

Ethics in the Sufi Order

Definitions

The word **Teacher** as used in these standards applies to anyone who is functioning in an official capacity of the Sufi Order International, including Representatives, Guides, Coordinators, and Retreat Guides. The word **Student** as used in these standards applies to initiates of the Sufi Order as well as students at classes, seminars, or retreats.

Scope of Function

Teachers serve students by giving spiritual guidance along with encouragement and inspiration. Teachers are authorized only to give spiritual guidance and practices established by the Sufi Order in functions approved by the Sufi Order.

Ethical Standards

A teacher of the Sufi Order realizes the sacred trust involved in guiding the spiritual development of another human being. With that trust goes the responsibility of honoring the following ethical standards:

1. Teachers shall not prescribe behavior or make decisions for students.
2. Teachers are not authorized to engage in psychotherapy in their official capacity in the Sufi Order.
3. Teachers shall not use the authority and power of their position to exploit students for material, emotional, or other personal gain.
4. It is the responsibility of the teacher to be aware of his/her feelings toward the student. When there is an inclination to act upon sexual feelings, this is deemed to go beyond the appropriate boundaries of the relationship. In such cases the teacher shall transfer the student to another teacher immediately for the protection of the student.
5. Teachers shall be very cautious about getting involved in any dual relationship with their students. Examples would include employing a student or contracting with a student in any type of business or professional relationship, or seeking investments from students for personal gain.
6. A teacher needs to be aware if a student has a problem that requires a different type of assistance than can be offered in the role of spiritual guide.

Examples:

- A student with physical problems shall be advised to seek proper medical treatment.
- A student with serious psychological problems (severe depression, anxiety, psychosis, or personality disorder) shall be advised to seek a licensed therapist (psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, or licensed counselor).
- A student with a drug or alcohol problem shall be advised to seek an appropriate substance abuse treatment resource such as a licensed professional, AA, or residential treatment facility. If a student is in treatment for a physical or psychological problem the teacher shall not attempt to discourage or replace the treatment. If a student is aware of having a significant physical or psychological problem, then the student shall inform the teacher of the problem. A teacher may elect not to give spiritual training to such a student.

7. If a teacher is unable to function effectively in the role of spiritual guide with a student due to factors such as personality conflicts or other conflict of interest situations as previously outlined, then the teacher shall refer the student to another teacher. The same shall apply in the case of student who has attained a level beyond the ability of the teacher to help the student continue to advance spiritually.

8. Teachers realize that there may be times in their lives during which they will be unable to function effectively in their role due to factors such as burnout, financial problems, or relationship problems. At such a time the teacher shall consult with his/her guide, consultant and/or peer groups. If the teacher decides to become inactive or reduce responsibilities he/she shall notify the Secretariat.

9. A person wishing to lead a retreat, seminar, or other program in the name of the Sufi Order shall have prior authorization from the Head of the Sufi Order or others delegated with that authority. Teachers shall not present Wazā'if, Dhikr, or Shāghal outside of Sufi Order functions without prior approval.

Anyone having an ethical concern related to an activity or function of the Sufi Order or any of its teachers, may contact in writing either of the co-chairpersons of the Ethics Committee, listed below:

Elaine Resnick
43 W 94th St.
New York, NY 10025-7113
212-666-7725

Suleiman Grosslight
432 Manitoba St.
Playa del Rey, CA 90293-8012
310-301-9090

ETHICS COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Ethics Committee of the Sufi Order is to deal with reported incidents of possible unethical behavior in interactions between Sufi Order teachers, their students and the public. A further purpose is to advise on procedures to help prevent possible unethical behavior.

The functions of the committee are:

1. To determine whether there has been an ethical violation in a particular instance.
2. To serve as an advisory board to advise Representatives, Guides, and Coordinators concerning what might constitute ethically correct behavior in a particular situation.
3. To establish guidelines for ethical behavior by Representatives, Guides, and Coordinators. All reports of possible unethical behavior should be reported to the co-chairpersons. The co-chairpersons may consult with other people as necessary in individual cases, but strict confidentiality will be observed at all times.

Reports of unethical behavior will be investigated by the Ethics Committee, which will forward its findings and recommendations to the Jamiat Khas or a designated subcommittee. The determination of the appropriate sanction (e.g. removal from authority) will be made by the Jamiat Khas in consultation with the Ethics Committee.

The Ethics Committee will give the Board of Trustees an annual report summarizing the types of cases investigated in the previous year, along with the dispositions, without any identifying information.

Ethics Committee Co-Chairs

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