

## Deconstructive Phenomenological Analysis of Sufi Discourse

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### ABSTRACT

This study presents Sufi discourse of Bulleh Shaha and Khawaja Ghulam Farid as a platform to assert the common emerging patterns in Sufi literature. Derrida's deconstruction is utilised to discover the binaries in Sufi texts and phenomenological analysis to comprehend the essence of lived experience and themes of Sufi confessional poetry. The study reveals the substance of Sufi tradition to a general audience by analysing poetic texts and situates them within the larger Sufi tradition. It would make some contribution to the growing literature on Sufism and would offer an opportunity to researchers to unfold the Sufi narrative.

**Keywords:** sufism, phenomenological analysis, deconstruction, Sufi discourse, confessional poetry

### Introduction

Sufism is one of those very few approaches to life which are universally acknowledged and acclaimed. It's also known as mysticism or pantheism in different parts of the world and is practiced in various ways to attain one and the same goal; unity with the divine spirit. All the Sufis/mystics and pantheist believe that human soul is a part of that divine spirit to whom it originally belongs to. While the object remains the same, the discourses, social practices and rituals vary in the above mentioned approaches. They develop universal love for humanity irrespective of class, colour, creed, race, religion, etc. Regardless of the fact that they preach kindness and love for humanity, their individuality is maintained throughout centuries because the very ontology and epistemology of these approaches is quite distinct. Sufism has its roots in Islamic beliefs such as monotheism and omnipresence of God. To shed light on the distinctive aspects of Sufism, mysticism and pantheism, a brief view of these philosophies of life is presented below.

Oxford Islamic studies online states that 'Islamic mysticism, often referred to as the internalization and intensification of Islamic faith and practice'. It is a pursuit of spiritual truth through the guiding principles of Islam. According to Nicholson (1976) 'Sufism has its roots in the Quran and *Sunnah* and cannot be understood unless we study it from the source'. It is one of the rich traditions of Islam at the heart of spirituality. According to

Rabbani (1984, p.205) William Stoddart is one of the most level headed living scholars, famous for his unbiased study of Sufism, who says ‘there is no Sufism without Islam’. He claims that Sufism is the mystical or spiritual side of Islam. He also points out that in modern world we are provided with Sufism without Islam but ‘one cannot be Benedictine without being Christian or a Sufi without being a Muslim’ (p.205). Schimmel (1975), an orientalist who has profound knowledge and deep understanding of the Sufi doctrine says in her famous book ‘Mystical Dimensions of Islam’, Sufism traces its origin back to the prophet of Islam and takes inspiration from the divine word as revealed through him in the Quran.

Soddart (1979) also rebuts the allegation that pantheism and Sufism are closely linked as Sufis believe in the notion of *wahdat al-wujūd* (the oneness of being) presented by Ibn Arabi. He says that this doctrine is purely based on the ‘Shahada’ which is understood as ‘there is no God but God’ (p.207).

Ali Hajwiri states in his most authentic book *Kashf-al-Mahjub*, ‘‘He that is purified by love is pure and he that is absorbed in the Beloved and has abandoned all else is a Sufi’. He refers to Abu al Hassan Nuri who says, ‘Sufism is the renunciation of all selfish pleasures, and Husri says, ‘Sufism is the heart’s being pure from the pollution of discord’ (Nicholson, 1976).

There are as many definitions of Sufi and Sufism as many eminent Sufi masters had practiced as well as experienced it. It is really hard to bring all those multiple viewpoints in this short paper. As Chittick (2000, p.viii) mentions in the preface of his book on Sufism, the Sufi tradition is immensely so broad and diverse that to provide a conclusive verdict about it, would be an impossible endeavour but it presents subtle emerging themes such as remembrance of God, the path of love, to serve humanity, beatitudes of God, the paradox of veil, etc.

### **Methods and materials**

The sample was selected from the regional Sufi poets of the sub-continent. As this study aims to find common patterns in the poetic discourse of Sufi poets of two different languages, the poetry of two well-known poets of Sufi tradition i.e. Punjabi and Saraiki respectively Bulleh Shah (1680-1757) and Khwaja Ghulam Farid (1845-1901) was studied thoroughly by the researcher and ten poems from each poet were selected as data. These poems were selected through purposive sampling for comparative study on the basis of common experiences the poets shared being Sufis. Shah and Farid were practicing Sufis who contributed their personal experiences in Sufism through poetry and prose for the seekers of peace, truth and divine love. Their poetry is read as well as sung in various countries of the world and they are admired for their universal teachings by Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians etc. alike. They come from the Punjab presently included in Pakistan yet their popularity stretches uniformly across the borders of the Indian Sub-continent.

The present study operates within the phenomenological approach on the one hand and depends on Derrida’s deconstruction on the other hand as the former deals with the subjective experience and its essence whereas the later helps to access the traces and the

binaries within the poetic discourse. According to Creswell (2012, p.58), a Phenomenological study inquires the personal life experience of individuals about a phenomenon and it concentrates on the focal point of the experience of a phenomenon. The main purpose of phenomenology is to contract individual experiences with an aim to “grasp the very nature of the thing,” (Manen, 1990, p. 177). This human experience can be of anything such as a disease, surgery, psychological issue, mystical experience, etc. Thus the phenomenological study collects data about any kind of individual experience and thoroughly describes it. This description consists of “what” they experienced and “how” they experienced it (Moustakas, 1994). Miller utilised phenomenological analysis to study the poetry of Ann Sexton whose poetry is highly confessional and according to him, she uses poetry to express her painful and extremely personal experiences (Miller, 1984). She states Confessional poetry reveals the author’s inner-most existential struggles. Therefore this unique approach to literature offers an opportunity to uncover and understand the author’s experience within the work. As Sufi poetry is highly confessional and consists of personal experiences of Sufis, phenomenological analysis seems a suitable approach for this study. An adopted form of phenomenological analysis given by Moustakas (1994) was used that consisted of the following steps: analysing data for significant statements, meaning units, textural and structural description and description of the “essence”. However as the Sufi discourse is full of paradoxes and contrasting concepts, to assert the binaries in the texts, Derrida’s deconstruction is applied. It also helped to seek traces in the poetry which is one of the most important concepts of Derrida’s deconstruction, as according to him ‘it is the mark of the absence of a presence’. (Derrida, 1998). Trace is the play between the present and the absent.

According to Creswell (2012, p.62), it’s a big challenge for the researcher to fulfil the requirement of Phenomenology to have at least some understanding of the broader philosophical assumptions of the phenomenon under study. Therefore the researcher has provided a broader view of Sufism by referring to eminent scholars in Sufism to underpin the experiences of Sufi poets under observation for this study. However, this analysis of Sufi discourse is just a humble attempt. For finality and authenticity further research would be required as Sufism is such a broad tradition which cannot be encompassed in this study.

### **Data analysis**

The study followed the steps of phenomenological analysis illustrated by Moustakas (1994) and Polkinghorne (1989). Data analysis in the first step consists of significant statements from the poetic discourse of Shah and Farid which present the common themes both Sufis experience while going through discursive practices and rituals of Sufism. However, before indulging into the analysis of these poetic texts, it is important to appreciate the significance of poetry within the broader Islamic tradition within which the Sufi poetic tradition operates. According to Schimmel (1975) the greatest contribution of Sufism to Islamic literature is poetry which transferred from the former Sufis to the present day, remains the most desirable genre to express the spiritual states and stations that constitute the Sufi path. This Sufi poetry, as Rubbani (1984) notes, is the product of their manifold spiritual states that saturate with deep intoxicating influence of divine love. Typical of Sufi poetry is the hymn in praise

of God, love for the Holy Prophet and his companions, yearning of soul for the beloved, the reality of life, prayer and worship, social practices, etc. Rare is the Sufi master who has not written a collection of poetry, and rarer still are gatherings of Sufis where some form of poetry is not recited or sung. This poetry, in Naser's view (1991), acts as the vehicle for the expression of human love for the Divine and became part and parcel of Sufi literature. When such poetry is sung by expert Qawals, the listeners enter into a trance and ecstasy.

### **Significant statements: emerging themes in sufi poetry**

The first step in phenomenological analysis is to state the significant statements, sentences, or quotes that provide an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon. Therefore, this study gathered the significant statements from the Sufi poetry of Shah and Farid to explain their personal experiences being Sufi poets. Besides that, the researcher looked for the instances of binaries present in the text to state meaning making in the Sufi poetry. According to Derrida (1976), discourses are incomplete linguistic systems that are produced by the 'play of differences' which mediate and organise our experience of the world. Thus difference captures the meaning through the interplay of different traces. The comparative in-depth study of the selected poems of Sufis Bulleh Shah and Khawaja Ghulam Farid came across certain patterns of differences which frequently occur in their poetic discourse which enabled the researcher to draw meanings.

The most significant and recurring theme in the poetry of both of the poets is belief in one God which is the touchstone of Islamic Sufism.

*Sab he adad ko smjhen wahid  
Kusrat he mufkood (Farid, p.20)*

'In all numbers, just one matters  
Multiplicity is not possible'

All the multiplicity that exists in the world leads to make me understand that there is only one God. He is the first and the last and exists or manifests in everything.

*Iknuqte wih gulmuqdi (shah,p.21)*  
'On one point, everything ends'

At this one point, all talks/discussions end. Shah advises to hold tight to this point, forget about all calculations and come out of the miserable state of disbelief. This strong faith in the oneness of God leads to spiritual/divine love where we see the unity of the lover with the Beloved.

*Ranjha Ranjhakr di ni me aape Ran jhanhoi (Shah, p.22)*  
'On constantly calling my beloved, I lost into him'

*Rajhanmera me Rajhandi (Farid, p.22)*  
'I belong to my beloved and he is mine'

*Ranjha* is a very popular character in Punjabi folk tale where he was a lover and Heer was

his beloved who faced many hardships to attain unity with Ranjha. Both of the poets here adopt female voice to express the meekness and fragility of one who wants to approach his beloved. Here unity with the beloved is expressed in such a way that they deny their existence or in other words annihilation of self is presented that they themselves have changed into the beloved. The beloved is actually absent but his presence is conveyed by playing with words as it is impossible physically to be one with God yet spiritually they have attained the state of total surrender to their beloved thus have the desired unification with Him. The binaries of man/God, physical /spiritual, presence/absence, slave/master, lover/beloved, separation/unification all seem to be implied within one verse. This inclination for unity with the beloved leads to self-denial and Shah is questioning himself about his identity as he has lost his individuality being in love with God.

*Bulliya ki jana me kon  
Na me momin wich maseetan  
Na me wich kufer di yareetan (Shah,p.24)*

‘Bulleh! I don’t know who I am  
I am neither a Muslim in mosque  
Nor a disbeliever among pagans’

Bulleh Shah here refers to his state of being lost, that he really does not know his reality. He indicates that visiting mosque regularly does not guarantee one’s faith and even among pagans, there might be a true believer. It is essential for a Sufi to deny oneself to find the Creator. Farid expresses the same condition in the following verses.

*Meda ishq wit u medayar wit tu  
Medadeen wit u meda eman witu (Frid,p.25)*

‘You are my love as well as beloved  
You are my religion as well as faith’

The love for Muhammad (P.B.U.H) the last Prophet of Allah is at the core of Sufism. The poets under study verbalise it through their poetry in such a similar way that it seems that both of them share the common experience under common circumstances. Bulleh Shah articulates that there is no difference between the very names Ahad and Ahmad while Farid expresses the same focusing on the fact that the Prophet (P.B.U.H) possessed qualities and attributes similar to God.

*Ahad Ahmad which fraqna Bulleya*

*Ik rati bherm arori da (Shah, p.25)*

‘The difference between Ahad and Ahmad is of only one letter’.

*Ahadte Ahmad farqna koi Wahid zaatsiffat ne (Farid, p.24)*

‘The attributes of Ahad and Ahmad are quite similar’

According to both of the poets even the apparent names of God and His beloved Prophet are quite similar as ‘Ahad’ is the attributive name of God and ‘Ahmad’ is the name of the Holy Prophet, the difference between these names is just of one alphabet ‘M’. They present here the deep rooted belief of Sufism that the essence of the divine spirit exists in the Holy Prophet who is the beloved of all Sufi poets after God Almighty. Shah yearns for his beloved in the following verses.

‘Come my love take care of me, I am in great agony  
You may not take notice of me, but do come to me’ (Shah, p.6)

In these verses, “my love” does not refer to the lover in the worldly sense but it indicates towards the divine love. Farid expresses the agony of love in the following words:

*Hun ishq wunj aimchusSaen*  
*Lukh wari assa di bus Saen (Farid, p.26)*  
‘Everything ends in the love of God’.

There is no temptation; nothing is attractive in the world when the beloved is separated from the lover. There is an urge for union with the beloved. Even in the ecstasy of love, they reach to the verge where they apparently forget about the obligations of Islam.

*Hajitnasaumsalat di Khwaishnahujj zakat di (Farid, p.26)*  
‘No need for prayer and fasting, no desire for hajj and zakat’

Here *namaz, roza, zakat and hajj* refer to the *Sharaih* obligations of Islam which, according to Ali-Hujwiri, are veils that lead to self-control and spiritual purification. Rubbani (1984) mentions in his book ‘Islamic Sufism’ that particular emphasis has been laid on the exoteric obligations in order to crush and subdue the evils of *Nafs* or the carnal self to ensure social welfare and to enable the soul to seek the higher and nobler regions of divine proximity and presence.

*Rooze hujj namaz ni mae Menupiya neaanbhulae (Shah, p.27)*  
‘My beloved made me forget all about hajj, fasting and prayers’

Shah here shows how a girl in love forgets all the religious obligations and apparently he is complaining in a feminine voice that her lover has intoxicated her to such an extent that she has forgotten to say prayers. The divine love is contrasted against physical love to differentiate between the worldly lover and the spiritual lover. Again we can observe binaries are drawn here to accentuate the idea of love. A lover in physical love may dismiss all these obligations but divine lovers fulfil all *Sharaih* obligations to have a glimpse of their beloved. The path of love is always associated with pains, sorrows and hardships. Farid articulates about his sad state that how his heart has become impatient and restless in Divine love.

*Dil yar li kurlawe Terpawe te gham khawe (Farid, p.27)*  
‘My heart is burning for the union with my beloved’

Man’s love for God is a quality, in Hajwiri’s view that manifests itself in the heart of the

pious believer who seeks to satisfy his Beloved and get familiar with the remembrance of Him. Shah presents his yearning for his beloved in the following verses:

*Tere ishq ne dhera mere anderketa Bhr k zehrpyala me tan aapepeta (Shah, p.27)*

‘Your love captured my soul; I am ready to die with this poison’

While telling about the hardships of love, they refer to the difficulties of the Prophets in such a way that it seems that both of them are assisting each other in creating these poetic expressions.

*Sabir de tunkeer epayu Mosa nu kohetoor charayu  
Mansoor nu cha sulidita (Shah, p.26)*

‘Sabir infected by worms, Mosa travelled to the Toor Mountain and Mansoor was hanged’.

Farid presents the same images thus:

*Sabir de tun keere biche Mosa kohe toor jalaya  
Shah Mansoor char usuli (Farid, p.25)*

‘Sabir tolerated worms, Mosa travelled to Toor, and Mansoor was hanged’.

Here, the first two references are towards the Prophets; Hazrat Yaqoob (A.S) who is known for his patience while suffering from a parasitic disease, he remains thankful to God due to his love for God and Hazrat Mosa (A.S) who was called upon to the Mountain Toor by God. The third reference is to Mansoor Hallaj (a well-known Sufi) who had been hanged due to his bold expression in ecstasy of love. All these references from Islamic history indicate how the generations of Sufis are attached to one and the same source. By utilising traces from Islamic tradition the Sufi poets evoke the eternity of divine love.

The mortal nature of this world is enthusiastically expressed by all Sufis. The negation of the material world is the cardinal of Sufism. They preach that this world and its life are temporal.

*Jug wehmkhayaltekawabea (Farid, p.28)*

‘This universe is an imitation of an idea’.

This whole universe is nothing more than an idea, dream or an imitation. The real is only God and this world is a mere reflection.

*Na kerbundyamerimeri, naterinameri Char dina da mela, dunyafermitti di dheri (Shah, p.28)*

‘Don’t say my world, it is neither yours nor mine, this life seems charming but it ends in the dust of grave’.

By utilising Derrida’s concept of binaries, we can see here the contrast presented through binaries mortal/immortal, imitation/real, physical/metaphysical, and temporal/ eternal to emphasize the finite nature of the life in this world.

Another significant fact that Sufis experience and articulate repeatedly in their poetry is the transitory nature of life. Youth is set against the old age and life against death as Derrida claims that one part of the pair is always privileged over the other. Instead of focusing on youth and life which are apparently privileged parts, both poets stress that youth

would soon turn into old age and life would replace with death.

*Ker maannahusnjwani da Na rehsinamnishankure (Shah, p.28)*

‘Don’t be proud of beauty and youth, both would end in nothing’.

Shah indicates that one should not be proud of youth, its energy and beauty because soon they would be replaced with old age, its weakness and dependency leading to death. Therefore, one should start preparation for the hereafter right in youth.

*Joban sathi char dehan da Jhau put zuafbhudyapaaonda (Farid, p.26)*

‘Youth accompanies for a few years, then old age arrives’.

The experiences of Sufi poets which are drawn from their confessional Sufi poetry have been instantiated in this section bringing into limelight the paradoxes through analysis of binaries. Indeed Schimmel (1975) is quite right while proposing that for Sufis, the paradox is the most legitimate form of guiding the seeker toward the goal. On the one hand, the researcher developed a textural description of the experiences of the poets and on the other hand, exhibited structural description of their experiences in the broader context of Islamic Sufism. In the following section, the essence of the subjective experiences of both poets is staged along with the traces found in their poetic discourse.

### **Findings and discussion**

While focusing on the significant verses of Sufi poetry of Shah and Farid, the researcher aimed throughout to let the themes speak for themselves for it is necessary in phenomenological analysis that the researcher must bracket his/her personal experience with regard to the phenomenon under study. The first and the foremost concept emerged as an essence of their experience is their belief in one God (*Tauheed*). According to Andrew Wilcox (2011), the Sufi’s final station is to attest the reality of their faith in *Tauheed*. To affirm to this truth is to infer that God alone has agency but the lover of God has to struggle hard in order to attain the enlightenment. The juxtaposition of ‘no god but God’ is to shake the familiar concept of multiplicity as Farid states that multiplicity is impossible. The manifestation of God in everything in the universe can lead to the belief in multiple gods as pantheists identify everything with God therefore *Tauheed* remains the kernel of Islam as well as Sufi tradition throughout centuries till today. The first Shahadah/ testimony – “There is no god but God” – discerns between the real and the unreal, or between the Absolute and the relative, or between God and “everything other than God,” which is the universe (Chittik, 2000).

The divine love is the topmost station for which Sufis strive throughout their life. The urge for the Beloved and the hardships of love are the essence of Sufi experience. Schimmel (1975) mentions, Sufi poetry expresses divine love and mystical union through the metaphors of profane love and union often resembling ordinary worldly love poetry and the Sufis made use of the ordinary vocabulary of non-mystical poetry, thus producing an ambiguity that is felt to be one of the most attractive and characteristic features of Sufi literature of all languages. In Regional Sufi poetry, therefore, God is the Beloved and the Sufi, or the human soul is the woman separated from her lover by illusion. The same is true



for Shah and Farid, both of them refer to 'Ranjha' who is a lover in a worldly love story, yet they play with this trace and indicate to be 'Ranjhan' in love, to attain the Beloved they behave like a female who is meek and fragile and cannot bear the hardships of love and consequently turns into the beloved which seems impossible apparently. However, the implied intention is that they annihilate themselves in Divine love. As for *Shahhada*, it's necessary to negate there is no god in order to affirm one God, in divine love it's a compulsion to negate one's self.

According to Hallaj, the first step in unification is the annihilation of separation. The analogy of union and separation must be applied to understand the mystery of unity with God. Ali Hajwiri declares that it cannot be expressed in language. Admitting the difficulty to comprehend the Sufis, Schimmel (1975) says to analyse the mystical experience itself is next to impossible since words cannot plumb the depths of this experience. Hajwiri refers to Junayd who said 'you must know that God is eternal and you are phenomenal and there is no homogeneity between the eternal and the phenomenal'.

The idea of the manifestation of divine wisdom was also connected with the person of the Prophet Muhammad (Schimmel, 1975). Therefore, Sufis express their love for him devotedly and they believe Muhammad certifies the divine attributes and characteristics, being an apostle of God. As for all Sufis, after the holy Quran, the Prophet and his sayings are the source of knowledge and practices through which they can approach spirituality and proximity with God. The realization that beyond the knowledge of outward sciences, intuitive knowledge was required in order to receive that illumination to which reason has no access, forces them to hold fast Islam. Muhammad has the aspect of sanctity in addition to that of prophecy that makes him the ideal for all Sufis. According to Jeniffer (2013), the Sufi concept of the "Perfect Man", the perfection of the human state, in which man is likened to a perfectly polished mirror reflecting all the Divine names and qualities, uniting God and the cosmos in one being is identified in the Prophet Muhammad. He is the model par excellence of this state of human perfection. That's what Shah and Farid articulate in their poems repeatedly.

One of the profound emerging features of Sufis' discourse is inter-textuality and recurring traces from the Holy Quran, the Hadith and the Muslim history. Both of the poets refer back to the life of the Prophets and quote the instances from Sufis that how they had put up with sorrows and hardships in Divine love and even in certain cases sacrificed their lives. As Seyyed Hossein Nasr states in his essay 'From Poem to Narrative in Sufism',

Being the inner dimension of the Islamic revelation, Sufism is related in both form and content to the Noble Quran, and the language of the Sacred Text, its rhythms and rhymes, its metaphors and symbols, have continued to echo in Sufi literature throughout the centuries. (Nasr, 1991, p.171)

Renunciation and negation of the world is an essential characteristic of Sufi discourse which is the gist of Sufi practices. The temporal and transitory nature of life and youth is emphasized by contrasting them with death and old age. As Shah verbalises in his poetry that 'soon there would be no sign of you O girl, therefore be focused on your task'. Here the task is to move forward for the purification of heart in order to make it a dwelling of God. According to the Sufis, man is ignorant, the vast majority of us are oblivious to the

realities of life and death, existence and God, and we live life as if in a dream or a metaphor. And yet the other side of sleep is wakefulness which can be gained through practical guidance and sincere efforts. (Sufism Oxford Islamic Studies Online)

To synthesize the whole discussion, the paradoxes and juxtapositions are the most frequently occurring singular feature of the poetic expression of Sufis. They play with paradoxes thus shake the very foundation of the familiar world (Jeniffer, 2013). The resulting effects are like seismic disturbance which sways the known and acquainted aspect of reality. For there is no way to know the groundlessness of reality except by forsaking the (perceived) security of solid ground, only then it is possible to enter and to assert the unknown. That is the ultimate endeavour of Sufis. The use of paradox may justifiably be viewed as an earnest and ingenuous attempt to convey the unconceivable (Wilcox, 2011).

## Conclusion

This study pursued phenomenological approach along with Derrida's deconstruction to analyse the Sufis' experiences and their essence in the poetic discourse of Bulleh Shah and Khawaja Ghulam Farid. The findings reveal that belief in one God, divine love, love for Holy Prophet, self-negation, temporal nature of life and the world, quotations from the Holy Quran and references to Hadith and Muslim history to enhance the authenticity of experiences, emphasis upon religious obligations and exoteric practices, are commonly emerging patterns in Sufi literature which are a source of national cohesion in general and Muslim unity in particular as all over the world, Muslims and Sufis share these unique features. Apart from this universal cause, Sufis have contributed significantly to illustrate the complex phenomenon and theoretical aspects of religion which are otherwise beyond the understanding of a lay man through their poetry by making use of paradoxes to simplify the binary relations existing between God/man, metaphysical/physical, eternal/phenomenal, inward/outward, presence/absence, etc.

The study implies that Sufism is essentially an Islamic tradition as Sufis derived theoretical as well as practical perspectives from Islam to begin with whereas the Western spiritualists have no faith to start with, no set of beliefs to guide and no fixed goal to direct steps. (Rubbani, 1984). It is hoped that this study would be a humble contribution in the existing literature on Sufism and would further provide a foreground to study the experiences of regional Sufis under the umbrella of broader Sufi tradition to enhance national cohesion and promote better understanding.

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## Appendix

### Glossary of Islamic terms

Ahad: one (refer to one God)

Hajj: Pilgrimage to Makkah during the month of Dhul Hijjah

Nafs:

Namaz (Salaah): Prayer. The second pillar of Islam. To pray five times daily.

Roza: fasting, obligatory in Ramadhaan, the Ninth month of the Islamic calendar

Shahadah: to testify that God is one and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is His last Prophet.

Shariah: Refers to the divine guidance as given by the Qur'an and the Sunnah and embodies all aspects of the Islamic faith, including beliefs and practices.

Sunnah: Refers essentially to the Prophet's example as indicated by his practice of the faith. The source is the collection of Ahadith ( Sayings of the holy Prophet).

Tauheed: The absolute Oneness of Allah.

Wudhu: Obligatory washing before prayers and recitation.

Zakat: The fix amount payable by a Muslim on his net worth as a part of his religious obligation, mainly for the benefit of the poor and the needy.