

Muslim World Journal of Human Rights

Volume 7, Issue 1

2010

Article 1

Examining Islam and Human Rights from the Perspective of Sufism

Fait A. Muedini*

*University at Buffalo, SUNY, fmuedini@buffalo.edu

Copyright ©2010 Berkeley Electronic Press. All rights reserved.

Examining Islam and Human Rights from the Perspective of Sufism*

Fait A. Muedini

Abstract

This paper argues that within the Islamic mystical tradition of Sufism lies an important perspective for approaching human rights. Sufism, while usually perceived as only dealing with spiritual matters, actually expresses a distinct message of service to mankind, and thus should be examined within the discussion of Islam and human rights. Along with Sufism's emphasis on service, the Sufi message of unity with God, and specifically the message of recognizing the existence of God in all creatures resonate soundly within the human rights discourse. With these points in mind, Sufi philosophy heightens the importance of human rights, while also allowing for self-construction regarding issues of human rights, and should be considered as another approach within the Islamic framework that is highly compatible with international human rights.

KEYWORDS: Islam, Human Rights, Sufism, Muslim World, Middle East

*I would like to thank Dr. Claude E. Welch, Jr. for his detailed comments and guidance throughout the entire writing process. I would also like to thank Dr. Mahmood Monshipouri, Dr. Neil Englehart, Kaltrina Ukmata-Muedini, Meredith-Joy Petersheim, Annika Hagley, and the anonymous reviewers for their comments and discussion related to the paper. All remaining errors are mine.

Introduction

The relationship between Islam and human rights has received a great deal of attention in the academic and policy literature. This discussion has found a particular location within the broader scope of the human rights discourse for a number of years, and covers a wide range of issues related to Islam and its level of compatibility with human rights (Baderin, 2007). The overall discussion of Islam and human rights has ranged from the relativism/universalism debate within human rights with specific reference to “non-Western” notions of human rights (Donnelly, 1982), to not only discussions of the overlying theoretical relationship of Islam to human rights (An-Naim, 2004), but also the various interpretations of Islam and their positions on human rights (Shah, 2006). Literature within the field of Islam and human rights has also included specific region (An-Na’im, 2001) or country-examinations of the level of human rights implementation in the “Muslim World” (Boroumand, 2007; Monshipouri, Welchman, Mokhtari, & Baderin, 2006). Such studies are not limited to country studies, and have included research on specific issues such as Islam, women and gender rights (Afkhami, 1997; Zuhur, 2003; Ghanea, 2004; Kamlian, 2005; Delaet, 2006), and religious freedom and religious minority rights (Bielefeldt, 1995; Donnelly, 2007; Moussalli, 2001: 129; Mayer, 2007).

Within the overall dialogue of Islam in international affairs, Islam has been perceived as containing different ideologies within one encompassing entity. This can be seen in a number of matters; the different sects in Islam, the various schools of interpretation and different regions and cultures where Islam has flourished all suggest a number of beliefs and approaches to particular questions regarding the human rights discourse. Such interpretations of theology are offered by different schools of jurisprudence in Islam that are not only focused on theological and spiritual elements of Islam, but also serve a role in establishing positions on human rights implementation in Muslim states and communities (An-Naim, 1990; 2005; Chase, 2007). Within the debate regarding the compatibility of Islam and human rights, an array of positions exist ranging from those who suggest that “Western” notions of human rights and democracy “...have little resonance in Islamic...[culture]” (Huntington, 1993)¹, to “reformers” who have argued for the full “reconciliation” (Dalacoura, 1998: 41) or compatibility of Islam and “Western” human rights. Others still have furthered the discussion by conducting quantitative studies examining the impact of Islamic political culture on overall levels of human rights protection (Price, 2002). This paper specifically examines the particular contributions Sufism offers to the discussion of Islam and human rights, namely the emphasis on *ijtihad* (personal interpretation), of *tawhid*

¹ Niaz Shah (2006) also mentions that Huntington (1993) falls into the non-compatible position of Islam and human rights.

(love for all beings), along with a distinct message of service towards others. This paper will begin by discussing the different Islamic approaches to *Shariah* (Islamic law) and human rights. Next, this paper will define and examine the main characteristics associated with Sufism. Within this section, the role of *ijtihad* (personal interpretation) in Sufism will be analyzed. This paper will then examine human rights from a Sufi perspective, namely the role *tawhid* plays in understanding rights, as well as how the importance of service in Sufi philosophy relates to human rights. This paper will examine such contributions of Sufism towards the overall discussion of human rights, while particularly examining the emphasis of women's rights. Finally, this article will end with a summary of the main points.

Islam and Human Rights

Within the debate regarding the compatibility of Islam and human rights, a broad spectrum of positions exist, ranging from those who suggest that “Western” notions of human rights and democracy are not compatible with Islam to positions that argue for the full compatibility of Islam and human rights. While a number of Islamic “approaches” to human rights are advocated (Shah, 2006), scholars focus on four main approaches used towards understanding the role Islam plays in terms of its level of co-existence with international human rights law. The first position taken has been categorized as the “secular” approach. This approach suggests that Muslim individuals, groups and countries should solely follow international human rights law, including but not limited to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Scholars argue however that this completely secular approach to human rights is problematic (Shah, 2006). This approach does little to address “obvious discrepancies between Islamic and international human rights law standards” (870) in areas such as minority rights (Shah, 2006). And with such discrepancies, Muslim states who view any ruling of international human rights law as contrary to their interpretation of *Shariah* are unlikely to adopt the secular approach. Often times Islamic government interpretations of what is or is not Islamic law are conservative ones, influenced by conservative clerics, which in turn leaves little room for other interpretations of rights that may be held in higher accord with modern day international human rights law. Along with such problems regarding the adoption of the secular position of human rights in the Middle East and the “Muslim World,” many within the Muslim World themselves also want live by laws shaped by Islam, a right itself granted in international human rights law (Shah, 2006: 870). In an attempt to fit human rights around notions of *Shariah*, many Muslim states have created and supported their own specific human rights documents such as the Universal Islamic Declaration of

Human Rights. But while they have signed onto such documents in an attempt to match human rights with Islamic principles, documents such as the UIDHR fail to address several issues in “Western” human rights documents (Mayer, 2007). For example, Mayer (2007) argues that the UIDHR qualifies marriage in a way that allows *Shariah* to have final control over the interpretation. In turn, this interpretation of Islamic law counters international human rights since it restricts women’s rights by disallowing Muslim women to marry non-Muslim men (123). Mayer (2007) explains that the UIDHR does not grant rights to unmarried women or men, but since “Muslim men are expected to marry,” this ultimately has a negative impact on the range of rights granted to Muslim women (125). And because a debate exists between “popular” interpretations of *Shariah* and international human rights law, Shah (2006) suggests that the secular approach is unlikely to succeed, given the fact that Muslims states will not adopt any notions of human rights that seem to contradict Islamic teachings, which they view as divinely inspired.

The second major approach regarding the relationship between human rights and Islam is the “non-compatible” approach, a position held by many “conservative” Islamic scholars, along with some Muslim governments who argue that Islam, because it “has its own distinct system of rights and duties[,]” cannot and should not adhere to Western notions of human rights (Shah, 2006: 871). Within the non-compatible position lies one of the most contested disagreements of the human rights movement, namely whether human rights are universal, or culturally relative and thus specific to religion, culture, and time (Mayer, 2007). Within this latter position are those who take issue with allowing Western notions of rights to enter into judging the actions of those in the “non-Western” world, or in this particular case the Islamic world (Mayer, 2007). Those in the “non-compatible” camp see the modern day human rights system as a Western construct, used for the benefit of Western countries. Such points are not limited to Islam, as scholars have examined human rights from other cultural perspectives, such as from African² (Penna & Campbell, 1998) and Asian perspectives (Welch & Leary, 1990; Kausikan, 1993; Sen, 1997; Bauer, J.R. & Bell, D.A., 1999; Bell, 2000; Dallmayr, 2002). For example, Pagden (2003) explains that the “Islamic objection to the concept of “human rights” has been joined by appeals on the part of Asian despots...for the existence of a specific set of “Asian Values” which supposedly places the good of the community over those of individuals” (172). This differs from universalists who suggest that the human rights movement is based on common standards of viewing all individual humans as equal, regardless

² Extensive work has also been done examining various human rights issues in Africa, (Welch, 1984, 2001; Mutua, 1994, 2008), including but not limited to NGOs in Africa, as well as the role of African courts (Mutua, 1999).

of color, race, religion, sex, or geographic location, while guaranteeing a list of rights that must be upheld by other individuals or governments regardless of culture (Donnelly, 2007: 37; Mayer, 2007: 8).

Another critique from the non-compatibility position as related to Islam suggests that the “Western” international human rights system is not divinely inspired, whereas the laws of Islam are free from man’s deviation, since they were introduced and preserved by God. Furthermore, non-compatibilists take issue with the human rights framework that places the sole emphasis on the rights of man. Instead, they suggest that the ultimate goal is a “theocentric” focus on The Divine (871). A final complaint is the notion that modern day international human rights law emphasizes rights, while ignoring the role of duties an individual has towards others and towards society as a whole (Shah, 2006). From this non-compatible approach has stemmed perceptions of a “clash of civilizations” (Huntington, 1996) between Western and Islamic societies. But while such criticisms are delivered from non-compatibilists, Muslim governments, while critical of international human rights, lack a solid understanding of what human rights are under the international human rights system (Shah, 2006; Mayer, 2007). In fact, the non-compatible approach is incorrect in its critiques of international human rights law because a large part of international human rights law is in fact in accordance with protections granted in Islam (Shah, 2006).

Thus while we see those in the non-compatible position attempt to dismiss the idea of human rights in an Islamic framework, other positions suggest that Islam and human rights are in fact compatible. The reconciliatory approach argues that Islam and the modern human rights system are similar, and “where they conflict, those areas could be reformulated and reconciled within international standards” (Shah, 2006: 875). Methods to “reconcile” Islam with international human rights vary among scholars, and include arguments for a “dialogue” of human rights between Islamic governments and the West (Monshipouri, 1998; Tibi, 1992; Shah, 2006). Another reconciliatory approach towards joining Islam and human rights is through the work of Abdullahi Ahmad An-Naim (1990) who argues for a revision of *Shariah* law, calling for the contextualization of Quranic *surahs* (or verses), suggesting that many of the Quranic *surahs*, particularly *surahs* revealed in Medina are time and culture specific, whereas Meccan *surahs* possess more of a universal and timeless message. Thus, An-Naim (1990) argues for focusing on the verses that are applicable regardless of space and time, as opposed to verses that were revealed for context-specific issues during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. While this approach seems to effectively address discrepancies between Islamic law and international human rights law, the main problem with this approach in terms of applicability is that many Muslims take issue with ignoring any verses in the Quran, since the Quran is seen by Muslims to be divine and timeless in its entirety (Shah, 2006).

Because of the skepticism of such an approach being adopted in the Muslim World, Shah (2006) argues that instead, what is needed is an “interpretive” approach that re-examines the Quran in a modern day context. Specifically, Shah (2006) suggests that since the Quran is “a living text [it] can be reinterpreted to meet contemporary needs of given Muslim societies” (881). By re-interpreting the Quran, we can be lead to the possibility of finding commonality between interpretations of the Quran and modern international human rights law (Shah, 2006). Shah (2006) uses this interpretive approach to re-examine various “conflict areas” (Bielefeldt, 1995) between Islam and human rights such as issues of polygamy, religious liberty, and women’s rights. For example, regarding the issue of a women’s testimony in court being interpreted by some *Shariah* law as being equivalent to one-half of a man’s testimony--if accepted at all, scholars explain that after reinterpreting Quranic *surahs* that are applicable to this law, along with taking account context specific factors--as well as historical precedent of when a woman’s testimony has been viewed as equal in Islamic contexts, the interpretation that suggests a woman’s testimony is not equal to that of a man’s testimony must be seen as invalid (Shah, 2006). Upon re-examination of the Quran, we find that the Quran itself suggests the “second” female discussed is meant to solely “remind” the other, and is not there to serve as a second witness to equal one male testimony. Scholars, debating why women needed an additional person to remind another—whereas the men do not need a reminder, argue that women at the time were not dealing with economic issues on a regular basis, and thus needed an advisor in court for when testifying regarding these economic matters (Shah, 2006). When applying the interpretive approach to the discussion of Islam and human rights, we also find that the new interpretations of the Quran do in fact grant women divorce and inheritance rights, a position contrary to many previous conservative interpretations of the Quran (Shah, 2006). Thus, such an approach has served valuable in bridging supposed differences between Islam and human rights.

Sufism

In order to understand the theoretical contributions Sufi theology brings to the discussion of human rights and Islam, it is imperative to begin by examining what is meant when using the term “Sufism.” The problem with defining Sufism (*tasawwuf*), however, is the “difficulty” of how to “approach” the discussion of Sufism [“] particularly “[s]ince the very concept...is hotly contested among both Muslims and non-Muslims” (Ernst, 1997: 1-2). Sufism is the understood and “accepted term name for mystical Islam” (Schimmel, 1975:3). But while mysticism, or the term “mystic” is represented [in Islam] by Sufi...[t]he terms,

however, are not precisely synonymous, for ‘Sufi’ has a specific religious connotation, and is restricted by usage of those mystics who profess the [Islamic] faith” (Nicholson, 1963: 3). The term mysticism itself is often understood as “love of the Absolute—for the power that separates true mysticism from mere asceticism is love. Divine love makes the seeker capable of bearing even enjoying all the pains and afflictions that God showers upon him in order to the test him and purify his soul” (Schimmel, 1975: 4). The mystic, or “[t]he enlightened sees God in everything and in every space” (Bentounes, 2002: 14). And because one can see God in everything, then seeing God in humans is not exempt. Lings (1977) explains that the Sufi theology of *tawhid* or “Oneness of Being” suggests that “what the eye sees and the mind records is an illusion, and that every apparently separate and finite thing is in Truth the Presence of the One Infinite” (Lings, 1977: 65). Lings (1977) relates this concept to “orthodox” Islam by citing the Quran, where it explains that “Wheresoever ye turn, there is the Face of God” (65).

While Sufism does not have one definition, Chittick (2009) explains that Sufis aim for a “personal engagement with the Divine” (207). Sufis place extensive value on recognizing God in the world, which includes the presence of God within the individual. Furthermore, Sufism, while still recognizing the value of rituals and physical acts of prayer, tends to generally stress inwardness over outwardness, contemplation over action, spiritual development over legalism, and cultivation of the soul over social interaction” (Chittick, 2009: 207). Sufism also places considerable values on God’s attributes of “love” and “kindness” as opposed to attributes of punishment (Chittick, 2009: 207). Sufism is also known for its emphasis on *dhikr* or remembrance of God, where Sufis will often chant the name of God as a form of worship (Chittick, 2009).

The term “Sufism” itself actually first originated from European travelers during the Middle Ages (Schimmel, 1975) who viewed Sufism as a “sect” of Islam (Ernst, 1997: 3), while the “practice” of Sufism itself is said to have been present during the establishment of Islam during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (Fadiman & Frager, 1997), although it was only “institutionalized” between “the ninth and eleventh centuries” (Buehler, 1998: 1). Original Western understandings of Sufism saw it as a lifestyle that was often compared to “Catholic monks...[who were] known for their solitary way of life” (Ernst, 1997: 3), often because of the dismissal of the material world. Sufi definitions have also “included “pure” and “wool” since it was said that Sufis would dress in wool “cloaks” for further indication of their “poor” life (Fadiman & Frager, 1997), although others suggest that wool was not commonly worn by mystics in Islam (Lings, 1977: 46). Nevertheless, this notion of a “poor” life associated with Sufism was not specifically related to material wealth, but rather spiritual poverty, most notably the idea that a person has nothing, and thus needs God for

everything (Fadiman & Frager, 1997). This importance of the concept of poverty in the original Sufi context was therefore more in-depth than the European interpretations of the customs of Sufi life, since Sufis believed that being poor reflected the importance of needing God (Ernst, 1997), particularly since one of the main goals of a person on the Sufi path is to become completely attached to God, even taking steps to detach oneself from the world so as to become solely reliant on God (Nasr, 2007). Along with such understandings of Sufism, other terms for Sufism include the term “dervish” which translated from Persian means “from door to door” (Fadiman & Frager, 1997: 3). This term was used for Sufis because of their habits of going to homes asking for food, indicative of their simplistic lifestyle (Fadiman & Frager, 1997). Later developments of Sufism by Europeans equated the religious philosophy with whirling dervishes (Ernst, 1997), taken from the whirling dervishes of the Mevlevi Sufi order that originated after the death of “Rumi,” as known in the West.

While being poor and having a remembrance of the need of God was esteemed in the early Sufi Islamic tradition, European travelers failed to see the Sufi lifestyle, along with the whirling of particular Sufis with an insightful religious explanation, and instead viewed the acts as “bizarre behavior” (Ernst, 1997: 4). This perception of Sufism was not only held by Europeans, however, as Sufism was also losing standing with Muslims in parts of the Muslim World such as Persia where Shi’ism was taking hold (Ernst, 1997: 4). Sufism continued to be seen as a “deviation” from Islam by early colonizers who encountered Sufi poetry that emphasized actions such as drinking, which is seen as forbidden in Islam (Ernst, 1997). Sufi orders continued to be under persecution at the beginning of the 1800s when Sir John Malcolm, who was the ambassador in Persia for the British East India Company built ties with the Shia religious *ulama* in Persia. This group, lead by Mahomed Ali emphasized going after the Sufis whom they saw as ruining Islam because the Sufis were viewed as not living up to high “moral” standards according to the Shia religious leaders (Ernst, 1997).

Critics further pointed out that Sufis were often willing to downplay the importance of custom and prescribed worship, instead suggesting that any form of prayer with God in mind was acceptable (Ernst, 1997). This sort of criticism of Sufism is prevalent in Muslim societies to this day, since while Sufism is currently revered in some Muslim communities, it is seen as “heretical” in many others (Fadiman & Frager, 1997:7). Examining the history and persecution of Sufism is relevant to the discussion of using Sufi theology to speak for Islam and its contribution to human rights because of the tension Sufism and other “moderate” interpretations of Islam have with those who adhere to a “fundamental” interpretation of Islam, and who view any other readings of the Quran as a “threat” to their control of what they have attempted to brand as “true” Islam. Fundamentalists view Sufism to be completely opposite to the

fundamentalist position of Islam (Ernst, 1997: 212-213). In fact, we have seen increased persecution of Sufis in modern-day Muslim countries such as the Islamic Republic of Iran, where there is an increased “clash” between Sufis and “more orthodox traditions of Islam” (Esfandiari, 2006: 1).

But despite the increased persecution of Sufis, there are many Sufi orders (or *tariqas*) (Voll, 2009) around the world, which are often founded for a number of different reasons. While many orders are established because of a following of a particular individual, other orders may be founded based on a particular attitude or action (such as orders based on “fasting”) (Voll, 2009: 218). Some of the larger Sufi orders include the Qidiriya, Naqshbandiya, Chishtiya, and Tijaniyah Orders (Willis, 2009), while other Sufi orders such as the Bektashiye and Mevleviye Orders are also popular (Godlas, 2009).³ These Sufi orders are often led by various *sheikhs* or *pirs*, which can be defined as a religious “elder” or “master” (Buehler, 1998: xxiii). These *sheikhs* or *pirs* are the leaders of the Sufi order (Shryock, 2009), and serve the role as “a spiritual leader and guide...” (377). In many Sufi Orders, the *pir* will often have a number of students or “disciples” that follow her/his spiritual advice and guidance. *Pirs* or *sheikhs* often are seen as possessing vast spiritual knowledge, which they have received either through extensive prayer and contemplation, or by “inherit[ing] their spiritual power from either a pious Sufi ancestor, or from their connection to the shrine of a past Sufi” (378). Many disciples of *pirs* may also believe that their leaders have extensive spiritual powers that include but are not limited “to perform[ing] miracles and [the ability] to confer the blessings” (378). More conservative branches of Islam often criticize Sufism based on this notion that Sufi *sheikhs* or *pirs* are themselves viewed as holy, which in turn often leads to disciplines establishing shrines of their religious teacher after the *pir* has passed (Ewing, 2001; Mannan, 2009).

Sufism and Human Rights

Having briefly examined the definition, key terms and branches of Sufism, this next section analyzes Sufi philosophy and its contribution to notions of human rights. As mentioned, the term Sufism often sets off debate as to its definition and its objective as a part of the Islamic faith (Fatemi, 1973: in Williams, 1973). And because advocates of fundamental Islamic approaches have portrayed Sufism as being against *Shariah* as well as lacking concern for the material world, a stigma of Sufism has remained that suggests the Sufi distances her/himself from the physical world (Nasr, 1972; 37). Because of this perception, it can be interpreted that Sufis would have little concern for daily affairs, which would include politics.

³ These are but a few of the Sufi Orders around the world. See Trimmingham (1971) for a detailed discussion regarding the history and establishment of Sufi Orders.

But in reality, the true essence of Sufism is quite the opposite. For example, a key part of Sufi thinking is to be active in this world all the while always being God-conscious. Heck (2007) has specifically argued that in many instances around the globe, Sufi orders have organized and have become involved in political affairs.

Furthermore, the notion that Sufism ignores *Shariah* is also inaccurate. Sufism in fact recognizes the importance of *Shariah* as one of the main foundations of a believer (Nasr, 2007). While Sufism advocates for the believer to explore deeper into spiritual questions on the “Sufi path” (*Tariqat*) (Buehler, 2003: 317) in order to find “Truth (*Haqiqah*)” (Nasr, 2007), Sufis acknowledge that one element of the faith is to follow the *Shariah*. Nasr (2007) explains the relationship between *Shariah*, *Tariqat*, and *Haqiqah* by saying that “The *Shariah* is the circumference of a circle whose radii are the *Turuq* (plural of *Tariqah*) and whose Center is the *Haqiqah* or Truth, that is, the Source of both the Law and Way as well as the Center for the one who begins on the circumference, journeys along one of the radii, and finally reaches the Center” (5). Ahmed Sirhindi, in his *letters* explains that before the Sufi can work on internal aspects of the individual self such as the ego, it is essential for the Sufi to follow *Shariah*, or God’s law, as well as the example set by the Prophet Muhammad (Buehler, 2003). Thus, while Sufism in no way ignores *Shariah*, Sufism does however allow for the individual to analyze her/his own ideas of morality through *ijtihad* (personal interpretation), and thus leading to an individual interpretation of rights, and in this case human rights.

And it is with this emphasis on *ijtihad* that Sufism offers the ability for the individual to practice self-construction regarding issues of rights—including human rights—without complete reliance on prior interpretations of *Shariah*. In fact, many within the history and development of reform movements within Sufism have highlighted using *ijtihad*, along with new interpretations of Islamic law that are not reliant on historical interpretations of Islam (Sirriyeh, 1998). A number of Sufi leaders have advocated for *ijtihad*, often at the expense of reliance on the guidance of Sufi *sheikhs* (Sirriyeh, 1998). Thus while there may be an emphasis by many Sufi orders on following the advice and guidance of a *sheikh*, we also know that particular forms or ideas within Sufism also move away from the necessity of a the “top-down” approach of a sheikh and student (Michel, 2005). This form of Sufism places value on the ability of the individual to use *ijtihad* (personal interpretation) in relations to her/his spiritual as well as temporal beliefs. With this, there is no emphasis on emulating the *sheikh*. Instead, the stressing of *ijtihad* within such elements of Sufism allows an individual to interpret ethical and political positions that may be absent in other traditions within Islam. Without seeking opinions from a *sheikh*, such Sufism offers the individual the freedom to develop her/his notion of rights. From this, we find that the advocacy for personal interpretation in the Sufi tradition allows for personal

reflection on issues of human rights, and thus is merely one of many Sufi contributions to the discussion of human rights.

But while such forms of Sufism emphasizes and grants the individual the important role of self-reflection and development towards an individual concept of rights, it must be noted that within Sufism we find differences in the level of independence an individual has in terms of *ijtihad* in relation to individual rights. While Sufi philosophy offers the ability for individual interpretation, through the development of Sufism, scholars have also found an increased role of the sheikh in the life of the disciple (Malamud, 1994). In fact, within some Sufi Orders, the role of the *pir* or *mursit* (spiritual teacher) is “central” to the development of the individual. Without the *pir*, the spiritual growth of the disciple is not possible (Trix, 2009: 332).

For example, the Naqshbandi Order places strong emphasis on the role of a Sufi master or *sheikh* in the spiritual growth of the student. Michel (2005) specifically explains that “the Naqshbandi discipline is presented with an explicit program of spiritual development, which is closely monitored by the [*sheikh*]” (345). Buehler (1998) explains that the Naqshbandi *sheikhs*, because of their strict adherence to the life of “Muhammad through a spiritual genealogy, traveling the same inner path as the Prophet, and exemplifying the Prophet in every thought and action, Naqshbandi [*sheikhs*] (Arabic literally, “elder”; Persian *pir*) were thought to literally embody him” (xv). And because of this belief of embodying Muhammad, students of the Naqshbandi *sheikhs* would aim to live exactly how the *sheikhs* lived (Buehler, 1998). In fact, within the Naqshbandi order, students would give their allegiance or “*bay’ a*” to the *sheikh* (Buehler, 1998: 1). Within the Naqshbandi order, the student is expected to be completely devoted to every word and action of the [*sheikh*] (Buehler, 1998). Buehler (1998) illustrates the level of devotion between the student to her/his *sheikh* by explaining that “[t]he disciples[?] attitude revolved around one underlying operating principle: an unquestioning compliance to an infallible [*sheikh*]” (1). In the case of the Naqshbandis, “[g]oing against the spiritual mentor meant opposing God” (Buehler, 1998: 2). Within the Naqshbandi—as well as other Sufi orders, *sheikhs* often are also elevated to the role of “intercessor” between humans and God (Buehler, 1998: 11; Trix, 2009). And thus, Buehler (1998) argues that looking at the history of the role of Naqshbandi sheiks, we find that sheiks who originated by serving a “teaching” role in regards to spiritual issues often evolved their roles in that of a “directing” position that often included guidance on politics or social issues.

Having said this, and despite attempts by “fundamentalists” to criticize Sufism (due to both its reliance on personal interpretation of *Shariah*, along with condemning Sufism for its esteemed status of *pirs*), Sufism has a great deal to offer the world community, particularly in the discussion of human rights. Sufism

itself emphasizes “humanitarianism, tolerance, harmony, [and]...love of mankind...” (Fatemi, 1973: 47), all important elements within human rights. In fact, Sufis in history’s past have risked their lives for the sake of fighting against issues of poverty and “inhumanity” (Fatemi, 1973: 48), issues that are now labeled under the banner of human rights.

While there has been little research that specifically and exclusively uses Sufism to argue for modern day issues of human rights, Said and Funk (2001; 2004) have applied such Sufi teachings primarily to issues of peace promotion and conflict resolution, while also relating the concept to issues of human rights specifically related to “cultural diversity” (Said & Funk, 2004; 13). Said and Funk (2001) explain that “from a Sufi perspective, social conflict and ecological imbalances demand responses inspired by love and identification, not fear...[.]...Sufis...uphold a sense of proportion and discernment, and issue a call to imbue even the most mundane of human activities with a holistic, spiritual sensibility” (258). They call for a “renewal” of the importance of the philosophical concept of *tawhid* or unity of God. Sufism understands the relationship between everything in the world to God as *tawhid* or “the Oneness of Being” (Lings, 1977; Nasr, 2007: 37). This concept of the “oneness of Being” is seen as “the crowning jewel of Sufism” (Nasr, 2007: 38), and suggests that one is only able to understand this idea that everything is a reflection of God through spiritual actions where the human being is able to rid her/himself of any “veils” until “God becomes the eye with which the human being sees, and the human being becomes the eye with which God sees the world” (38). Therefore, while this concept is the desired goal of the Sufi, even the most basic level of thought regarding this philosophical idea requires a great deal of individual progress and work towards knowing God (Nasr, 2007). Nasr (2007) explains that the Sufi concept of God is different than pantheism—which suggests everything is God. Instead of this, the Sufi position argues that “[e]xistence is a manifestation of Being, and all existence issues from and belongs to Being in the same way that the rays of the sun are finally nothing but the sun” (40). Therefore, instead of everything being God, Sufis instead argue that all things are “mirrors” of God (Nasr, 2007: 41).

This philosophical concept of *tawhid* has been discussed by Sufi scholars throughout generations, and was strongly advocated by the Sufi philosopher Ib’n Arabi, along with other Sufi thinkers such as Jami (1978), who believed that “all things that exist are mirrors of [God’s] perfections.” Using this concept of *tawhid*, Said & Funk (2001) argue that everything in and on Earth is filled with God, and that “peace [is seen] as an ecology of the spirit that reconciles the apparent multiplicity of created things through the establishment of proper internal and external relations amongst them” (258-259). And because Sufism, with its ultimate objective towards “union” with The Divine (Ernst, 1997: 12)

“contains within itself the possibility of being practiced in any circumstance in which man finds himself, in the traditional world as well as in the modern one whose manifestations seem in so many ways to negate the Divine and to make man forget who he is and where he is going” (Nasr, 1972: 37), we can apply the notion of *tawhid* to not only political affairs, but more specifically to human rights. This position contributes to the discussion of human rights by introducing a spiritual undertone to the discussion of human rights—something the human rights corpus directly lacks, by allowing the “humanization of the sacred” to exist in that human action, as both the “personal...and the interpersonal” is itself sacred and holy (Said & Funk, 2001: 4). By seeing human rights and the world in a perspective that is heavily centered on God, Sufism is bringing a perspective of “harmony” to the world that we live in (Said & Funk, 2001: 2), and a position that every action is a special and holy. Such actions that will allow us to continue in the path of union with God while dismissing differences for the sake of “unity” (Said & Funk, 2001: 4). Therefore, since one of the main beliefs within Sufi theology is this notion of *tawhid* where Sufis believe that God is “identical with pure Being” and that according to the Sufis, “everything represents God” (Fatemi, 1973: 50), then this concept can and should be applied to human rights. The desire and understanding of the true Sufi who has advanced her/himself spiritually recognizes that the accomplishment and protection of human rights is within it an action towards the recognition of “God everywhere” (Nasr, 1972: 43). This heightened sense of the world as a reflection of God allows for a distinct message of respect for man and human rights. If we follow this logic, we can see that by maintaining and being a proponent for the protection of human rights, as well as striving to the best of our ability to ensure that human rights are respected, we are helping those for which we see God in. If this philosophy is to be followed, every human that is suffering, since s/he is a reflection of God, should according to the Sufi be helped. Such a philosophy can be adhered to by Sufi as well as non-Sufi Muslims, along with non-Muslims who have either been influenced by Sufi poetry or philosophy.

An area where the Sufi theology of *tawhid* has been applied is in the area of women’s rights. This message of universal love and tolerance for all human beings, men and women alike, has been an integral part of Sufi theology and history, and resonates soundly with the interpretive approach of Islam and human rights. In fact, Sufism’s allowance and strong embrace of Islamic concepts such as *ijtihad* or personal interpretation and re-interpretation of *Shariah* under a changing society have been evident even during a time where “mainstream” Islam’s gates of *ijtihad* were closed (Baden, 1992). While interpretive approaches of Islam have advocated for the necessity of women’s rights (Shah, 2006), Sufism itself has also continued to allow and call for re-interpretation in light of the evolution of society. Since its emphasis has been on the universal message of

Islam, Sufism has been tolerant of re-interpreting *Shariah* in order for the message of Islam, including women's rights, to be universally applied (Baden, 1992). Working from the theological concept of *tawhid*, we have found many Sufi thinkers who have argued for the complete equality of men and women towards this objective, a position found much less in "conservative" interpretations of Islam (Hashmi, 2000). Similar to interpretive approaches to women's rights (Wadud, 1999; Shah, 2006), Sufi works point to the gender neutrality of the Quran in the discussion of God, explaining specifically that the terms "men" and "women" have been used equally multiple times in Islam's holy text, as well citing the numerous passages which address both sexes as further proof of women's equality in Islam (Helminski, 2003: xiv; Wilcox, 1998: 132). Along with the equality of verses, Wilcox (1998) has further suggested another Sufi interpretation of the equality between men and women where she says that

“[t]he concepts of women and men are themselves symbolic. The women symbolizes the body, and the man the soul. Every human being must have both, for the body is the vessel of the soul, which cannot exist without it. The soul, of course, is the source of life for the body. Without the soul, the body begins the process of returning to the elements from which it was originally constituted. If the passages [of the Quran] referring to women and men are read as referring to body and soul, greater clarity ensues” (29).

From such Sufi interpretations, Wilcox (1998) has argued that gender in the Quran is “irrelevant” (136).

Along with Quranic interpretations of women's rights, Sufism's history of women's rights has been further evident in its rich past of not only women Sufi mystics, but also in having female scholars re-interpreting *Shariah* as well as having women participate in religious services together with men. In fact, Hermansen (2008) has found that many Sufi orders have included women into the rituals of Sufi Islam. For example, in the “Sufi Islamia Ruhaniat Society” in the United States, women not only pray alongside with men, but also, the Sufi Order has made it a point to “update the language of the teaching to include the feminine” (in Hermansen, 2008: 2). Others have examined the role of women in Sufi orders throughout Pakistan, India, and Senegal and have found an Islam where women have a large role in the prayer services. For example, Abbas (2002) explains that women in India and Pakistan have had a number of roles serving as mystics, “curators of Sufi poetry,” singers of Sufi songs, as well as worshippers in the religious service. Declich (2000), in her examination of Sufi orders in Somalia, similarly found the importance of women's Sufi poetry in the respective Sufi communities.

In addition to the notion of applying the concept of *tawhid* to human rights, Sufism also stresses the importance of living highly in the material world all the while remembering the ultimate goal, unity with God. Thus, one of the most important aspects of an upright life to the Sufi is to live for God. According to many, in order to serve God, one must serve other creatures and creations on Earth (Fadiman & Frager, 1997: 17). Related to Sufism's role on serving others, Sufi Sheikh Muzaffer was quoted as saying:

“Serving God—what more beautiful thing is there to do! That only real joy is to be a servant of God, and that means being awake all the time to the needs of the moment... When you enter the path you put yourself in the street of service for the rest of your life. There is no going back. Do not think that you can be of service only when you want to be of service!” (Fadiman & Frager, 1997: 222).

The Sufis explain that service, which is seen as “a form of worship,” must be done for the sake of God alone, and not for any other personal satisfaction, and that “[t]his kind of service comes when we remember that we are a part of God's creation, and that by serving creation we are serving our Creator—not for the heavenly reward, but out of love and gratitude” (Fadiman & Frager, 1997: 217). In fact, “[a]n old sheikh [has been quoted as saying that] “[s]ervice without love is like a beautiful corpse. The outer form is lovely, but it is lifeless” (Fadiman & Frager, 1997: 217).

Many stories exist throughout the historical tradition of Sufism that highlights the importance of service in Islam, not only of service to other human beings, but even to animals. Numerous stories have been told of service, such as a story of a woman who not only helped build hospitals for her community, but went out of her way to help an ant who fell into wet concrete. Another Sufi story discusses a son who would devote his Friday earnings to help the poor, in an action of respect for his deceased parents' souls. Unfortunately, one day, when he was unable to make any money, he asked a spiritual advisor what to do. When he was told to collect scraps of “melons and watermelons” for animals, he obliged. Then the story claims that the son saw his parents in a dream for which they spoke to him saying “God be pleased with you!... You used to send us a present every Friday, and now this Friday night, we received as a divine gift the melons and watermelons of Paradise” (Sheikh Muzaffer, in Fadiman & Frager, 1997: 218).

Applying the concept of service to the notion of human rights, one can see the importance of serving and protecting our fellow man as a form of worship to God. Since Dervishes believe that helping others who are suffering is worship, then every action that helps fellow man actually helps in fulfilling the Sufi objective of forming a union with God. Abu al-Najib Suhrawardi (1975) argued

that “the people of religion are [those who choose]...to do good works” (37). Thus, placing the human rights discourse under a Sufi framework allows one to constantly devote her/his “worship” to helping others, and to protect and ensure the rights of all, since this act will ultimately bring one closer to God, since Sufis believe that serving others is “the shortest and easiest” way to God (Abu Said, in Fadiman & Frager, 1997). And it is this love of The Divine, this constant yearning for closeness to God that ultimately drives an adherent to serve others (Fadiman & Frager, 1997: 18). Sufis believe that to obtain union with God, the Sufi must devote her/his life to serve God by giving service to humanity (Fatemi, 1973: 72), since Sufis (and Muslims) see themselves as God’s vicegerents (Nasr, 1972; El Fadl, 2004; Said & Funk, 2004), God’s “custodian” or “curator” of God’s creation (Izutsu, 1983: 235). Applying this to a modern concept of human rights, this position can be placed within the Sufi framework to live every moment helping her/his fellow man, ensuring all rights are met not because of any pressure from society, but rather because of the value of the service to God for whom the adherent loves, since “God bequeathed these beautiful attributes of love and service to humankind, and nothing in the whole world is as sweet as uplifting as these wonderful qualities” (Fadiman & Frager, 1997: 18). Fadiman & Frager (1997) cite Sheikh Muzaffer, who explains that “[l]ove, service and compassion help us reopen our hearts and come closer to God. One of the greatest services we can perform is to help heal the injured hearts of others. Our hands are made to lift up those who have fallen, to wipe the tears of those who are suffering from the trials of this world” (35). In fact, “service” and “love” are so instrumental to Sufi theology that they are seen as two of the stages on the “Mystical Journey.” Sufis see the goal of serving and loving fellow humans as the ability to “replace” “all the evil thoughts which breed dislike, hatred, and religious division and prejudice...[with] love” (Fatemi, 1973: 64-65). It is important to note that according to Sufism, service and love of God go together. The Sufi Rabia, who lived primarily in the eighth century (Helminski, 2003), was said to have had a discussion with Sofyan Thawri on generosity where “Rabia once asked Sofyan Thawri,

“What is your definition of generosity?” He replied, “For the inhabitants of this world, generosity consists in giving away what one has; for those of the world beyond, generosity is to sacrifice one’s own soul.” Rabia objected and said that he was wrong. Sofyan then asked her what her definition of generosity was. “Generosity,” she said, “is to worship Him for love of Himself alone, and not for any benefit or reward” (Rabia, in Harvey & Hanut, 1999:78).

Other historical Sufi philosophers such as Abu Sa'id (Nicholson, 1921) set particular "rules to be observed by the inmates of his *khanqah* in Nishapur [,]" one of which was to "...welcome the poor and needy and all who join their company, and let them bear patiently the trouble of waiting upon them (14). Thus we see from a host of Sufi stories and philosophical texts that Sufis have taken the concept of service—something prevalent in mainstream Islam, and have written extensively about how the role of service for God is connected to Sufi theology of devoting one's entire life for God (Fadiman & Frager, 1997).

Conclusion

This essay has argued that Sufism, the "mystical branch" of Islam allows us to approach human rights from a different perspective, while still working within the Islamic framework. By using Sufi thinking related to the concept of the "oneness of being," Muslims, through constant striving towards being in "unity" with God, are able to work towards guaranteeing the full rights and protections of every human being. In addition to the "oneness of being" (Nasr, 2007), Sufism's emphasis on *ijtihad* and also its strong message of service to mankind is highly relevant to the human rights discourse, and allows one to make the argument that Sufi Islam is highly compatible with human rights. In fact, following Sufi concepts of service and also *tawhid* actually bring one closer to promoting human rights, as Sufism highlights the importance of serving mankind for the sake of the love of God, since Sufis believe that God is revealed in every part of creation, humans, plants, and animals alike. By highlighting the relationship between Sufi philosophy and human rights, we find the importance of love and service as they relate to the human rights dialogue. Therefore, Sufism can be yet another tool in allowing for another Islamic perspective towards the shaping of a truly universal human rights corpus, even though resistance will nevertheless come from "non-compatible" fundamental scholars and governments who argue that Islam and human rights as understood in the West are incompatible (Shah, 2006). Those who argue against the compatibility of human rights and Islam would not be solely critical of just this Sufi position, since they are also critical of many other reformist positions that advocate the compatibility of Islam and human rights (Shah, 2006). And while most in the Muslim world are not "Sufi" by definition, Sufism has had a great influence not only throughout the Muslim World, but also in the West, where Sufi poetry is not only being read, but in fact where Sufi poets such as Rumi are "the best selling poet in the United States..." (Tompkins, 2002). Therefore, Sufism has within its teachings tools for mankind to live with complete love and respect for the human rights of one another.

REFERENCES

Abbas, S.B. (2003). *The Female Voice in Sufi Ritual: Devotional Practices in Pakistan and India*. Texas, United States. University of Texas Press.

Abu Sa'id (Nicholson, R.A., Ed.) (1921). *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*. Cambridge, United Kingdom. Cambridge University Press.

Afkhami, M. (1997). Promoting Women's Rights in the Muslim World. *Journal of Democracy*. 8, no. 1, 157-166.

An-Naim, A. (1990). *Toward an Islamic Reformation: Civil Liberties, Human Rights, and International Law*. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press.

An-Na'im, A. (2001). "Human Rights in the Arab World: A Regional Perspective," *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 3, pp. 701-732.

An-Naim, A. (2004). 'The Best of Times' and 'The Worst of Times': Human Agency and Human Rights in Islamic Societies. *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights*. 1, No. 1, 1-12.

An-Naim, A. (2005). Human Rights and Scholarship for Social Change in Islamic Communities. *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights*. 2, No. 1, 1-4.

Baden, Sally (1992). The Position of Women in Islamic Countries: Possibilities, Constraints, and Strategies for Change. *Report prepared for the Special Programme WID*,. 1-42. Available Online:
<http://thewomenofislam.info/PDFs/ThepositionofwomeninIslamic.pdf>

Baderin, M.A. (2007). Islam and the Realization of Human Rights in the Muslim World: A Reflection on Two Essential Approaches and Two Divergent Perspectives. *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights*. 4, No. 1, 1-25.

Baur, J.R. & Bell, D.A. (Eds.). (1999). *The East Asian Challenge for Human Rights*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Bell, D.A. (2000). *East Meets West: Human Rights and Democracy in East Asia*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Bentounes, K.A. (2002). *Sufism: The Heart of Islam*. Prescott, Arizona: Hohm Press.

Bielefeldt, H. (1995). "Muslim Voices in the Human Rights Debate," *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 4. pp. 587-617.

Boroumand, L. (2007). The Untold Story of the Fight for Human Rights: Iran's Resilient Civil Society. *Journal of Democracy*. 18, No. 4, 65-79.

Buehler, A.F. (1998). *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet: The Indian Naqshbandiyya and the Rise of the Mediating Sufi Shaykh*. Columbia, SC: South Carolina Press.

Buehler, A.F. (2003). Shari'at and Ulama in Ahmad Sirhindi's Collected Letters. *Die Welt des Islams*. 43, No. 3, 309-320.

Chase, A. (2007). The Transnational Muslim World, the Foundations and Origins of Human Rights, and Their Ongoing Intersections. *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights*. 4, No. 1, 1-14.

Chittick, W. (2009). "Sufi Thought and Practice", in *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Vol. 3, 207–216. Ed. by John L Esposito. New York: Oxford University Press.

Dalacoura, K. (1998). *Islam, Liberalism, and Human Rights*. London, England: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd.

Dallmayr, F. (2002). "Asian Values" and Global Human Rights. *Philosophy East and West*. 52, No. 2, 173-189.

Declich, F. (2000). Sufi Experience in Rural Somalia: A Focus on Women. *Social Anthropology*. Vol. 8, No. 3, 295-318.

DeLaet, D.L. (2006). *The Global Struggle for Human Rights: Universal Principles in World Politics*. Belmont, California: Thomson Wadsworth.

Donnelly, J. (1982). Human Rights and Human Dignity: An Analytic Critique of Non-Western Conceptions of Human Rights. *The American Political Science Review*. 76, No. 2, 303-316.

Donnelly, J. (2007). *International Human Rights*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

El-Fadl, K.A. (Ed.). (2004). *Islam and the Challenge of Democracy*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Ernst, C.W. (1997). *The Shambhala Guide to Sufism*. Boston, Massachusetts: Shambhala Publications.

Esfandiari, G. (2006, February 16). Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. Retrieved August 26, 2008, from Iran: Qom Authorities Crack Down on Sufis Web site: <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1065846.html>

Ewing, K.P. & Mannan, M. (updated) (2009). "Pir", in *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Vol. 3, 377–378. Ed. by John L Esposito. New York: Oxford University Press.

Fadiman, J., & Frager, R. (Eds.). (1997). *Essential Sufism*. Edison, New Jersey: Castle Books.

Fatemi, N.S (1973). A Message and Method of Love, Harmony, and Brotherhood. *In Sufi Studies: East and West*. Williams, L.F.R (Ed.). New York, New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc.

Ghanea, N. (2004). Human Rights of Religious Minorities and of Women in the Middle East. *Human Rights Quarterly*. 26, 705-729.

Godlas, A. (2009). *Sufism--Saints--Sufi Orders*. Available Online: <http://www.uga.edu/islam/Sufism.html>

Harvey, A, & Hanut, E (Eds.). (1999). *Perfume of the Desert: Inspirations from Sufi Wisdom*. Wheaton, Illinois: Quest Books.

Hashmi, T.I. (2000). *Women and Islam in Bangladesh: Beyond Subjection and Tyranny*. New York, New York. Palgrave Macmillian

Heck, P. (Ed.). (2007). *Sufism and Politics: The Power of Spirituality*. Princeton, New Jersey: Markus Weiner Publishing.

Helminski, C. (Ed.) (2003). *Women of Sufism: A Hidden Treasure. Writings and Stories of Mystic Poets, Scholars & Saints*. Boston, Massachusetts: Shambhala Productions.

Hermansen, M. (2008). Sufism and American Women. Available Online: <http://worldhistoryconnected.press.illinois.edu/4.1/hermansen.html>

Huntington, S. (1993). "Clash of Civilizations." *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 72 No. 3, pp. 22-49.

Izutsu, T. (1984). *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press.

Jami, N. (Whinfield, E.H, & Kazvini, M.M., trans.) (1978). *Lawa Ih: A Treatise on Sufism*. London, England. Theosophical Publishing House LTD.

Kamlan, J.A. (2005). Islam, Women and Gender Justice: A Discourse on the Traditional Islamic Practices among the Tausug in Southern Philippines. *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights*. 2, No. 1, 1-33.

Kausikan, B. (1993). Asia's Different Standard. *Foreign Policy*. 92, 24-41.

Lings, M. (1977). *What is Sufism?*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press.

Malamud, M. (1994). Sufi Organizations and Structures of Authority in Medieval Nishapur. *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*. Vol. 26, No. 3. 427-442.

Mayer, A.E. (2007). *Islam and Human Rights: Tradition and Politics*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Mayer, A.E. (2007). The Islam and Human Rights Nexus: Shifting Dimensions. *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights*. 4, No. 1, 1-27.

Michel, T.S.J. (2005). Sufism and Modernity in the Thought of Fethullah Gulen. *The Muslim World*. Vol. 95, 341-358.

Monshipouri, M. (1998). *Islamism, Secularism, and Human Rights in the Middle East*. Boulder, Colorado: Lynn Reinner.

Monshipouri, M., Welchman, L., Mokhtari, S., & Baderin, M.A. (eds.) (2006). *Islam and Human Rights: Advocacy for Social Change in Local Contexts*. Global Media Productions.

Moussalli, A.S. (2001). *The Islamic Quest for Democracy, Pluralism, and Human Rights*. Gainesville, Florida: The University Press of Florida.

- Mutua, M.W. (1994). Domestic Human Rights Organizations in Africa: Problems and Perspectives. *Journal of Opinion*. 22, 30-33.
- Mutua, M.W. (1999). The African Human Rights Court: A Two-Legged Stool. *Human Rights Quarterly*. 21, 342-363.
- Mutua, M.W. (2008). Human Rights in Africa: The Limited Promise of Liberalism. *African Studies Review*. 51, 17-39.
- Nasr, S.H. (1972). *Sufi Essays*. London, England: George Allen and Unwin LTD.
- Nasr, S.H. (2007). *The Garden of Truth: The Vision and Promise of Sufism, Islam's Mystical Tradition*. New York, New York: Harper One Publishing.
- Nicholson, R.A. (1963). *The Mystics of Islam*. London, England: Routledge and Kegan Paul LTD.
- Pagden, A. (2003). Human Rights, Natural Rights, and Europe's Imperial Legacy. *Political Theory*. 31, No. 2, 171-199.
- Penna, D.R., & Campbell, P.J. (1998). Human Rights and Culture: Beyond Universality and Relativism. *Third World Quarterly*. 19, No. 1, 7-27.
- Price, D. (2002). Islam and Human Rights: A Case of Deceptive First Appearances. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. 41, No. 2, 213-225.
- Said, A.A. & Funk, N.C. (2001). Peace in the Sufi Tradition: An Ecology of the Spirit. In *Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam: Precept and Practice*. Said, A.A., Funk, N.C., & Kadayifci, A.S. (Eds.). Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America.
- Said, A.A., & Funk, N.C. (2004). Sufi Prescriptions for World Politics: A Way to Global Community. *"The 'Shakir' World Encounters" Conference, Marrakech, Morocco*. 1-19.
- Schimmel, A. (1975). *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press Chapel Hill.
- Sen, A.K. (1997). Human Rights and Asian Values. *Sixteenth Morgenthau Memorial Lecture on Ethics and Foreign Policy*. 5-32.

Shah, N. (2006). "Women's Human Rights in the Koran: An Interpretive Approach." *Human Rights Quarterly*. Vol. 28 No. 4, pp. 868-903.

Shryock, A. (2009). "Shaykh", in *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Vol. 3, 132–133. Ed. by John L Esposito. New York: Oxford University Press.

Sirriyeh, E. (1998). *Sufis and the anti-Sufis: The Defence, Rethinking and Rejection of Sufism in the Modern World.* Richmond, Surrey: Routledge/Curzon Press.

Suhrawardi, A. N. & Milton, M (ed.). (1975). *A Sufi Rule for Novices*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Tibi, B. (1994). *Islamic Law/Shari'a, Human Rights, Universal Morality and International Relations*, 16 *Human Rights Quarterly*. Vol. 16, No. 2 pp. 277-285 (1994).

Tompkins, P. (2002). Rumi Rules! Time Entertainment. Available Online: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,501021007-356133,00.html>

Trimingham, J.S. (1971). *The Sufi Orders in Islam*. Oxford, England. Oxford University Press.

Trix, F. (2009). "Bektashiyah", in *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Vol. 1, 332–333. Ed. by John L Esposito. New York: Oxford University Press.

Wadud, A. (1999). *Qur'an and Women: Rereading the Sacred Text From a Women's Perspective*. Oxford, England. Oxford University Press.

Welch, C.E., & Meltzer, R.I. (Eds.). (1984). *Human Rights and Development in Africa*. Albany, New York. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Welch, C.E., & Leary, V.A. (Eds.). (1990). *Asian Perspectives on Human Rights*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Welch, C.E. (2001). *Protecting Human Rights in Africa: Strategies and Roles of Nongovernmental Organizations*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Wilcox, L. (1998). *Women and the Holy Quran: A Sufi Perspective*. Riverside, CA: M.T.O. Shahmaghsoudi. Williams, L.F. R. (1973). *Sufi Studies: East and West*. Boston, Massachusetts: E P Dutton Publishers.

Willis, J.R. (2009). "Tijaniyah", in *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Vol. 3, 216–224. Ed. by John L Esposito. New York: Oxford University Press.

Voll, J. (2009). "Sufi Orders", in *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Vol. 3, 216–224. Ed. by John L Esposito. New York: Oxford University Press.

Zuhur, S. (2003). "Women and Empowerment in the Arab World," *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 4. pp. 1-12.