Tariqahs (or sufi orders) had become major social organizations by the twelfth century and enjoyed mass popularity by the fifteenth or sixteenth century. Orders range in form, from simple preservation of the tariqah ֑ tariqah (i.e. “path”, or sufi order) as a set of devotional exercises to vast interregional organizations with carefully defined structures.
SPREAD OF SUFISM
13TH - 16TH CENTURIES

NORTHERN AFRICA

MIDDLE EAST

INDIA

SOUTHEAST ASIA
The specific structure and format of the daily devotional exercises and activities were set by each order’s founder as a special spiritual path.

The founder was the spiritual guide for all followers, who swore a special oath of obedience to him as their shaykh.

Leadership was passed down either within a family line or on the basis of spiritual seniority within the ṭariqah.

The typical initiation rite transmits a blessing (barakah) to the disciple, transforming his or her soul.
Not only men!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tx6dwa4u8Lg
Barakah was also believed to survive death so that the tombs of saints became shrines where people could pray for favors. Thus, saints came to be regarded by many as intermediaries of God. The person having barakah, living or dead, had to be able to transmit it to ordinary people, giving them good health, material gain, or spiritual rewards. The most visible proof of barakah was the ability to perform miracles. In Islamic folk traditions, barakah is also associated with certain foods, animals, plants, and even words and gestures. The qualities of barakah often existed in charms and amulets used to ward off evil spirits.
Written expressions of Sufism include hagiographies, poetry, and literature describing the stations (maqāmāt) of spiritual ascent on the path to God and their accompanying psychological transformations. Sufis use terms such as sukr (intoxication, سُكرَ) and šahw (sobriety, صحَو) to describe their experiences.

“Intoxicated” expressions of Sufism predominate in Sufi poetry expressing joy and ecstasy. It is popular among Muslims of all classes.

“Sober” Sufism offers methodical discussions of ritual, behavior, morality, Qur’anic exegesis, and the nature of God and the world. It tends to appeal to intellectuals.
Wine and drunkenness are two of the most common metaphors in Persian mystical love poetry.

Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī speaks of two ideas, or two main states of mind, which he has experienced, one being love, and the other drunkenness.
The Lover is always alone even surrounded by people; like water and oil, he remains apart. [...] Love is a tree, and the lovers are its shade.

Love has nothing to do with the five senses and the six directions; its goal is only to experience the attraction exerted by the Beloved [...].

The springtime of Lovers has come/that this dust bowl may become a garden;
the proclamation of Heaven has come/
that the bird of the soul may rise in flight.

The sea becomes full of pearls/
the salt marsh becomes sweet as kawthar [one of Paradise rivers],
the stone becomes a ruby from the mine/
the body becomes wholly soul.
Bring the pure wine of love and freedom. But sir, a tornado is coming. More wine, we'll teach this storm a thing or two about whirling.

Lovers drink wine all day and night and tear the veils of the mind. When drunk with love's wine, body, heart and soul become one.

Take sips of this pure wine being poured. Don't mind that you've been given a dirty cup.
Some modern observers have proclaimed the effective end of the Sufi orders, claiming that mystical religious experience and modernity are incompatible. According to them, Sufism, as the religion of the common people, embodied superstition and un-Islamic elements adopted from local cultures. Eradication of Sufism was believed necessary in order for Islam to reclaim its right to exist, including modern science and technology.

However, by the end of the twentieth century, it was clear that Sufi orders remained a dynamic part of the religious life of the Islamic world and were active in the expansion of Islam in both rural areas and modern societies in the West, and among the modernized intellectual elites within the Muslim world.
Sufi organizations provide social cohesion in an increasingly mobile society, emphasizing communal activities such as *dhikr*. They have helped to shape responses to the challenges to Muslim faith in the modern era by providing organizational bases for activist reformist programs and modern-style political parties. They have assisted in developing modernization programs and providing a framework for Islamic communal identity in the face of official efforts to suppress religion. Popular participation in Sufi gatherings and support for various types of *tariqahs* remain high throughout the Muslim world. Estimates of membership in Sufi orders in Egypt alone are in the millions, in contrast to the hundreds or thousands in the more militant Islamic revivalist organizations.
To sum up

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1EQtaQYpzTw