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## Concept Zuhd (asceticism) in Islam

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**Abstract**---This article analyzes the evolution of the phenomenon of zuhd (asceticism) in the of Islam in the field of religious phenomenology, as well as the ascetic movements observed in the I-II centuries AH, the regional and common features of the first ascetic schools.

**Keywords**---Islam, Zuhd, Zahid, Makomat, Hanif, Zuhd Schools, Sufism.

### Introduction

Originating on the Arabian Peninsula in the 7th century, Islam soon spread to many countries in Asia, Africa, and Europe, bringing to the peoples of these regions not only a new form of faith but also a new way of life and new social relations. Asceticism, formed within the framework of Islamic teachings, is a practical and intellectual process, manifested, on the one hand, as a material good, the rejection of desires, and on the other hand, as an attempt to humiliate oneself. The lexical meaning of the word "Zuhd" is interpreted differently in different encyclopedic dictionaries. In particular, it is said, "Zuhd is only in worldly affairs, and it is the opposite of desire and lust for the world." In the terminological sense, –zuhd is the purification of the heart from what is worshipped. If we analyze the processes associated with Zuhd, we can see that even before Islam, it existed in different forms in different nations. Consequently, in the pre-Islamic ascetics, there were attempts to resist al-wasaniya (polytheism) and the belief in idols. It should be noted that in pre-Islamic Arabia, asceticism was observed in the activities of the Hanifs. The Hanifs did not worship pagan gods, but practiced strict ascetic practices (strict observance of purity, living in slavery, etc.) and did not join either Jews or Christians.

Waraqa ibn Nawfal and Abu Qays Sarma ibn Anas can be mentioned as bright representatives of this direction. The word "Hanif" is interpreted in the Mu'jamul-Waraq dictionary as "one who turns from evil to good." Although the researchers often gave abstract, contradictory opinions about the Hanifs, they unanimously noted that they were an anti-polytheistic category. The Hanifs openly denied the pagans, urging them to oppose alcoholism, gambling, and other harmful vices prevalent among the Arabs of the time. Of course, their call was

met with opposition from nobles, officials, and idol worshippers. Many Hanifs did not stay in one place but were forced to live as dervishes and wander around the country.

Be given the quality of people belonging to different tribes, who are not united in a great bond with each other, mainly against idols and preoccupied with the idea of calling for reform. In his *Sira*, Ibn Hisham gives a brief biography of the Hanifs Zayd ibn Amr, Waraqa ibn Nawfal, Ubaydullah ibn Jahsh, Uthman ibn Huwayris, who formed a small group (*usba*) and denied the Quraysh's prayers and rituals. Researchers point to the Companions and their followers as the first ascetics in Islam, noting that the spirit of asceticism in Islam dates back to the time of the Prophet (saas). Even during the time of the Prophet (pbuh), some of the Companions, such as Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, Hudhayfah ibn Yamani, and Salman al-Farsi, had a pious attitude and way of life. In particular, the Arab scholar Abdul Qadir Isa states that the first centuries of Islam were a time of pious and pious people, people who were completely devoted to Allah. The mystic scholar A.D. Knish also notes that the ascetic sentiments that formed Sufism originated at the same time as Islam, but also points out that the literal ascetic-Sufi movement emerged later. There are also opinions about the social origin of the first ascetics based on specific approaches. While some scholars point out that they are mostly descended from muhaddiths, A. Knish believes that in addition to the muhaddiths, the social structure of asceticism, the first form of Sufism, included narrators, reciters, participants in the Byzantine frontier wars, pious merchants and artisans.

### **Materials and Methods**

The movement of the ascetics in the early period of Islam was based on certain verses and hadiths that stated that the world was transitory, deceptive, and of no value in the afterlife and that the life of asceticism was recommended. According to researchers, the following verses of the Qur'an aroused the ascetic moods among the ascetics: "Let not the life of this world deceive you" (Lukman 31:33). If they only knew, the abode of the Hereafter is eternal life! (Ankabut-29: 64). "Wealth, children, and this life is the adornment of the world" (Kahf 18:46), "Always remember the name of your Lord, and turn your hearts to Him with sincerity." (Muzammil: 73: 8) In the early I-II centuries AH, the attitude of asceticism affected almost all areas of Islam. The terms "nisk", "qanoat" and "vara" were often used during this period. However, in the second century AH, these words began to be replaced by the term "zuhd." It can also be seen that it was customary for most medieval Muslim scholars to add the name –Zahid! to their names. The idea of finding the pleasure of Allah, entering Paradise, and escaping the torment of Hell was observed among the ascetics in the first centuries AH.

While the concept of zuhd, which used to be based on "fear", prevailed among the ascetics of this period, the concept of "divine love" introduced by one of the famous Sufis of this period, Robiyat al-Adawiya (d. 130/752), took on a new form in the worldview of the ascetics. Consequently, a new stage in the direction of asceticism has emerged - the stage of asceticism, which is rooted in divine love. Although zuhd remained a personal matter until the end of the 2nd century AH, it

can be seen that in some regions, schools were formed, following the views and practices of famous ascetics. The first schools of asceticism were the schools' asceticism in Madinah, Kufa, Basra, Khorasan, and Movarounnahr.

### **Madina School**

The foundations of Zuhd, derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah, were formed in Medina, the first capital of the Islamic State. The most striking examples of ascetic practices are seen in the lives of the Prophet (pbuh), the Chaharis, the Companions, and the Companions of the Suffa. Until the capital was moved to Damascus by the Umayyads, Medina was the center of the Zuhd lifestyle. Later, when Damascus was formed as a political center, Medina became the center of spiritual life. The city of Madinah has become a city of asceticism, serving as a haven for those who want to be free from political crises.

### **Kufa School**

The city of Kufa was considered the capital of the state of Ali (r.a.). The descendants of the Prophet and the Shiites made Kufa the center of the struggle against the Umayyad state formed in Damascus. After the execution of Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet (pbuh), a group of people chose the path of asceticism and repentance. This group of people became known as "bakkaun" as well as "tavvabun". According to some researchers, this appearance of zuhd, which in essence means political protest, has become an example and symbol of the Yemeni people. According to the classification of Islamic schools of thought, the peculiarity of this school of asceticism was the tendency towards Shiism and the glorification of the descendants of the Prophet (pbuh). Tawus ibn Kaysan, Jaid ibn Jubayr, Mansur ibn Ammar, Jabir ibn Hayyan and Rabi ibn Haysam were the first ascetics to come from Kufa. The so-called "Sufis" are mostly from Kufa. In particular, Abu Hashim Sufi (d. 150/767) also came from Kufa. He lived first in Kufa and then in Baghdad, where he became famous. In his views, more emphasis was placed on warning against hypocrisy than on achieving sincerity. Sufyan al-Sawri's words about him also testify to this: —If it were not for Abu Hashim, the subtleties of hypocrisy would remain unknown.

### **Basra School**

In the 1st and 2nd centuries AH, Basra became a center of asceticism far removed from political issues. Hasan Basri (d. 106/728), who lived and worked in this city, is mentioned as the first Sufi ascetic who systematized Sunni views based on the Qur'an and Sunnah. The successors of this school after Hasan al-Basri were Malik ibn Dinar (d. 131/748) and Abdul Wahid ibn Zayd (d. 177/793). The characteristics of the ascetics of this period were manifested in the fear of the torment of hell, the shedding of tears in the hope of heaven, and the will to connect with God through prayer and obedience. However, at the same time, the views of the ascetics Robiya Adawiyah and Maruf Karhi, who brought divine love to the forefront, also spread. In general, during this period, the school of Basra developed two directions — the direction led by Hasan Basri based on fear and sorrow, and the direction of zuhd based on divine love by Rabia Adawiyah. Later, this school was taught by Habib Ajami (d. 115/733), Muhammad ibn Wasi (d.

127/744), Malik ibn Dinar (d. 131/748), Ayyub Shahtiyani (d. 131/748), Farqad Sabahi (d. (131/748), Abdul Wahid ibn Zayd (d. 177/793).

### **Khorasan School**

From the 2nd century AH to the present day, many mystics, founders of various schools, and Sufis have emerged from this school. This school has a special place in the history of mysticism. Ibrahim ibn Adham (d. 161/777), Shaiq Balkhi (d. 194/809), Ahmad ibn Harb (d. 234/848), Abdullah ibn Mubarak Marwazi (d. 181/797), Bishr ibn Harith Marwazi (d. . 227/841) as the first ascetics grew up in this school. The first ascetics of the Khurasan school later migrated to and around Basra, Baghdad, and their subsequent formation continued under the influence of Sufi orientations in these areas. Consequently, the characteristics of the early ascetics of Khurasan are similar to the qualities of the Basra school, such as renunciation of worldliness, poverty, service to Allah, and fear of Allah. In addition, the Khurasan ascetics were distinguished by their rulings on trusting Allah. Reliance on Allah has been interpreted as "complete reliance on the self in the promises of Allah." The concepts of "muhabbatullah" and "marifatullah" were widespread in the practice of asceticism until the end of the second century AH. Another feature of this period is that the ascetics attached great importance to riyadah, to deal with their shortcomings.

### **Movarounnahr School**

Fuzayl ibn Iyaz (d. 187/802), Hatim Asamm (d. 237/851), Khushnam Sharani (d. II / VIII a.), Julwan ibn Samura Ponabi (d. II / VIII a.), Isa ibn as representatives of the Mawarounnahr school of asceticism. Musa Gunjar (d. 185/801), Hafs ibn Mansur Paykandi (III / IX a.), Ahmad ibn Ishaq Surmari (d. 242/856), Hashid ibn Abdullah Bukhari (d. 246/860), Abu Turab Nakhshabi ( waf. 245/834), Mu'adh ibn Ya'qub Qasani (III / IX a.), Askar ibn Husayn Nakhshabi (waf. 245/860). It is noted that the main ideas of the representatives of this school are zuhd, vara, saxo, repentance, anger, sadness, consent, sincerity, risk, enlightenment, piety, bowing, and victory. In the Movarounnahr School of asceticism, socially active asceticism is more prevalent than secularism. This situation had an impact on the later widespread pattern in the region. In particular, the principles of the Naqshbandi, such as "a lonely meeting", "dil ba yoru dast bakor" are an echo of such asceticism. At the same time, some Western scholars are of the opinion that under the influence of Christian asceticism in Islam, a special way of achieving spiritual perfection has been developed. According to some Western Islamic scholars, the concept of zuhd was formed under the influence of Christian monasticism, monism, and the Indian tradition, and developed in accordance with the mystical tradition. For example, the Swedish orientalist and researcher T. Andre concludes that there are similarities between Zuhd in Islam and the asceticism of Christians. A number of reasons for this view are also cited: including the close contact of Muslims in Syria and other new provinces of the Khilafah with the Christian population; that there were many Christians in the history of Islam who converted to the religion, and so on.

## **Result and Discussion**

Early ascetics had elements of Christian asceticism: renunciation of worldly pleasures, forgetfulness of identity, voluntary poverty, voluntary starvation, and so on, possibly similarities to Christian monastic traditions. But this is only a formal resemblance in appearance. For example, Ka'b ibn Ahmar and Malik ibn Dinar, the Tabi'een, said of 'Umar ibn' Abdullah, one of the first ascetics, that he was the monk of this community (Muslim community). According to their testimony, "Amir ibn Abdullah slept while standing, fasted constantly, and prayed about a thousand rak'ahs every night". Along with those who interpret zuhd as the first stage of mysticism, there are also some scholars who believe that zuhd developed separately from mysticism. This is explained by the fact that asceticism continued independently of mysticism. However, sources state that most of the Egyptian jurists and scholars during the Mamluk period were not Sufis but ascetics. The famous Muslim theologian is a scholar, mystic, philosopher, and jurist Imam al-Ghazali (d. 589/1111) used the term "zuhd muhaqqaq" to describe "zuhd." Ghazali identified three cases of "zuhd" and included those who entered zuhd at the lowest level in this classification because they feared the fire of hell; the ascetics are placed on the second level to enjoy the pleasures of heaven; and on the highest level are the ascetics who have renounced everything but Allah, who do not deviate from the thought of Allah, and who are devoted to Allah. Al-Ghazali calls this degree "zuhd al-Arifin." This is zuhdi muhaqqaq, and the previous ones are deeds (the deed of worldliness) because the one who does it wants to return to this world several times in return for giving up something in this world.1

Subsequent Islamic scholars also advanced their own views on asceticism and Sufism. In particular, the views of Hakim Termezi, the brightest representative of Central Asian mysticism in the IX-X centuries, are noteworthy. In particular, he did not consider himself a "Sufi" or a "mystic." Hakim Termezi writes in his book *Nawadir al-Usul: The pious Salafis of the Companions and the Tabi'een* were sincere and careful of their religion, contented with what they had, dressed in wool (suf) and rags (haliqan), and refrained from interfering with people. They did this out of fear of Allah and not to go to Him with the remnants of the world. Their actions are like those of a man who is afraid of drowning for fear of drowning. This is because of their weakness of faith. After them, those who were not faithful in the same work followed them and began to wear suf and khaliqan, and eat stale bread and leftovers. They wanted to show their asceticism, their hearts were full of worldly desires, and their worlds were devoured by their religion. Hence, Hakim Termezi criticized the ascetics who were influenced by the teachings of the Iraqi school of mysticism at that time, entering the Movarounnahr and Khorasan regions.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it should be noted that in the early days of Islam, asceticism was formed on the basis of verses and hadiths, but in later periods, the views of certain individuals served as the basis of asceticism. Also, the views of the representatives of the schools of asceticism enumerated above have influenced the views of asceticism in the later period. At the same time, there are two

different approaches to the formation of zuhd, that is, zuhd itself appeared as a separate practice and as the first stage of mysticism. Along with the formation of systematic views on Zuhd, special literature on this topic has been created. Almost all the literature of the classical period includes chapters on zuhd, in particular, in the classic works of mystics such as Kalabadi, Qushayri, Abu Talib Makki, Imam al-Ghazali, there are separate chapters on this topic. Also, in the early days of Islam, it was customary to collect hadiths on the subject of zuhd, and independent instructions on the practice of zuhd, books on the description of zuhd were written.

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