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THE EXISTENCE AND CONTRIBUTION OF SUFISM IN RESOLVING RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS

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Abstract

This article aims to explore the existence of sufism and its contribution to resolving religious conflicts. As part of Islamic science, sufism is an esoteric dimension of Islamic teachings that discusses aspects of spirituality. In this context, sufism is used as an approach to achieve peace of mind for its followers. This article uses qualitative methods and literature studies.Datas are collected from various books and other scientific articles analyzed using exploratory, interpretive, and analytical methods. The research results show that the history of the development of sufism has always experienced dynamics and ups and downs. Differences in views always accompany its development between those who recognize and reject sufism as an Islamic science. The struggle between Sunni and Falsafi Sufism cannot be avoided. However, this is not a real problem because the main problem is not the material differences of Sunni and Falsafi Sufism, but rather the political, power, economic, and social intrigue accompanying it. Despite this arrangement, sufism continues to exist to this day and has given rise to the latest developments such as perennial sufism. Perennial sufism is an approach used in sufism to build harmony among humans. In this context, the perennial approach in sufism can be used to resolve religious conflicts. In other words, perennial sufism has contributed as an approach to reducing religious conflict in the modern era with the spirit of religion and the values of tolerance contained in it.

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi eksistensi tasawuf dan konstribusinya bagi penyelesaian konflik keagamaan. Sebagai bagian dari ilmu keislaman, tasawuf merupakan dimensi esoteris ajaran Islam yang membahas aspek spritualitas. Dalam konteks ini, tasawuf dijadikan sebagai pendekatan untuk meraih ketenangan jiwa pengikutnya. Artikel ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dan studi kepustakaan, sehingga data-data bersumber dari berbagai buku dan artikel-artikel ilmiah lainnya yang dianalisis dengan metode eksploratif, interpretatif dan analitis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sejarah perkembangan tasawuf selalu mengalami dinamika dan pasang surut. Perbedaan pandangan senantiasa mengiringi perkembangannya antara yang mengakui serta menolak tasawuf sebagai keilmuan Islam. Pergulatan antara tasawuf sunni dan falsafi tidak dapat dihindarkan. Hal demikian bukan masalah, karena permasalahan pokok bukan pada materi tasawuf sunni dan falsafi, melainkan intrik politik, kekuasaan, ekonomi dan sosial yang mengiringinya. Terlepas dari pengaturan itu, tasawuf tetap eksis hingga hari ini dan memunculkan perkembangan terbaru seperti tasawuf perenial. Tasawuf perenial adalah sebuah pendekatan yang digunakan dalam tasawuf untuk membangun harmonisasi sesama manusia. Dalam konteks ini pendekatan perenial dalam tasawuf dapat dijadikan sebagai bentuk penyelesaian konflik keagamaan. Dengan kata lain, tasawuf perenial memiliki kontribusi sebagai salah satu pendekatan dalam meredakan konflik keagamaan pada era modern dengan spirit agama dan nilai- nilai-nilai toleransi yang terkandung padanya.

Background

This article aims to explain the position of Sufism as part of Islamic scholarship and its existence in human social life. Sufism is a science in Islam whose object is the human soul. In this context, Sufism helps humans create inner peace through the process of purifying the soul. Sufism is an important part of the development of Islamic knowledge. Meanwhile, epistemologically, sufism knowledge is called *Irfani* or *Hudhuri* knowledge. There are other forms of knowledge besides *Irfani*, namely *bayani* knowledge and *burhani* knowledge. *Bayani* knowledge is knowledge that relies on revealed knowledge. Revealed truth is absolute, while natural knowledge is the knowledge humans obtain through logical explanation through logic.

As a part of Islamic teachings, the role of sufism is not only related to personal experience but also related to social life. This is closely related to the existence of Islamic teachings as the basis for the teachings of sufism. As a religion, Islam not only emphasizes the doctrine of divinity but also relates to social reality and human life. Seyyed Hossein Nasr said Islam is not just a religion, but also a civilization and historical reality.[1] Nasr tries to provide an understanding of Islam with its dimensions on one side and Islam as a derivative of Quran principles, thoughts, and culture on the other side. As a religion, Islam is a way of life for Muslims, which contains the principles of obedience, devotion (worship), and belief (faith). This teaching is a private matter for its adherents.[2] On the other hand, as a civilization, Islam has allowed the emergence of various scientific disciplines and brilliant thinkers in various fields, such as theology, philosophy, sufism, architecture, science, and various other disciplines.

In the Sufi's view, reality is based on the Quran and sunnah. Then it was developed into a concept that provides space for humans to understand themselves in order to get closer to God. Sufism tries to explain who humans are and what they should do.[3] In this context, sufism can be described as a spiritual appearance that does not appear to be an expression of Islam. Sufi teachers always explain sufism in the context of monotheism so that sufism cannot be separated from the context of monotheism itself. Sufism as a path taken to achieve reality is not attained through reason but through *kasyaf*, *dzauq*, *i'yan* and *musyahadah*. This path then becomes debated and sometimes even rejected because it is considered vague, does not have definite rules, and is often mixed with delirium. Apart from these various slanted views, Sufism is a treasure that exists in the Islamic world, which in general view is often understood as the hidden power of spirituality.[4] Sufism in Islam is integrated with the application of *shari'a*, so that *shari'a* without sufism will not achieve spiritual life, and vice versa, sufism without *Shari'a* will remain uncontrolled religious behavior.[5] Sufism is then referred to as the mystical dimension of the Islamic religion, which is based on individual experiences in an effort to get closer to Allah. This esoteric dimension of Islam is described as a spiritual journey that begins with withdrawal from the world. Thus, both fiqh (exoteric) and sufism (esoteric) are two sides that are related to each

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[1]Seyyed Hossen Nasr, *Islam: Religion, History and Civilization,* (HarperSanFrancisco, 2003).

[2]Seyyed Hossein Nasr.

[3]William C. Chittick, *Sufism A Beginner's Guide* (Oneworld Publications, 2000).

[4]Tanvir Anjum, "Sufism in History and Its Relationship with Power" 2 (2006): 221−68.

[5]Ajay Kumar Ghoshi and Summer Ahmad Mir," A Short Introduction to Origin, Beginning and History of Sufism or Tasawuf ", dalam *International Journal of Management and Aplied Science* V, 2 Issues 12, Desember 2016

other and have the same source, namely the Quran and Sunnah. Sufism then became important in the history and cultural heritage of Islam.

This study is important to discover the development of sufism from time to time and reveal sufism as a solution to society's religious conflicts. There are indeed many articles regarding the development of sufism from time to time. However, it is limited to the periodization of the development of Sufism. Meanwhile, this article reveals the material aspects of the development of sufism itself. Articles about sufism as a resolution of religious conflicts seem to be circulating—generally see it from the perspective of sufism as spirituality. Meanwhile, this article focuses on sufism as a resolution of religious conflicts in society based on perennial sufism. By asking questions: first, how has Sufism existed from time to time? second, what is the contribution of Sufism to the modern era and how Sufism can be used as resolution of religious conflicts?

Flows and Styles of Sufism

In its development, Sufism formed into several schools. These are the teachings of Sufism which emphasizes the ethics and practice of remembrance as well as the metaphysical and philosophical Sufism. Then recently the terms perennial sufism and urban Sufism also emerged has generated several schools and styles. Philosophical Sufism (tasawwuf falsafi) is a form of Sufism whose teachings are more philosophical because they extend to metaphysical issues, the issue of uniting humans with the God. Meanwhile, Sunni Sufism tends to emphasize servant ethics/morals and ignores metaphysical and philosophical issues in its teachings, as developed by al－Ghazali[6].

Philosophical sufism is kind of sufism which is based on the integration of the theories of Sufism and philosophy.[7] This study of sufism was carried out in depth with a philosophical review of all related aspects. In Sufism, the mystical vision of Sufism is combined with the rational vision of Sufism. Sufism has a mystical type of infinity, which views God as an Absolute and infinite reality, likened to an ocean that has no limits and is not bound by time. Humans in this mystical type are the waves of the all－divine ocean. Humans are seen as originating from God and can experience reuniting with Him. This understanding is often criticized because it is thought to produce pantheism and monism. The next type emphasizes the personal aspect, and the relationship between humans and God is described as the relationship between humans and their masters, between creatures and the Creator.[8] The second is called the mystic of personality.

Ibn Arabi is a sufi who is seen as the developer of the philosophical teachings of Sufism. The sufism he developed often received criticism and even rejection from thought groups belonging to sunni sufism. Ibn 'Arabi, whose full name was Muhyi al－Din Muhammad Ibnu Ali, was a sufi born in Murcia, a city in southeastern Spain, in 560 AH/1165 AD. In the west, he was known as Ibn al－Arabi, and in Spain as Ibn Suraqa[9]. The depth of the Sufism material he developed illustrates Ibn Arabi's mastery of

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[6]Abd. Moqsith Ghazali, "Corak Tasawuf Al－Ghazali Dan Relevansinya Dalam Konteks Sekarang," *Al-Tahrir* 13, no. 1 (2013): 61－85, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21154/al－tahrir.v13i1.7.

[7]Ghazali.

[8]Zainuddin Abdullah, "Tanbih Al－Masyi Menyoal Wahdatul Wujud: Kasus Abdurrauf Singkel Di Aceh Abad 17 Karya Oman Fathurahman," *Mumtgz* 3, no. 1 (2019): 280－88.

[9]Moulvi S.A.Q. Husaini, *Ibn Al-'ARabi: The Great Muslim Mystic and Thinker* (Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1996).

philosophical－mystical teachings such as the teachings of Plotinus, Permanides, and other emanation philosophers.

Sufism with a philosophical style was earlier developed by al－Hallaj and is known for its *Hulul* theory. This style then reached its peak in the hands of Ibn 'Arabi. Al－Hallaj and Ibn 'Arabi are known as the developers of the flow of unity of form. Although they use different loci, in substance, they are the same. The doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud* is a sufism doctrine that is complicated to understand besides the doctrine of *wahdah al-syuhud*. In Kausar Azhari Noer's view, the doctrine of *wahdatul wujud* is a major contribution to metaphysics. *Wahdat al-wujud* is a doctrine which states that there is nothing in existence except God. There is only one ultimate being, namely God, who is called by Ibn 'Arabi al－Haqq. Everything other than God does not exist in itself, it only exists insofar as it manifests the Being of God. Nature is the locus of God's appearance.[10]

Ibn Arabi is known as an important figure in the teachings of philosophical Sufism. Even though he did not establish the sufi order group, his teachings developed widely in the Islamic region. It would not be wrong for him to be named *Shaykh al-Akbar*, as a reference to the great influence of his teachings in sufism. The teachings of *wahdat al-wujud, insan kamil* are the two main teachings of Ibn Arabi which had a major influence on the development of philosophical Sufism in Islam. The concept of *wahdat al-wujud* is the core of Ibn Arabi's sufism teachings. God (Allah) exists with His substance and because of His own essence. He is the Absolute Being, not limited by anything else, not *Ma'lul* (effect) of something, *nor Illah* (cause) for something. He is the creator of cause and effect, He is the Holy King who always exists. Meanwhile, according to him, nature is condemned as non－existent (*'adam*) in the sense that it does not exist by itself, but is a form given by God, dependent on its form, or standing in its form[11].

Ibn Arabi explained the concept of *wahdat al-wujud* with the concept of God's *tajalli* in Nature. Nature is God's *tajalli*. Nature is the appearance of God. Ibn Arabi's view has received criticism because it is considered to have produced to the concept of pantheism, which has an impact on the unity of God and nature, making it difficult to separate the two. Criticism and rejection of Ibn Arabi's understanding will not occur if we look at Ibn Arabi's opinion or teachings about *tanzih* and *tasybih*, so that the form of nature—even though it is said to be a form given by God or is said to be God's form in the form of nature, does not mean that it is understood as a form that is equal to God and nor can it be called God.[12] Therefore, glorifying God and at the same time exalting Him with nature for Ibn Arabi is the right effort. According to Ibn Arabi, people who glorify God without glorifying Him are an ignorant act. With the concept of *tanzih* and *tasybih*, it can be argued that Ibn Arabi did not equate God with nature or vice versa.

The teachings of *wahdat al-wujud* are not the only teachings of Ibn Arabi that were influential in the history of the development of sufism in Islam. The concept of the perfect human or *insan kamil* is Ibn Arabi's sufism doctrine which is no less important than the teaching of *wahdat al-wujud*. The term *insan kamil* appeared in Islamic literature around the 7th/13th century AD, based on Ibn Arabi's ideas, as a locus that he used to label the concept of the ideal human being as the appearance of God. However,

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[10]Kautsar Azhari Noer, "Tasawuf Dalam Peradaban Islam: Apresiasi dan KritiK," *Ulumuna* X, no. 2 (2006): 367－90.

[11]Abd Aziz Dahlan, *Penilaian Teologis Atas Paham Wahdat Al-Wujud (Kesatuan Wujud) Tuhan Alam Manusia Dalam Tasawuf Syamsuddin Sumatrani* (IAIN－IB Press, 1999).

[12]Dahlan.

according to Yunasril Ali, if you look closely, the concept of human beings existed before Ibn Arabi.[13]   According to L. Massignoon, the concept of *insan kamil*(perfect human) did not originally come from Islam, but its roots came from the ancient Persian religion. In ancient Persian teachings, the name Gayomard was popularly known, which means the first human who possessed divine powers and played an important role in the creation of nature. In fact, according to Massignoon, this concept is also visible in the teachings of the Mongols. Although Massignon's opinion is not fully accepted, Yusuf Zaidan views that the concept of human beings originates purely from Islam. According to him, even though the term *insan kamil* is found in ancient Persian manuscripts/texts, it does not necessarily show the same essence as the term *insan kamil* in Islam because each term emerged and grew in different cultures.[14]

In contrast to the falsafi sufism, sunni/*akhlaki* Sufism emphasizes servant ethics/morals and ignores metaphysical and philosophical issues in its teachings. This style of sufism is often attributed to al－Ghazali. His work *Ihya' Ulumuddin* illustrates al－Ghazali's emphasis on the importance of morals. For him, sufism and the Shari'a are two things that cannot be separated and must be able to produce a good person[15].   Al－Ghazali's is presented as a form or pattern of *akhlaki-amali*. This style has become a role model for Muslims at large. A number of books written by al－Ghazali have become objects of study in various institutions, especially his book *Ihya' 'Ulumuddin.* Like other Sufis in general, Imam al－Ghazali placed his sufism but within the corridors of the Shari'a. For him, sufism cannot be separated from the *Shari'a*. However, the *Shari'a* that al－Ghazali implemented was not just a formal legal Shari'a but a *Shari'a* full of moral and ethical spirit. For al－Ghazali, *Shari'a* is the container, sufism is the content.[16]

Al－Ghazali's presence was thought to reduce tensions between the *fuqaha* group and Sufi *ulama*. The emergence of al－Ghazali with his sufism not only reduced tensions between the warring groups of *ulama* but also decreased the volume of attacks and executions against sufis.[17]   Based on the views of Victor Danner in The Islamic Tradition, sufism is the middle side of Islam. According to him, when al－Ghazali turned to sufism to save his soul, the Islamic world was being filled with popular expressions of sufism, so sufis, with their various charismatic behavior, made them known and loved by many peoples and even by some jurists.[18]   The praise of the founders of the basic schools of Islamic jurisprudence, Shafi'i, and Ahmad bin Hanbal, for Sufi teachings, considering them an integral element of the Koran, shows the high respect that Muslim mysticism received among Muslim scholars in the period of the caliphate. However, the unity of *fiqh* and sufism was unfortunately short－lived, fanatical exoterism became an ideology that then gave rise to tensions between them.[19]

The tensions between Sufi clerics and exoteric clerics are increasingly sharp. Among them are the tensions between supporters of sufism and dogmatic jurists

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[13]Ali, *Manusia Citra Ilahi: Pengembangan Konsep Insan Kamil Ibn Arabi Oleh Al Jili.*(Jakarta :Paramadina,1997)

[14]Ali.

[15] Abd. Moqsith Ghazali"*Corak Tasawuf Al-Ghazali Dan Relevansinya Dalam Konteks Sekaran*g." *Jurnal Al-Tahrir* , Vol.13,No 1, Mei 2013. Accesed http://www.IAIN. Ponorogo.ac.id.

[16]Ghazali.

[17]Ghazali.

[18]Efendi, "Sufisme Martin Lings Dan Kontribusinya Terhadap Perenialisme" (Universitas Islam Negeri (Uin) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2020).

[19]Efendi.

(*mullahs*) in Persia in the 12th century. This mutually unfavorable controversy between Sufis and mullahs continued for centuries after the Safavid takeover of Iran[20] After the Safavid takeover, sufism slowly faced opposition. Although the tension and opposition had occurred in the 9th century AD, with the torture of al－Hallaj, it was then reconciled by al－Ghazali, one of pupular Islamic scholars who came later.

Forms of Criticism of Sufism

The history of the development of has always experienced dynamics. There have often been clashes between groups who accepted and those who rejected and lasted for quite a long time. The presence of Imam al－Ghazali (450－505 AH) is considered to be able to reduce tensions between these two groups. When Al－Ghazali came into sufism, the Islamic tradition is filled with popular Sufism expressions so that Sufis, with their various charismatic behavior, made Al－Ghazali widely known and loved by Sufis and even some Islamic jurists..

After al－Ghazali, the existence of Sufism again faced rejection movements that sometimes emerged from the sufism group itself, such as that carried out by Ruzbihan Baqlin (d. 1209 AD), who criticized the existence of sufism clerics as people who would go to hell. A sharper critic was came from Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328), who later became a reference and provided important authority for future reformers in the group opposing sufism.[21] Although dissatisfaction with Sufism had emerged long before, it reached its peak in the 18－19 century AD. A.J. Arberry was one of the scientists who strongly attacked the manifestations of sufism, especially those that occurred in the 18th and 19th centuries. He strongly denounced the depravity of sufism. In Egypt, which Arberry then assumed for all Islamic territory. He described sufism as an extraordinary violation of the Sharia, open immorality, and fraudulent opportunism. According to him, supernatural knowledge has shifted the position of reason to exploit and deceive the ignorant masses.[22]

Critics against sufism can be divided into two forms, namely critics from insider (Muslims) and critics from outsider (Orientalists). Critics comes from Islamic scholars and often even comes from sufi followers themselves. Such as critics and rejection of sufism carried out by the Wahabiyyah group, which saw excessive public behavior towards sufis and prioritized visiting Sufi teachers and their graves, which had defeated sharia obligations such as performing prayers regularly. The Wahhabi movement is an outstanding example of a violent and total rejection of sufism and its organized expressions.[23]

Critics of Sufism did not stop with the Wahabiyah group. It continued into the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Along with the modernism movement, modernists emerged in the Islamic world and advocated for renewal in the Islamic world. In the view of these modernists, Muslims are far behind compared to Western civilization. The backwardness of Muslims is caused by various factors, one of which is that Muslims do not develop rational thinking. One of the great figures who drove reform in Islam at the turn of the 19th to 20th century was Sayyid Jamal al－Din al－Afgani. This figure is of the view that the decline experienced by Muslims is partly caused by the Sufis misplaying their role. According to him, the sufis and traditional religious leaders of their time were responsible for the decline of Muslims. These sufis carried out a wrong

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[20]Efendi.

[21]Elizabeth Sirriyeh, *Sufi Dan Anti-Sufi* (Pustaka Sufi, 2003).

[22]Elizabeth Sirriyeh.

[23]Elizabeth Sirriyeh.

interpretation of Islam which was far from its pure nature and opposed reason. They encouraged a fatalist attitude towards destiny, which led to inactivity and even laziness and eliminated productive attitudes.[24]   Although on the other hand, al－Afgani's criticism of sufism still needs to be questioned.

Criticism after criticism is always faced against sufism. The most frequently expressed criticism is the issue of the existence of Sufism which is considered not to be purely derived from Islamic teachings. Sufism is an elaboration of various teachings that come from outside Islam, such as the teachings of Neo－Platonism. Muslim scientists later rejected this opinion. Harun Nasution is a Muslim scholar who rejects the assumption that sufism originates from teachings outside Islam. Harun is adamant in his stance that sufism originates purely from the teachings of Islam itself.[25]   Harun Nasution's views are always inconsistent with the views of other figures who still believe that external elements have entered the Sufism tradition.

Neosufism and Modernity

Two styles of sufism, namely philosophy and Sunni, continue to develop in the Islamic world. At the same time, at the beginning of the turn of the 19 th to 20 th century, the world was in the midst of a modern trend that touched all levels of world society, including Muslims. The trend of modernity is an important concern in the history of human civilization, as a period that had the impact of social change, which made humans dependent on tools and machines to meet their living needs. Humans strive to develop their thinking, creativity, and initiative to give birth to various things that can make their lives easier[26].

Seyyed Hossein Nasr said that modern society is a group of humans who are organized in their intellectual structure through positivistic premises without looking for a connecting line between nature and humans. According to Nasr, the implication is that humans no longer have an intuitive sensitivity to their environment, giving rise to an arbitrary attitude toward nature.[27]   The impact of the current era of modernity reduces all essences in the metaphysical sense and the role of religion to the material and substantial. Thus, religious views have almost disappeared in the modern era. However, at the same time, a phenomenon emerged on the surface of modern life, namely the rise of the dimension of spirituality. Perhaps this is due to the anti－thesis of modern life, which is full of sensory culture, namely culture that is empirical, worldly, secular, humanistic, utilitarian, hedonistic, and often even leads to atheism. All of this is the impact of what is called positivism.

The epistemology of modernism shapes the attitudes of human arrogance, dehumanization, and demoralization. Individual humans have full authority to carry out whatever actions they want to take. Modernism also emphasizes experimentation to reach the comprehensive truth behind appearances or metaphysics.[28]   Another thing from the impact of modernism is the emergence of a spiritual crisis. Even though it does not deny the existence of God, modern society, which deifies science and knowledge,

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[24]Elizabeth Sirriyeh.

[25]Harun Nasution, *"Filsafat Dan Mistisisme Dalam Islam*," *An-Nida*, 1973, 92.

[26]Silawati, "Pemikiran Tasawuf Hamka Dalam Kehidupan Modern," *An-Nida* 40, no. 2 (2015), https://ejournal.uin－suska.ac.id/index.php/Anida/article/download/1502/1294.

[27]Encung, "Tradisi Dan Modernitas Perspektif Seyyed Hossein Nasr," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam* 2, no. 1 (2012), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2012.2.1.201－217.

[28]Ahmad Anwarudin, "Subjek Dalam Pandangan Dunia Posmodernisme," *Refleksi: Jurnal Kajian Agama Dan Filsafat* 13, no. 4 (2013): 443－68, https://doi.org/10.15408/ref.v13i4.910.

makes people move away from religion and makes them live within the confines of secularism.[29]   The impact of modernism not only occurred in the West but also penetrated the souls and thoughts of Muslims. This modernization impact has given rise to a spiritual and moral crisis among Muslims themselves. To not lose direction and purpose in the lives of Muslims, they must return to the basic values of Islamic spirituality itself. Seyyed Hossein Nasr calls it a return to tradition. Traditionality is a solution for a society facing the challenges of modernity.[30]

Modernity is a worldview because it serves various human needs, besides that modernity also provides the poverty of human life through science and technology.[31] In scientific discourse, tradition is confronted with modern terms. The term Modern does not mean contemporary and following the times, but rather something separate from the transcendent. Thus, modernism contrast to religion. Modernism implies that everything is purely human and divorced from its divine source. In the context of religion, it is hoped that it can provide solutions to modern society's crises. The dimension of as an important part of the Islamic teaching system is required to contribute to resolving the spiritual crisis of modern society. The dynamics that occur in modern society have encouraged the birth of a new Sufism movement called Neo－sufism.

Neo－sufism is an attempt to return humans to their original spiritual beliefs. The term Neo－sufism was first popularized by Fazlur Rahman as a type of sufism that integrates sharia and sufism. Neosufism emphasizes aspects of social－moral reconstruction of society, a therapy to make people more humane. In the perspective of Neo－sufism, living a Sufi life does not mean leaving the world but rather placing high values on the world and viewing the world as a medium for achieving perfect spirituality with the construction of new sufism.[32] In Rahman's view, Neo－sufism is sufism that has been updated.[33] Neo－sufism shifted the focus to the socio－moral reconstruction of Muslim society. This differs from early sufism, which emphasized the individual rather than society.[34]   This assumption is a common phenomenon, similar to the assumption that Sufis tend not to have a social concern.[35]

Even though the term Neo－sufism developed at the same time as modernization occurred in the early 18th century and continued into the turn of the 19th and 20 centuries, Neo－sufism as an effort to renew sufism was started by Ibn Taymiyah (d. 728 H/1328 m). The emergence of the idea of renewing sufism in the 14th century gave rise to new optimism about the future of sufism to face various problems in the modern Muslim life which are increasingly rationalistic, materialistic, and consumeristic.[36] Neo－sufism, in this case, is understood as reformed sufism, most of the metaphysical exchatic nature and mystical－philosophical content previously dominant in old sufism.

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[29]Silawati, "Pemikiran Tasawuf Hamka Dalam Kehidupan Modern."

[30]Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989).

[31]Encung, "Tradisi Dan Modernitas Perspektif Seyyed Hossein Nasr."

[32]Kasmuri Slamet dan Ihsan Sanusi, *Akhlak Tasawuf : Upaya Meraih Kehalusan Budi Dan Kedekatan Ilahi* (Jakarta: Kalam Mulia, 2012).

[33]Azyumardi Azra, *Konteks Berteologi Di Indonesia: Pengalaman Islam* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1999).

[34]Azra.

[35]Armyn Hasibuan, "Neo－Sufisme, Ragam Dan Perkembangannya: Mampukah Membangun Konstruksi Baru," *HIKMAH: Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah Dan Komunikasi Islam* 7, no. 2 (2013): 59－74.

[36]Mahrus As'ad, "Perkembangan Tasawuf Dan Tarekat Baru Mahrus As ' Ad," *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* XXXVI, No. 1 (2012): 38－55.

Neo－sufism emphasizes and renews the moral, puritanical factor in sufism at the expense of unorthodox extravaganza forms of sufism.[37]

Neo－sufism, a Sufism reform movement, continues to roll into the modern century. Over a long time, starting from the period of Ibn Taymiyah and his student Ibn Qayyim, Neo－sufism always received the support of orthodox *ulama*, to become a new Sufism movement to cleanse the old sufism from various deviations and additional elements. Neo－sufism, as a new model, tries to offer efforts to combine contemplative－purificative with sharia and theology. The movement to develop Neo－sufism was carried out by Islamic thinkers from the modern period to post－modernism.

The doctrine of Neo－sufism, which later manifested itself in the personal lives of Sufi scholars and their supporters, firmly shows that in sufism there is absolutely no place for passivity and withdrawal (*uzlah*) from worldly practical problems. By still adhering to the Koran and hadith, Neo－sufism differentiates itself from the early Sufism paradigm which often plunged its followers into passivity, while actually suppressing activism[38].

The Neo－sufism movement continues to develop until it enters the modern and post－modern era. Through its figures, Neo－sufism urges Muslims to actively fulfill worldly obligations, which seem to be a separate station that must be passed to achieve progress on the mystical journey. In the context of Neo－sufism, a true Sufi is not a Sufi who alienates himself from society but a Sufi who calls for goodness and prevents evil, helps and liberates those who are oppressed, the sick and poor, and can do *taawun* (mutual help) with Muslims others for the betterment of society.

Neo-sufism, Social Change and Conflict

One form of flow in the history of the development of sufism is neo－Sufism. The focus of Neo－Sufism is to emphasize aspects of society's social and moral reconstruction. In the perspective of neo－Sufism, sufism does not abandon the world. Still, it places high values on the world and views the world as a medium for achieving perfect spirituality by constructing a new understanding of sufism. Neo－Sufism then developed and was embraced by many figures such as Martin Lings in the modern era. Martin Lings (1909－2005 AD), one of the Islamic thinkers who also had an interest in the issue of sufism in the 20th . Martin Lings was an English Muslim scholar who later changed his name to Abu Bakar Sirajuddin after embracing Islam. He is known as one of the best writers about the history of the life of the Prophet Muhammad. In his article in Islamic Magazine in 2005, Martin Lings strengthened his stance on the importance of the Koran and Islamic traditions (sunnah) as a guide to Muslim life. According to him, Islam is a spirit for the life of human civilization.[39] According to him, all aspects of life must be penetrated by religion. The humanitarian and spiritual crises that are occurring and will continue to occur in the future must be faced with religion.[40]

In the development of contemporary Islamic thought, Muslim scholar Martin Lings is seen as one of the perennial thinkers and influential sufism in the Western world. He

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[37]Mahrus As'ad.

[38]Mahrus As'ad.

[39]R W J Austin, "A Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century : Shaikh Aḥmad Al－'Alawī, His Spiritual Heritage and Legacy.," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 105, no. 2 (1973): 158－59, https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1017/S0035869X00130874.

[40]Martin Lings, "What Is the Spritual Significance of Civilization," *Islamica Magazine*, 2005.

is a follower of Frithjof Schuon in perennial philosophical thought[41]. Martin Lings is a Muslim scholar from England who provides a new coloring in the context of contemporary Islamic thought. He is considered a multitalented Muslim scholar who can combine the values of art and literature with Islamic religious dimensions such as sufism and philosophy. From a philosophical aspect, Martin Lings is a continuation of the perennial philosophical character. The term perennial philosophy is thought to have been first used in the western world by a philosopher named Augustus Steuchus (1497−1548) which Leibnitz later popularized. The basic principle of perennial philosophy is the similarity of knowledge and religious messages wrapped in symbols in every religion and esoteric tradition. In other words, exoteric religions have an esoteric transcendent unity, which can lead religious people to an original perspective in viewing religious diversity.[42] Apart from that, Frithjof Schuon, an Islamic thinker who intensely explained the perennial philosophy. As a perennial philosopher, Schuon argued that the doctrine of monotheism in Islam is not exclusively the essence of its message but the core of every religion. The concept of revelation in Islam is interpreted as a confirmation of the doctrine of monotheism. The perennial tradition is rooted in almost all fields of Sufism studies. As stated by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Sufism in Islam was heavily influenced by previous saints such as Pythagoras and Plato. In the Islamic view, many saints lived before the prophet. Martin Lings has the same position as Schuon regarding perennial truth.[43]

As a modern Muslim scholar, Martin Lings, in the view of other Muslim figures such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr,[44] William Chittick, is a believer and propagator of sufism. Referring to several of his works, Martin Lings tries to provide a contextual understanding of sufism. Sufism for Lings cannot be separated from three key words: closeness, feeling and direct intuitive knowledge.[45] According to him, the essence of sufism is *dzawq*, which will continue to develop intensely in the practices of the Sufi himself[46]. Sufism is one way for modern humans to resolve their spiritual problems and crises. Modernity and the spiritual crisis became a severe concern for Martin Lings. The rapid development of science and technology has made humans dependent on materials. Spiritual matters are neglected, giving rise to various spiritual crises and moral decadence. Sufism is a way to help humans face spiritual problems. It is in this context that Martin Lings pays serious attention to sufism and the complexity of its issues. One of the essential issues in the world of sufism is the issue of the origins of sufism. According to Martin Lings, concerning sufism, the doubtful argument on the origins of sufism are increasingly developing in such a way. Skeptical attitudes towards the purity of sufism as a derivation of Islamic teachings are growing to such an extent.[47]

Another side of the problems of modern society is that conflicts often arise in the name of religion and understanding or belief. In the era of modernization, technological

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[41]Zachary Markwith, "Muslim Intellectuals and the Perennial Philosophy in the Twentieth Century 1," *Journal Sophia Pereenis* 1, no. 1 (2009): 39−98.

[42]Fathin Fauhatun, "Islam Dan Filsafat Perenial: Respon Seyyed Hossein Nasr Terhadap Nestapa Manusia Modern," *Jurnal Fuaduna : Jurnal Kajian Keagamaan Dan Kemasyarakatan* 4 (June 30, 2020): 54, https://doi.org/10.30983/fuaduna.v4i1.2728.

[43]Markwith, "Muslim Intellectuals and the Perennial Philosophy in the Twentieth Century 1."

[44]Martin Lings, "In Memoriam : Dr . Martin Lings," *Vincit Omnia Veritas* II, no. 1 (2005): 89−98.

[45]Martin Lings, "The Origins of Sufism," *Islamic Sciences* 13, no. 1 (2015): 53−64.

[46]Martin Lings.

[47]Martin Lings, "Sufi Answers to Questions on Ultimate Reality," *Journal Ultimate Reality and Meaning* 13, no. 3 (1979).

progress is developing rapidly in such a way. This condition also coincides with the increasing diversity of human life regarding race, belief, and religion. Differences in views and beliefs sometimes give rise to disputes and different points of view, which sometimes lead to conflict.[48] It is a necessity that a person is bound by the beliefs and understandings he adheres to. However, on the one hand, disputes often occur, and religious emotions are misplaced, giving rise to attitudes of mutual suspicion towards each other. The emergence of prolonged conflict, whether from any religious belief or conflict, which is then called social conflict, is one of the big agendas that must be resolved in the modern and contemporary context. Using the opinions of Marx, Darendorf, Simme, and Coser, conflict is interpreted as a conflict between one individual and another individual, or between one group and another group. Basically, conflict can be seen from two positive and negative sides. From a positive perspective, conflict can stimulate healthy competition, and people try to be better than others. Conflict can be the initial stage of social change. From a negative perspective, conflict is a problem that needs to be overcome. Fierce conflict can trigger sharp disputes and hostility that disrupt the atmosphere between groups in society.[49]

Based on the theory of social change and conflict, what occurs in society is based on the desire of individuals or groups to increase prosperity and power, prestige, social support or other rewards. While each of them individually or as a group, besides having similarities, they also have a series of differences. These similarities and differences relate to gender, level of education, occupation, cultural background, ideology, perspective, ideals, and interests.[50] Conflict resolution always produces various methods and means. The approach that is often used is the comparative religion approach. Traditionally, conflict resolution is based on a political conflict management approach and semi－autonomous structuralist theory. These two paradigms see the involvement of the state or government as a mediator in the emergence of conflicts that occur in society. If we refer to Johan Galtung's opinion, there are three stages in conflict resolution namely (1) Peacekeeping, which is the process of stopping or reducing acts of violence through military intervention, carrying out the role of peacekeepers. (2) Peacemaking, namely a process aiming to bring together or reconcile the political attitudes and strategies of conflicting parties through mediation, negotiation, and arbitration, especially at the elite or leadership level. (3) Peace Building, namely the process of implementing social, political and economic change or reconstruction to create lasting peace.[51]

The question is, can the resolution of religious conflicts only be resolved using a conflict theory approach? In principle, the issue of resolving religious conflicts can be discussed through various paradigms, one of which is through the sufism and perennial approaches. Sufism as a dimension of Islamic spirituality will gain a strategic position in the 21st century AD. This position is supported by several studies such as Azyumardi Azra's research, which explains that practitioners of sufism. Sufism tend to have autonomous networks and ties, self－regulating, self－financing, and strive to achieve common benefit (public good). This tendency is not unique among practitioners of

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[48]Stev Koresy Rumagit, "Kekerasan Dan Diskriminasi Antar Umat Beragama Di Indonesia," *Lex Administratum* 1, no. 2 (2013): 56－64.

[49]Suwandi Sumartias dan Agus Rahmat, "Faktor －Faktor Yang Memegaruhi Konflik Sosial," *Jurnal Penelitian Komunikasi* Vol.16, no. No.1 (2013), http//www bppkibandung.id/index.php/jpk/article/download/24.

[50]Suwandi Sumartias dan Agus Rahmat.

[51]Yulius Hermawan, *Transformasi Dalam Studi Hubungn Internasinal : Aktor ,Isu Dan Metodologi,* (Yogyakarta: Graha Ilmu, 2007).

sufism, because this tendency has emerged and existed among Muslim communities since the early days of Islamic history. Second, Vincent J.Cornell's research in North Africa concluded that there was a number of civil society potentials in sufism networks. This condition can be seen from the strong ties between practitioners of sufism to achieve the *maslahah ummah* (public good) by developing education and implementing civilized values that emphasize mutual trust and respect.[52]

In this modern era, figures such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr, who uses the term traditional Islam as the core of sufism, and Muhammad Abid a−Jabiri, Murtadha Muthahhari, bring the concept of *irfan*. The latter figures have carried out Sufism creativity, namely efforts to be responsive to the changes in human life. Human life is not static, it always changing. God never stops creating something new, so He manifests Himself in every new glory and amazing ways. Muhammad Iqbal, a poet and creative Islamic thinker, said that humans are creators who help God (co−creator with God). This is the highest status a human can achieve.[53] Although on the other hand, doubts and criticism of sufism continue to arise. In conditions like this, Islamic thinkers such as Martin Lings emerged, especially in Sufismsufism, who contextualized Sufismsufism.

In the midst of various criticisms and objections from people about the purity of sufism as a spiritual tradition/teaching originating from Islam, Sufism figure Martin Lings adheres to and attempts to express his stance regarding the existence of sufism as mysticism originating from Islamic teachings. Lings firmly stated that Sufism is based on the Quran and Sunnah. Some arguments arise from orientalists who believe that sufism is originated from Hindu, Buddhist, Neo−Platonist, and Zoroastrian traditions, and even from the basis of Christian mysticism.[54] Martin Lings was a follower of the perennial school of thought, as was his teacher Frithjof Schuon. Most scientists view Martin Lings as trying to combine his understanding of perennials with sufism. Some of his writings such as *What is Sufism*, *the Origin of Sufism*, *Sufi Answer to Question on Ultimate reality*, *Kitab al-Yakin*, and *Return to Spirit* contain Martin Lings' views and stance regarding the essence and existence of sufism as an inseparable part of Islamic teachings.

Perennials, as stated by Nasr, indicate several things. First is the need for modern society—including Muslims—to return to their ancestors' religious teachings and mystical traditions. Especially for Muslims, Nasr's traditional Islam contains a call for Muslims to return to religious tradition − with the Quran and Sunnah, which have been practiced by their predecessors and make their lives within the framework of that tradition. Second, with the perennial concept, a solution can be offered to avoid conflicts of diversity and beliefs between human beings. In the context of perennial ideas, sufism is an important tool to reconstruct the spiritual aridity of modern society based on perennial values that exist in the principles of mysticism in every religion.

Conclusion

Based on the research that has been carried out, several important things can be put forward, including that sufism is a form of Islamic scholarship based on the teachings of the *quran* and *sunnah*. Even though various views reject the originality and sources of

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[52]Sulaiman, "Perubahan Sosial Berbasis Tasawuf : Studi Kasus Fethullah Gьlen Dan Gьlen Movement," *Al-Tahrir* 16, No. 1 (2016): 21−46.

[53]Markwith, "Muslim Intellectuals and the Perennial Philosophy in the Twentieth Century 1." *Journal Sophia Pereenis* 1, no. 1 (2009): 39−98.

[54]Markwith.

sufism, this cannot cancel the existence of Sufism as part of Islamic science. In its development, sufism formed schools such as moral sufism , this school of sufism emphasizes aspects of moral improvement. Then, philosophical Sufism is the study of sufism using a philosophical approach. Neo－sufism is a reconstruction of moral sufism sufism, which seeks to return sufism to its original form and emphasizes moral improvement. Neo－sufism tries to provide sufism in the reality of modern human life without confounding sufism sacredness of divinity and profanity of human life. The last, perennial sufismis a form of sufism using a perennial philosophical approach. Using a perennial philosophical approach as applied in the doctrine of perennial sufism, sufism doctrine can become a method of resolving religious conflicts. In the context of perennial sufism, every human being and belief must be seen from the same perspective that are moving towards the ultimate truth. Therefore, everyone with their beliefs should not demean or hate others because of differences in understanding and methods taken to attain the ultimate truth.

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