

The Role of Humour as a Virtue: From the Perspective of the Sufi's Worldview

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Abstract : In Sufi culture, humour in form of story, expressed as prose or poetry, is used to deliver moral lessons. However, this humour is not limited to telling stories as an educational program. In this paper, an idea is introduced to argue that humour is a virtue from the Sufis' perspective. This understanding of humour is different than as what has been understood generally in the Western intellectual tradition. For the Western philosophers in general, humour is the indication of the soul's position in relation to others that signify the relations between different individuals. But for the Sufis, it is more so as a tool for an individual to surpass his/her anger and encourage toleration with others; ultimately it is a form of 'mercy'. In order to explain this idea, the paper will be worked into three parts as steps to construct the epistemic structure of this claim. The first part, the ethic philosophy of the Sufis will be discussed, and this will be done mostly based on the ideas on ethics that is related to the conception of existence. In the second part, few short Turkish Sufi stories will be looked at to find how the humour is applied in relation to the objective of the stories. After that, how humour can be a principle in ethic will be discussed by making some comparisons with what already taught as philosophy of humour in the West under the groups of incongruity, superiority, and relief theories. Therefore, in the end, we shall argue that to find humour in every situation is a recommended virtue for, providing that it surpassing anger of oneself and encourage toleration for others as an act of mercy.

Keywords : epistemology, ethic, sufism, virtue

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