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Buddhist's *Kalyānamitta* and *Ṣūfi's Shaykh-Murid*: A Comparative Exploration of Spiritual Mentorship in Buddhism and Islam

Nur Suriya Binti Mohd Nor*
Mohamed Ashath**

Abstract

Spiritual mentorship is essential in both Buddhism and Islam because it offers seekers individualized support and direction on their path to self-realization and spiritual bliss. The Buddhist concept of *Kalyānamitta* and the *Ṣūfi* idea of *Shaykh-Murid* explain the importance of the experienced and wise spiritual guide who will assign the meditators to attain spiritual perfection. So, the objective of this research is to investigate the fundamental roles of Buddhist *Kalyānamitta* and the Sufi idea of *Shaykh-Murid* as methods for personal transformation and spiritual growth to make better interreligious understanding among the adherences. The study examines the philosophical foundations, historical orientations, and practical applications of these ideas in the two traditions through a comparative lens. Through an examination of relevant primary and secondary sources, scriptures, and scholarly works, this research aims to elucidate the spiritual practices that enable seekers to cross the transformative journeys of both Buddhism and Islam. Although Buddhism and Islam are two different religions, the study's findings show that they have many fundamental parallels in the pursuit of spiritual mentorship. This research concludes by empowering Buddhist-Muslim interreligious understanding and lessening misconceptions within them through finding commonalities on spiritual mentorship, and discipleship. Mentorship plays a crucial role in both Buddhism and Islam, providing personalized guidance and support to individuals on their quest for self-realization and spiritual fulfillment. This is exemplified in the Buddhist concept of *Kalyānamitta* and the Sufi notion of *Shaykh-Murid*, highlighting the significance of experienced and wise spiritual guides who assist practitioners in achieving spiritual excellence. Consequently, this study aims to explore the foundational roles of Buddhist *Kalyānamitta* and the Sufi concept of *Shaykh-Murid* as vehicles for personal transformation and spiritual development, fostering greater interreligious understanding among their followers. By employing a comparative approach, this research delves into the philosophical underpinnings, historical context, and practical applications of these concepts within both traditions. Through an examination of primary and secondary sources, scriptures, and scholarly literature, the research seeks to elucidate the spiritual practices that facilitate transformative journeys in both Buddhism and Islam. Despite the

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apparent differences between Buddhism and Islam, the study's findings reveal remarkable parallels in their pursuit of spiritual mentorship. In conclusion, this research empowers interreligious understanding between Buddhists and Muslims, dispelling misconceptions and highlighting common ground in the realms of spiritual mentorship and discipleship.

Keyword: *Kalyānamitta*, Shaykh-Murid, Spiritual Mentorship, Buddhist-Muslim Understanding.

Introduction

Although Buddhism and Islam have been considered as religions of peace, the meeting of Buddhists and Muslims is most often imagined as one of violent confrontation in the modern world. There should be an understanding between Buddhism and Islam to ensure harmony among the adherents. Buddhist's *Kalyānamitta* and *Ṣūfī Shaykh-Murid: A Comparative exploration of spiritual mentorship in Buddhism and Islam* may be ideal concepts to make a good inter-spiritual comparison between Buddhism and Islam. It can be used to bring Buddhist-Muslim understandings. The exploration of spiritual mentorship in Buddhism and Islam is a valuable endeavour as it allows for a comparative analysis of the practices and concepts within these two major religions.

Throughout history, understanding has been recognized as one of the basic conditions of global peace and social stability between various groups of people from diverse faiths, religions, ethnicities, cultures, races, colors, languages, nationalities, etc. Across the world, Muslims and Buddhists have peacefully coexisted for a long time. However, their interaction has been mainly political and economic instead of doctrinal¹ yet the first contact between the Muslim and Buddhist civilizations took place in the areas where Buddhism had spread came under the rule of the Arab Umayyad (661-684 AD); entitled as Umayyad expansion to the Central Asia region. The relationship between Muslims and Buddhism grew during the Abbasid period (775-809 AD), especially in an intellectual aspect.² In the 8th century CE, during the Abbasid period, the earliest meaningful interaction between Buddhist and Muslim scholars started. Caliph al-Mansur established a Bayt al-Hikmat (House of

¹ Mohamed Ashath, "Peaceful Coexistence Through the Concepts of Brahmavihārās of Buddhism and Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'a of Islam: A Content Analysis," *Analisa: Journal of Social Science and Religion* 6, no. 01 (2021): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.18784/analisa.v6i01.1298>.

² Ahmad Faizuddin Ramli, Jaffary Awang, and Zaizul Ab Rahman, "Muslim Scholar's Discourse on Buddhism : A Literature on Buddha's Position," *SHS Web of Conferences* 53, 04001 (2018).

Knowledge) in Baghdad at that time for the study and translation of literature from Greek and Indian cultural works, particularly.

The number of intolerant attitudes between different religious groups has increased considerably in different parts of the world in recent times, especially between Buddhists and Muslims in some countries like Burma, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and elsewhere. During the last few decades, Buddhist-Muslim clashes have garnered the attention of the global community, referring to such incidents as the destruction of the Nalanda monastery in the thirteenth century and the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues by the Afghan Taliban in 2001, the Buddhist government's dominance of Muslim minorities in South Thailand, violence against the Muslim Rohingya and the rise of the 969 movement in Myanmar, the ethnic riots in Sri Lanka have seriously harmed the Buddhist-Muslim interrelationship and understanding.¹ There should be an understanding between Buddhists and Muslims through comparative studies of their religions. The Buddhist concept of *Kalyānamitta* and the *Ṣūfi* idea of *Shaykh-Murid* explain the importance of the experienced and wise spiritual guide who will assign the meditators to attain spiritual perfection. So, the objective of this research is to investigate the fundamental roles of Buddhist *Kalyānamitta* and the *Ṣūfi* idea of *Shaykh-Murid* as methods for personal transformation and spiritual growth to make better interreligious understanding between Buddhists and Muslims. It is hoped that the similarities of these two concepts; *Kalyānamitta* and *Shaykh-Murid* can make good interreligious understanding.

Literature Review

There is a handful of works that aim to uncover the common ground between Buddhism and Islam. For instance: *Islam and Buddhism in the Modern World*² and *Finding God in Buddhism: A New Trend in Contemporary Buddhist Approaches to Islam*,³ and the book *Common Ground Between Islam and Buddhism*⁴ try to analyze the basic beliefs

¹ Mohammed Ashath and Nur Suriya Mohd Nor, "Social Cohesion in the Views of Islam and Buddhism: A Textual Analysis," *Al-Itqān*, no. 2 (2021).

² Imran Nazar Hosein, *Islam and Buddhism in the Modern World* (Masjidh Dar al-Qurān, 2001).

³ See; Kieko Obuse, "Finding God in Buddhism: A New Trend in Contemporary Buddhist Approaches to Islam," *Numen* 62, no. 4 (2015): 408–30, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685276-12341379>.

⁴ See; Reza Shah Kazemi, *Common Ground Between Islam and Buddhism* (Jordan: The Royal Aal-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, 2010).

and major themes of both religions comparatively. The work on *Building a Bridge Between Theravada Buddhism and Islam*¹ is a significant work that attempts to explain some structural similarities between both traditions. Similar to Imthiyaz Yosuf, Alexander Berzin's findings, specifically *Buddhist-Muslim Doctrinal Relations*² focus on historical encounters rather than finding doctrinal or philosophical similarities. Similarly, the objective of these works does not compare any specific spiritual practices to bring Buddhist-Muslim interreligious understandings. As a result, it has been found that there have been no works that specifically deal with spiritual mentorship within the Buddhist and Islamic scriptural perspectives that have been carried out.

Methodology

This article falls within the scope of the history of religious thought, which involves a textual analysis and library research. Thus, this article applies to the qualitative approach without Islamizing Buddhism and Buddhistizing Islam. It uses a literal review on analysis of the literature studied about both Buddhism and Islam concerning Buddhist's *Kalyāṇamitta* and *Ṣūfi's Shaykh-Murid* and its textual evidence. The results are gathered and arranged for the construction of spiritual mentorship to foster Buddhist-Muslim understanding.

Concerning the source of this article, both primary and secondary sources in English, Arabic, Sinhala, Pali, and Tamil languages are consulted. The study concludes that although, Buddhism and Islam are two different religions yet, both religions share a similar scope for spiritual mentorship. Both religions emphasise the importance of spiritual teachers and mentors for the spiritual life and for the upliftment of the spiritual journey.

Buddhism

Buddhism is the world's fourth-largest religion with over 520 million followers, or over 7% of the global population, known as Buddhist.³ Buddha (Sanskrit: "Awakened One"), was a teacher who lived in northern India between the mid-6th and mid-4th centuries BCE (Before

¹ See; Philip Novak, "Building a Bridge Between Theravada Buddhism and Islam," 2017. Collected Faculty and Staff Scholarships. 302. <https://scholar.dominican.edu/all-faculty/302>

² Alexander Berzin, "Buddhist-Muslim Doctrinal Relations," *Buddhist Attitudes toward Other Religions*, 2008.

³ "Buddhists". Global Religious Landscape. Pew Research Centre. Retrieved 13 March 2015.

the Common Era).¹ The teachings of Buddha are considered as Buddhism. However, Buddhism, according to a strict definition of the word “religion”, is not a religion at all and Buddhism is simply a non-theistic philosophical and moral system that expounds a unique path to enlightenment.² So it is said that Buddhism goes counter to most religions in striking the Middle Way and in making its Teaching homocentric in contradistinction to theocentric creeds.³ However, generally, Buddhism is considered a religion, philosophy and way of life.

The Buddha often summarized his teachings into four noble truths: life is *Dukkha* (unsatisfactory); the cause of *Dukkha*; the end of *Dukkha*; and the way to end *Dukkha*.⁴ The end of *Dukkha* is the Fourth Noble Truth and that of the Way leading to the Cessation of *Dukkha* which is known as the 'Middle Path' (*Majjhima Patipada*) and the noble eightfold path (*Ariya-Atthangika-Magga*) because it is composed of eight characters to attain *Nirvana*. 1. Right Understanding (*Samma ditthi*), 2. Right Thought (*Samma sankappa*), 3. Right Speech (*Samma vaca*), 4. Right Action (*Samma kammanta*), 5. Right Livelihood (*Samma ajiva*), 6. Right Effort (*Samma vayama*), 7. Right Mindfulness (*Samma sati*), 8. Right Concentration (*Samma samadhi*).⁵ These eight factors or Noble Eightfold Path have been traditionally divided into three groups of training or the three ways of practice and they are morality or good conduct (*Sila*), meditation or mental development (*Samadhi*), and wisdom or insight (*Panna*).⁶ The *Sila* consist of Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood and that belongs to the way of good conduct. *Samadhi* consists of the Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration and belongs to the way of mental development. *Panna* consists of the Right Understanding and Right Thought that belongs to the way of wisdom.⁷ So, it can be reviewed that the Buddha's teaching is interconnected with four noble truths and a noble eight-fold

¹ Buddhism. Britannica.com, Retrieved November 09, 2020, from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Buddhism>.

² Bomhard, *The Original Teachings of The Buddha*, sec. Introduction.

³ Venerable Nārada Mahāthera, *The Buddha and His Teaching, Buddha Dharma Education Association*, 1998, XI, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1tfw059.10>.

⁴ Damien Keown, *Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2013) (Chapter: The Four Noble Truths) pp. 48–62

⁵ Walpola Sri Rahula, *What The Buddha Thought* (New York: Grove Press, 1974), 45.

⁶ Peter D Santina, *Fundamentals of Buddhism* (Singapore: Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc., 1984), 47.

⁷ Santina, 48.

path which consists of three divisions; *Sila*, *Samadhi*, and *Panna* as depicted in the table below.

Sila-Samadhi-Panna

| Division | Eightfold Path factors |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Moral virtue (<i>sīla</i>) | 1. Right Speech |
| | 2. Right Action |
| | 3. Right Livelihood |
| Meditation (<i>Samadhi</i>) | 4. Right Effort |
| | 5. Right Mindfulness |
| | 6. Right Concentration |
| Insight, wisdom (<i>paññā</i>) | 7. Right Understanding |
| | 8. Right Thought |

Buddhist’s *Kalyāṇamitta*: A Discussion on Spiritual Friendship in Buddhism

According to Buddhist doctrine, making spiritual relationships is a crucial step on the road to enlightenment. Friends that are spiritually minded support one another in their pursuit of the truth, encourage one another to live morally and assist one another in putting aside selfish desires and needs. Thus, the Buddhist concept of “spiritual friendship” within Buddhist communal life—applicable to both monastic and domestic relationships is known as *Kalyāṇamitta*. *Kalyāṇamitta* brings the meaning of a good friend, and the reference is to a spiritual teacher in Buddhism.¹ After getting rid of all possible hindrances, the prospective meditator should seek out a competent teacher (*ācariya*) who can give him proper guidance.² In Buddhism, instead of beginning *samādhi*, the meditator must optimize firstly, the conditions under which it will be practised. So, Visuddhimagga recommends that to find a suitable monastery for the practice of *samādhi*. After, the monastic must find a good friend (*kalyāṇamitta*), that is, an experienced and wise spiritual guide who will assign them a meditation subject that is suitable to their temperament.³

The importance of mentoring in Buddhism throughout history cannot be overstated. Since Siddhartha Gautama, often known as the

¹ Walpola Sri Rahula, *What the Buddha Thought*, 144.

² Dhammaratana, *Guide Through The Visuddhimagga*, 27.

³ Ñānamoli, “*Visuddhimagga*” *The Path of Purification*, 86.

Buddha, attained enlightenment, mentorship has been an essential component in fostering and guiding the spiritual development of his followers. These committed students, known as bhikkhus, accepted and relied upon the kind aid and direction given by their beloved teachers during their path to enlightenment. Over the centuries, and in many lands, Buddhist monks and nuns have acted as ‘good friends’ (*kalyānamitta*) to the laity in a variety of ways, starting with being good examples and thus fertile ‘fields of karmic fruitfulness’. The ethos of the Sangha has thus been radiated out into society, and the lay world has received various benefits from the ‘world-renouncing’ Sangha that it supports.¹

Buddhist canon mentions extensive explanations of spiritual friendship and its necessities and norms. The (*Kalyānamitta*) *Appamāda* Sutta is about spiritual friendship based on the Buddha’s famous statement that “spiritual friendship is not half of the holy life. Still, the whole of the holy life,” famously found in the *Upaddha Sutta*², where the teaching is given by the Buddha to Ānanda. The (*Kalyāna,mitta*) *Appamāda* Sutta, in fact, records the Buddha’s recount of this teaching on spiritual friendship, this time given to Pasenadi.³ The Buddha’s teaching to Pasenadi, however, is slightly longer than that given to Ānanda. However, both are emphasising the importance of spiritual friendship.

“I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying among the Sakyans. Now there is a Sakyan town named Sakkara. There Ven. Ānanda went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to the Blessed One sat to one side. As he was sitting there, Ven. Ānanda said to the Blessed One, “This is half of the holy life, lord: having admirable people as friends, companions, & colleagues.”

“Don’t say that Ānanda. Don’t say that. Having admirable people as friends, companions, & colleagues is actually the whole of the holy life. When a monk has admirable people as friends, companions, & colleagues, he can be expected to develop & pursue the noble eightfold path.”⁴

¹ Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices*, Cambridge University Press, Second (Cambridge, 2013), 314, <https://doi.org/10.2307/604489>.

² Tripitaka *Upaddha Sutta* (S 45.2)

³ SN 3.17, *Appamada Sutta*, translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu, 1998

⁴ Tripitaka, *Upaddha Sutta* (SN 45:2)

In the first-century CE exegetic *Vimuttimaggā*, Arahant Upatissa identifies the need to find a "good friend" or "pre-eminent friend" to develop "excellent concentration." The good friend should understand the Tipiṭaka, *kamma*, "beneficent worldly knowledge" and the Four Noble Truths. Citing Anguttara Nikaya 7.36, Upatissa says that a bhikkhūmitto ("monk friend") should have the following seven qualities: Lovableness, estimableness, venerableness, the ability to counsel well, patience (in listening), the ability to deliver deep discourses and the not applying oneself to useless ends."¹

Buddhist spirituality places a lot of emphasis on meditation. Most meditations are practised with the assistance of a meditation teacher. Such a person is known as a *Kalyāṇamitta*, or "excellent buddy," in Buddhism. Meditation requires individualised instruction because it is a subtle skill that cannot be adequately taught through standardised written teachings. The instructor gets to know his or her students, supports them through challenges as they arise, and prevents ineffective or inappropriate use of the potent tool of self-change that meditation offers. In exchange, the student must put up good effort in his practice and be willing to follow where it takes him.

The Buddha tells him that there are four things which are conducive to a man's happiness in this world: First: he should be skilled, efficient, earnest, and energetic in whatever profession he is engaged in, and he should know it well (*uttbana-sampada*); second: he should protect his income, which he has thus earned righteously, with the sweat of his brow (*arakkha-sampadd*); (This refers to protecting wealth from thieves, etc. All these ideas should be considered against the background of the period.) third: he should have good friends (*kalyana-mitta*) who are faithful, learned, virtuous, liberal and intelligent, who will help him along the right path away from evil; fourth: he should spend reasonably, in proportion to his income, neither too much nor too little.²

Islam

Islam is the second-largest religion in the world with 1.8 billion followers or 24.1 per cent of the world's population. Islam teaches that God is one, merciful, and all-powerful,³ and has guided humanity

¹ P.V. Bapat, *Vimuttimaggā and Visuddhimaggā - A Comparative Study* (Calcutta: Calcutta Oriental Press, 1937), 48–50.

² Walpola Sri Rahula, *What The Buddha Thought*, 82.

³ Campo, Juan Eduardo, "Allah" *Encyclopedia of Islam*, (Infobase Publishing 2009) p. 34.

through prophets (messengers) with revealed scriptures.¹ The very word Islam etymologically refers to peace and submission. The word Islam derives from the Arabic root *Salām*, or *Silm*, which means peace and obedience to God's will.² Islam is not a new religion that was introduced by Muhammad (PBUH),³ Islam means “submission to the will of God”, i.e., for Muslims Islam, has always been the only acceptable religion in the sight of God. For this reason, Islam is the true “natural religion”, and it is the same eternal message revealed through the ages to all of God’s prophets and messengers. Muslims believe that all of God’s prophets, which include Abraham, Noah, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, brought the same message of Pure Monotheism. As a result, unlike many people believe, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was not the founder of a new religion, but rather the final Prophet of Islam. God finally fulfilled the covenant He made with Abraham, one of the earliest and greatest prophets, by revealing His final message to Muhammad (PBUH), which is an eternal and universal message for all of mankind.⁴ Therefore, Islam is a religion that expects total submission of humans to God almighty in every aspect of life to achieve a better life hereafter.

Shaykh-Murid: A Discussion on Spiritual Mentorship in Islam

In *Śūfism*, the concept of *Shaykh-Murid* is very popular and depicts the role of a spiritual guide or preceptor (*shaykh*) which is also considered essential for the spiritual development and training of a disciple (*murid*).⁵ *Sheikh* or *Shaykh* is also referred to as a *Murshid* and Pir or Peer. The title of *Shaykh* is often translated into English as *Śūfī* spiritual guide or saint. In *Sufism*, a *Shaykh*'s role is to guide and instruct his disciples on the Sufi path. The relationship between the *murid* and the *shaykh* is central to the *Śūfī* tradition and is similar to the concept of *kalyānamitta*, the good friend or spiritual guide, in Buddhism. The *shaykh* is depicted as a source of spiritual development and guidance and is preferred to seclusion.

¹ Peters, F. E, “Allāh.” In the Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World, (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2009)

² Esposito, John L, "Islam." In the Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World, edited by J. L. Esposito. (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2009)

³ Muhammad (PBUH) is the final and last messenger of Islam. So before that God almighty sent several messengers to the earth to introduce and guide people according to god’s path. In Islam the first human, Adam was a Muslim.

⁴ *A Brief Introduction to Islam*, *Www.Islamreligion. Com Website* (islamHouse.com, n.d.), 3, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1757913911425736>.

⁵ Tanvir Anjum, “Sufism in History and Its Relationship with Power,” *Islamic Research Institute, International Islamic University* 45, no. 2 (2016): 221–68.

The *Sufi* path is the path of the struggle of the soul with the devil, and the Prophet (PBUH) called the jihad of the soul and passion the greater *jihad*, and the jihad on the battlefield was called the lesser jihad. It was narrated that Jabir said: "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came to invaders, and he (PBUH) said: "You have given the best of the lesser jihad to the greater jihad. He said, "The struggle of the person is his desires (*Mujahada al-Nafs*)."¹ Therefore, the greatest struggle in the path of Islam is *Mujahada al-Nafs*. The disciple must find a *shaykh* who is experienced and wise, and who can assign them towards *mujahada al-Nafs* according to their nature and level of improvement. This practice may involve various forms of meditation, such as *dhikr* (remembrance of God), *muraqabah* (contemplation), or other forms of spiritual exercises.² Likewise, *'Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn'* also discusses and describes some specific duties related to the spiritual relationships toward friends, neighbours, relatives, parents, guests, and others. There is a separate topic on the manners of closeness, brotherhood, companionship, and cohabitation with different kinds of people.³ It is explained the qualities of the *Shaykh* and the responsibility of the *Murid*. However, the concept of shaykh-Murid is heavily criticized among the Salaf scholars.

Discussion

To fully comprehend the significance of mentors in Islam, one must delve into the principles of spiritual guidance within Islamic teachings. Within the context of Islam, the act of mentorship holds great importance as it serves as a pathway for individuals to enhance their comprehension and application of their faith.

From the literature, it is noticed that Buddhism and Islam are foundationally two different religions. Its ethos and Theos are distinct and unique. It is identified that Buddhism is cause-and-effect-oriented, while Islam is god-centered. So basically, the objective and ultimate role of *Kalyānamitta* and *Ṣūfī Shaykh-Murid* are different yet both have many significant similarities in the part of spiritual mentorship. So, importance of spiritual mentorship is rooted in both religions Transmission of Wisdom: As In both religions, the mentor plays a crucial role in transmitting spiritual teachings and wisdom to the disciple. The *Kalyānamitta* imparts knowledge about the Dharma (Buddhist

¹ Hadith narrated by Imam Baihaqi

² Tanvir Anjum.

³ Al-Ghazali, *Ihyā' 'ulūm Al-Dīn (Revival of Religious Sciences)*, 610.

teachings), while the *Shaykh* shares insights into *Ṣūfī* practices, Quranic interpretations, and the path to salvation with the Divine.

In the spiritual mentorship approaches, *Kalyāṇamitta* in Buddhism may involve practices of self-inquiry, meditation, and mindfulness to understand the nature of suffering and reality. *Shaykh–Murid* relationships in *Ṣūfism* might emphasize the dissolution of the individual self (*nafs*) through devotion, prayer, and various forms of *dhikr* (remembrance of God) to achieve a state of selflessness and divine unity. In the way of Relationship: Both concepts are based on spiritual relationships and often employ experiential methods such as spiritual practices, meditation, and rituals to help the disciples *Murid* cultivate inner states of consciousness and connect with the Divine. Both incorporate philosophical discussions, instructive teachings, and suggestions for moral behaviour in dealing with obstacles in life.

The following table provides a concise summary of the similarities and differences between Buddhist *Kalyāṇamittatā* and *Sufi Shaykh–Murid* concepts in the context of spiritual mentorship.

| Aspect | Buddhist <i>Kalyāṇamittatā</i> | <i>Sufi Shaykh–Murid</i> |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Purpose | Spiritual friendship, guidance, and support | Spiritual mentor-disciple relationship |
| Relationship Focus | Friendship and Peer Mentorship | Spiritual leader and Companionship |
| Devotion | Trust and confidence | Trust and devotion |
| Spiritual Growth | Personal transformation and enlightenment | Inner spiritual growth and insight |
| Transmission of Wisdom | Transmission of teachings and practices | Transmission of spiritual wisdom |
| Inner Mystical Experiences | Emphasis on inner mystical experiences and direct connection | Encouragement of inner mystical experiences |
| Self-Realization | Aimed at self-realization | Goal is self-realization |
| Respect and Reverence | Disciples show respect and reverence to mentor | Disciples show respect and reverence to mentor |
| Silent Transmission | Recognition of silent transmission of wisdom | Acknowledgement of silent transmission |
| Organizational Structure | Less hierarchical | Hierarchical structure with a clear spiritual leader (<i>Shaykh</i>) |
| Cultural Context | Common in Buddhism | Common in Sufism |
| Founder Figures | There was no single founder. | There are numerous Sufi orders, each with its own lineage. |

Conclusion

This research concludes by empowering Buddhist-Muslim interreligious understanding and lessening misconceptions within them through addressing issues of spiritual mentorship, discipleship, and the seeking of the correct direction. Therefore, this work tries to explore the importance of spiritual mentorship and guidance in Buddhism and Islam and to analyse the *Kalyāṇamitta* and *Ṣūfi Shaykh-Murid* concepts with their respective traditions and to identify similarities and differences for better Buddhist-Muslim interreligious understandings for the betterment of policy makers and to use as a common draft in interfaith dialogue initiatives.

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