

# Murshid

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***Murshid*** (Arabic: مرشد) is Arabic for "guide" or "teacher", derived from the root *r-sh-d*, with the basic meaning of having integrity, being sensible, mature.<sup>[1]</sup> Particularly in Sufism it refers to a spiritual guide. The term is frequently used in Sufi orders such as the Qadiriyya, Chishtiya, Shadhiliya and Suhrawardiyya.

The path of Sufism starts when a student (Murid) takes an oath of allegiance or *Bay'ah* (*bai'ath*) with a spiritual guide (*murshid*). In speaking of this initiatory pact of allegiance, the Qur'an (48:10) says: *Verily they who pledge unto thee their allegiance pledge it unto none but God. The Hand of God is above their hands*<sup>[2]</sup>

The murshid's role is to spiritually guide and verbally instruct the disciple on the Sufi path, but "only one who has himself reached the End of the path is a spiritual guide in the full sense of the Arabic term*murshid*".

A murshid usually has authorisation to be a teacher for one tariqa (spiritual paths). Any tariqa or silsila has one murshid at a time who is the head of the spiritual order. He is known as the *shaykh*, *by way of khilafah: process in which the shaykh identifies one of his disciples as his successor for the khalifa*.

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## Importance

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In Sufism, it is the transmission of the divine light from the murshid's heart to the disciple's which surpasses any other source of knowledge and is the only way to progress directly towards the divine. The concept of Murshid Kamil Akmal (also known as *Insan-e-Kamil*) is significant in most tariqas. The concept states that from pre-existence till pre-eternity, there shall always remain a Qutb or a Universal Man upon the earth who would be the perfect manifestation of God and at the footsteps of the Islamic prophet Mohammad.

## See also

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- Pir (Sufism)
- Rōshi
- Spiritual direction
- Starets
- Guru

## External links

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- Glossary of Muslim Terms
- Sufi Live
- Murshid<sup>[1]</sup>

# Notes

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1. See Hans Wehr's *Arabic Dictionary*, 4th ed., s.v. rašada.
  2. Cf. Martin Lings, *What is Sufism*, Islamic Texts Society, Cambridge, p. 125.
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