

## The Philosophy of Locality Choice of Major Ayyubid and Mamluk Khanqahs in Cairo

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Al Imam Abū 'Abdullāh Muhammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī, famous Muslim jurist, said once that "three things in this world have been made lovely to me; avoiding affectation, treating people kindly, and following the way of tasawwuf."<sup>1</sup> This valuable statement illustrates the significance of Sufism as one of the major aspects of Islam as it basically represents the living heart of Islam, the aspect of eternal wisdom, the inner dimension of the revelation given to Muhammad, and not an arbitrary form of occultism.<sup>2</sup>

Accordingly, the Sufi could be generally defined as the Muslim who cleared and purified his soul in terms of devoting himself to a life of asceticism and austerity, aiming in the first place to gain Allah's gratification and mercy.<sup>3</sup> Equally, Sufi could be defined as the Muslim who freed himself from living a restricted life with carnal or bodily concerns and bounds, and turning to God on the horizon of heart.<sup>4</sup> In fact, the origin of the term "Sufi" has been a debatable issue between different scholars, for some believe that it was originally derived from the Arabic word "Şafā" which stands for clarity as one of the main characteristics of the Sufi's soul.<sup>5</sup> Also, there is another stream which rooted the term " Sufi " to the Arabic word "Taşfiya" which translates as "refinement" or "filtration" to illustrate the filtration of the Sufi's heart from evil deeds and intentions.<sup>6</sup> However, the most popular theory states that it was primitively derived from the Arabic word " Şūf" which translates as "wool" for it was the main material used by the Sufis in their clothing to be matching with the nature of their ascetic life.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [www.spiritua/foundatsion.net/quotes.htm](http://www.spiritua/foundatsion.net/quotes.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Geoffroy, *Sufism*, 1.

<sup>3</sup> 'Abdullāh, *Ma'āhid*, 29; Rizq, *Khānqāwāt* 1:48.

<sup>4</sup> Gülen, *Sufism*, 9; Kāmil, *al-Taşawwuf*, 51.

<sup>5</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>6</sup> Hilmī, *al-Hayāh*, 92.

<sup>7</sup> 'Abdullāh, *Ma'āhid*, 29; Stoddart, *Sufism*, 20.