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## **Sufism and its Relationship with the Development of Human Potential**

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### **Abstrak**

Pemikiran sufi sebenarnya merupakan pemikiran yang aktif karena manusia dipandang sebagai makhluk potensial yang memiliki tingkat kesadaran yang tinggi. Dalam definisi sufi, kesadaran mistik adalah kesadaran aktif yang mengarah pada pengenalan Tuhan. Tinjauan yang dilakukan secara kualitatif ini menemukan bahwa pengenalan Tuhan dalam perspektif sufi akan mengarah pada pengembangan potensi. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kepustakaan, penelitian ini juga membandingkan dengan pandangan Barat tentang pengembangan potensi manusia. Pengenalan Tuhan pada gilirannya akan menanamkan rasa cinta kepada Tuhan sehingga melahirkan ilmu pengetahuan yang merupakan pengembangan potensi manusia. Pengetahuan ini merupakan anugerah Tuhan, karena dengan itu manusia mengembangkan potensi yang ada dalam dirinya kemudian diterjemahkan ke dalam kreativitas, ketajaman pikiran dan optimisme dalam hidup sesuai dengan kebenaran Tuhan.

Kata kunci: Sufi; manusia; kesadaran

### **Abstract**

**Sufism and its Relationship with the Development of Human Potential.** Research paper: Sufi thought is, in fact, an active mind because humans are seen as potential beings with high levels of consciousness. In the Sufi definition, the consciousness of mysticism is an active consciousness that leads to the introduction of God. This qualitatively conducted survey found that the introduction of God in a Sufi perspective will lead to the development of potential. Using a literature approach, this study also makes a comparison with Western views on the development of human potential. This introduction of God will further cultivate a love for God that will bring forth the knowledge of the development of human potential. This knowledge is a gift of God because, with this knowledge, man develops his potentials and then translates them into creativity, sharpness of mind, and optimism in life by God's truth.

Keywords: Sufism; human; consciousness

## Introduction

Sufi thought is often misinterpreted as a negative thought, called anti-activity or anti-world. Sufi thought is said to deny rationality and science. As a branch of thought, Sufism should be viewed as a thought that has an appreciation for life and is rational. In other words, Sufis are not fatal but positive. Through Sufism, forms of responsibility are born of the human soul because the spirit within them is exposed to truth and reality. These forms of responsibility are the development of the potential of the self through the knowledge gained. This fact has been stated by earlier figures such as al-Ghazali, Ibn Arabi, and al-Qunawi who saw the potential development in the form of mysticism. The only weakness in the academic context is the description of the truth in a discursive-logical manner (demonstration).

Mysticism comes from the Greek word meaning to keep secrets. The characteristics associated with mysticism are trivial

- 1) Content-free awareness (analysis)
- 2) Experience of absolute unity
- 3) Real awareness of God's presence (Craig & Luciano, 1998)

Thus, the discussion between philosophers is whether these experiences are a form of knowledge? Psychologist William James outlines four things that put the experience in what might be called mysticism

- 1) Abstract
- 2) The quality of the experience
- 3) Transience (temporary)
- 4) Passivity (experienced subject) (James, 1958)

According to James, the quality of the effect of experience is the most important thing, which can serve as a benchmark to the experience of mysticism. He added that if it were to grow well it could be an authoritative statement. The mystical experience of those who experience it can be regarded as the state of knowledge in the form of insights into the substance of truth. However, these conditions may not be intelligible in the form of discursive logic but are believed to have cognitive content. However, it differs from the cognitive module because of its synthetic-intuitive nature rather than analytical-rational. That is why it is said to be a

level of unconscious awareness, although, on the other hand, it has cognitive content. It is cognitive but its nature is intuitive (James, 1958).

Stace divides the consciousness of mysticism into two parts. The first part is an extrovert, while the second is an introvert. Extrovertive consciousness refers to the condition of one who sees the whole element of the universe structured into one living entity and no longer has a particular form. Introvertive consciousness, in turn, refers to the experience of one who melts and unites within the One, so that only the One remains (Stace, 1960).

Unity with the One and disconnection with the other has produced objectivity (one truth) and characteristics that are both spiritual and non-spiritual. In this case, dualism has no meaning. The meaning of dualism is the existence of the essence of the subject. Thus, consciousness in this state overcomes various forms of discord and diversity, as well as abstract analytical thinking leading to absolute consciousness that is intertwined with one another (Stace, 1960).

## Methodology

The question in this study is whether Sufism can develop behavioral potential from a psychological point of view. For this study not to be biased, a comparison was made of Western views on human potential. This study uses a literature approach with a fully qualitative method. The study aimed to get an initial picture of human potential according to the Sufi perspective and its relationship to human potential.

## Result and Discussion

### *Sufism in the context of psychology*

In the context of psychology, the consciousness of mysticism is a source of human emotion called love. Sufi love refers to the longing to return to its Origin, the Source of Everything.

The experience of mysticism in the form of a process refers to the levels of spirituality or existence. The experience of mysticism in the form of knowledge can be achieved through the so-called ascetic practice; meditative and introspective.

In the eyes of Sufism, *mahabbah* (love) is glory. *Mahabbah* is considered a gift because the heart tends to see beauty. Massignon outlines the five meanings of

the first, clean, and white; second, high and noble; third, commonality and tenacity; fourth, the substance of the cornice; and fifth, care (Massignon & Raziq, 2001).

Al-Qusyairi defines *mahabbah* as a noble soul. Al-Tusi also divides the *mahabbah* into three levels: the mercy of Allah Almighty to his servants; a heartfelt view of the greatness of the Almighty Allah; and love of God with a clear vision. Al-Muhasibi considers that the *mahabbah* is a Divine gift whose seed is planted in the hearts of His servants to the secrets of existence (al-Taftazani, 1985).

It is the *mahabbah* that sneaks into the heart and arouses a love for the bounties that God has given to be in a state, not a maqam (station). The state is a psychological condition. The state is closely linked to internal potential, as the higher the level of love then the more open the veil between lovers and loved ones.

A state is a form of discipline that can be practiced. In other words, love-based psychology in fact can develop a person's inner potential into something positive. A Sufi figure named Rabiah al-Adawiyah has listed six things to go through to achieve *mahabbah*;

- 1) Developing a life based on subservience by abandoning love for the world and filling life by remembering God as the focus of his love.
- 2) Put Eternal Love, the love of God as the supreme love of all other forms of love. With everlasting love, one will not fear the life of the world and dare to face it.
- 3) To see the abundant beauty of God, worship should be maintained day and night only because of Eternal Love.
- 4) Obedience to God is not because it is the expectation of a heavenly reward, but that obedience is based on Eternal Love.
- 5) Devotion to love means accepting the will of Allah Almighty without asking too much. Thus, the belief reflects the true nature of the faith.
- 6) Eternal Love must be seen in two passions: longing and obligation. The longing for the only God to be remembered and missed, while the obligation of God is a reality in life that prevents those who do not see it (al-Taftazani, 1985) (Thursday, 2000).

*Mahabbah* to God is at the height of the human gnosis that realizes the greatest potential of man, the knowledge of God. On the part of the Sufis, the love

of God which adds to His knowledge is believed to be God's gift to him. Knowledge of God is the introduction (*ma'rifah*) to God that occurs after love is realized. It is this combination of knowledge and love that gives birth to positive psychology in the form of responsibilities and trusts that must be rooted in the life of the world for happiness in the hereafter.

Knowledge of God shows the complete dependence of man upon God as it arises in the realization that God is the true owner of knowledge. Thus, the knowledge of God is the protection of the human being from all the accidents that may befall him. According to Ibn 'Ata'illah, the knowledge of God is the true meaning of the oneness of mysticism which reveals the greatness of God as the Creator of the Universe which is in no way associated with anything (Kardas, 2018).

Further, the knowledge of God can be divided into two, the knowledge of truth and the knowledge of reality. The knowledge of truth is awareness of God, through His Name and Character while the knowledge of reality is awareness of the substance of God. The first knowledge is attainable to man while the second knowledge is not attainable to man. According to Ibn 'Arabi, knowledge of God means knowing His existence and not His substance. (Arif, 2002) On the importance of knowledge of God, al-Ghazali asserts that knowledge is the goal of every awareness and the result of every knowledge according to all branches of thought (Ozkan, 2014).

In the context of Sufi thought, knowledge of God will bring together knowledge and practice. The awareness of these two things will erode the nature of the ego within itself and purify the nature of the inner self. Science gives people a sense of the power of God and motivates people to do deeds that can strengthen the human heart to always remember God. Awareness of God will grow in mutual love because humans are very weak in God's sight and need to help one another. The weakness of man in the presence of God does not mean fatal, that is, he cannot try instead to enlighten mankind so as not to be arrogant with other beings. The realization of one's strength, in reality, is with God's help. Thus, consciousness is called protection which refers to the preservation of God to the self. These protections include threats that are soft and small; which in a logical sense is unlikely to cause harm. For example, soft water can cause flooding. Whereas small mosquitoes and fleas can be fatal to humans. They all come from God as a warning to people of the damage they have done in life.

### *The Importance of Tauhid on Positive Development*

An introduction to God that brings to the knowledge of God will shape a person's self-concept, which influences his behavior, and actions in his life. Knowledge based on this revelation can purify the mind and heart which not only gives confidence and peace of mind but also causes the person to feel happy in his life (Qardhawi, 2000).

The source of revelation which includes the Quran and the Hadith is capable of developing spiritual strength which includes aspects of soul and heart, instinct, desire, and intrinsic motivation (Al-Ghazali, 1992). The spiritual force also influences the way we think, feel, affect, and emotion and produces positive physical actions and behaviors.

Psychologically, this spiritual power based on faith in God will direct people to think and act to gain God's pleasure and thus reap the rewards for the good of the world and the hereafter. This outward and inward unity is generally based on humanity and can eventually develop all the potential and capabilities of a human being.

This is contrasted with the Western approach, which separates moral education from the power of God. The effect is that human beings are only seen as citizens or members of society because the emphasis is on the achievement of the nation, and the nation. Whereas in Islam, human beings should be fully developed, because they are moral agents. Good people will produce good people and good nations. On the contrary, good citizens do not always produce good people. This is because its humanitarian values are measured from a pragmatic and utilitarian standpoint based on the use of society, the nation, and the world. Whereas in Islam, the value of humanity is based on the last stop of ethics, in which humans as individuals are to be repaid on the Day of reckoning (al-Attas, 1993).

The humanity embodied in this Islamic perspective is the result of the development of positive potential, not only to fellow humans but also to other beings, and the whole world. This humanity will produce kindness and love. Most importantly, this humanity from a psychological point of view comes from the human soul resulting from the manifestation of faith and sincerity in God (Langgulung, 1979).

Faith produces intrinsic motivation and many other positive impulses that are present in the human soul such as commitment, determination, obedience, and consistency. Without faith, humans are exposed to destruction because their empty souls tend to follow their desires and their senses (Zaidan, 1987). As a result, the human soul becomes weak and produces negative behavior. This situation is contrary to the human nature that God has equipped with various potentials to govern this earth.

This intrinsic motivation lies in human consciousness because with that awareness human beings can improve their self-esteem in a better way. Through awareness of faith in God, man can produce righteous deeds.

Thus, positive behavior is the result of the potential development of the elements that make up the human body, which is a spiritual combination of the heart and the mind; and physical activity that involves the movement of the body. In Islamic and Sufi perspectives, in particular, the spiritual potential is considered an axis for the development of other potentials, as it has a monotheistic value that can save mankind from worldly misery and the hereafter (Othman, 2009).

### *The Conceptual Relationship between Sufi Thought and Potential Development*

The experience of mysticism at its peak will give rise to monotheism. A strong awareness will bring out the human potential of psychology covering spiritual, emotional, intellectual, practical, and physical aspects. All of these aspects will affect the development of behaviors such as creativity, commitment, love, tolerance, and optimism. The result is for organizations that are either micro or macro that is translated into welfare and productivity improvement (Hawwa, 2012).

### *Human Potential from a Western Perspective*

The West sees human potential divided into 3; is desire, understanding, and behavior individually. In the context of modern psychology, human potential is divided into 3; namely cognitive, affective and psychomotor. Cognitive refers to the development of the mind, affective refers to emotion and achievement while psychomotor refers to physical movement (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964).

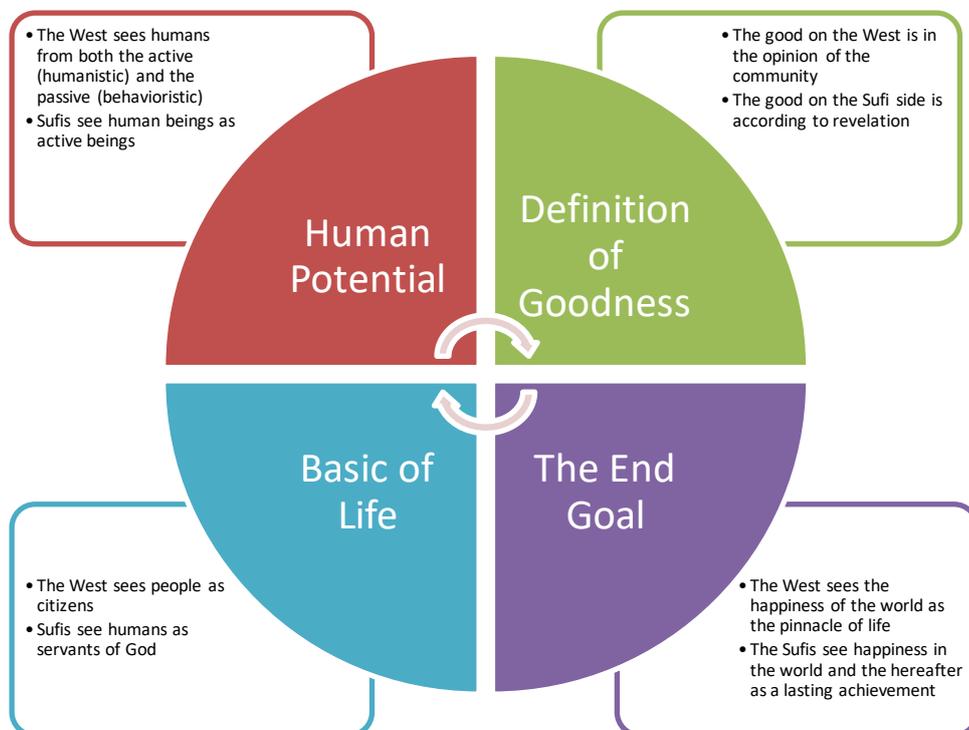
From a humanistic psychological perspective, humans are considered good, objective, and independent beings. In other words, humanistic psychology considers human beings as active beings, in contrast to behavioristic psychology

and psycho-analysis that consider humans to be passive and pessimistic (Nazar, 2010). Humanistic thinking is akin to Sufi thought which is not fatal but emphasizes the concept of effort in life. Life business is called by the Sufis, as a means of finding the best among the best. In other words, an effort is a positive approach.

Nonetheless, humanistic psychology defines morality as a set of rules and accepted by the human community. Thus, the goodness in the West is very relative, since the goodness in the human side is not necessarily the true good in the sight of God as it is in the context of Sufi thought. This is because true goodness in the eyes of God is a universal good that is hard to reason with, except by the truth of revelation. For example, free sex between men and women is considered not a fault in the West

in world; but in the eyes of God, this association leads to uncontrolled sexual relations that lead to the birth of adulterous children and harmful sexually transmitted diseases (Akbar, 1993).

Another example is alcohol. The West sees people who drink alcohol as not a mistake if it does not interfere with the peace of others, but in God's eyes, alcohol is not allowed as it would lead to negative behavior that not only harms others but itself (David, 1988).



## Conclusion

Sufi thought based on Islamic teachings prioritizes the development of the faith to be fundamental, and a source of strength for internal motivation that can then shape a positive attitude as a Muslim.

With the development of faith, there is a profound effect of faith, which builds creativity and higher potential. From a psychological standpoint, faith gives people the confidence to build strength to achieve happiness.

While the West views life as a social problem. Human creativity is needed to find a solution to life, not to worldly happiness and the afterlife. Thus, the West sees that the potential for good is nothing more than to produce good citizens; rather than a human being who holds God's trust in managing life.

As a result, the good in the West is relative because it is based on human decisions rather than divine revelation. Therefore, any intention of good in the West is not necessarily absolute truth according to God's revelation, which in turn can lead to evil and perversion.

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