Module Title: Introduction to Muslim Mysticism

Module Code: IRFINT
Course Duration: 17 Weeks
Teaching Method: 2 units/week
Credits: 10

Overview:

This module seeks to define ‘irfān and taṣawwuf. It endeavours to study the origins, history and development of mysticism in Islam, its divisions (theoretical and practical), central motifs in Sufi literature (the qasida, nasib, maqamat, halat and the ghazal forms and their themes), and the historiography of the major texts in Sufism. It introduces students to prominent figures in the field of Islamic mysticism such as al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 737), Rābiʿa al-ʿAdawiyya (d. 801), Abu Yazīd al-Bīstāmī (d. 859), Sarī al-Saqāṭī (d. 867), Junayd al-Baghdādī (d. 910), Husayn Ibn al-Mansūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 922), Abu al-Ḥasan Khurqānī (d. 1033), Ḥāfiẓ Trāṭām (d. 1077), Abu Ḥamid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), Ahmad al-Ghazālī (d. 1126), Ṭāhir al-ʿAdwānī (d. 1131), Ḥakīm Sanāʿī (d. 1131), Farīd ud-Dīn al-ʿAṭṭār (d. 1221), Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240), and Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 1273). This module will also enable the students to establish the link between ‘irfān, kalām (theology), manṭiq (logic), and philosophy. It will also expose them to the major themes of Muslim mysticism from Ibn ʿArabī onwards.

Syllabus:

The following are the subjects that are discussed in this module:

- Definition, subject matter, objective and benefits of ‘Irīfān/Sufism
- Origin and etymology of the term: ṣūfī, ṣāfī, ṣāfīd and zāhid and their interrelations
- Relationship between ‘Irīfān/Sufism and the other Muslim disciplines of theology, philosophy and ethics
- The history and development of ‘Irīfān/Sufism, from its early prominent scholars/practitioners and their contributions up to and including the formation of the different tariqas present today
- Distinction between theoretical and practical ‘Irīfān/Sufism; their relation, importance, purpose and value among Muslim mystics specifically, and in ‘Irīfān/Sufism generally
- The scriptural (Qur’anic and traditional) basis of mysticism and asceticism, early ascetic Sufism, practical Sufism and theoretical mysticism
- Overview of the central themes in Muslim Mysticism
- The impact of the transmission and translation of philosophical and religious texts from other cultures on the expression, interpretation, and practice of ‘irfan
- Theoretical ‘Irīfān/Sufism Part I: An overview of the central motifs in the Sufi literature of Maulana Jalal al-Din al-Rumi
- Theoretical ‘Irīfān/Sufism Part II: An overview of the general teachings of Ibn ‘Arabī
Learning outcomes:

On completion of this module, the successful student will be able to:

1. Discuss the definition, subject matter, aims, and benefits of ‘Irfān/Sufism
2. Discuss the etymology, history and development of ‘Irfān/Sufism
3. Show an awareness of the scriptural basis of ‘Irfān/Sufism
4. Show an understanding of the difference between the sciences of Muslim theology, Muslim philosophy and mysticism, and the historical tension between the Sufis, muḥaddiths and fuqahā’
5. Describe the influence of Muslim philosophy and theology on ‘Irfān/Sufism
6. Understand of the key ideas of theoretical ‘Irfān/Sufism of Maulana Rumi and Ibn ‘Arabi
7. Demonstrate an awareness of the parallels between ‘Irfān/Sufism and other mystical traditions

Assessment Weighting:

- 100% Exam

Learning Materials:

Core texts:

- AMI Pack
- Smith, M. (2001), Muslim women Mystics: The Life And Work Of Rab‘ia And Other Women Mystics In Islam, Great Islamic Thinkers, Oxford: Oneworld

Further Reading:


Osho (2004), *Unio Mystica: Discourses on the Sufi Mystic, Hakim Sanai*, India: Tao Pub


