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COMMUNITY BASED TASAWUF STRENGTHENING SOCIAL TIES THROUGH SPIRITUALITY

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the role of community-based Sufism in strengthening social ties in society. Sufism, which was initially practiced individually, has now developed into a community that emphasizes the importance of togetherness, tolerance, and social solidarity. In the context of a modern society influenced by individualism, community-based Sufism offers a solution to building a more caring and harmonious society. The purpose of this study is to explore the social dynamics that occur in the Sufism community and how their spiritual practices contribute to strengthening social ties. The research method used is qualitative with a participatory observation approach, where researchers are directly involved in the activities of the Sufism community. The results of the study indicate that community-based Sufism plays an important role in strengthening Islamic brotherhood, developing an attitude of tolerance, and forming social solidarity among community members.

INTRODUCTION

Sufism is a spiritual dimension in Islamic teachings that aims to purify the soul and draw closer to Allah SWT. Unlike the sharia approach that emphasizes more on laws and external actions, Sufism emphasizes the inner aspect of how humans cultivate their hearts, improve their morals, and purify their intentions in every action. Historically, Sufism has often been considered an individual path of dhikr, meditation, and seclusion that is carried out privately. However, in its development, a form of community-based Sufism has emerged that emphasizes the social dimension of spirituality. Sufism is no longer practiced only personally, but grows in a forum of togetherness such as dhikr assemblies, tarekat, and da'wah communities that bring spiritual values to life in society.

In the context of modern society plagued by individualism, hedonism, and social crisis, community-based Sufism emerged as a solution to strengthen social ties. Spirituality not only brings inner peace, but also becomes the foundation for building a caring, tolerant, and harmonious society.

1. Sufism and Spirituality in Islam

   Etymologically, the word "Sufism" comes from the word ṣūf which means "wool", referring to the simple clothing worn by Sufis as a symbol of asceticism. Sufism focuses on the dimension of ihsan in Islam, namely worshiping God as if seeing Him. The practice of Sufism includes dhikr, muhasabah (introspection), mujahadah (controlling desires), and noble morals. In practice, Sufism is not only about the relationship between individuals and God (ḥablum minallāh), but also relationships between people (ḥablum minannās). This is seen in the teachings of the Sufis who emphasize love, service to others, and a spirit of togetherness. True spirituality does not separate humans from the world, but rather refines their social interactions.(Praptika, Yusuf, and Heslinga 2024)

2. The Birth of Community-Based Sufism

   Community-based Sufism emerged as a response to the need for spiritual collectivity in society. In communities such as tarekat or zikir assemblies, individuals not only grow spiritually, but also socially. They support each other, advise each other, and engage in joint social activities such as charity, education, and even advocacy for social justice. Some

forms of Sufism communities in Indonesia include:

a. The Naqsyabandiyah, Qadiriyah, Syattariyah and other orders are actively organizing congregational dhikr, regular religious studies, and community service.
b. Dhikr and religious study groups such as the Rasulullah Assembly, Az-Zikra Assembly, etc., which form a collective identity and become a spiritual forum for young people.
c. A modern Sufism study community on social media that spreads spiritual values in a way that is relevant to the digital generation.

Through communities like this, Sufism is no longer just a lonely path, but rather a social movement that strengthens brotherhood and forms a strong spiritual society.

3. The Role of Sufism in Strengthening Social Bonds

Community-based Sufism has a major role in forming social solidarity. Some forms of Sufism's contribution to social ties include:

a. Fostering Togetherness and Brotherhood

   Sufism practices such as collective dhikr, pengajian, and daily wirid create togetherness among participants. They do not only gather for worship, but also to pray for, advise, and help each other.

b. Developing an Attitude of Tolerance and Love of Peace

   The teachings of Sufism prevent fanaticism, hatred, and hostility. Sufis are taught to love all of God's creations, including people of different beliefs.

c. Addressing Social Problems

   Many Sufi communities are active in social activities such as helping the poor, holding social services, and providing spiritual education to marginalized communities. Thus, Sufism functions as a real social force.

d. Cultivating Empathy and Caring

   The essence of Sufism is to realize the essence of oneself as a servant of God and part of humanity. This fosters a sense of empathy and a desire to share, not only materially but also spiritually.

4. Real Examples of Sufism Communities that Build Society

Some real examples in Indonesia:

a. The Qadiriyah Naqsyabandiyah Order in Suryalaya (Tasikmalaya) which established Pondok Inabah as a rehabilitation center for drug addicts. Sufism not only heals the soul, but also saves the younger generation.
b. The Nariyah Dhikr Assembly in various regions, apart from dhikr, is also active in social activities such as mutual cooperation, orphanage assistance, and informal education.
c. Sufism communities in digital media, such as the Al-Ghazali and Ibn Arabi study communities, which expand the preaching of Sufism into virtual spaces, bring together people from various backgrounds in spiritual search.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a participatory observation approach, which aims to deeply understand the social dynamics that occur in the Sufism community, especially in strengthening social ties through spiritual activities. This approach was chosen because qualitative research allows researchers to dig deeper into information about subjective experiences and interactions between community members, without changing or intervening in their behavior. In this study, researchers act as part of the community, not just as observers. Researchers will be directly involved in activities in the Sufism community, such as joint dhikr, pengajian, or other community meetings, to understand from within how Sufism practices affect social relations between members. This participatory observation allows researchers to feel directly how interactions and social ties are formed in the context of spirituality that is lived together.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

Sufism etymologically comes from the Arabic word, namely tashawwafa, Yatashawwafu, apart from these words, there are those who explain that Sufism comes from the word Shuf which means wool, meaning that Sufism adherents live simply, but have noble hearts and avoid silk clothing and wearing cloth made of book of sheep with coarse wool or what is called coarse wool cloth. Which at that time wearing coarse wool cloth was a symbol of simplicity 1 The word shuf is also interpreted as a piece of wool which means that the Sufis in front of Allah feel themselves only like a piece of wool separated from their unity which has no meaning whatsoever.

The word Sufism also comes from the word Shaff which means row, the meaning of the word shaff is interpreted to refer to the congregation who are always in the front row when

praying, as those who pray in the front row will receive glory and reward. Therefore, people who when praying are in the front row will get glory and rewards from Allah SWT.

Sufism is often understood as an inner aspect of Islam that focuses on cleansing the soul and achieving closeness to Allah. However, in its development, Sufism is not only limited to individual experiences, but has entered a social dimension that influences the way Muslims interact with each other in society. The concept of spirituality in Islam teaches that every individual must maintain a good relationship with Allah, but is also expected to maintain harmonious relationships with fellow human beings. Therefore, Sufism is not only seen as a search for inner peace, but also as a tool to strengthen social bonds between individuals in the community (Falach and Assya'bani 2022).

Spirituality in Islam is not something isolated, but should have a positive impact on social life. Ukhuwah Islamiyah or Islamic brotherhood, for example, is a basic concept that connects Muslims in spiritual and social bonds. Through spiritual practices in Sufism, such as dhikr and collective worship, individuals are brought together in a community that has a common goal of improving themselves and increasing their closeness to Allah. This is what underlies that community-based Sufism can strengthen social bonds among Muslims.(Bukittinggi 2021).

DISCUSSION

1. Community in Sufism: More Than Just a Social Group

Community-based Sufism focuses on the formation of groups that have a common goal in undergoing a spiritual journey. This concept of community not only functions as a place for people with the same goal to gather, but also as a forum that teaches high social values, such as compassion, mutual assistance, and cooperation. In a dhikr assembly, for example, a group of people gather to remember Allah together. Although dhikr is a practice that should bring us closer to Allah, in the context of a community, it also strengthens relationships between individuals. Through this shared activity, a sense of togetherness is created, where each member feels connected to the others in a deeper bond. Furthermore, the tarekat (Sufi group) plays an important role in forming the Sufism community. The tarekat is an organization that teaches the teachings of Sufism to its members through the guidance of a mursyid (spiritual teacher). Within the tarekat, there is a coaching system that not only focuses on the spiritual development of the individual, but also builds close social relationships between fellow members. Tarekat members learn to care for and support each other, both spiritually and socially. Therefore, the

tarekat can be a concrete example of community-based Sufism that integrates religious values with social life.

2. The Role of Sufism in Strengthening Social Bonds

   Sufism communities make a major contribution to strengthening social ties in society. There are several ways in which community-based Sufism strengthens solidarity and social relationships between individuals:

   a. Building Solidarity Through Shared Practices

      Through shared spiritual activities, such as science assemblies, dhikr assemblies, or pengajian, members of the Sufism community create deeper relationships with each other. This is not just a ritual activity, but also a means to strengthen social relationships. For example, in a dhikr assembly, in addition to focusing on worship, participants also share life experiences, give each other advice, and support each other on their spiritual journey. This creates a strong sense of brotherhood among members, which ultimately strengthens social solidarity.

   b. Cultivating Empathy and Compassion

      Sufism teaches the importance of noble morals such as humility, patience, and compassion. This concept is not only applied in relationships with God, but also in relationships with others. In the Sufism community, each member is taught to respect, appreciate, and help each other without expecting anything in return. Ihsan or doing good sincerely to others is one of the basic values in Sufism that forms a mindset and social attitude that is more caring towards others. This contributes to the creation of a society that is more full of compassion and empathy.(Ajrul et al. 2025)

   c. Strengthening the Ties of Friendship

      Silaturahmi, which means maintaining good relations, is one of the social values that is highly emphasized in Islam, including in Sufism. In the Sufism community, silaturahmi is an important part of daily life. Through community activities that often involve regular meetings, such as pengajian or social events, individuals are reminded to strengthen relationships with family, friends, and neighbors. This strengthens the social network that supports the well-being of individuals and society.

3. Application of Sufism in Modern Society

In today's increasingly individualistic world, the role of the community in Sufism is becoming increasingly relevant. Society is now often divided by personal busyness, technology, and social differences. Therefore, a spirituality-based Sufism community can be a means to overcome social disparities and strengthen relationships between individuals in society. The Sufism community provides an example of how spirituality can create a social bridge that connects people from different backgrounds. For example, social activities carried out by the Sufism community, such as social service, giving zakat, and donations to those in need, not only improve social relations between members, but also improve social conditions around them. This is in line with Islamic social values that teach us to help each other and share with those in need.

On the other hand, by prioritizing the values of Islamic brotherhood, community-based Sufism can be a solution to improve social interaction in a fragmented society. In an increasingly advanced but isolated world, community-based Sufism provides space for togetherness, mutual support, and maintaining social harmony.

4. Challenges and Hopes in Implementing Community-Based Sufism

Although community-based Sufism has many benefits in strengthening social bonds, there are some challenges faced in its implementation. One of them is the tendency of society to become increasingly busy and separated by technology. The desire to stay connected directly in a spiritual community may be difficult amidst increasingly demanding personal and work lives. Therefore, it is important to continue to promote the importance of community as a space to share and support each other, both in person and through more accessible digital platforms. However, the hope for the future is that more people will be able to feel the benefits of community-based Sufism. By building and maintaining strong relationships among each other, not only will individuals feel more peaceful and happy, but society as a whole will become more harmonious, loving, and caring for each other.(Authority, Ar-raniry, and Aceh 2024)

Community-based Sufism offers a spiritual approach that focuses not only on the individual's inner journey, but also on the formation of strong social bonds in society. Through shared spiritual practices such as dhikr, pengajian, and other social activities, Sufism can strengthen relationships between individuals and strengthen social solidarity.

The concept of Islamic brotherhood, which is the basis of community-based Sufism, plays an important role in building a society full of compassion, mutual assistance, and cooperation. Thus, community-based Sufism not only enriches spiritual life.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that community-based Sufism has a significant role in strengthening social ties in the midst of a modern society that tends to be individualistic. Through the method of participatory observation, researchers were directly involved in the spiritual activities of the Sufism community, such as joint dhikr and religious studies, to understand the social dynamics that were formed. The results of the study show that Sufism practices not only deepen the relationship between individuals and God, but also build solidarity between community members. Joint activities create a sense of togetherness and empathy, and foster Islamic brotherhood values that strengthen social relations. In the context of modern society, the Sufism community plays a role as an alternative space that offers inner peace and strengthens social networks through inclusive spiritual values.

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