

# Sufism as Therapy Psychological Problems of Modern Society

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## Abstract

Modernity gave rise to many advances as well as problems for modern society, including psychological problems. They tend to pursue material life and have a materialistic lifestyle rather than thinking about religion, which is considered to play less of a role in living life. One of the factors that can trigger negative impacts is a materialistic, hedonistic attitude to life, and the desire to control all aspects of life excessively and blindly. General symptoms of unhealthy mental health can be seen from several aspects, namely feelings of anxiety, feeling disturbed, unreasonable fear, envy, arrogance, negative behavior. These diseases arise because the heart is not calm, because the heart is far from God. Sufism is present in society as a solution to overcome and anticipate human psychological problems. Therefore, this researcher attempts to carry out an analysis of the teachings of Sufism as a therapy for human problems from a psychological perspective. This research method is a type of qualitative research based on library literature data, with a deductive-inductive thinking pattern. In this research, the primary sources consist of literature that is directly related to the research variables, namely various data regarding Islamic psychology and Sufism. Meanwhile, the secondary source is data related to this research. The research approach uses a psychological approach. For this reason, the author tries to conclude that psychology and Sufism can be interpreted as a science that discusses the human psyche and has the same role, namely providing solutions and overcoming human problems in living life. Modern humans are humans who think logically and are able to use various technologies to improve the quality of their personal and social lives. However, the result of this imbalance can then cause mental disorders.

## 1. Introduction

Modernity gave rise to many advances as well as problems for modern society, including psychological problems. In the millennial era, society now seems to deify science and technology, while religious understanding is increasingly weakening, making them human beings who experience spiritual understanding.

They tend to pursue material life and a materialistic lifestyle rather than thinking about religion, which is considered to play less of a role in living life.

The negative impact of advances in technology and information is influenced by various factors. One of the factors that can trigger negative impacts is a materialistic, hedonistic attitude to life, and the desire to control all aspects of life excessively and blindly.

This attitude to life is a manifestation of mental illness. General symptoms of an unhealthy mental state can be seen from several aspects, namely: feelings (anxiety, feeling disturbed, unreasonable fear, envy, arrogance, etc.), thoughts, negative behavior, health (physical disturbances due to an uneasy mind psycho-somatic). These diseases arise because the heart is not calm, not at peace because the heart is far from God. This kind of lifestyle is very pronounced in urban areas and has even spread to remote villages, where people compete with each other in all fields.

Sufism is present in society as a solution to overcome and anticipate human psychological problems. Therefore, this researcher seeks to analyze the teachings of Sufism as a therapy for human problems from a psychological perspective.

## 2. Methodology

This type of research is qualitative research based on literature data, so the pattern of thinking chosen by the researcher is a deductive-inductive way of thinking. As it is known that a study has at least two sources of data, namely primary sources and secondary sources.

In this research, the primary sources consist of literature that is directly related to the research variables, namely various data regarding Islamic psychology and Sufism. While the secondary sources, namely data related to this research, one of them is about psychotherapy.

The research approach uses a psychological approach. The psychological approach used as the basis for this research is the Islamic psychology approach. This is because, specifically, religious research, especially on psychological issues.

## 3. Sufi Psychology

In general, psychology comes from the Greek word psyche which means soul and logos which means science, so that it can be interpreted that psychology is the science that deals with the soul. In Islam, the term soul can be equated with the term al-nafs and some say al-ruh. But both have different assumptions [1].

In terminology, Wilhem Wundt argues that psychology is the science of mental life, such as thought, attention, perception, intelligence, will, and memory.

Sufism and psychology have similarities, especially regarding the conception of the basic potential and development of the human soul. In psychology, this potential is seen as related to psychological behavior, which is exemplified by the link between a person's motivation and the behavior he displays. In the discussion of tasawwuf, the relationship between the soul and the body is discussed, which aims to create harmony between the two. From this, a category of good and bad actions emerged which is called morals. In the view of the Sufis, a person's character and character are very dependent on his soul. If the soul is controlled by animal or vegetable lust, then what will appear in its behavior is animal or vegetable lust. Likewise, if what is in power is insane lust, then what emerges is human behavior.

The terminological definition of Sufism is very diverse. Shaykh Yusuf al-Rifa'i, as quoted by Tamrin, explained that the terminological definition of Sufism reaches approximately two thousand. Meanwhile, Nicholson in Hamzah Tualeka notes that the number of definitions of Sufism is seventy-eight definitions, while Suhrawardi argues that the definitions of Sufism number more than a thousand. For this reason, the author tries to conclude that psychology and Sufism can be interpreted as a science that discusses the human psychology and has the same role, namely providing solutions and overcoming human problems in living life.

### 3.1 Modern Society Psychology Problems

While technological innovation has an important place in society, it also brings harmful lifestyles. Patterns of human activity largely revolve around discourse. Perhaps discourse functions as an important medium in the relationships that exist.

Modern humans are humans who think logically and are able to use various technologies to improve the quality of their personal and social lives. However, the result of this imbalance can then cause mental disorders.

One of the sufferings of modern humans is that humans have lost meaning, like 'humans in cages'. He is anxious every time he has to make a decision and doesn't know what he really wants.

In the view of sociologists, this symptom is referred to as a symptom of alienation which is caused by the following factors:

1. Rapid social change
2. Warm relations between people have turned into barren ones
3. Traditional institutions have changed into rational institutions
4. A homogeneous society has turned into a heterogeneous one
5. Social stability turns into social mobility.

That's how modern humans are, they do something not because they want to do it, but because they feel other people want them to do it. He is busy serving other people's wishes until he forgets his own wishes. As a result of the problems of modernity that have been mentioned, modern humans suffer from mental disorders, including:

#### a. Worry

The anxiety experienced by modern humans stems from the loss of the meaning of life. As human nature has a need for meaning in life. The meaning of life belongs to someone when he has honesty and feels his life is needed by other people and has done something meaningful for other people. Even though what fighters do is for the benefit of others, the urge to fight is born from oneself, not to satisfy others.

Modern humans actually have no meaning in life, because they have no principles of life. Everything he does is following trends, following social demands, while social demands do not necessarily have noble principles. So he was enslaved to serve change. Because he feels that his life has no meaning, there is no dedication in his actions, he is hit by prolonged anxiety and anxiety.

#### b. Lonely

As a result of arid human relations, modern society is no longer sincere and warm. This modern human feels lonely, even though he is in the middle of a crowd. This is because all modern humans use social masks to cover the face of their personality.

#### c. Boredom

Because life is no longer meaningful, and relationships with other human beings feel bland because of the lack of sincerity, anxiety always disturbs his soul and prolonged loneliness, causing psychiatric disorders in the form of boredom.

Prolonged anxiety and loneliness eventually make you bored, tired of pretense, of falsehood, but don't know what to do to get rid of the boredom.

#### d. Deviant behavior

Prolonged anxiety, loneliness and boredom cause a person to not know exactly what to do. In this empty and fragile state of mind a person is unable to think further. So what happens is that it is very easy to be invited or influenced to do fun things even though those actions deviate from moral norms. For example, being influenced by illegal drugs.

#### e. Psychosomatics

This disorder describes the close interaction between the soul (psycho) and the body (soma). Psychosomatics are physical disorders caused by psychological and social factors. If a person's emotions build up and peak, this can trigger shock and chaos within him. In general, psychosomatic sufferers always complain, feel unwell, have heart palpitations, feel weak and have difficulty concentrating. Psychosomatic manifestations can be in the form of syndromes, trauma, stress, dependence on sedatives/alcohol/narcotics or deviant behavior. Thus, psychosomatics can be referred to as a combined physical and mental illness. Those who are sick are actually the soul but manifest in the form of physical pain.

### 3.2 Therapy in Sufism Literature

The word therapy comes from the word therapeutic which means an adjective that contains elements or medicinal values [2]. Meanwhile, Carl Gustav Jung, a figure in Analytical Psychology, as quoted by Amir, stated that psychic disorders basically originate from spiritual problems.

This can also be seen from the expression psychoneurosis which is understood as suffering that has not found its meaning, the cause of this suffering is spiritual stagnation or psychological sterilization [3]. William James, a psychiatrist from the United States, argued about the importance of religious or faith therapy, he said that undoubtedly the best therapy for health is faith in God, because individuals who are truly religious will always be ready to face problems/disasters that will occur [4].

So, the therapy referred to in tasawwuf/sufi is an attempt to make humans happy, happy, and calm in living life and can be used as an effort to prevent psychological disorders. Thus, therapy can be interpreted more

broadly, including prayer, fasting, dhikr and management of the heart, as well as the practices of tasawwuf teachings carried out by Sufis.

As is characteristic of Sufi life, namely carrying out all aspects of life according to Lillah (because of Allah) and Billah (in the Name of Allah).

### 3.3 Sufism as an Alternative Psychological Therapy

From the beginning, Sufism aims to draw closer to God (taqarrub ila Allah). However, this shows how far we are at this time from Him, because we are now living in a foreign land far from our true origin and place of return.

Sufism not only makes us aware of our separation from our true source and place of return. But also, at the same time explaining to us where we came from and where we will return. Thus, tasawwuf gives direction in our lives. From the teachings of the Sufis, we come to understand that man is not only a physical being, but also a spiritual being, apart from his physical being, who has his spiritual origins in God.

By realizing how humans are also spiritual beings, it is more likely that we will act more wisely and in a balanced way in treating ourselves. With attention to welfare, cleanliness and mental health.

In answering psychological problems, Sufism teaches the essence of a happy life. A happy life must be a healthy life, because people who are unhealthy (sick) may very well be unhappy. Healthy living includes both physical and mental.

#### a. Physical Health

Physical health in the teachings of Sufism depends on food and drink. Food and drink consumed must be healthy and lawful. Unhealthy food and drink can cause disease, and what is unclean can lead to the formation of bad character, which is a reflection of an unhealthy soul. Haram food is not only pork and unclean drinks. But also, income obtained by illegal means, such as theft and corruption.

#### b. Mental Health

In addition to food and drink, worship such as prayer, fasting and dhikr also affect physical and mental health. Prayer apart from worshipping or training the soul also consists of several body positions, each of which has a positive impact on health. For example, prostrate, with this position the knees that form a right angle allow the abdominal muscles to develop and prevent the appearance of frivolity in the middle, increasing blood flow to the upper part of the body, especially the head (including the eyes, ears and nose) and also the lungs.

Apart from praying and fasting, body functions are rested and given the opportunity to be fresh again. Another worship that has a positive impact on health is dhikr. Dhikr means remembering, chanting or glorifying Allah by repeating one of his names or a sentence of his majesty.

With dhikr, thoughts and feelings can become calm, so that people will live a healthy life, avoid diseases that usually arise from mental disorders, such as stress, and so on. In addition, dhikr also functions to strengthen the heart, energy, morals, avoid danger and therapy for the soul, all of these functions are very much needed by humans today who tend to be secular.

Sufism teaches various rituals and dhikr, as a way to get closer to Allah. Sufism does not at all aim to change the patterns of modern psychotherapy. On the contrary, Sufi therapy exists as a complement and balancer to existing therapeutic concepts by optimizing opportunities for one's individual strength to heal oneself "self-healing".

The journey of a Sufi in drawing closer to Allah has several stages. First, Mujahadah, a spiritual struggle in which humans are required to restrain their passions and not indulge in pleasures.

In psychology, happiness can toy with the human psychological condition. Martin Seligman said, happiness is one of human nature, to avoid stress and depression.

Muhammad al-Kalabazi places zuhud in the following order (Maqomat): al-Taubah, al-Zuhd, al-Second, Riyadloh, namely the exercise of the soul, mind and heart. As stated by Hanna Djumhana, dhikr that is done humbly and in a soft voice will bring relaxation and serenity and happiness to those who do it [5]. Sabr, al-Faqr, al-Tawadhu, al-Takwa, al-Tawakkal, al-Ridha, al-Mahabbah and al-Ma'rifah [6].

Al-Ghazali applied the first stage of his tasawwuf, first, repentance, which means returning from sin (turning away and withdrawing from sin). In Sufistic literature, sin is interpreted as the veil of al-Mahub (Beloved). Amin Thanksgiving [7] says, sin itself is psychologically a burden for someone who commits it. As a result of the sin he committed, it often results in stress or depression, which in turn brings illness. Thus, sin is the germ of disease physically and psychologically. So that the behavior of repentance can be used to eliminate the seeds of disease.

Second, Wara' is purifying the heart and various limbs [3]. Whereas a Wira'i (person who does wara'), will be careful in choosing food that is clean and sufficient for his needs. Sufism teaches people not to overdo it and maintain lust. One of them, so as not to overeat about eating. Excessive eating is one of the effects of stress on

human behavior, hence the wara' attitude. Psychologically, it can be interpreted as a behavior that can reduce a person's level of stress.

Third, Zuhud, according to al-Junaidi in his book *Amin Gratitude*, zuhud is emptying the hands of possessions and emptying the heart of seeking worldly or material problems [8]. The ascetic mentality can be used as a means of healing mental illness. The mental illness in question is of course mental illness caused by material things, or the pursuit of material things that are never satisfied. According to Robbins (1998) dissatisfaction at work can be taken out in various actions, such as complaining, being rebellious, even stealing company or agency property. In this case, asceticism can be used as a control for human behavior regarding excessive negative or positive things.

Fourth, Qona'ah, from a linguistic perspective, means feeling sufficient or willing. According to the term, it is the attitude of being willing to accept and feel sufficient for the results one seeks and distance oneself from feelings of dissatisfaction and feelings of lack [9]. Satisfaction here means being grateful for the blessings given by Allah, the blessings of health, security and daily needs. As Abraham Maslow said in the hierarchy of human needs, physiological needs such as eating and drinking. Safety needs (the need to feel safe). Maslow said that humans will find peace if these needs can be fulfilled. The most important thing is psychological peace. This attitude can be used as an alternative to self-therapy from psychological illness which often has a negative impact on physiological health, because from within a person an attitude of accepting reality and self-respect for the reality that occurs emerges.

Fifth, Tawakal, which means surrender, surrendering oneself to Allah after carrying out activities, doing, acting and behaving. People who put their trust, surrender to Allah with all their thoughts, intuition and heart which synergize with reason, deeds, actions, awareness, personality strengthening and complete mental reconstruction. Awareness, personality and complete mentality are the positive effects/impacts of surrendering to Allah with sincerity and sincerity. Meanwhile, all of that is Islamic psychotherapy that functions preventive, curative and constructive in an effort to realize measurable mental health and personality. Thus, Tawakal attitude is a formula of Islamic psychotherapy in overcoming anxiety, stress, depression, frustration and traumatic illnesses.

#### 4. Conclusion

At the end of this article, the author intends to convey the conclusion that no matter how diverse and serious the psychological problems experienced by modern humans. Humans are definitely able to face various life problems by providing balanced nutrition to both their physical needs and their spiritual/spiritual needs, because many of these problems originate from neglect of the spiritual aspect.

Based on the Sufism and Psychology literature described in each sub-chapter above, it turns out that healing in the world of medicine and the medical world, both classical and modern, can be understood that the values of Sufism can be used as a therapy to cure illnesses that rely on the teachings of Sufism. This can be understood through various activities carried out by Sufis, such as Mujahadah and Riyadhoh, which can be drawn into a healing process, both physical and mental.

Furthermore, Psychology and Sufism have common ground, especially in overcoming human problems psychologically and physiologically. Making Sufism values as an alternative psychological therapy to complement medical treatment. Maqomat in Sufism such as repentance, asceticism, wara', qona'ah and dhikr (Sufi identity) are used as alternative psychological therapy and to prevent psychological gaps that will affect the condition of the physical body, such as the emergence of physical illness or negative actions. Therapy here also has a broader meaning, not just a "medical effort" to cure disease.

As the aim of this research is to ground the values of Sufism in everyday life. Values are more effective if the values of Sufism are packaged with a psychological and therapeutic approach, although without reducing the essence of Sufism. This shows that there is a relationship between the mind, heart and body in human health.

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