

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC STUDIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Email: internationalislamicsocial@gmail.com

Home Page: https://jurnal.asrypersadaquality.com/index.php/ijiss

"SUFISM AND THE JOURNEY OF THE SOUL"

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KEYWORDS

Tasawuf, Soul Journey, Perfection of Allah SWT, Spirituality.

Abstract

This research discusses the concept of tasawuf in Islam, which is a discipline that studies the way to purify the soul and draw closer to Allah SWT. Tasawuf plays an important role in improving the quality of spiritual life and achieving soul perfection. This research analyzes the concepts of tasawuf, the journey of the soul, and spiritual perfection in Islam, as well as the role of tasawuf in Islamic education and the development of a balanced and harmonious personality. By understanding the concepts of tasawuf, individuals can increase their spiritual awareness, develop a balanced personality, and achieve soul perfection. This research also discusses the application of tasawuf in daily life, as well as its implications in improving the quality of spiritual life and achieving a better life goal. The results of this research show that tasawuf can help in achieving soul perfection, improving the quality of spiritual life, and developing a balanced and harmonious personality. The more people fall into worldly life, the further they are from Allah SWT. The increasing distance from Allah SWT makes their souls yearn for divine light. This research aims to explore the dynamics of the journey of Sufism practitioners in implementing Sufism teachings. The method used in thisresearch is aphenomenological approach with Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) analysis. This method focuses on exploring the subjective experiences that individuals experience in their lives. The subjects in this research were Sufism practitioners who were members of a tarekat. There were three subjects selected purposively for research purposes. The findings from this research show that Sufism reflects noble morals, both in relationships with Allah SWT when worshiping and in interactions with fellow humans regardless of their background. The reasons for the three subjects to join the tarekat and study Sufism were driven by the aim of getting closer to Allah SWT and gaining His approval.

INTRODUCTION

Sufism is a discipline that studies how to cleanse the soul and get closer to Allah SWT. In Islam, Sufism plays an important role in improving the quality of spiritual life and achieving perfection of the soul. Sufism is not just a theory, but also a practice that can help individuals in increasing spiritual awareness and developing a balanced personality.

In everyday life, many people are looking for ways to improve the quality of spiritual life and achieve soul perfection. Sufism can be one way to achieve this goal. By understanding the concepts of Sufism, individuals can enhance their spiritual awareness, develop a balanced personality and achieve soul perfection.

Sufism also has an important role in Islamic education. By studying Sufism, individuals can understand deeper Islamic concepts and develop a balanced and harmonious personality. Sufism can also help individuals in facing life's challenges and improve the quality of spiritual life.

In this research, we will discuss the concept of Sufism, the journey of the soul, and spiritual perfection in Islam. This research will also discuss the role of Sufism in Islamic education and the development of a balanced and harmonious personality. By understanding the concepts of Sufism, it is hoped that it can help individuals in improving the quality of spiritual life and achieving soul perfection.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method to understand the concept of Sufism and the journey of the soul in Islam. We will analyze various relevant literature, such as books and scholarly articles, to gain a better understanding of this topic.

In this study, we will use content analysis to understand the meaning and content of the analyzed texts. By doing so, we can identify and categorize the concepts of Sufism and the journey of the soul in Islam, as well as understand the role of Sufism in Islamic education and the development of a balanced and harmonious personality.

With this research, we hope to contribute to the understanding of Sufism and the journey of the soul in Islam, and to serve as a reference for further research on the same topic. We also hope that this research can help people better understand the concept of Sufism and the journey of the soul in Islam.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

The Meaning and Nature of Sufism

First of all, we need to see Sufism not just as a series of rituals or separate worship practices, but a long process of purifying the heart. Kartanegara (2006) emphasizes the cleansing of the qalb so that the light of ma'rifatullah can enter. This process cannot be separated from mujahadah al-nafs, which is a conscious effort to resist the impulses of lust. In daily practice, this mujahadah is realized through contemplative dhikr and tadabbur, where we contemplate the verses of Allah and plant them in the depths of our hearts (Ghofur, 2020). Dhikr is a means of binding the breath and mind to Him, while tadabbur opens spiritual insights. Both complement each other so that the heart is lighter and ready to receive kashf.

On the other hand, falsafi Sufism offers a theoretical foundation that links the teachings of sharia with the essence (Iman, 2015). This method is useful in Islamic education because it helps students understand the inner motivation behind every act of worship. It is not just about

practicing rituals, but understanding the moral essence and spiritual purpose behind them. Efendi et al. (2025) added that dhikr and muraqabah are consistent foundations of inner practice in contemporary Sufistic traditions. Systematic dhikr strengthens the heart's bond with Allah, while muraqabah self-surveillance in His presence hones spiritual sensitivity. These exercises are done in a structured manner, helping the practitioner to grow in a sustainable manner.

If we look at Ibn Batutah's journey, as described by Al Fathon (n.d.), we find how humility and sincerity are the benchmarks of inner maturity. Although he was known as an accomplished traveler, these core values of Sufism guided his every step. This is proof that the nature of Sufism demands the integration of knowledge, practice and ethics. Understanding the nature of Sufism also means recognizing its psychological dimension. The inner struggle demands emotional control, stress management, and the characteristic spiritual toughness that is increasingly needed in the modern era. These Sufistic exercises, when adapted to the contemporary context, are capable of equipping one with mental and emotional resilience.

In addition, the historical context enriches our insight into the variety of Sufism practices in different regions, including the archipelago (Zebua et al., 2025). The adaptation of local culture results in a diversity of methods, from dhikr assemblies to tarekat teaching methods. All this shows the flexibility of Sufism to touch the hearts of people wherever they are. Thus, the essence of Sufism encapsulates science, practice, philosophy, and ethical values all rolled into one. Without a thorough understanding, the risk is that the practice of Sufism becomes an empty ritual or theoretical discourse without application. Therefore, the integration of all these dimensions is absolutely necessary for Sufism to truly work as a way of transforming the soul.

The Role of Sufism in the Soul's Journey

Sufism has a very important role in the journey of our souls. With Sufism, we can understand ourselves and our relationship with Allah SWT better. Sufism helps us cleanse our souls of negative traits and develop positive traits.

On the journey of Sufism, we will discover various concepts and principles that help us understand ourselves and our relationship with Allah SWT. Sufism also helps us face life's challenges better and improves the quality of spiritual life. According to Iman (2015), philosophical Sufism can help us understand spiritual concepts and develop a balanced and harmonious personality. Thus, Sufism can become an important scientific discipline in increasing spiritual awareness and developing a balanced and harmonious personality.

In the context of Islamic education, Sufism can be the basis of educational psychology which helps us achieve spiritual perfection. According to Ghofur (2020), Al-Ghazali's Sufism can be a psychological foundation for Islamic education that helps us understand spiritual concepts and develop a balanced and harmonious personality. Thus, Sufism can become an important scientific discipline in increasing spiritual awareness and developing a balanced and harmonious personality. Sufism can help us achieve better life goals and improve the quality of spiritual life.

Stages of The Soul's Journey

Classical Sufis, such as Sa'id Hawwa, describe the soul's journey in three main phases: fana', baqa', and tajalli (Suriansah, 2012). Fana' fi'llah means 'disappearance' of the ego, when

a servant feels the presence of God replacing worldly worries. This is the most challenging initial phase, as it requires letting go of self-attachment to lower desires.

After the mortal phase, baqa' bi'llah appears: 'new life in Allah'. Here, the soul is no longer driven by lust, but is in harmony with the Divine will. This change is reflected in daily behavior, where kindness arises naturally, not out of obligation alone. This is where a Sufi begins to live with inner and outer balance. The culmination of this journey is tajalli, when Divine light appears in the qalb. The benefits of tajalli are not just an inner sensation, but kashf reveals directly divine secrets. Ghofur (2020) emphasizes that this experience gives rise to wisdom that is able to guide practical decisions and actions.

Apart from these three phases, Mulla Sadra added an eschatological dimension: the soul's journey continues after death through the realm of barzakh until the final meeting with Allah (Al-Walid, 2012). In barzakh, the soul undergoes a further purification process according to the level of sincerity and quality of charity while in the world. This shows the continuity of mental practice in the world and nature after death.

The following are the levels of the soul's journey in Sufism based on the concepts we have concluded:

1. Fana' fi'llah (Disappearance of the Ego): The initial challenging phase, where a servant feels the Divine presence replacing worldly worries and releasing one's ties to lower desires.
2. Baqa' bi'llah (New Life in Allah): The phase where the soul is no longer driven by lust, but is in harmony with the Divine will, and goodness appears naturally.
3. Tajalli (Peak of the Journey): The phase where Divine light appears in the qalb, giving rise to wisdom capable of guiding practical decisions and actions.
4. Barzakh Realm (Eschatological Dimension): The soul's journey continues after death through the barzakh realm until the final meeting with Allah, where the soul undergoes a further purification process according to the level of sincerity and quality of charity while in the world.

The experience of mortal' to tajalli cannot be separated from the guidance of the murshid, who helps students understand the limits of practice. Without direction, these phases can lead to misunderstandings and even psychological disorders. So, spiritual guidance becomes the foundation so that each stage is passed safely and meaningfully. In a modern context, practice methods can be adapted: from daily dhikr, breath-gazing meditation, to inner reflection journals. This series of practices helps each individual assess his or her spiritual progress, strengthen commitment, and adjust intensity according to the needs of the soul.

The congregational community also plays an important role in maintaining the continuity of traditions and transferring the map of the soul's journey between generations. Documentation of this spiritual map, combined with collective discussion and practice, keeps Sufistic methods alive and relevant. By understanding the map of the stages of the soul's journey in depth, Sufism practitioners can move more purposefully, avoid confusion, and ensure that every inner practice brings real transformational results.

DISCUSSION

Implications of Sufism Methodology in Islamic Education

Educators at Islamic educational institutions can design mujahadah al-nafs programs that are integrated into the daily curriculum, such as morning and evening dhikr sessions before

lessons begin (Iman, 2015). This activity is not just a formal ritual, but a concentration exercise that instills the habit of remembering Allah at all times. With a clear structure, students learn to manage time between academic and spiritual activities. Understanding the meaning of each dhikr is also emphasized so that it is not just a matter of calculations. Teachers can provide the historical and philosophical context behind dhikr to enrich insight. This method helps students internalize the values of Sufism naturally in everyday life. Consistency of practice will build strong spiritual habits over time.

The Wahdatul Wujud method proposed by Suwar & Dahri (2022) can be used as an interactive discussion module in class, where students read Hamzah Fansuri's classic literature and share reflections on inner experiences. This activity strengthens awareness of the unity of creation and the Creator. Group discussions help hone the ability to argue and listen to different views. In addition, students can practice thematic meditation based on the concept of the unity of being. This process not only increases theoretical understanding, but also deepens spiritual experience. This kind of curriculum encourages active involvement and collaboration in the study of Sufism.

Psychologically, breathing techniques in Sufistic meditation and contemplative dhikr according to Ghofur (2020) have been proven to be effective in reducing academic stress and increasing concentration. The simple practice of counting your breaths while chanting Allah's name provides a mental break amidst the stress of the task. Teachers and educators can lead these short sessions between class hours. As a result, students experience increased inner calm and readiness to learn. Evaluation of spiritual progress can be done through a personal reflection journal. Thus, Sufism methodology also contributes to mental health and academic performance.

The implementation of congregational remembrance assemblies as noted by Efendi et al. (2025) provides strong social value, because students pray for each other and support each other's spiritual growth. Small group remembrance sessions can be scheduled once a week, accompanied by questions and answers and sharing experiences. This activity builds empathy, solidarity and a sense of responsibility for the spiritual processes of peers. Therefore, the remembrance assembly is not just a religious activity, but a social laboratory for forming a caring character.

Apart from oral practice, inner reflection can also be developed through a daily journal where students write down experiences of dhikr, tadabbur verses of the Koran, and inner changes felt every day. Teachers review journals periodically and provide constructive feedback. This method allows for a qualitative assessment of students' spiritual development. Journals also become personal documentation that can be used for ongoing self-evaluation. This activity fosters self-awareness and motivates students to continue to improve the quality of worship and morals.

The role of the teacher or murshid in Sufi education is very crucial to ensure that inner training is safe and directed. Personal guidance through mentoring or small group coaching helps identify each student's spiritual obstacles. Teachers can adjust the intensity of the exercises and offer advanced techniques as needed. With this approach, the potential for psychological disorders can be minimized, and each individual feels supported in their spiritual journey.

Assessment of the success of Sufism methodology should ideally be formative and qualitative based, such as spiritual portfolio assessment, journal self-assessment, and attitude observation. This model emphasizes inner growth rather than mere numbers or grades. Apart from that, the development of a special rubric that contains criteria for sincerity, persistence of dhikr, and depth of tadabbur helps the objectivity of the assessment. That way, students are motivated to focus on the inner learning process, not just the end result.

With consistent application and community support, Sufism methodology in Islamic education can produce a generation that is not only academically superior, but also spiritually and emotionally mature. The integration of cognitive, affective and spiritual aspects creates a perfect human being who is ready to embark on the journey of the soul to the afterlife. This kind of holistic education is a valuable legacy for the future of the people.

The Power of Allah SWT According to the Qur'anic Perspective

In Arabic, there are various terms that describe the power of Allah SWT. The term that is often discussed in the science of Tawhid is qudrah, which means ability. This is one of the attributes of Allah SWT that exists in His Most High Essence, which every Muslim should recognize and believe in. This belief includes the recognition that Allah SWT has the power to create and organize the universe (Chaery, 1983).

In the discussion of the science of Tawheed according to the school of al-Ash'ariyah among Ahl al-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah, the attribute of qudrah is placed as the seventh of the twenty attributes that must be known about Allah SWT. This attribute emphasizes the difference between the power of creatures and the power of Allah SWT. Allah is the Lord of all power and nothing can limit Him; in fact, He is the One who decrees all things (Amrullah, 1975). The scholars of Tawhid assert that it is impossible for Allah SWT to have a weak nature. If He is weak, He would not be able to create creatures, because what is weak is not God (Ahmad, 1980).

There are many terms used to describe the nature of qudrah or power of Allah the Almighty. Some verses mention the names of the Good Names of God (al-Asma' al-Husna), which also indicate that God is all-powerful. The main purpose of using these terms is to illustrate Allah's power. Among the names of Allah mentioned in The Position of the Power of God and the Power of Man: According to the Perspective of the Qur'an in the Qur'an "القادر", Allah is referred to as the All Powerful, Strong, and Bold, and has perfect power (Mahluf, 1990).

The power of Allah SWT is very broad and does not require help from other creatures (Al-Jawwad, 2012). Some verses in the Qur'an that include the word "القادر" can be found in Surah al-An'am verse 37, al-Isra' verse 99, at-Tariq verse 7, Yasin verse 81, al-Ahqaf verse 33, and al-An'am verse 65. Al-Ghazali (d. 505 AH) states that "القادر" means the Powerful One, which indicates that if Allah SWT wants to do something, He will do it, and if He does not want it, He will not do it. According to Fakhr al-Razi (d. 606 A.H.), "القادر" is a derivation of another word 'القدرة' and sometimes has a similar meaning "المقتدر" which means 'All Powerful' (Umar, 1974). In some other verses, it is found that the word also means 'the Almighty'. In conclusion, these terms have similar meanings of 'The Almighty'.

This is due to the power of Allah SWT that surpasses all His creations, in accordance with the position of creatures as God's creations. There are similar terms in the following revelations of Allah:

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ

Meaning: "Glory be to You, the Lord who has power beyond what they know." (Surah al-Saffat (37): 180)

The definition of the word "رب العزة" in this verse is God who has glory and power. Al-Mawardi suggested that " رب العزة" in the context of this verse has two meanings, namely, the Ruling King and God who controls everything (Al-qurtubi, 1966).

Spirituality in Sufism

It would be rather complicated to explain spirituality from the point of view of Sufism because it would be like trying to identify the 'bitter-sweet taste of an orange'. Spirituality is an integral part, even the essence, of Sufism itself. However, this section will delve more into the meaning and gradual stages of the spiritual journey that one must go through when practicing Sufism. In some terms that are interrelated or directly related to spirituality, such as mysticism, asceticism, transcendence, and similar terms, Annemarie Schimmel states that all of them in Sufism can be understood as an awareness of the Single Reality that the salik and sufis call the Divine Essence (Schimmel, 2000). While on a spiritual journey, Sufis believe there are different approaches to connecting with God. Furthermore, Schimmel, quoting Hujwiri, mentions that there are two personal states that arise when approaching God, namely "familiarity" and "reverence".

From these two conditions, there is still a division or grouping of steps to reach God, which is known by Sufis as maqāmat. Furthermore, in the process of this spiritual ascent, there is a condition or various conditions that Sufis believe to be God's gift that cannot be obtained by personal effort, known as aḥwāl (Nasution, 2002). Each famous Sufi figure has a different way of describing the sequence of their spiritual journey. Some start with repentance and end with makrifat, while others may start with gratitude and reach the final stage of kasyaf. All the long phases of the spiritual journey require struggle, both in terms of 'ibādah, as well as ri-yāḍah and mujāhadah (Widayati, 2019).

In contrast to the above explanation, Javad Nurbakhsy sees it from the point of view of a science that has been integrated between psychology and Sufism. In the book Sufi Psychology, Nurbakhsy explains that the main goal in Sufism is to control the selfish soul, evil elements, and destructive urges in each individual, in order to reach the deepest inner consciousness (Nurbakhsy, 2000). The reference is based on the state of the times which, according to some Muslim figures, is a period of spiritual crisis (Sutoyo, 2015), thus requiring various efforts to revive high moral values derived from Islamic spirituality (Mujib, 2015). Especially with regard to interdependence between creatures which is often summarized in the value of "Islamic tri-interrelation", namely: relationship between fellow humans (ḥablun min al-nās), relationship with creatures or nature (ḥablun min al-'ālam), and relationship to God (ḥablun minaLlāh). This shows that spirituality in Islam, or the specific context of Sufism, is able to accommodate comprehensive attention that is universal (Damanik, 2020) and reaches a fairly broad dimension in its spectrum.

In the context of Sufism, humans are understood to have an inherent spiritual instinct. From a doctrinal point of view, this spiritual instinct can be considered an important factor in the emergence of religion in the world. Spirituality existed before religion, especially in its institutional context. Therefore, today, when religion in Western societies is experiencing various kinds of neglect and decline, spirituality is still being explored, adapted, and used as a lifestyle (Rahayu, 2019). There are signs of increased attention and participation in Sufism in Europe, even though they are not officially Muslim. This type of spirituality is often referred to as "behaving without belinging" (malik, 2015). Practicing spirituality without embracing a particular religion.

This is understandable, because in Sufism, flexibility and hospitality are important aspects. Spirituality is dynamic and can be developed according to the commitment of each individual. On the other hand, there are also spiritual movements in Sufism that have been organized into tarekat groups in various regions with teachings and rituals that have become hereditary traditions. Qualitatively, however, the core of the spiritual journey in Sufism is actually based on three interconnected dialectical processes. First, takhalli, which is an attempt to cleanse oneself of harmful negative elements, traits and tendencies such as envy, malice, hasad, greed, egocentricity or ananiyah, and others. Second, taḥalli, which is an effort to fill oneself with good characters and traits, and decorate oneself with praiseworthy and beneficial morals. Third, tajalli, which is defined as inner enlightenment that leads to the acquisition of divine light that allows the disclosure of the Divine manifested in various forms that can be seen (Waliyuddin, 2021). From this process, individual intelligence is increasingly visible and grows well so that it becomes creative (has high creative power), productive, and has the potential to provide benefits to the surrounding environment. This is the view of spirituality in the context of Sufism.

CONCLUSION

Sufism and the journey of the soul reflect a process of transformation that integrates the inner and outer dimensions in an effort to achieve maqam ma'rifatullah. Through the purification of the qalb, mujahadah al-nafs, and the practice of dhikr and tadabbur, individuals are prepared to purify the heart and build character in line with Islamic teachings. The philosophical and methodological framework offered by falsafi Sufism facilitates a deep understanding of the nature of worship, so that spiritual practices do not just become formal routines, but rather a reflection of ethical values and awareness of tawhid.

In the realm of eschatology, the soul's journey does not stop at the life of the world, but continues through the beyond until the culmination of eternal tajalli. The continuity of this process emphasizes that every good deed and spiritual investment in this world affects the degree of happiness of the soul in the hereafter. The value of humility, sincerity, and consistency in dhikr become a measure of the soul's readiness to face the divine court and enter ultimate happiness.

The implication of tasawwuf methodology in Islamic education shows how important the integration of cognitive, affective, and spiritual aspects is in forming a complete person. With a curriculum that accommodates mujahadah al-nafs, congregational dhikr practice, reflection journals, and murshid guidance, Islamic educational institutions can produce a generation that is not only academically competitive, but also emotionally and spiritually mature. This whole

approach emphasizes that Sufism is not just a traditional heritage, but a practical guide to accompany the soul's journey towards Allah.

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