid, Bakr, Amr, matter, a wall, air and so on—is Allaah here?!

‘**The Most Gracious rose over the [Mighty] Throne [in a manner that suits His Majesty],**’⁴ This is the creed of the Salaf as-Saalih.

³ Laa ilaaha illallaah لا اله الا الله There is no deity truly worthy of being worshiped except Allaah the Most High

⁴ Soorah Taa Haa [20:5]

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So this type of Soofism is the severest of the most severe forms of disbelief found on the face of the earth.⁵

Shaikh al-Albaanee (rahimahullaah) said, "There is a type which is less [severe] than it, and it is the person who has deviated in his conduct from that which the Prophet (ﷺ) was upon by burdening the soul with more than it is able to bear, in the name of refining it. And here we say: we, as Muslims, are not in any need whatsoever of a means which we—in order to nurture ourselves—take on through a way other than that of our Prophet (ﷺ).

How so when in the hadeeth which Imaam Ahmad (rahimahullaah) reports in his *Musnad* and others in their collections from Jaabir ibn Abdullaah al-Ansaaree (رضي الله عنه)⁶, [there occurs that he] said that, 'One day the Prophet (ﷺ) saw a page in the hand of Umar ibn al-Khattaab (رضي الله عنه) which he was reading. He said, 'What is this, O Umar?' He said, 'This is a page a man from the Jews wrote for me.' So he (ﷺ) said, 'O Son of al-Khattaab! Are you all puzzled/bewildered as the Jews and Christians were puzzled/bewildered?'⁷ By the One in Whose Hands is the soul of Muhammad! If Moses were alive he would have no alternative but to follow me."

So if Moses (عليه السلام)⁸, the one whom Allaah spoke to and to whom He revealed the Torah directly, met the Prophet (ﷺ) it would not be possible for him to follow his Torah—rather he would have no choice but to follow our Prophet (ﷺ).

Thus: how is it with us today that in the name of Soofee Islaam we nurture ourselves through a certain method of burdening [ourselves] under the impression that it is a [way of] refining the soul that orders evil, [doing so by] being severe/harsh against it.

They have very strange and odd stories. One of them, and this was in the time of the early generations whose righteousness has been testified to, [and was a time when] Soofism had started to raise its horns, ... as for that which followed later in the time of ash-Sha'raanee—and what will make you understand what ash-Sha'raanee was, then narrate [the reality about him] and there is no harm in doing so ... amongst them would be someone who would wear the coarsest of garments and then immerse himself in the Tigris River on a bitterly cold day. Then he would stand on the roof of his house, the cold wind whipping his face. [When asked], 'What is this?' He replied, 'Refining the soul.'

This is not a refining of the soul, it is punishing it.

And the Prophet (ﷺ) said, in Truth—and we need to recognise the effect of this statement in our knowledge and Islaamic [way of] life today—, 'I have not left anything which will bring you closer to Allaah except that I have ordered you with it, and I have not left anything which will distance you from Allaah and bring you closer to the Fire except that I have forbidden you from it.'

⁵ [Translator's note: The following is another example of the extremists amongst them: 'Sulaimaan bin Ali bin Abdullah al-Tilmisaneer d. 690AH. He is highly revered among Soofees. The Shaikh of Islaam Ibn Taymeeyah said about him, "He used to make all forbidden things lawful. To such an extent that some of the reliable people reported that he said:

'The daughter, the mother, all (foreign) women—all of them are one and the same—there is nothing forbidden in that for us. It is only the ones who are veiled that say that that is *haram*. So we in reply say to them: 'It is *haram* for you (not us).'" (*Majmoo'atur-Rasaa'il* (1/184).

This Soofee Tilmisaneer once passed by a mangy, scabby dead dog on the street whilst he was talking to his companion about *Wahdatul-Wujood* (the Unity of Being/Existence). So his companion said to him, "Is this also the Essence (*Dhaat*) of Allaah?" pointing to the dead dog. So Al-Tilmisaneer replied: "Yes. Everything is His Essence. There is nothing that is outside His Essence (*Dhaat*)."

High is Allaah above what the Soofees ascribe to Him!' (*Majmoo'atur-Rasaa'il* (145) of Ibn Taymeeyah).]

⁶ (رضي الله عنه) (rad iyallaahu `anhu) May Allaah the Most High be pleased with him

⁷ Compiler's note: it is as though the Prophet (ﷺ) is saying, 'Are you puzzled/bewildered about the Truth and not sure that you are upon it such that you have to return to the narrations of the Jews?'

⁸ (عليه السلام) (alaihis-salaam) Peace be upon him

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And from that are two hadeeths reported in Saheehs Bukhaaree and Muslim. One of them is the hadeeth of Anas ibn Maalik (رضي الله عنه), who said some people came to the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) but did not find him.

They asked his family about his worship, about his standing for prayer at night and during the day, and his relationship with women [i.e., his wives]. So his family spoke about what they knew and said that he (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)⁹ would fast and eat, stand to pray at night and [also] sleep, and would marry women.

Anas (rad iyallaahu `anhu) said that when they heard that they regarded it as being little, i.e., they thought that the Prophet's (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) worship was little, because they pictured: the Messenger of Allaah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) sleeps at night? Surely, he must stay awake all night?! Likewise, he breaks his fast? Surely, he must fast all the time?! And he marries women?

And some people say that, 'Knowledge was lost between the thighs of women.' [i.e., due to concern about their intimate relationships with their wives.] How can the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) marry four, eight or more?

So they regarded his worship as being little—but then they turned to themselves and said, 'This is the Messenger of Allaah. Allaah has forgiven him his past and future sins.'

The reality is that these statements emanate from people ... who had newly embraced Islaam, because it is not possible that a person who understood his Prophet's (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) sublime perfection which has no comparison, to say, 'Why does the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) marry? Why does he sleep? Why does he eat? Allaah has forgiven him his sins ...' It is not befitting that such statements be said, but it happened as such.

The important thing is that they turned to themselves and said, 'This is the Messenger of Allaah, Allaah has forgiven him his past and future sins. So we must toil and exhaust ourselves and worship Allaah until He forgives us.'

What was the way to achieve that, in their opinion?

One of them said, 'As for me, I will fast and never break it.' The other said, 'As for me, I will stand in prayer and not sleep.' And the third said, 'I will never marry women.'

Then they left.

After some time the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) came and was told about them. So he (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) gave a short sermon and said, **'What is the matter with a people who say such and such? I fear Allaah more than you do, and I am the most obedient and dutiful among you to Him. As for me, then I fast and break the fast, I pray at night and sleep and I marry women. So whoever turns away from my Sunnah is not from me.'**

Here is the point, **'So whoever turns away from my Sunnah is not from me.'** So these righteous Soofees of old, I am not referring to Ash-Sha'raanee's group and his likes and [those who believe in] the Unity of Being. No. These people departed from the guidance of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and so came with old Buddhist, Indian ways which they inherited, and maybe they were foreigners [non-Arabs] who entered Islaam and did not understand it properly. Thus coming up with a way of

⁹ ('alayhi ssalaam) (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) Upon him be peace

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punishing the soul under the assumption of purifying it. And here is your Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) saying, **'So whoever turns away from my Sunnah is not from me.'**

Then he (alaihissalaam) implemented this method with a Companion of his: it reached him that Abdullaah ibn Amr ibn al-Aas—the Companion, the son of a Companion, (radiallaahu anhum)¹⁰—it reached him that his father married him off to a girl from Qur'aysh. He [i.e., Amr ibn al-Aas (رضي الله عنه)] visited her one day and asked her about her husband [i.e., his son].

So she said to him, 'There is no problem with him except that he has not yet approached our bed. He stands to pray at night and fasts during the day,' i.e., he got married but didn't get married.

This was difficult upon Amr so he complained about his son to the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). So he (عليه)¹¹ said to him, **'O Abdullaah! It has reached me that you spend the night in prayer and fast during the day and that you do not approach women [i.e., your wife].'** He said, 'It is as such, O Messenger of Allaah!'

And this hadeeth is long and I will summarise it by saying that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) laid down a methodology for him which he could worship Allaah through and gather, as they say today, between the right of the body and the right of the *nafs* on the other hand, and the right of the soul, i.e., worship.

So he said, and he used to stand all night finishing the Qur'aan in it, and would always fast, he said regarding the recitation of the Qur'aan and this is at the end of the story which is long, he said, **'Read the Qur'aan in three nights. For whoever reads it in less than three has not understood it.'**

And concerning that which was connected to fasting he told him initially to fast three days every month, and a good deed is rewarded tenfold, so it would be as if you would have fasted the entire month, so Abdullaah would reply, 'O Messenger of Allaah! I am a youth and have strength. I can do more than that.'

And here you will notice the difference between that generation and our generation of today.

A youth in his prime, whose father married him off to a girl from Qur'aysh, he turns away from her and [instead] stands to pray all night and fast during the day and ... so on and so on. And when the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) tells him to take it easy upon himself he replies to him saying, 'O Messenger of Allaah! I am a youth and have strength. I can do more than that.'

Today you have the opposite of that.

A youth will grow up upon obedience to Allaah and all around him you will find people repelling him, both those near to him and those distant: firstly the father, secondly, the mother, they will say to him, 'You're still a youth. You can worship later.'

Look at the difference between that time and this.

The point is that eventually he (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) told him to fast a day and miss the next for such was the Fast of Daawood (عليه السلام) who would not flee from the enemy when he met them.

¹⁰ (radiallaahu anhum) May Allaah the Most High be pleased with them

¹¹ (عليه الصلاة والسلام) (alayhi as-Salaat wa Salaam) Upon him prayer and peace

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[But] Abdullaah (رضي الله عنه) replied, 'O Messenger of Allaah! I want better than that.' He replied (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), 'There is nothing better than that.'

So where is this pretentious ascetic Soofism, contradicting the Quran and Sunnah [by going further than what the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) instructed his Companions with].

Thus, that which in Soofism truly agrees with the Qur'aan and the Sunnah, then remove this name [i.e., 'Soofism,' from it] and remain on the Book and the Sunnah and the methodology of the Pious Predecessors.

And whatever opposes the Book and the Sunnah, then we throw it aside.¹²

¹² Al-Hudaa wan-Noor, 632