

REVITALIZING SPIRITUALITY THROUGH SOCIO-SUFISM: M. FETHULLAH GÜLEN'S INTEGRATION OF SUFI ETHICS AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT



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Abstract

The marginalization of religious values amid secularization, materialism, and individualism has generated a need for forms of spirituality that address not only inner transformation but also contemporary social responsibility. While modern discussions of Islamic spirituality often emphasize individual piety and mystical experience, the social and ethical dimensions of Sufi spirituality remain comparatively underexplored. This article examines M. Fethullah Gülen's conception of socio-Sufism as a framework that integrates Sufi ethics with social engagement. It aims to analyze the conceptual foundations of Gülen's socio-Sufism, examine how spiritual cultivation is translated into social responsibility, and assess its relevance to the revitalization of spirituality in modern society. Employing qualitative library research with philosophical and historical-contextual approaches, the study analyzes Gülen's major works and relevant scholarly literature through qualitative content analysis. The findings demonstrate that Gülen's socio-Sufism is structured through the dynamic relationship between *tazkiyah al-nafs* as inner spiritual formation, *hizmet* as the ethical expression of spirituality through service, and collective social praxis as the broader realization of spiritual values. This integration transforms Sufism from an exclusively inward-oriented spiritual practice into an ethically engaged mode of religious life in which personal piety and social responsibility are mutually reinforcing. The study concludes that Gülen's socio-Sufism provides a relevant conceptual framework for revitalizing spirituality by reconnecting inner moral transformation with social engagement and ethical responsibility in modern society.

Abstrak

Marginalisasi nilai-nilai agama di tengah sekularisasi, materialisme, dan individualisme melahirkan kebutuhan akan bentuk spiritualitas yang tidak hanya berorientasi pada transformasi batin, tetapi juga mampu merespons tanggung jawab sosial kontemporer. Meskipun diskursus tentang spiritualitas Islam modern sering menekankan kesalehan individual dan pengalaman mistik, dimensi etis dan sosial dari spiritualitas Sufi masih relatif kurang mendapat perhatian. Artikel ini mengkaji konsep socio-Sufism M. Fethullah Gülen sebagai kerangka yang mengintegrasikan etika Sufi dengan keterlibatan sosial. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis landasan konseptual socio-Sufism Gülen, menjelaskan bagaimana pembinaan spiritual ditransformasikan menjadi tanggung jawab sosial, serta mengkaji relevansinya bagi revitalisasi spiritualitas dalam masyarakat modern. Penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif berbasis studi kepustakaan dengan pendekatan filosofis dan historis-kontekstual melalui analisis isi terhadap karya-karya utama Gülen dan literatur akademik yang relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa socio-Sufism Gülen dibangun melalui relasi dinamis antara *tazkiyah al-nafs* sebagai pembentukan spiritual internal, *hizmet* sebagai ekspresi etis spiritualitas melalui pelayanan, dan praksis sosial kolektif sebagai perwujudan nilai-nilai spiritual. Integrasi tersebut mentransformasikan Sufisme dari praktik spiritual yang semata-mata berorientasi ke dalam diri menjadi bentuk kehidupan keagamaan yang berorientasi pada keterlibatan etis, dengan kesalehan personal dan tanggung jawab sosial yang saling memperkuat. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa socio-Sufism Gülen menawarkan kerangka konseptual yang relevan untuk merevitalisasi spiritualitas dengan menghubungkan transformasi moral internal, keterlibatan sosial, dan tanggung jawab etis dalam menghadapi tantangan masyarakat modern.

INTRODUCTION

Technological advancements and the tide of globalization have brought about fundamental changes in various aspects of human life, including the ways in which individuals express and interpret spirituality (Fikriyah, 2024). Modern society faces the complex realities of life, in which people must navigate the tension between spiritual needs and the allure of a materialistic-hedonistic lifestyle (Soleh, 2023). In this situation, religious values and traditional religious practices are often perceived as outdated, irrelevant, or even incapable of providing concrete answers to contemporary social issues. This phenomenon is inseparable from the influence of secularization, namely the tendency to separate religious teachings from the realm of social life and the public sphere (Mu'asyara et al., 2024).

Secularization not only impacts social structures but also touches upon the dimension of individual consciousness. The world is increasingly understood through a rational-instrumental framework, causing reality to lose its sacred and transcendental dimensions (Eder, 2025). Consequently, life's orientation shifts from the search for meaning toward material achievement and pragmatic success (Nesia Mu'asyara et al., 2024). Under such conditions, religion is not entirely marginalized, but its function is reduced from a source of inner transformation and the formation of moral consciousness to merely symbolic identity and ceremonial practices. The spiritual dimension, which should foster ethical sensitivity, social solidarity, and divine awareness, is also marginalized, both in personal and public life (Nesia Mu'asyara et al., 2024).

Empirical studies across contexts confirm this tendency. Declining religious participation is associated with reduced social connectedness and increased loneliness (Gemar, 2024), while weakened spiritual engagement correlates with higher anxiety and lower life satisfaction (Zarzycka & Zietek, 2019). In the Indonesian context, spirituality is consistently linked to resilience and psychological well-being (Wahyuningsih, 2008). At the communal level, religious institutions are also experiencing declining participation and weakening solidarity, reducing their capacity to function as cohesive moral communities (Twenge et al., 2016). As a result, religious institutions are progressively losing their capacity to function as cohesive moral communities that generate collective ethical action and social integration.

In response, Islamic intellectual traditions have sought to reconnect spirituality with social life. *Fiqh sosial*, developed by K.H. M. A. Sahal Mahfudh, reorients Islamic jurisprudence toward public welfare (*maslahah*) and social responsiveness (Mahfudh, 2003). Neo-Sufi approaches similarly emphasize ethical refinement and compassion as foundations of social life (Hakim, 2025). However, both approaches remain largely normative and do not systematically explain how inner spiritual formation is transformed into sustained collective action. This indicates a conceptual gap in contemporary studies of Islamic spirituality regarding the mechanism linking spiritual interiority and social praxis (Voll, 2008).

Addressing this gap, this study proposes socio-Sufism as a conceptual framework that integrates inner spiritual formation (*tazkiyah al-nafs*) with collective social praxis through *hizmet* (service) as a mediating mechanism. This framework offers a structural interpretation of M. Fethullah Gülen's thought by explaining how spiritual consciousness is operationalized into organized ethical action within modern society, thereby bridging the

transition between spiritual interiority and social agency. Gülen, a contemporary Turkish Muslim thinker, integrates Sufi spirituality with education, ethics, and social responsibility. Rooted in the Sufi tradition, his thought emphasizes self-purification (*tazkiyah al-nafs*), moral development (*akhlaq*), and service to humanity (*hizmet*) (Ebaugh, 2009). Within this framework, spirituality functions not as a private experience but as a transformative moral force shaping public engagement and civic responsibility.

Rather than examining the Hizmet Movement as a socio-political phenomenon, this study focuses on a conceptual analysis of socio-Sufism as a theoretical paradigm for revitalizing spirituality. Revitalization here refers to the reactivation of religion's transcendental and ethical dimensions that have been weakened by modern rationality. It is understood not as ritual revival, but as substantive value transformation that restores religion's relevance to contemporary social needs and meaning-making processes (Lebedev et al., 2023).

In this context, Gülen's socio-Sufism thought offers a significant response to the effects of secularization, which reduces the role of religion to the private sphere. In his work *Toward a Global Civilization of Love and Tolerance*, Gülen not only emphasizes the importance of individual spiritual experience through Sufism but also advocates for social transformation rooted in ethical values, compassion, and tangible contributions toward the common good (Gülen, 2010). His ideas combine Sufi spirituality with a high degree of social consciousness, thereby re-establishing religion as a constructive public force rather than merely a symbol of identity, let alone a tool of domination (Purnomo et al., 2023). Through educational approaches, interfaith dialogue, and engagement with social issues, Gülen demonstrates that religion can serve as a source of enlightenment and concrete solutions to modern challenges such as moral crises, intolerance, and social fragmentation (Purnomo et al., 2023).

The socio-Sufi approach is relevant for deeper study, as it offers a framework of understanding capable of bridging the inner dimensions and social practices of religiosity. Socio-Sufism not only emphasizes aspects of asceticism and individual spiritual experience but also positions spirituality as a source of ethical values that drives active engagement in social life. Therefore, a study of socio-Sufism from the perspective of Gülen's thought is important to demonstrate how Sufism can function as a spiritual paradigm responsive to the challenges of modernity, while simultaneously contributing to the revitalization of religion's role as a moral and social force in modern society.

Thus, this study is not intended to examine the Hizmet Movement as a socio-political phenomenon or to evaluate its practical implementation in specific contexts, but rather focuses on a conceptual analysis of M. Fethullah Gülen's thought regarding socio-Sufism as a paradigm for the revitalization of spirituality. This study uses Gülen's works as the primary source to explore how the integration of Sufism, social ethics, and humanitarian responsibility is formulated theoretically. This approach is expected to clarify Gülen's intellectual contributions to the discourse of contemporary Sufism and to enrich the understanding of a model of Islamic spirituality relevant to the challenges of modern society.

This study focuses on several research questions, namely: How is the conceptual framework of socio-Sufism constructed in the thought of M. Fethullah Gülen? What is the pattern of integration between the spiritual dimension of Sufism and social responsibility

within the framework of socio-Sufism? And how is M. Fethullah Gülen's socio-Sufism relevant to efforts to revitalize spirituality in modern society? These research questions were formulated to gain a deeper understanding of Gülen's intellectual contribution in presenting a model of Islamic spirituality that is adaptive to the dynamics of modernity without losing its transcendental dimension.

This research employs a qualitative approach based on library research. This methodological design is considered appropriate because the object of study is conceptual and textual, namely the socio-Sufi thought of M. Fethullah Gülen. In this context, qualitative library research enables an in-depth interpretation of textual data and conceptual structures embedded in primary and secondary source (Creswell, 2004).

The primary data sources in this study consist of selected works of M. Fethullah Gülen that discuss spirituality, Sufism, ethics, and social responsibility. These texts are treated as the main corpus for analyzing the conceptual structure of socio-Sufism. Secondary sources include academic books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and scholarly studies that critically examine Gülen's thought as well as broader discussions on socio-Sufism and contemporary Islamic spirituality. Data collection was conducted through systematic documentation techniques, involving identification, selection, and classification of relevant literature. The selection of sources was based on three criteria: (1) conceptual relevance to socio-Sufism and Gülen's thought, (2) academic credibility, and (3) analytical contribution to the research focus. This ensures that only authoritative and relevant texts are included in the analytical process. The data analysis uses qualitative content analysis combined with interpretive reading (Mackiewicz, 2018).

The analysis is conducted through three stages. First, data reduction, which involves filtering and simplifying textual materials based on relevance. Second, data categorization, in which key concepts are grouped into analytical themes such as spirituality, ethical values, social engagement, and socio-Sufi integration. Third, interpretive analysis, which aims to reconstruct the conceptual framework of socio-Sufism within Gülen's intellectual tradition.

The historical-factual approach is operationalized as a contextual analysis of Gülen's ideas within their intellectual and socio-historical setting. This does not aim at chronological reconstruction, but rather at situating his socio-Sufi ideas within the development of contemporary Islamic thought. This approach helps to explain how socio-Sufism emerges as a response to modernity, secularization, and the crisis of spirituality. To ensure analytical rigor, this study applies source triangulation by comparing interpretations across primary texts and secondary scholarly literature. This process enhances interpretive validity and minimizes bias in constructing the conceptual framework of socio-Sufism.

This study is expected to contribute academically to the development of contemporary Sufism studies, particularly regarding the relationship between spirituality and social transformation. This research is also expected to enrich the discourse on models of religiosity that are moderate, humanistic, and responsive to the challenges of modernity, so that religion is not only understood as an individual ritual practice but also as a source of ethical values that contribute to building a harmonious and meaningful social life.

THE CONCEPT OF SOCIO-SUFISM IN THE THOUGHT OF M. FETHULLAH GÜLEN

Muhammad Fethullah Gülen was born on April 27, 1941, in the village of Korucuk, Pasinler district, Erzurum Province, in eastern Turkey. Gülen's birth coincided with major events unfolding in Turkey: the Ottoman Caliphate had been defeated in World War I and was subsequently transformed by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk into the modern republic we know as modern Turkey. He came from a religious family with a strong background in religious education. His father, Ramiz Gülen, was a state-appointed mosque imam who also possessed scholarly expertise in classical Islamic studies. Meanwhile, his mother, Refia Gülen, was known as a devout woman who could read and teach the Qur'an to the girls in her neighborhood (Ebaugh, 2009).

Gülen grew up in a religious environment and was intellectually influenced by the thought of Said Nursi, a Kurdish scholar known for the Nur movement and his exegetical work, *Risale-i Nur*. Nursi's philosophy, which emphasizes the reconciliation of faith and modern rationality, inspired many in Turkish society, particularly during the early years of the Turkish Republic when the state's secularization policies were strictly enforced (Council & Relations, 2016). He was born at a time when Kemalist secularism had begun to soften. This deeply religious family environment served as the starting point for the formation of his scholarly and spiritual character. His early formal education took place traditionally in madrasahs and local study circles, as the public school system in rural Anatolia at that time was limited (Council & Relations, 2016).

Additionally, other influential figures included Alvarli Muhammad Lutfi, a Sufi sheikh; Mehmet Akif, the national poet; Necip Fazil, a Turkish Muslim intellectual and poet; and Muhammed Hamdi Yazir (1878–1942), a Qur'anic exegete (Yucel, 2010). Gülen's education and training were highly comprehensive. Muhammad Lutfi guided him in spirituality, Gnostic knowledge, and religious practices. Meanwhile, Gülen also studied Arabic under Sadi Efendi and learned proper Quranic recitation from Al-Qari Hacı Sidqi Efendi (Yucel, 2010).

Gülen's thought exhibits an integrative character in explaining the relationship between Islamic spirituality and the social dynamics of modern society. In his view, religion is not positioned as a reality separate from social life, but rather as a source of normative values that shape an individual's ethical orientation within society. Within this framework, Sufism is not understood merely as a personal and contemplative religious practice, but as a process of inner cultivation that impacts the formation of broader social attitudes (Fethullah Gülen and Ali unal 1961).

Furthermore, Gülen developed an approach that integrates modern science with divine values into a coherent intellectual framework. He rejects the dichotomy between science and religion, viewing both as two complementary dimensions of knowledge that together provide a holistic understanding of reality (Gülen, 2010). In this context, the value of compassion occupies a fundamental position as a principle that underpins cosmic order while also serving as the foundation for the formation of social ethics in human life (Gülen 2020).

Building on this framework, socio-Sufism in Gülen thought can be understood as a conceptual construct that integrates epistemological, spiritual, and social dimensions into a systematic unity. Spirituality does not stop at individual religious experience but evolves

into an ethical force that drives active engagement in various forms of social service, education, and humanistic dialogue. Thus, socio-Sufism represents not only a form of personal religiosity but also a paradigm that affirms the interconnection between individual piety and social responsibility within the context of modern society.

In his monumental work *Key Concepts in the Practice of Sufism: Emerald Hills of the Heart*, Gülen's explains that Sufism is a spiritual path undertaken by humans to purify the heart from various negative tendencies such as greed, arrogance, and excessive attachment to the material world. This process of spiritual purification aims to cultivate a person of profound spiritual depth and noble moral character. Thus, Sufism is not solely oriented toward mystical experiences but also toward character development that reflects Islamic ethical values in daily life (M. Fethullah Gülen, n.d.).

Gülen's also emphasizes that Sufism cannot be separated from Sharia. In his view, the spiritual dimension of Islam is rooted in obedience to the teachings of Sharia, which form the foundation of a Muslim's religious life. Therefore, a seeker's (salik) spiritual journey is realized not only through inner experiences but also through consistent religious practices such as worship, moral discipline, and self-control. This integration of the outward and inward dimensions makes Sufism a means to achieve a balanced religious life between spiritual awareness and obedience to religious teachings (Gülen, 1961). Conceptual Flow of Socio-Sufism in Gülen's Thought:



THE INTEGRATION OF SPIRITUALITY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Within the socio-Sufi framework developed by M. Fethullah Gülen, spirituality and social responsibility are understood as inseparable dimensions of religious life. Spirituality is not limited to personal religious experience but functions as a transformative force that shapes ethical awareness and social engagement. This perspective is rooted in the principle of *tawḥīd* (the oneness of God), which Gülen interprets not merely as a theological doctrine but as an existential awareness that guides individuals to perceive all aspects of life as interconnected under divine unity. Consequently, the awareness of *tawḥīd* generates moral responsibility, encouraging individuals to embody values such as justice, compassion, and solidarity in their interactions with others. In this sense, the relationship between humans

and God directly influences their relationship with society, making spirituality the ethical foundation of social responsibility (Gülen, 2020).

This spiritual foundation is strengthened through *tazkiyah al-nafs*, the continuous purification of the self from egoistic tendencies. In Gülen's thought, spiritual development is not an inward withdrawal but a formative process that cultivates moral qualities such as sincerity, empathy, and responsibility. Through this process, spirituality is transformed from an internal experience into a stable ethical disposition that shapes social consciousness and encourages constructive engagement with societal realities (Gülen, 2020).

A further dimension of this transformation is *ma'rifat*, understood not merely as mystical knowledge but as an ethical awareness of divine proximity that intensifies social responsibility. In this view, spiritual advancement does not culminate in withdrawal from society but in a heightened obligation to contribute to collective welfare. The deeper one's spiritual realization, the stronger the commitment to justice, social harmony, and human well-being (Gülen, 2004).

The operational expression of this spiritual framework is found in the concept of *hizmet* (service), which translates inner spiritual values into concrete social action. *Hizmet* reflects the principle that faith must be embodied through service to humanity. Educational initiatives, humanitarian work, community development, and interfaith dialogue are therefore understood as manifestations of religious devotion rather than secular social activities. Through this mechanism, spirituality becomes an active force within public life rather than remaining confined to individual contemplation (Çetin, 2010).

In this context, socio-Sufism departs from classical interpretations of Sufism that emphasize withdrawal or purely contemplative practice. Gülen repositions spiritual realization as inherently linked to social engagement, where devotion to God is inseparable from service to humanity. Spiritual maturity is thus measured through ethical action and participation in addressing social problems, transforming Sufism into a socially engaged moral framework (Pimada, 2024).

This orientation can be situated within broader theoretical debates on religion and modernity. Weber's thesis on the "disenchantment of the world" highlights how rationalization tends to marginalize transcendental values in public life (Weber, 2002). From this perspective, Gülen's integration of spirituality and social responsibility represents an attempt to reintroduce ethical transcendence into modern social structures. Similarly, Berger's concept of desecularization challenges the assumption of inevitable religious decline under modernization, emphasizing instead the continued public relevance of religion (Berger, 1999). The *Hizmet* movement reflects this persistence through sustained engagement in education, humanitarian service, and intercultural dialogue.

Furthermore, Habermas's post-secular framework argues that religious traditions remain relevant in public discourse when translated into universally accessible ethical language (Habermas, 2005). Within this framework, *hizmet* functions as a mediating structure through which spiritual values are articulated as compassion, cooperation, and civic responsibility. Taylor's analysis of modern secularity further reinforces the necessity for religious traditions to continuously reinterpret their public role within plural moral landscapes (Taylor, 2007). Collectively, these perspectives position socio-Sufism as a bridge between inner spirituality and public ethical engagement.

A comparable critique is offered by Nasr, who attributes the modern spiritual crisis to the loss of the sacred dimension of existence (Nasr, 1996). While Nasr emphasizes metaphysical restoration, Gülen proposes a praxis-oriented alternative in which spirituality is actualized through structured social engagement. Education, humanitarian service, and civic participation become the medium through which spiritual consciousness is translated into lived ethical responsibility. Within this framework, socio-Sufism functions as a mechanism that transforms inner consciousness into social praxis. Spirituality is not confined to contemplation but becomes operational through collective ethical action. This highlights the distinctive contribution of Gülen's thought in linking personal piety with sustained social transformation.

From a psychological and ethical perspective, the process of spiritual formation is closely associated with the concept of the qalb (heart), understood as the center of moral consciousness. Through tazkiyah, the heart is purified from traits such as egoism, greed, and hostility, resulting in the formation of empathy, solidarity, and social concern (Gülen, 2004), his internal transformation reinforces the continuity between spiritual development and social responsibility.

In practical terms, this socio-Sufi orientation is particularly relevant for plural societies. Through principles of dialogue, tolerance, and service, Gülen's thought offers an inclusive model of religious engagement that transcends exclusivist interpretations of religion. In multicultural contexts such as Indonesia, this framework contributes to strengthening religious moderation by integrating personal spirituality with civic responsibility.

Overall, Gülen's socio-Sufi framework demonstrates a reconfiguration of the relationship between spirituality and social responsibility in which religiosity is not positioned as a private or residual domain, but as a constitutive dimension of public ethical life. The analysis indicates that socio-Sufism operates through a structured integration of tawhīd, tazkiyah, ma'rifat, and qalb, which collectively generate a form of moral subjectivity oriented toward sustained social engagement. Rather than remaining at the level of individual spiritual refinement, these dimensions are operationalized through the institutional logic of hizmet, where ethical consciousness is continuously translated into collective social praxis. In this configuration, spirituality does not merely accompany social action but actively produces and sustains it as a form of moral agency. This finding suggests that socio-Sufism reconfigures the boundary between interior religiosity and public ethics, where spiritual formation becomes a generative mechanism for social cohesion, ethical responsibility, and participatory engagement within plural modern societies.

REVITALIZING SPIRITUALITY IN MODERN SOCIETY

The moral and spiritual crisis in modern society is not only marked by a decline in formal religiosity but is more specifically evident in ethical dysfunction in everyday life (Rijal and Prasajo 2019). Examples include the normalization of instrumental behavior, a weakening of social responsibility, and the reduction of human relationships to utilitarian ones. In this context, the main problem is not merely a "lack of religion," but rather the severing of the connection between spiritual values and social practice. Religious values remain present symbolically, but no longer function as an ethical framework guiding action (Rijal & Prasajo, 2019).

Gülen's thought on socio-Sufism can be understood as an effort to address this disconnection through the reconstruction of the relationship between inner consciousness and social action. Gülen does not begin with changes in social structure, but rather with the formation of individual ethical consciousness rooted in spirituality. However, the emphasis is not on the intensity of the spiritual experience itself, but on its capacity to produce a sustained orientation of action within the social sphere.

Here, socio-Sufism operates through a specific ethical mechanism: the transformation of inner consciousness into social commitment. Self-purification is not positioned as a final goal, but as a process of forming moral dispositions such as sincerity, empathy, and responsibility which are then expressed in concrete actions. Thus, spirituality functions as a relatively stable source of internal motivation, one that does not depend on external controls such as social regulations or sanctions. Within this framework, social action is not driven solely by normative obligations, but by internalized ethical awareness.

Nevertheless, the assumption that the internalization of spiritual values automatically produces constructive social actions remains problematic. The relationship between the inner dimension and social praxis is not deterministic but depends on the social context, the structure of opportunities, and the individual's capacity to translate values into action. Under certain conditions, spirituality can actually develop in a private form and have no significant social implications. Therefore, the effectiveness of socio-Sufism does not lie solely in the depth of spirituality, but in the success of bridging the process of value internalization with concrete social praxis.

In this regard, Gülen offers the concept of *hizmet* as a concrete mechanism for connecting the two. *Hizmet* serves as both an institutional and ethical medium that enables spiritual values to be translated into collective action, particularly in the fields of education, cross-cultural dialogue, and humanitarian activities. With this practical framework, spirituality does not stop at individual consciousness but takes on an operational form in social life. This demonstrates that Gülen's contribution lies not only at the conceptual level but also in providing an implementable model.

Nevertheless, this approach still faces two major limitations. First, there is a risk of reduction, where an orientation toward social activities causes spirituality to lose its reflective dimension and shift into merely a moral justification for action. In this scenario, social action continues, but it is no longer supported by deep spiritual awareness. Second, in a pluralistic and increasingly secular society, the integration of spirituality and the public sphere is not universally accepted, so socio-Sufi practices may face resistance or be subject to different reinterpretations.

The relationship between spirituality and social action within the *hizmet* framework developed by Gülen can be understood as a systematic effort to bridge the gap between inner consciousness and social praxis in modern society. Unlike religious approaches that emphasize spirituality as a private experience, *hizmet* positions spirituality as a source of ethics that demands actualization through social action. Spirituality does not stop at the contemplative dimension but functions as a moral energy that drives active engagement in social life (Karakas, 2008).

Within the *hizmet* framework, spiritual transformation is not positioned as an end goal but rather as a process of shaping moral dispositions that are subsequently manifested in

social action. Values such as sincerity, empathy, responsibility, and service form the primary foundation for individual engagement in social activities. This is reflected in the character of the Hizmet movement, which is rooted in voluntarism, where individuals voluntarily participate in various social activities without seeking material gain (*Fethullah Gülen The Hizmet Movement*, n.d.).

To clarify this relationship, several concrete examples of behavior can be identified as manifestations of the integration of spirituality and social action in hizmet. First, involvement in the field of education, such as volunteering as a teacher at schools or tutoring centers aimed at improving access to education for underprivileged groups. These activities are not merely viewed as professional work, but as a form of service driven by a spiritual awareness of the importance of knowledge and social welfare. Second, participation in humanitarian activities, such as fundraising, distributing aid to disaster victims, or involvement in social organizations. In this context, social action is not merely a response to material needs, but also an expression of empathy rooted in spiritual values (*Fethullah Gülen The Hizmet Movement*, n.d.).

Third, interfaith and intercultural dialogue, such as participating in discussion forums, multicultural community activities, or peace initiatives. These activities reflect the understanding that spirituality should not lead to exclusivity, but rather should foster an open attitude and appreciation for differences. Fourth, daily behaviors that reflect social ethics, such as honesty at work, professional responsibility, and concern for the social environment. From the perspective of Hizmet, these actions are concrete forms of the internalization of spiritual values in daily life (*Fethullah Gülen The Hizmet Movement*, n.d.).

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Gülen's socio-Sufism articulates an integrated model of Islamic spirituality in which *tawhīd*, *tazkiyah al-nafs*, *ma'rifah*, and *qalb* constitute an interdependent framework of spiritual and moral subject formation. Within this framework, spirituality is not confined to inward contemplation or individual mystical experience but functions as a transformative ethical force that shapes personal conduct and social responsibility. The cultivation of the *qalb* and purification of the self provide the foundation for developing *ma'rifah*, while *tawhīd* gives theological coherence to the process of spiritual transformation. This inner formation is translated into social praxis through *hizmet*, which functions as a mediating mechanism connecting spiritual consciousness with service, solidarity, and collective responsibility. Thus, *hizmet* is not merely an expression of philanthropy but a practical manifestation of spiritual maturity and ethical commitment.

In this configuration, Gülen's socio-Sufism transcends the conventional dichotomy between spiritual withdrawal and social engagement by presenting both as mutually constitutive dimensions of religious life. Social responsibility is not treated as an external addition to spirituality but as one of its essential expressions. By connecting inner moral transformation with sustained social engagement, socio-Sufism offers a framework for understanding how Sufi ethics can respond to the challenges of modern society, particularly individualism, moral fragmentation, and weakening communal bonds. Its broader significance lies in reconceptualizing Islamic spirituality as an active form of ethical agency capable of generating social solidarity and contributing to the common good in plural

modern societies. In this sense, the revitalization of spirituality requires not only the recovery of inner religious consciousness but also its translation into sustained ethical action through socially engaged forms of religious life.

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