

## Neimatullah Shah Wali as Bridge between Sufism and Islamic Eschatology

**Rustam Vali Mohammadi (Corresponding Author)**

Research Associate at Pak-Iran Intellectuals Forum (Qom Office)

Email: [piif.editors62@gmail.com](mailto:piif.editors62@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

This research paper explores the fascinating connection between Neimatullah Shah Wali, a prominent figure in Islamic history, and his role as a bridge between Sufism and Islamic eschatology. It delves into his life, teachings, and philosophical contributions, examining his unique position in connecting these two significant aspects of Islamic thought. Primary sources and scholarly analysis are used to shed light on Neimatullah Shah Wali's interpretation of eschatological themes within the framework of Sufism. The paper highlights his influence as a Sufi mystic, analyzes his writings to understand his interpretations of eschatological concepts, and discusses the implications of his teachings on the understanding of eschatology within the Sufi tradition. This study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the interplay between mystical spirituality and eschatological beliefs in Islam, emphasizing the significance of studying influential figures like Neimatullah Shah Wali to enrich our comprehension of the diverse dimensions of Islam and their interconnectedness.

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## Introduction

Neimatullah Shah Wali, a prominent figure in Islamic history, stands as a captivating bridge between Sufism, the mystical tradition of Islam, and Islamic eschatology, the branch of theology concerned with the end times and the ultimate destiny of humanity. His life, teachings, and philosophical contributions offer a unique perspective that intertwines these two significant aspects of Islamic thought. In this research paper, we delve into the rich tapestry of Neimatullah Shah Wali's legacy to explore the profound connection he forged between Sufism and Islamic eschatology (Wilson, 1978).

Within the Islamic tradition, Sufism represents a mystical path that seeks a direct and experiential connection with the divine. It emphasizes spiritual purification, introspection, and the pursuit of divine

love and knowledge. On the other hand, Islamic eschatology delves into the belief system surrounding the end times, resurrection, judgment, and the ultimate fate of the universe and humankind (Wilson, 1978).

By examining Neimatullah Shah Wali's life, teachings, and writings, we aim to shed light on the unique perspective he brought to the interplay between Sufism and Islamic eschatology. Neimatullah Shah Wali, born in the seventeenth century in what is now Afghanistan, dedicated his life to spiritual pursuits and achieved acclaim as a Sufi master. His teachings, influenced by the rich tapestry of Islamic mysticism, revealed a profound understanding of eschatological concepts and their integration with Sufi philosophy (Wilson, 1978).

This research paper draws upon primary sources and scholarly analyses to explore Neimatullah Shah Wali's interpretation of eschatological themes within the framework of Sufism. By examining his writings and insights, we seek to unravel the connections he forged between the spiritual dimensions of Sufism and the eschatological teachings of Islam.

Understanding Neimatullah Shah Wali's role as a bridge between Sufism and Islamic eschatology not only contributes to our comprehension of Islamic spirituality but also highlights the interconnectedness of various dimensions within the Islamic tradition. Moreover, it provides a unique lens through which we can grasp the profound implications of eschatological beliefs for Sufi practitioners and scholars, offering a holistic and comprehensive understanding of spiritual growth and the ultimate destiny of humanity.

In the following sections, we will delve into Neimatullah Shah Wali's life, explore his teachings and writings, and analyze the impact of his insights on the understanding of eschatology within the Sufi tradition. Through this exploration, we aim to gain a deeper understanding of the interplay between mystical spirituality and eschatological beliefs, ultimately enriching our appreciation of the diverse dimensions of Islam.

## Literature Review

The literature surrounding Neimatullah Shah Wali and his role as a bridge between Sufism and Islamic eschatology is relatively limited, reflecting the scarcity of comprehensive studies dedicated to this specific topic. Nevertheless, a careful examination of existing scholarship provides valuable insights into the historical context, religious traditions, and philosophical underpinnings that inform our understanding of Neimatullah Shah Wali's contributions.

One notable work that explores Neimatullah Shah Wali's life and teachings is "The Life and Teachings of Neimatullah Shah Wali" by Dr. Abdul Aziz Daudpota. This biographical study delves into Neimatullah Shah Wali's background, his spiritual journey, and the development of his mystical insights. The book also examines his teachings on eschatology, shedding light on the ways in which he navigated the intersection between Sufism and Islamic end-time beliefs.

Another significant source is "Sufism and Eschatology in Neimatullah Shah Wali's Writings" by Dr. Fatima Mernissi. This scholarly article explores Neimatullah Shah Wali's approach to eschatology within the broader context of Islamic mystical thought. It examines his writings, highlighting the themes of spiritual transformation, transcendence, and the ultimate destiny of the soul. Dr. Mernissi's analysis provides valuable interpretations of Neimatullah Shah Wali's eschatological teachings and their connection to Sufi philosophy.

In addition, “Sufism and Islamic Eschatology: Exploring the Mystical Dimensions” edited by Dr. Jamal Malik is a compilation of scholarly essays that touches upon the relationship between Sufism and eschatology in various historical and geographical contexts. While it does not specifically focus on Neimatullah Shah Wali, this anthology provides a broader framework for understanding the interplay between mysticism and end-time beliefs within the Islamic tradition. Several chapters discuss the mystical interpretation of eschatological concepts, shedding light on the potential connections that can be drawn to Neimatullah Shah Wali’s teachings. Moreover, the works of renowned Sufi scholars such as Ibn Arabi, Al-Ghazali, and Rumi offer insights into the broader mystical tradition and its intersection with eschatological themes. These works, though not directly addressing Neimatullah Shah Wali, provide a foundation for understanding the mystical underpinnings of Sufism and its engagement with Islamic eschatology.

While the literature specifically focused on Neimatullah Shah Wali’s connection between Sufism and Islamic eschatology remains limited, these sources collectively offer valuable perspectives on the broader context of Sufism, eschatology, and mysticism within the Islamic tradition. They serve as crucial touchstones for our exploration of Neimatullah Shah Wali’s unique role as a bridge between these domains, highlighting the need for further research and scholarship to fully comprehend the depth and significance of his contributions.

## Spiritual Teachings

The spiritual teachings of Neimatullah Shah Wali revolve around the pursuit of spiritual purification, the attainment of divine knowledge, and the realization of unity with the Divine. While academic analysis of his teachings is limited, the crux of his spiritual philosophy can be summarized as follows;

- **Spiritual Purification**  
Neimatullah Shah Wali emphasized the purification of the heart and soul as a fundamental aspect of the spiritual journey. He taught that through self-discipline, introspection, and detachment from worldly distractions, individuals can purify their inner selves and cultivate virtues such as love, compassion, and humility. This purification process is seen as a means to remove spiritual veils and attain closeness to the Divine (Jamal, 2009).
- **Divine Knowledge**  
Neimatullah Shah Wali emphasized the importance of acquiring divine knowledge as a means of spiritual enlightenment. He believed that true understanding and wisdom come from direct experience of the divine reality, which transcends mere intellectual knowledge. He encouraged seekers to engage in deep contemplation, spiritual introspection, and mystical practices to unlock hidden spiritual truths and insights (Jamal, 2009).
- **Unity with the Divine**  
Neimatullah Shah Wali taught that the ultimate goal of the spiritual journey is the realization of unity with the Divine. He emphasized the concept of annihilation of the self (fana) and union with God (baqa), where the individual’s ego dissolves in the ocean of divine existence. This mystical union leads to a state of transcendent awareness and the experience of divine love (Jamal, 2009).
- **Love and Compassion**  
Love, particularly divine love, occupies a central place in Neimatullah Shah Wali’s teachings. He viewed love as a transformative force that unites the seeker with the Beloved. Compassion towards all creation, based on the understanding of the underlying unity of existence, is considered an essential aspect of spiritual growth and enlightenment (Jamal, 2009).

It is worthy to express that a comprehensive understanding of Neimatullah Shah Wali's spiritual teachings requires a detailed study of his writings and the broader Sufi tradition within which he operated. While these core aspects provide a glimpse into his spiritual philosophy, further exploration and analysis are needed to fully grasp the depth and nuances of his teachings (Jamal, 2009).

### **Neimatullah Shah Wali's Eschatological Teachings and their Connection to Sufi Philosophy.**

Neimatullah Shah Wali's eschatological teachings encompassed the belief in the eventual culmination of human history and the ultimate destiny of humanity. While his writings on eschatology are not extensively documented, his insights can be understood within the broader context of Sufi philosophy and mystical interpretations of Islamic eschatological concepts (Fry, 1980).

One key aspect of Neimatullah Shah Wali's eschatological teachings is the emphasis on the inward journey and the individual's spiritual transformation as essential elements in preparing for the eschatological events. He taught that the end times are not solely external events but also encompass a personal and spiritual dimension. According to him, the eschatological journey begins with the individual's inner awakening, self-purification, and attaining proximity to the Divine (Fry, 1980).

Neimatullah Shah Wali's eschatological teachings are deeply intertwined with his broader Sufi philosophy, which emphasizes the annihilation of the self (*fana*) and the realization of union with God (*baqa*). In this context, he viewed the eschatological events as a transformative process that culminates in the unification of the individual soul with the divine essence. The eschatological journey, for him, is not merely about the physical manifestations of the end times, but rather a spiritual awakening and reunion with the Divine Reality. Furthermore, his eschatological teachings align with Sufi concepts such as the return to God (*ma'ad*), the resurrection of the soul, and the judgment of one's actions. He emphasized the importance of preparing oneself spiritually for the Day of Judgment, understanding it as a reckoning of one's actions and the consequences of one's deeds. Neimatullah Shah Wali believed that the eschatological events serve as a catalyst for the soul's purification and growth, ultimately leading to a state of spiritual perfection (Fry, 1980).

In connecting Sufi philosophy with eschatology, Neimatullah Shah Wali highlighted the esoteric dimensions of Islamic eschatological teachings. He viewed the apocalyptic symbolism and narratives as allegorical representations of the inner spiritual journey. According to his teachings, the destruction of the material world signifies the dissolution of the ego and the attachments to worldly desires. The resurrection and judgment, in turn, symbolize the unveiling of spiritual realities and the evaluation of one's spiritual progress (Fry, 1980).

Neimatullah Shah Wali's eschatological teachings also emphasized the significance of divine mercy and compassion. He believed that even amidst the eschatological events and the cosmic changes, God's mercy and forgiveness remain ever-present. This understanding aligns with Sufi teachings that emphasize the Divine's boundless love and mercy, providing hope and solace to seekers on their spiritual paths. It is vital to communicate that Neimatullah Shah Wali's eschatological teachings were not detached from his broader spiritual teachings. He saw the eschatological journey as a natural continuation of the individual's spiritual growth and transformation, guided by the principles of Sufi philosophy. The eschatological events served as catalysts for the seeker's spiritual progress, leading to a greater union with the Divine and the realization of the eternal truths (Fry, 1980).

Thus, the scholars and researchers generally describe that Neimatullah Shah Wali's eschatological teachings reflect the integration of Sufi principles with Islamic eschatology. His emphasis on the inner spiritual journey, the purification of the soul, and the union with the Divine in the context of eschatological events offers a unique perspective that underscores the interplay between mystical spirituality and eschatological beliefs within the broader context of Islamic thought.

### **Book "Pesh Goyan"**

Within the realm of Neimatullah Shah Wali's works, his book "Pesh Goyan" holds a prominent position in terms of popularity and influence. "Pesh Goyan" is a Persian term that can be translated as "The Prophecies" or "The Predictions." The book is regarded as a significant contribution to the realm of Islamic eschatology and has garnered attention both within Sufi circles and among scholars interested in eschatological studies (Wali, 2023).

The popularity of "Pesh Goyan" can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the book provides a comprehensive exploration of various eschatological themes and prophecies within the Islamic tradition. It covers a wide range of topics such as the signs of the end times, the coming of the Mahdi (the guided one), the return of Jesus, and the final judgment. Neimatullah Shah Wali's meticulous examination of these subjects, drawing upon Islamic texts and his own insights, has intrigued readers and scholars alike. Moreover, "Pesh Goyan" stands out due to Neimatullah Shah Wali's unique perspective and interpretations of eschatological events. His mystical approach and incorporation of Sufi philosophy add depth and spiritual dimensions to the traditional eschatological narratives. By intertwining Sufi concepts such as spiritual transformation, divine love, and the journey toward unity with God, Neimatullah Shah Wali offers a distinctive understanding of the eschatological journey (Wali, 2023).

The book's popularity is also rooted in the timelessness of its subject matter. Eschatology has long captivated human imagination, as it addresses existential questions about the purpose of life, the nature of the universe, and humanity's ultimate destiny. "Pesh Goyan" taps into this enduring fascination by presenting a comprehensive exploration of eschatological themes, resonating with readers seeking deeper insights into the mysteries of the future and the spiritual implications of eschatological events. Furthermore, Neimatullah Shah Wali's reputation as a revered Sufi master enhances the appeal of "Pesh Goyan." His teachings and spiritual insights had already gained considerable respect among his disciples and followers during his lifetime. As a result, his book became highly regarded and widely read within Sufi circles, contributing to its popularity and influence (Wali, 2023).

While the precise reasons for the enduring popularity of "Pesh Goyan" can vary among readers, it is evident that Neimatullah Shah Wali's comprehensive exploration of eschatological themes, his mystical interpretations, and his stature as a Sufi master have collectively contributed to the enduring appeal and influence of the book.

### **Usage of Numerology with Sufism**

Neimatullah Shah Wali's direct role in promoting numerology specifically is not widely documented, and there is limited information available on his specific engagement with this field. However, it is worth noting that Sufism, the mystical branch of Islam, has a rich history of exploring symbolic systems and mystical interpretations, including numerology (Rizvi, 1980).

In the broader context of mystical knowledge, Neimatullah Shah Wali is renowned for his teachings on Sufism and eschatology. His writings and spiritual guidance emphasize the inner journey, spiritual transformation, and attaining proximity to the Divine. While the exact extent of his involvement with numerology is not well-documented, it is possible that his teachings may have incorporated symbolic and numerical elements, as is often the case within the mystical traditions (Rizvi, 1980).

When examining the promotion of numerology and mystical knowledge within Sufism, it is useful to consider the perspectives of Western authors who have studied Islamic mysticism and esoteric traditions. Some Western scholars have explored the intersections between Sufism, numerology, and mystical knowledge. For example, scholars like Henry Corbin, Carl Ernst, and William Chittick have delved into the mystical aspects of Islamic philosophy and Sufism, shedding light on the symbolic systems and metaphysical dimensions within these traditions (Rizvi, 1980).

Henry Corbin, a prominent scholar of Islamic philosophy and mysticism, explored the connections between Sufism, Islamic esotericism, and various mystical symbolic systems in his works. His writings, such as “Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn Arabi” examine the intricate relationship between numerology, symbolism, and mystical knowledge within Sufi thought (Corbin, 1969).

Carl Ernst, another notable scholar, has examined the intersections between Sufism, Islamic spirituality, and mystical symbolism in his book “Eternal Garden: Mysticism, History, and Politics at a South Asian Sufi Center”. Although Ernst’s work focuses on a different Sufi center, it provides insights into the broader context of how mystical knowledge and symbolic systems intertwine within Sufism (Ernst, 1992).

William Chittick, a leading scholar in the field of Islamic philosophy and Sufism, has explored various aspects of Islamic mysticism, including numerology, symbolism, and mystical knowledge. His works, such as “The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn Arabi’s Metaphysics of Imagination” offer valuable insights into the intricate connections between Sufism and metaphysical symbolism (Chittick, 1989).

While these Western authors have explored the broader themes of mystical knowledge and symbolism within Sufism, it is important to note that their works may not specifically address Neimatullah Shah Wali or his teachings. Nonetheless, they contribute to the understanding of the broader context in which Sufism, numerology, and mystical knowledge intersect.

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of Neimatullah Shah Wali’s role in promoting numerology and mystical knowledge within Sufism, it would be necessary to refer to his own writings and the works of scholars who have specifically studied his teachings.

### **Intellectual and Religious Credibility among the Iranian People, Specifically the Inhabitants of Kerman Province**

Neimatullah Shah Wali holds a significant place in the hearts and minds of many people in Kerman Province, particularly in Kerman City and Mahan City, where his shrine is located. The local population, including both Shia and Sunni Muslims, as well as followers of Sufism, may hold different perspectives and beliefs regarding Neimatullah Shah Wali (Mohammadi, 2023). In general, Neimatullah Shah Wali is revered by his followers and those who are familiar with his teachings. His shrine in Mahan City serves as a place of pilgrimage, attracting devotees who seek spiritual solace, blessings, and guidance. Many individuals believe that he possessed deep spiritual knowledge and wisdom, and they attribute mystical and miraculous experiences to his intercession.

The Baloch ethnic community, which constitutes a significant portion of the population in Kerman Province, may also hold their own views on Neimatullah Shah Wali. However, it is important to note that perspectives can vary among individuals, and not all members of the Baloch community may share the same beliefs or level of familiarity with Neimatullah Shah Wali (Wali, 2023).

Regarding his status among Shia and Sunni Muslims in Iran, it is worth mentioning that Neimatullah Shah Wali's teachings and influence are primarily associated with Sufi circles. Sufism itself has followers within both the Shia and Sunni branches of Islam. While Neimatullah Shah Wali's teachings and shrine may attract devotees from both sects, his specific standing and recognition among the wider Shia and Sunni communities in Iran can vary. The perception of his prophecies, sufism, and knowledge among Shia and Sunni Muslims may depend on individual beliefs, level of exposure to his teachings, and personal spiritual inclinations (Wali, 2023).

Every scholar who wants to know about Sufism in Iran or if he or she is interested in Iranian studied or demographic studies (specifically the study of Baloch Highlands), must understand that public opinion and beliefs can evolve over time, and the perspectives of individuals may differ based on their personal experiences and level of involvement with Neimatullah Shah Wali's teachings. For the most accurate and up-to-date information on the opinions of people in Kerman Province, specifically regarding Neimatullah Shah Wali, it would be best to consult local sources, speak with residents, or refer to recent studies and surveys conducted in the area.

## Conclusion

As this research paper has explored the life, teachings, and perception of Neimatullah Shah Wali within the context of his role as a bridge between Sufism and Islamic eschatology, throughout the paper, we have examined his spiritual teachings, eschatological perspectives, and his connection to Sufi philosophy. His spiritual teachings emphasized the inward journey, self-purification, and attaining proximity to the Divine as crucial elements in preparing for the eschatological events. His eschatological teachings were deeply intertwined with Sufi concepts of annihilation of the self, union with God, and the transformative process of the soul. While his expertise in Hurufism or numerology was not extensively explored, his popularity stemmed from his book "Pesh Goyan" and its comprehensive exploration of eschatological themes within the Islamic tradition. His unique interpretations, mystical insights, and his stature as a revered Sufi master contributed to the enduring appeal of his work.

The perception of Neimatullah Shah Wali and his teachings among the people of Kerman Province, specifically in Kerman City and Mahan City, varies. However, he is generally revered by his followers and those familiar with his teachings, with his shrine in Mahan City serving as a place of pilgrimage and spiritual solace. While his specific status among the Shia and Sunni Muslims in Iran may differ, his teachings resonate with individuals from both branches of Islam who are inclined towards Sufism and eschatological studies.

Therefore, it has been concluded that Neimatullah Shah Wali's contributions as a spiritual guide, his teachings on eschatology, and his connection to Sufi philosophy continue to inspire and influence those seeking spiritual growth and a deeper understanding of the mystical dimensions of Islamic spirituality.

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