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Urgency of Sufism in Solving Millennial Generation Moral Problems

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ABSTRACT

Abstract:

The escalating concerns surrounding moral issues have given rise to a disquieting atmosphere. Curiously, an individual's recognition of moral deficiencies does not necessarily translate into heightened self-awareness of their own virtuous conduct. The tumultuous and emotionally charged states of hearts often propel certain individuals towards actions that contravene the tenets of Islam. In response, this study aims to outline a strategy for addressing emotional instability and unbridled emotions among students through the integration of Sufi science. Employing a qualitative and literature-based approach, this research draws upon primary data derived from documentary and library materials encompassing Sufism's scholarly corpus, with triangulation ensuring data collection, analysis, presentation, and conclusion-drawing rigor. The ability of Sufism to instill serenity and self-discipline, as seen from the discourse findings, emphasises its contemporary relevance. Within Sufi tenets, the significance of moral education emerges as pivotal as it navigates humanity towards ethical pathways, acting as a bulwark against moral decay, spiritual tumult, and moral ascendancy. Presently, there exists a pressing need to reevaluate and recontextualize the spiritual principles intrinsic to Sufism, fostering a persona that harmonises both ritualistic observance and moral rectitude. This endeavour is imperative to resolving the multifarious challenges that beset the modern era.

Keywords: Scientific Urgency; Sufism; Moral Problems; Millennial Generation.

INTRODUCTION

Amid today's global life scene, there is a phenomenon in which certain social groups are trapped in alienation, which sociologists call alienation. Modern humans are indeed humans who have lost their meaning or are empty (Pacheco, 2020). This alienation

phenomenon results from rapid social change. Warm relations between people have developed into arid links, traditional institutions have evolved into rational institutions, homogeneous societies have developed into heterogeneous communities, and social stability has shifted into social mobility (O'Connor et al., 2020).

This alienation is because modern civilization is based on the progressive negation of spiritual essence in human existence (Mansour, 2001). As a result, humans lose their status as servants before God because they have been cut off from their spiritual roots (Reynolds, 2018). This proves that modern humans, better known as millennials, are experiencing a severe spiritual crisis (Umam & Muhid, 2020). Some examples of phenomena that commonly occur are they are unable to solve various problems in life, entangled in the emptiness and emptiness of life's existence. This condition raises various criticisms and attempts to find a new paradigm that is expected to create a meaningful presence. Religious incoherence is not always seen as a cure for the downturn and dryness of existence. The desire to return to originality designates charisma (cult) and extraordinary (magical) phenomena (Umotong, 2012; Wang et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2022). Practically speaking, there are symptoms of a search for meaning in life and self-fulfilment that are rich in spirituality and are anticipated to alleviate the suffering of alienation (Gupta et al., 2018).

Modern human interest in the spiritual realm seeks a new life balance. These existentialists believe that people want to regain independence and freedom, which have been reduced and imprisoned by the modern world's exhausting scientific, materialistic, mechanistic, and secular lifestyle. Existentialism argues that life can be achieved if humans consistently exceed their limits and want to get out of their comfort zone (Ghassemi & Soltaninejad, 2012).

On the other hand, Iman, Islam, and Ihsan are the main principles of Islam as spirituality which cannot be denied (Ikhwan, 2021b). Iman moves the spirit, Islam is related to charity, and Ihsan determines the perfection of realization and the goal of combining faith and action. However, Sufism's morals are higher than Ihsan's (Anwar, 2021). Sufism is currently considered an effective alternative to the millennial generation's spiritual needs and moral development. However, many people today ignore this teaching. Millennials prioritize materialistic pursuits over spiritual ones (Zamhari, 2013). Millennials want material indulgence regardless of its eschatological consequences (Stewart et al., 2017).

Seeing the progress of science and technology, the 21st century brought fundamental changes in all aspects of human life. The acceleration of change followed by turmoil in all disciplines has made human existence very competitive to fulfil endless desires. This situation has a domino effect on many individuals who find it challenging to solve life's problems, such as stress, anxiety and lack of security and comfort.

Humans usually pursue and rely on therapy and religious and spiritual rehabilitation as a response to the inconsistencies of life experienced related to this. Even though the primary purpose of Sufism is to bring its adherents to a peaceful, safe, and enjoyable life, not just an escape when facing various life problems, in Islam, this is often known as Sufism, and its scope includes the human esoteric dimension (Abitolkha, 2016).

Some literature states that the values of the millennial generation of Sufism are experiencing a revitalization phase. The presence of Sufism is increasingly meaningful when Sufism can become an oasis in a barren and arid desert for a modern society experiencing a spiritual crisis. Sufism, which was previously claimed to be one of the causes of the decline of Islam, and was responded to with a negative attitude, is now increasingly gaining a place among the all-modern millennial generation (Mahdi, 2012);(Nuraini & Marhayati, 2019);(Gani, 2019).

Interest in development is increasing among the educated and intellectual class, the middle class, and other members of the Muslim community. This state of affairs demonstrates the need for modernity. There needs to be more than the rapid progress of science and technology to meet human esoteric needs. Therefore, Sufism is an essential element in developing spirituality in human existence. This study determines the importance of managing human presence in the new millennium.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach to the type of literature study. This research approach is qualitative. This research procedure produces descriptive data such as verbal or nonverbal utterances or words from the observed object. It presents information regarding the current status of phenomena and is directed to determine such situations (Samsu, 2017). The data, which is the centre of this study, is collected through variable data, which is based on the writings, thoughts, and opinions of figures and experts who talk about the main themes of the research. Primary data sources are documents and library materials in the form of books and journals related to Sufism as a way of solving problems in the millennial era. Secondary data from other references support them. Data collection techniques used are documentation, observation and interviews. Data analysis was carried out by condensing, presenting, and drawing conclusions. Credibility is carried out by technical triangulation (Agustinova, 2015);(Ikhwan, 2021a).

DISCUSSION

Spiritual Crisis in the Millennial EraThe millennium marked the beginning of the triumph of the supremacy of rationalism and religious dogmatism. The modernity of this century, which tends to separate science and philosophy from religion and secularism, explains this. Therefore, the epistemological unification of rationalism and empiricism produces what Thomas Henry Huxley calls the "scientific method".

By acquiring analytical knowledge, one can free oneself from the influence of any external causes, as the modern Western philosophical tradition holds. As humans focus their minds on the world around them, abstract concepts such as God, Heaven, Hell, religion, magic, and other eschatological matters become insignificant. The concept of man as a free and independent being is central to the work of philosophers such as Descartes, Frederik Nietzsche, Immanuel Kant and Jean-Paul Sartre. According to some experts, amid the global existence domain, a phenomenon occurs in social groupings trapped in isolation or alienation (Bao et al., 2006; Umotong & Dennis, 2018; Xing et al., 2021). People who fall into this category are more likely to be the cause of alienation concerning phenomena such as; the transformation of a homogeneous society into a heterogeneous society, relations between people that can be said to be irrational, the occurrence of very rapid social changes, changes in stability to mobility or traditional to rationality (Umotong, 2021; Vess & Maffly-Kipp, 2022).

As a result of the inability of rationalism to fulfil the most basic needs of humans in terms of intangible values, many millennials are known to suffer from a deep sense of spiritual emptiness within themselves. However, excavations are limited to discovering essential needs, each of which stems from unquestioned orders that were once performed in obedience to religious directives (Gray et al., 2019). However, according to (Nasr, 1991b), the world and everything in it and the products of human activity tends to compete for power, which results in the destruction and exploitation of nature. This is because he adheres to free values and a neutral philosophy of science. As a result, humans are led to assume that their behaviour does not result in negative consequences.

The technological revolution has increased control over matter, location, and time, creating economic systems, lifestyles, paradigms, and referral systems. The existence of

science and technology has created real social concerns. *First*, it can affect the strength and weakness of a person's faith. The influence of the dichotomous scientific paradigm between logic and spirituality impacts the silencing of people's religious beliefs. It was completely unaffected by the breakthrough information gathered.

Second, it can cause multiple personalities, as is currently prevalent. The human spirit has gone a long way because of the many life patterns associated with the exclusion of religion. The present is continuously governed by mechanical working formulas, losing spiritual values. As a result, spiritual values have been lost, and the science that emerged is not controlled by religion at all. Therefore, humans are gradually being unconsciously in the process of eradicating humans.

The *third* impact is stress and frustration. Because today's society operates and develops regardless of constraints or feelings of satisfaction, there is no gratitude for what has been achieved. They experience increased stress and frustration as a direct result of failure, making it difficult for them to think effectively. Due to the significant risk of making poor choices under such circumstances, individuals often succumb to destructive behaviours that destroy their sense of self-worth and prospects.

The *fourth* is the fragmentation of scientific endeavours. The advances that have occurred due to the present period have turned the universe into a sub-field of research focused on applying paradigms to the problem-solving process. If a person has a problem and seeks a solution from several sources, such as scientists, theologians, psychologists, economists, and politicians, then that person will most likely experience confusion. This is understandable because referring to many different sources with various scientific disciplines will further expand the problems.

And *fifth* is the relationship between humans to be materialistic. Current relationship patterns are often judged primarily on one person's capacity to provide a monetary advantage to another. As a result, the spirit of mutual help and brotherhood, based on the calling of faith, is almost nonexistent or even if very little is found. People prioritize material concerns over other values, including common sense, conscience, religion, and compassion.

Millennials may anticipate receiving three things from modern life: hope, opportunity and challenge. This provides an excellent opportunity to fulfil ambitions by forcing people to work hard and faces problems due to modernity's highly competitive lifestyle. It promises aspirations to improve livability and resources. Although it is possible for humans to stop living, it is assumed that if humans die, all problems will also stop due to loss of self-esteem or maybe suicide (Gu et al., 2023).

Adopting modern practices brings with it the expectation of increased performance and reputation, along with a possibility of success or failure. Today's people are more inclined to need a reasonable, efficient, and instantly successful point of view, along with increasing speed and volume of labour, which is often neglected by other things that are also full of life and meaning. In addition, modernization is responsible for contemporary humanity, which is experiencing a mental crisis, an outward manifestation of a more profound spiritual problem.

As a result of Western culture, in which the capitalistic-selfish way of life fails to develop human morality and spirituality, there is an urgent need to describe spiritual principles as a system of modern existence. Humans are connected with achievement, have empty values, and experience spiritual unrest. Most millennials are at risk of experiencing various mental illnesses, including anxiety, sadness, and feelings of alienation (Rabelo et al., 2022). This kind of contemporary phenomenon has penetrated the minds of certain Indonesians because they often experience deep feelings of insecurity and worry without being able to identify the cause (Howell, 2010).

Trying to explain psychopathology with contemporary theories, which cannot enter the most profound psychological areas such as spirituality and religion, is one of the causes of the crisis of human spirituality. Pursuing spirituality in today's contemporary culture is challenging. Many beliefs have been pushed to the brink of extinction due to the rise in popularity of the consumerist lifestyle. In today's modern world, the spiritual journey is often seen as a way of life that must have the same length, width, and height as everyday social life. As a result, he is known as a post or hyper spiritual because his route has been adopted as a control engine towards capitalism and consumerism, both of which are revered, praised, and embraced by today's Islamic culture (Reinsberg et al., 2023).

It is necessary to carry out the process of releasing everything that has the potential to interfere with the sanctity of the soul. It is time for religious people to reduce or even stop all types of pseudo-spirituality decorated with identity, status, image, and lifestyle choices that potentially damage the core of spirituality. According to Rif'i and Mud'is (2011), to achieve one's spiritual goals to the fullest, it is important to worship with total honesty and sincerity. People have a better chance of being ushered into the greatness and goodness of life.

SUFISM AS A HUMAN SPIRITUAL NEED IN THE MILLENNIAL ERA

Body and soul in humans constitute a dualism that cannot be separated, even though the two aspects of human existence are different (Umotong, 2021). The condition of the heart develops the soul, but the material resources that the body desperately needs can only satisfy the body. The body needs to be happy by getting closer to God to have a healthy soul. While the soul of every human being is constantly directed toward its Creator, the body is focused on the world, which is often investigated through the lens of Sufism. Those who practice Sufism prefer to see the world through this lens. Sufism is a condition of the heart in which a person enjoys an intimate relationship with his God.

According to Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Westerners are tired of worldly comforts and don't know the true purpose of life. So, they start looking for spiritual values because they are essential to revive spiritualism. In this context, the spiritual teachings of Sufism and the pious behaviour it encourages can play an important role. Sufism is analogous to the breath that gives life and the spirit that animates the entire framework of Islam. This includes the social and intellectual expressions of Sufism (Nasr, 1991a).

The phenomenon of spirituality, primarily sourced and inspired by Islamic teachings, in this case, Sufism, has attracted a lot of attention and is believed by many to become a trend in the 21st century. This offer makes sense, given that there has been a worldwide spiritual awakening since the turn of the century. The emergence of this spiritual movement can be seen as a rejection of today's society which places too much importance on worldly, secular, and profane things. Humans are eager to rediscover the spiritual component that has been neglected for a long time.

This awakening to one's spiritual nature is a worldwide phenomenon in Western culture and the Islamic world. In the Western world, recently, there has been a trend towards a return to spirituality which is marked by the growing prevalence of religious and spiritual fundamentalism movements. Apart from giving birth to psychological and social issues, this movement is also responsible for this tendency. Meanwhile, it is marked by various religious articulations among Muslims, such as Islamic Fundamentalism which is very exoteric and literalistic.

Modern man's fascination with the spiritual world is, at its core, a search for a new sense of balance in one's existence. Existentialists, for example, argue that the fundamental desire of humans is to regain their freedom, a freedom that has been severely restricted and stifled by the exhausting scientific, materialistic, mechanical, and

secularistic way of life that characterizes contemporary society (Ikhwan, 2021b). Existentialism proposes that life is attainable by people as long as they continually strive towards transcendence (Klackl, 2020).

During this process of transcendence, life does not only end in a profane reality within the limits of space and time, but on the contrary, life is transcended into a reality that is absolute, sacred, and transcends (the highest truth) of space and time. Transcendence, which can be achieved through the spiritualization of the self, is where the search for an ideal life balance and true freedom can be found.

H. M. Amin Gratitude stated that Sufism is a system of training with sincerity (*riyadhoh mujahadah*) to cleanse, improve, and deepen aspects of spirituality known as *taqarrub* so that attention can be directed only to Allah. According to Abu al-Wafa' al-Ghanimi at-Taftazani, Sufism is a philosophical view of life that aspires to increase the morality of the human soul and is achieved through specific exercises in such a way that the sensation dissolves in the transcendental essence.

Currently, several individuals, even some of them in the form of communities or organizations, have forgotten where they came from and where they will go after they die. They are dragged into the current condition of globalization, which ultimately causes them to abandon their former beliefs. Because of this, the human heart becomes challenging due to being consumed by worldly things. It is also said that Sufism is a science that brings about the decline of civilization, as mentioned earlier, complete with the ability to compete and the urge to participate in world activities.

In line with the terminology of the Qur'an, Sufism is referred to as the *caliph fi al-ard*. This is because it brings harmony to life in the world. In his role as caliph, it is the responsibility of man to develop and rule the world while protecting its environment. Humans are obliged as servants of Allah to maintain their purity and fill their souls with the majesty, guidance, and gifts Allah bestows. Therefore, knowledge of Sufism is needed to regulate human activity about life in the mortal world.

One example of the most pressing need in contemporary scenarios is the application of knowledge to the environment, both social and ecological. This shows that someone who wholeheartedly has the majesty of Allah SWT to do good to others does not harm others, works sincerely and diligently, and behaves professionally in his work.

Since there is a direct connection between Sufism and Morality, practising either is more challenging than turning one's hand. For that, you have to have a consistent attitude in living it. Sufism must be accompanied by good morals for its generalization, which is one of the historical, present and future urgency of Sufism because Islam is a religion that strictly maintains a balance between ceremonial, social, and public piety. *Ikhlas*, *wara*, and *qana'ah* are the three pillars on which the practice of Sufism is built according to the setting of the millennium era. These three characteristics are used to exercise self-control despite rapid technological advances without letting ourselves be complacent (Suryani et al., 2023). The lesson, which builds moral growth and behaviour with fellow humans and other God's creatures, is used in the millennial era amidst the rise of technology that makes humans more individualistic.

Noble morals and a high desire to benefit the surrounding community are two critical assets to develop and live anywhere in this world. However, the main problem for people is a crisis in their spirituality. Although postmodernism effectively meets human needs with limitations, it is unsuccessful in meeting spiritual needs. The growth of science and technology, along with the supremacy of rationalism, empiricism, and positivism, has brought humans to a contemporary existence, where secularism has turned out to be the primary attitude of the millennial era.

According to (Hidayat, 2011), one of the characteristics of contemporary society is its aggressive attitude towards progress, which is motivated by various achievements

made possible by scientific research and technological developments. He also supports rationality with the changing characteristics of contemporary society, where people seek the meaning of things logically and in material form. This is one of the characteristics of modern society that has changed.

On the other hand, due to modernization, the spiritual component of society has shrunk and become less prominent, which has led to an increase in the practice of seeking spirituality. People who place their highest value on material possessions are more likely to suffer from feelings of inadequacy and dissatisfaction with the pleasures they can access. These feelings of restlessness and dissatisfaction contribute to the development of undesirable or even harmful outcomes, such as the disintegration of society.

The development of Sufism as an approach that provides different offerings that people might adopt to react to people's perceived spiritual emptiness seems reasonable. It is impossible to solve significant problems alone by relying on the supremacy of science and technology as a grand ideology supported by governments worldwide. Both socialism and communism as ideologies proved unsuccessful, while capitalism and liberalism were seen as unstable and weak. Almost all futurists and scientists trained in scientific forecasting of future events and circumstances (also known as futurologists) agree with this forecast. Therefore, it is not surprising that people are starting to turn to religion as the best option to prevent the destruction of human civilization.

People tend to take refuge in spiritual pursuits amidst rapid advances in scientific research and technical development, which is an exciting occurrence. This shows the vital role that tasawwuf plays in the daily activities of contemporary society and its relevance in doing so. The significance of Sufism for modern human existence can be attributed to several different elements.

Sufism can be used as the innate nature of every human being. Sufism is a divine potential that functions to design patterns of world history and civilization. Sufism can colour all activities with social, political, economic and cultural dimensions (Alblezi et al., 2022).

Besides that, Sufism functions as a means of controlling humans so that the human dimension is not tarnished by modernization, which leads to moral decadence and value anomalies so that Sufism will lead humans to achieve the supremacy of morality (Maryano & Sholeh, 2021); (Rosadi & Sitika, 2021). In addition, Sufism has relevance and significance to the problems of modern humans because, in a balanced way, it provides inner coolness and, at the same time, is a scientific discipline.

The rise of belief in religion in the 21st century aligns with modern science and technology, which cannot explain the purpose of human life. The tendency of people to return to faith is more focused on spiritualism rather than on traditional practices. However, contemporary society does not want to be bound by formal religion. This is because modern people are more interested in spiritual activities such as meditation, dhikr, prayer and other spiritual forms than the rituals, moral teachings and social aspects taught by official religions. This conclusion is drawn from the ineffectiveness of some religions in the West.

Cults and sects such as the People's Temple, Children of God, David Kores groups, Haven Gate, and Aryan Nations emerged as a direct result of the inability of established religions to adapt successfully to shifting social norms and address the challenges facing Western societies. Therefore, in this situation, Sufism emerged as an option to overcome the challenges outlined earlier (Nurjan et al., 2022). This is due to the many types of spiritual virtues in Sufism, which have been bundled with philosophy, thought, science, and specific spiritual disciplines based on Islamic teachings (Yamamoto, 2013).

According to the explanation (Abdullah, 2010), it is a kind of magnet that does not appear on the surface, but its enormous strength can be felt clearly. Both in his own life

and in his position in society, the practice of Sufism develops in a positive direction in the context of contemporary materialistic existence. The condition known as estrangement disease is bound to strike millennial generation members sooner or later. Therefore, spiritual life guidance is needed to maintain integrity with aspects of Sufism in Islam, which are used to choose answers to existing problems.

Sufism educates individuals to develop inner sharpness and subtlety, which forces its adherents always to prioritize the considerations involved in every challenge they face. Those who study Sufism are forced to remain firm and patient in meeting the many challenges that the world throws at them. People are fully guided through life serenely and joyfully when they learn to practice the lesson of surrender to Allah. Sufism teaches its followers always to submit and accept God's choices without complaining or feeling dissatisfied. This attitude of contentment allows them to eliminate the feelings of dissatisfaction and greed they experience. Using the notion of *zuhud*, namely the perspective of not being enslaved by worldly or materialistic forces, is one of the ways to combat the materialistic and hedonistic mindsets that undermine contemporary individuals.

CONCLUSION

Humans seek clarity of life in spiritual pursuits amidst the rapid advancement of science and technology, which is exciting for everyone. This shows Sufism's vital role in contemporary society's daily activities and its relevance in life. Modern man's fascination with the spiritual world is, at its core, a search for a new sense of balance in one's existence. Humans have a fundamental need to reclaim the independence and freedom lost due to scientific, materialistic, mechanical and secularistic ways of thinking. To describe life in the contemporary world, existentialism proposes that life is attainable by humans as long as they continually strive towards transcendence. Sufism is associated with beneficial principles that can improve humanity's future. Some of these principles include emptying the soul of disgraceful traits such as pride, envy, and *riya* and then filling it with *takhalli* and *tahali* traits.

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