

Article

Sa'diddin Hamavi's Views on Sufi Morality and Their Specific Features

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Abstract: The article provides a comprehensive comparative analysis of the Sufi ethical system of Sa'd al-Din al-Hammu'i within the framework of classical mystical traditions and the school of Ibn al-'Arabi. Sufi ethics is examined not merely as a set of social norms, but as an essential dimension of human ontology, representing the soul's return to its divine origin through the process of assimilation to the Divine Names (takhalluq bi-asma' Allah). The study highlights how al-Hammu'i links the purification of the soul (nafs) to cosmic and metaphysical stations, comparing his approaches with Abu Hamid al-Ghazali's psychological treatments of spiritual vices and virtues. A distinct feature of al-Hammu'i's ethical framework is its unique integration with the science of letters ('ilm al-huruf). While traditional Sufism articulates spiritual stations through psychological concepts, al-Hammu'i interprets the letter Alif as the supreme metaphysical symbol of moral steadfastness and rectitude (istiqlamah). Furthermore, the paper investigates the correlation between outer observance of Sharia regulations and inner moral transformation, criticizing antinomian trends (ibahiyyah). It demonstrates how al-Hammu'i harmonizes profound concepts of trust in God (tawakkul), contentment (rida), and spiritual modesty (haya') with a practical social ethos based on the principle of solitude within society (khalwat dar anjuman). The research concludes that al-Hammu'i's ethical philosophy successfully synthesizes theoretical metaphysics with actionable spiritual practice, offering a holistic path toward the realization of the Perfect Man (al-Insan al-Kamil).

Citation: Shavkatovich R. A. Sa'diddin Hamavi's Views on Sufi Morality and Their Specific Features. International Journal on Integrated Education (IJIE) 2026, 9(2), 246-250.

Received: 09th Feb 2026

Revised: 14th Mar 2026

Accepted: 19th Apr 2026

Published: 24th May 2026



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Keywords: Sa'd al-Din al-Hammu'i, Sufi Ethics, Science of Letters ('Ilm Al-Huruf), Ibn Al-'Arabi, Al-Ghazali, Purification of the Soul (Nafs), Rectitude (Istiqlamah), Trust (Tawakkul), Solitude Within Society, Perfect Man.

1. Introduction

In Sufi philosophy, morality (sufi morality or maqamat) is not merely a set of moral rules accepted in society, but a process of fundamental renewal of the human psyche, the purification of the soul from vices, and the transformation of the soul into a mirror reflecting divine qualities. In classical Sufi sources, beautiful morality is defined as both the beginning and the highest peak of the spiritual path. After all, the representatives of Sufism followed the golden rule: "Sufism is entirely morality; whose morality is more beautiful than yours, his level in Sufism is also higher than yours."

Sa'diddin Hamavi's system of Sufi ethics is one of the central areas that defines not only his metaphysical views on enlightenment and the science of Islam, but also the foundations of practical ethics. A comparative analysis of the thinker's moral philosophy with the traditions of classical Sufism and the views of scholars such as Ibn al-Arabi, Hakim Tirmidhi, and Abu Hamid al-Ghazali serves to reveal his unique model of the

"perfect human being." In Sufi philosophy, morality is not merely a set of social mores, but an integral part of human ontology—the process of the soul returning to its original divine source and being adorned with the attributes of the Truth. In the Hamawi system, this concept is manifested in the concept of "takhalluq bi-asmoillah" (being ethical with the names of Allah), and the mystic sees the purification of the soul in unity with the statuses of existence.[1] While representatives of classical Sufism, in particular Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, described morality as a constant state of the soul in "Ihyou ulumid-din" and focused on its medical-psychological and moral aspects, i.e., the classification of destructive vices and saving qualities[2], Hamawi places more emphasis on the transcendent and mystical aspect of the issue. In his opinion, moral striving is the purification of the soul from "moral impurity" (inferior behavior) and the manifestation of the divine essence through "moral purity" (beautiful behavior). The common point here is that both thinkers consider the ego to be the source of moral depravity and consider its perfection as a mandatory condition for virtue. However, as a private difference, al-Ghazali offers more Sharia-practical and spiritual treatment methods, while Hamawi connects the states of the soul with the cosmic and metaphysical levels.[3] In the Hamawi system, the levels of nafsi ammora, lavvoma, and mutmainna determine not only a person's inner state but also their place in the general hierarchy of existence, namely the worlds of Mulk and Malakut. A person who has attained the status of Nafsi Mutmainna surrenders completely to divine destiny, and the virtue of contentment reaches its highest point, which in turn encourages the servant to look at all created beings with compassion. In Sa'diddin Hamawi's ethical philosophy, the struggle against lust and the responsibility of riyozat are considered among the most important practical elements ensuring the spiritual transformation (tahawwuli) of the tax. The mystic's psychological definitions of the concept of "mujahada" (struggle against the ego) are of particular importance, as he considers moral purification not only as abstinence from vices but also as the reorientation of the energy centers in a person's inner being[4]. In classical Sufi sources, in particular in Abu Qasim al-Qushayri's work "Ar-Risala," the mujahada against the ego is interpreted as doing the absolute opposite of its desires and weakening it through such actions as physical starvation and sleep deprivation [5], Hamawi, as a major representative of the Kubrawiyya order, highlights the inner-enlightened aspects of riyazat. According to him, the soul is not nurtured only by physical deprivation, but as a result of the fall of divine rays (tajalli) into the soul, its dark nature dissolves on its own. A distinctive feature of Hamawi's system in this process is that he evaluates the status of "observation" (seeing divine beauty with the eyes of the heart) not as a result of the mujahada, but as an integral process within it. That is, only when the tax collector begins to enjoy spiritual beauty, his soul sincerely and easily abandons worldly vices. This approach is in full harmony with the methods of moral and spiritual education based on the metaphysics of colors and rays of the school of Najmuddin Kubro.

2. Materials and Methods

Another distinctive aspect of the mystical moral system is the contrast between the concepts of "sincerity" and "hypocrisy" and the status of hypocrisy. According to Hamawi, the most dangerous points of moral crisis are "riyo" (acting for show) and "ujb" (being captivated by oneself). While other Sufi scholars, such as Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, called hypocrisy an inner shirk and described its social and religious harm in detail, Hamawi views hypocrisy as a human disconnection from the divine ontological system. In his opinion, a hypocritical person becomes attached to the people (beings) rather than to the Almighty through their actions, and as a result, they falsify their own essence. This breaks a person's connection with the "Absolute Body" and condemns them to be expelled from the Malakut world. Therefore, in Hamawi's work, true morality is alive only with devotion. Ixlos is a servant's refusal to associate any power or benefit other than the Truth in their

actions, intentions, and behavior[6]. In this sense, morality is the complete liberation of the human soul from hypocrisy and falsehood, that is, the attainment of the status of spiritual freedom (hurriyat).

At the same time, Hamavi's views on the ethics of "conversation" (communication between a sheikh and a murid, as well as between tax collectors) are widely covered, which brings him closer to the practical foundations of the Naqshbandiya and Suhrawardiya orders. While Shahabuddin Suhrawardi in his work "Awarif al-Maarif" showed that living as a community, the etiquette of the khanqah and the ethics of brotherhood are the basis of Sufism[7], Hamawi describes the ethics of conversation as a metaphysical process of exchange. According to the author, the two tax collectors sitting in one place and conversing about enlightenment and morality leads to the reflection of their soul mirrors. If a person's morality and spiritual state are high, their light will wash away the flaws in the heart of their interlocutor. Like the concepts of "conversation" and "generosity" in the Naqshbandi order, in the Hamawi system, the morality of a perfect person (sheikh) is transmitted to the murid not only through words, but also through spiritual influence and reflection. This shows that morality is not only a learned science but also a living reality formed under the influence of personal communication and the spiritual environment.

3. Results and Discussions

Hamawi's views on social and economic ethics are also noteworthy, particularly regarding the correlation between "profession" (honest labor) and "asceticism" (non-being given to the world). At a time when many ascetic movements considered complete renunciation of the world and renunciation of labor as moral perfection, Hamawi considers engaging in honest labor to be one of the obligatory acts of the soul[8]. However, he sees true asceticism not in the emptiness of the hands, but in the emptiness of the heart from worldly love. A person may have wealth in their hands, engage in commerce or farming, but that wealth should not enter their heart and distract them from the remembrance of Allah. This approach is fully consistent with the motto of the Khojagon-Naqshbandi order "dil ba yor-u dast ba kor" (the heart is in Allah, the hands are in labor). According to Hamawi, it is preferable and more difficult for a person to demonstrate moral qualities such as justice, honesty, generosity, and generosity while living in social life than to pray alone in distant mountains. Therefore, he called upon his disciples to be masters of a profession that brings benefit to society and to observe the criteria of divine justice in dealing with people.

One of the most characteristic aspects of Hamavi ethics, which distinguishes it from other Sufi systems, is its inextricable connection with the science of Sufism, that is, the metaphysics of letters. While in classical Sufism, behavior and virtues are usually expressed in purely moral or psychological terms, Hamawi interprets the letter "Alif" not only as a metaphysical personification of Being but also as the most perfect symbol of the status of "istiqomat" (rightness and loyalty) in a moral sense. The fact that the alif stands upright, does not deviate in any direction, and does not lose its original form, although it is associated with other letters, means the moral stability of a perfect person in the face of worldly temptations and physical vices. In this regard, Hamawi shares a common ground with Ibn al-Arabi, and in his work "Al-Futuh al-Makkiya," Sheikhul Akbar also considers letters as an ordered ummah within itself, promoting their connection to human morality and the order of the universe[9]. But the peculiarity is that while Ibn al-Arabi analyzed morality in a general-philosophical plan within the framework of the manifestation of the Absolute Being and the unchanging essences, Hamawi consistently applied these letter symbols to the practical-moral conduct of the tax through daily spiritual exercises, virds and zikrs, a system of tables and circles [10]. As stated in his work "Al-Misbah fitasawwuf," a person's speech and action, that is, the verb, is the main tool that reveals their inner moral level. The reason is that a person may appear equal to everyone when they are

silent, but when they act and speak, their true moral value and scientific level are revealed [11]. This demonstrates the consistent socio-psychological and pragmatic basis of the system of collective morality. Through speech, a person reveals a vice or virtue in their soul, which once again confirms the importance of the ethic of silence and the restraint of the tongue in the cultivation of the ego.

On the issue of the balance between Sharia and morality, Hamavi fully agrees with the major representatives of Sunni Sufism. In his works, he severely criticizes the sects of false Sufism that go beyond the precepts of Sharia and deny social and moral obligations. In his opinion, Sharia is a ship, and morality and truth are the ocean to be crossed with the help of that ship, for the tax that plunges into the ocean without a ship is bound to perish. This view fully aligns with the classical criteria in Abu Nasr Sarraj at-Tusi's "Al-Luma'" and Abu Bakr Kalmay'i's "At-Taarruf"[12]. However, the specific aspect that distinguishes Hamawi from others is that he views Sharia practices not only as a legal or jurisprudential obligation but as part of the cosmic order. The physical actions of a person in prayer, fasting, and other prayers are forms in the world of Mulk, while the moral intention and spiritual state behind them are rays in the world of Malakut. Therefore, external beauty and inner purity form an inseparable whole. Even if the tax collector is in a state of divine intoxication or spiritual intoxication, he must maintain social balance and demonstrate the priority of the most beautiful behavior in dealing with people[13]. This is the moral expression of the status of temperance in Sufism, that is, stability, and proves how balanced Hamavi's stance is.

Another important pillar of collective ethics is the concepts of trust and consent. While Hakim Tirmidhi in his work "Navodir al-usul" evaluated tawakkul as a servant's renunciation of their own physical strength and power, relying entirely on the guarantee of Allah[14], Hamawi enriches this concept with cosmic predestination and the theory of fate. According to our analysis, in Hamavi's view, every particle and every event in the universe originally occurs according to specific laws established in Divine Science[15]. A wise person who has discovered this truth does not complain about the people around him, does not envy or be angry with anyone in the difficulties that befell him, because he sees the Musabbib behind the causes, that is, Allah, who is the true cause. This forms an ethic of absolute tranquility in the inner world of a person and boundless tolerance and mercy toward the environment. While other Sufis saw tawakkul more in the context of detachment from sustenance and worldly cares, Hamawi interprets it as the transience of human will in the Divine will, that is, existential surrender. This situation creates a special quality in him—a sense of modesty and majesty. Realizing that the Arif is always in the presence of the Almighty, he does not deviate from moral norms not only in front of people but even when left alone. He would be ashamed not of men, but of the divine light that floats within him.

Result

From the perspective of social ethics, Hamavi's views are not based on asceticism or complete isolation from society. Although he considers long-term chilla and kalwat exercises necessary for spiritual education, as detailed by Alouddavla Semnani in Al-Urwa,[16] the ultimate goal of the suluk is to serve people while remaining within the community. In this case, the principle of being within society and engaging the heart with Allah takes priority. A perfect person is a person who outwardly actively participates in the service of servants, in easing their burdens, and in their moral upbringing, but internally is always in communication with the Absolute Being. This balance frees Hamawi's philosophy from being merely a theoretical-metaphysical system, giving it the status of a strong practical and social moral model. He considers his ego to be the most despicable thing in the world, while he looks at other people with great respect and compassion as a place of reflection of divine qualities. The highest peak of collective social morality is the exaltation of human dignity and the ability to see the divine gift within it.

In our opinion, Sa'd al-Din al-Hamawi's moral system is aimed at liberating man from inner spiritual slavery and forming him as a full-fledged individual at both the cosmic and social levels. His moral philosophy is built upon the pillars of divine love, devotion, loyalty, honest labor, and social responsibility, proving that these beautiful qualities constitute the essence of Sufism. These consistent views of Hamavi are a unique spiritual heritage that successfully combined the experience of classical Sufism with the metaphysics of the unity of the body in practical life.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the system of Sufi ethics of Sa'diddin Hamawi is a perfect philosophical concept that combines the traditions of classical Sufism on the education of the soul, that is, the general aspects, the metaphysical concepts of Ibn al-Arabi's school and the unity of existence, that is, the specific aspects, combining them with the science of Islam and a unique symbolic system, that is, it is a separate aspect.

The moral views of the thinker lead a person to free himself from the narrow, selfish chains of his ego, to become part of the cosmic harmony in the universe, and ultimately to rise to the level of the Perfect Man and be adorned with divine morality. Undoubtedly, this system still serves as an important guide to action in ensuring the balance between a person's inner and outer worlds and their survival from spiritual crises.

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