THE DOCTRINE OF SUFI PHILOSOPHY AS A POWERFUL ANTIDOTE TO GLOBAL TERRORISM

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Abstract: *The rise of global terrorism presents a critical challenge to peace and stability worldwide, fueled by divisive ideologies that promote hatred and violence. There is a growing need for alternative frameworks that promote understanding, tolerance, and reconciliation. This paper explores the doctrine of sufi philosophy as a powerful antidote to global terrorism, examining its principles and practices in fostering peace and countering extremist ideologies. A comprehensive review of literature on sufi philosophy, Islamic mysticism, and counter-terrorism strategies was conducted to elucidate the principles and practices of sufism in promoting peace and countering extremist narratives. The findings reveal that sufi philosophy embodies principles of love, compassion, and spiritual enlightenment, potent antidotes to the rhetoric of hatred and violence propagated by extremist groups. Sufi teachings emphasize the interconnectedness of humanity, fostering a culture of tolerance, understanding, and mutual respect. In conclusion, the doctrine of sufi philosophy offers a transformative framework for countering global terrorism by addressing its root causes of ignorance, fear, and alienation. Through its emphasis on love, compassion, and spiritual enlightenment, sufism provides a compelling alternative to extremist ideologies, inspiring individuals and communities worldwide to embrace a path of peace, unity, and understanding.*

Keywords: *Humanism, Peaceful Coexistence, Sufism, Terrorism, World Peace.*

Abstrak: Bangkitnya terorisme global menghadirkan tantangan penting terhadap perdamaian dan stabilitas di seluruh dunia, yang dipicu oleh ideologi yang memecah belah yang mendorong kebencian dan kekerasan. Ada peningkatan kebutuhan akan kerangka kerja alternatif yang mendorong pemahaman, toleransi, dan rekonsiliasi. Tulisan ini mengeksplorasi doktrin filsafat sufi sebagai penawar ampuh terhadap terorisme global, mengkaji prinsip-prinsip dan praktiknya dalam membina perdamaian dan melawan ideologi ekstremis. Tinjauan komprehensif terhadap literatur tentang filsafat sufi, mistikisme Islam, dan strategi kontra-terorisme dilakukan untuk menjelaskan prinsip

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dan praktik tasawuf dalam mempromosikan perdamaian dan melawan narasi ekstremis. Temuan ini mengungkapkan bahwa filsafat sufi mewujudkan prinsip-prinsip cinta, kasih sayang, dan pencerahan spiritual, yang merupakan penangkal ampuh terhadap retorika kebencian dan kekerasan yang disebarkan oleh kelompok ekstremis. Ajaran sufi menekankan pada keterhubungan antar umat manusia, menumbuhkan budaya toleransi, pengertian, dan saling menghormati. Kesimpulannya, doktrin filsafat sufi menawarkan kerangka transformatif untuk melawan terorisme global dengan mengatasi akar penyebabnya, yaitu ketidaktahuan, ketakutan, dan keterasingan. Melalui penekanannya pada cinta, kasih sayang, dan pencerahan spiritual, tasawuf memberikan alternatif yang menarik terhadap ideologi ekstremis, menginspirasi individu dan komunitas di seluruh dunia untuk menempuh jalan perdamaian, persatuan, dan pengertian.

Kata-kata Kunci: *Humanisme, Hidup Berdampingan Secara Damai, Perdamaian Dunia, Tasawuf, Terorisme.*

Introduction

Terrorism emerged as a dominant non-state threat to global security after the Cold War. However, it was present in some form in and after the Second World War years, but such activities gained international attention after the 9/11 terror attacks on the USA. Since then, the global war on terror has become an influential agenda for the United States and some other countries like France. Primarily, their focus was on the so-called '*Jihadists'* who propagated hatred and extremist versions of Islam and resorted to Terrorist activities. These extremists or radicals, also known as "Sunni hardliners," were scrutinized worldwide for indulging in coercive, brutal, and unethical means for propagating their ideology, for example, the Taliban, ISIS, Boko Haram, etc. This extremist also carried out massive attacks against Muslims themselves, for example, the attack at the Al-Rawda Mosque on November 24 by Islamic State in Birr al-Abd, in northern Sinai, despite the presence of strict security. This mosque was targeted all the more because it serves as a local headquarters for the Sufi Brotherhood present there. Likewise, another attack took place in Pakistan by Al-Qaeda on the Shrine of Sufi Saint Hazrat Shahbaaz Qalandar, aiming to create fear in the minds of the people who practice sufism. The extremists target Sufi Shrines and Mosques to undermine the strength it has. It ideologically also Is the opposite of extremism, therefore being a positive branding of Islam and is seen as a way for rebuilding confidence in Islamic values which the violent terrorist activities had defamed all this while after that, sufism was used as a "counter-terrorism policy" by the West as well by the Asian and African countries (Ghosh 2104, 91–4).

The rise of global terrorism poses a significant threat to peace and stability worldwide, perpetuating fear, division, and violence across diverse communities. In the face of this escalating crisis, there is a pressing need for effective strategies to counter extremist ideologies and promote peace-building efforts. One such potential solution lies in the doctrine of sufi philosophy, an ancient tradition rooted in Islamic mysticism that

embodies principles of love, compassion, and spiritual enlightenment.

Unlike the divisive rhetoric espoused by extremist groups, sufi teachings emphasize the interconnectedness of humanity and advocate for tolerance, understanding, and mutual respect. Through meditation, chanting, and *dhikr* (remembrance of God), sufis cultivate inner peace and self-awareness, transcending ego-driven desires and embracing a path of non-violence and service to others.

This paper aims to examine the role of sufism as a philosophy in eliminating terrorism, curbing religious fanaticism, and stopping communal violence via its spiritual and social practices, raising awareness amongst the common masses, aiding people of the lower economic stand of society, and unleashing the true spirit of Islam. This paper will also highlight the efforts of the various Sufi Orders in India and worldwide to counter terrorism, and religious fanaticism and promote peace and harmony in a pluralistic society.

The Origin and the Spread of Sufism

Sufism has always had a great fan following, not just among Muslims but also among non-Muslims, as seen in India, where sufi saints laid the foundations of the Bhakti movement in Hinduism. Moreover, sufism has always played a pivotal role in breaking down superstitions and has become all the more relevant in contemporary times of violence. The word sufi has many derivations, but the most popular one is that the word 'sufi' comes from the Arabic word '*ṣū*' which means wool. Therefore, the Muslim saints who used to wear garments made of wool were termed "*sufis*." Even though sufism is a much later phenomenon associated with Islam, it is said to have its foundations in the 7th century A.D.

It is asserted that Islamic sufism finds its roots in the life and personality of the Prophet of Islam, Hazrat-e-Muhammad (Rafiqi 2009, 24). Who is the role model for all those mystics, spiritualists, sufi *dervishes, faqīrs, rishis,* and *pirs* who had devoted their lives to gaining the knowledge of '*ḥaqīqah* and *ṭarīqah* in the light of Qur'an and Sunnah to achieve the fundamental goal of Islam? Sufism is not something different or a new religion from Islam. The mystic spirituality also depends on the five fundamental pillars of Islam, i.e., the kalma (*shahādat*), the prayer (*ṣalāt*), the *ṣaum* (fasting during Ramadan), the (*zakāt*) the obligatory contribution towards the poor, and finally the performance of pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) if the person could effort the expenses (Hamdani 2009, 34).

The sufis would usually live in isolation, practice self-mortification, and were distinguished by a cloak of wool (*ṣūf*), a tradition of Muhammad, which is believed to be the origin of the word sufi. A group of such devotees lived a life of poverty and constant prayer and fasting on a stone bench before Muhammad's Mosque. These people of the bench (*Aṣḥāb-e-ṣuffa*), 45 to over 300 in number, were given too much weeping and

repentance and are believed to be the origin of sufism. However, the name sufi was given to such ascetics only around the second century after the death of Muhammad. The sufis in the early period were primarily ascetics, and sufism had not yet evolved into a fully developed system of theosophical doctrines, which became the core feature of the later sufism. The companions of Muhammad, like Bilāl, Salmān al-Fārisī, and ʿAmmār bin Yāsir, were the early mystics. Later, with the spread of Islam, sufism flourished in Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Persia, and Central Asia and gave birth to renowned sufis like Rābiʿah al-Baṣrī, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Junayd Baghdādī, Dhu Nūn al-Miṣrī, etc., around the 9th and 10th century (Nizamie 2013, 215–17).

The Sufi Masters started to have a significant following in the form of disciples or "*murīds*," and a group of disciples from one particular Sufi Master together were termed "*Ṣūfī Silsilas*" or "Sufi Orders." There emerged several Sufi Orders. The earlier ones were, for example, "Muḥāsibīs, Qushayris, Junaydis, Nūris, Sahlis, Ḥakīmis, Kharrāzis, Sayyāris, and Ṭayfūris though limited to particular geographic locales were influential in the development of sufi thought. Later major sufi orders with a broader appeal were established around sufi masters like Qadri by ʿAbdul Qādir Jīlānī (Baghdad), Chishti by Abū Isḥāq Shāmī (Syria), Suhrawardī by Abū Najīb Suhrawardī, Yesevi by Ahmed Yesevi (Kazakhstan), Kubrawiya by Najmuddīn Kubrā (Central Asia), Rifāʿi by Aḥmed Rifāʿi (Iraq), Shādhilī by Abū al-Ḥasan Shādhilī (Morocco), Mevlavi by Jalāluddīn Rūmī (Konya), Naqshbandi by Bahāuddīn Naqshband (Bukhara), Niʿmatullahi by Nūruddīn Muḥammad Niʿmatullah (Syria) and Tījānī by ʿAbbās Aḥmad al-Tījānī (Algeria). The sufi orders practiced presently run in hundreds, but most of these represent the offshoots of the earlier ones (Chaudhary 1998, 184–5).

The 13th century considered the golden age of sufism, was marked by the development of comprehensive mystical and theosophical doctrines of sufism by sufi scholars like Ibn al-ʿArabī of Spain, Ibn al-Fāriḍ of Egypt, and the famous Persian sufi poet Jalāluddīn Rūmī After the golden era the Arab-Muslim world produced only a few notable sufi scholars. However, the influence of sufi orders continued to grow (Dehlvi 2009).

Islam Was not Spread by the Sword but by Sufism

Sufism can be seen as a potent force behind making Islam the second-largest religion in the world with 1.2 billion followers. Islam was not spread by the sword, i.e., forcible conversion, but the love of the sufi preachers via their excellent conduct, kind disposition, and noble character, attracted people towards Islam. It is not just a sect of Islam but a philosophy that holds the core values of Islam and is "found in the mystical tradition within both the Sunni and Shia branches of the faith. sufis have, through the centuries, combined their inward quest with the defense and expansion

of Islam worldwide. At once, mystics and elite soldiers, dervishes and preachers, charismatic wonder-workers and power-brokers, ascetic sufis have always been in the vanguard of Islam. While pushing forward the physical borders of Islam, they have been essential to the spiritual and cultural fullness of the faith (Jenkins 2009). Today, the sufi tradition is deeply threaded through the power structures of many Muslim countries, and the orders are enjoying a worldwide renaissance.

Can Sufism Diffuse Terrorism?

To find out whether sufism can diffuse terrorism, we need first to find out the root causes of the so-called Jihadist or Islamic terrorist activities and the reason behind the extensively growing extremism and religious intolerance across the globe.

All the so-called 'Islamist Terrorist' organizations in existence today are based on the misinterpretation of Islam. This was due to 'extremism,' which became all the more popular after globalization as there was a fear amongst some people that Western values would deteriorate their culture. Some groups took advantage of this situation, like ISIS and Al-Qaeda, who altogether denounced all Western values and declared a Fatwa on them being against Islam. They also misguided the Youth to fulfill their political motives. As a result, worldwide Islam's image was defamed.

Sufism is inversely proportional to terrorism; while the former is flexible and transcends communal boundaries, the latter is very rigid and compact, not allowing outsiders or people from other communities to be a part of its purview. Sufism attracted people towards Islam, whereas 'Militant Extremis' or terrorism has been the cause of alienating Islam from the rest of the communities. People across the Globe unanimously agree that sufism is capable of curing the wounds made by hatred and extremism.

The sufis believe "that when individuals stoop to the lowest rungs of human nature, they become more dangerous than the wildest animals. And when the virus of "selfish contumacy" (stubborn rebellion against authority) infects their being, they become more volatile than the most explosive device (Rizvi 2016).

The need of the hour is to save humanity by disarming them with weapons and hatred and giving the arms of love to all. As Jimi Hendrix wisely said:

When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace.

The Islamic Institute in Mannheim, Germany, which works towards the integration of Europe and Muslims, sees sufism as particularly suited for interreligious dialogue and intercultural harmonization in democratic and pluralist societies; it has described sufism as a symbol of tolerance and humanism-non dogmatic, flexible and non-violent (Malik and

Hinnells 2006, 25).

According to Philip Jenkins, a Professor at Baylor University, "the sufis are much more than tactical allies for the West: they are, potentially, the greatest hope for pluralism and democracy within Muslim nations." Likewise, several governments and organizations have advocated the promotion of sufism as a means of combating intolerant and violent strains of Islam. For example, the Chinese and Russian governments openly favor sufism as the best means of protecting against Islamist subversion.

The British government, especially following the July 7, 2005, London bombings, has selected sufi groups in its battle against Muslim extremist currents. The influential RAND Corporation, an American think-tank, issued a major report titled *"Building Moderate Muslim Networks,"* which urged the U.S. government to form links with and bolster Muslim groups that opposed Islamist extremism. The report stressed the sufi role as moderate traditionalists open to change and thus as allies against violence. News organizations such as the BBC, Economist, and Boston Globe have also seen sufism as a means to deal with violent extremists. Some aspects of sufism can be seen below, which further prove the fact that sufism can diffuse terrorism (Rabasa et al. 2007).

Sufism and Modernity

Sufism has a significant role in understanding modernity and enjoying the fruits of modernism. Without the appreciation of modernity, the ingredients that make the recipe for civilizations will be worthless. The main question about technology should not be whether it should be applied or how far some technologies can go. The most essential element is to know who is appropriate to use specific technologies and the controllers. One important characteristic of modernity is its massive dynamism; man should appreciate changes and improve life. Sufism, being flexible and dynamic, is open to changes that are socio-cultural, political, developmental, etc., to suit the more significant needs of humankind.

The connection between sufism and modernity is intricate and manifold, characterized by a blend of continuity and adaptation in response to the trials and possibilities of the contemporary era. On the one hand, sufism, focusing on the growth of the soul, inner metamorphosis, and universal principles of affection and empathy, continues to resonate with individuals seeking purpose and contentment in an increasingly secular and materialistic world. In this light, sufism offers an ageless wisdom that surpasses the constraints of time and place, serving as a source of comfort and guidance amidst the rapid changes and uncertainties of present-day existence.

On the other hand, sufism has also experienced significant changes in the face of modernity as practitioners grapple with the influence of globalization, technological progress, and shifting social and political

landscapes. Some sufi orders have embraced contemporary methods of communication and outreach, utilizing social media and digital platforms to spread their teachings and connect with a global audience.

Others have endeavored to reinterpret traditional sufi teachings in the context of current issues such as gender equality, environmental sustainability, and social justice, adjusting their practices to address the urgent challenges of the modern world. Despite these transformations, however, the fundamental principles of sufism remain deeply entrenched in the pursuit of spiritual excellence, the cultivation of inner tranquility, and the promotion of harmony and empathy in society, making it a resilient and pertinent tradition in the face of the ever-evolving landscape of modernity.

The sufi customs have flexibly adjusted to the modern age's trials and modifications through myriad methods, embodying a lively response to the ever-changing social, cultural, and technological landscapes. One notable adaptation is the utilization of contemporary communication to disseminate sufi wisdom and connect with a broader audience. Sufi orders have wholeheartedly embraced social media, online platforms, and digital domains to reach individuals worldwide, thus facilitating the expansion of their spiritual message beyond conventional boundaries.

Additionally, confident sufi leaders and scholars have actively partaken in interfaith discussions and outreach endeavors to foster comprehension and collaboration among diverse religious communities in a world increasingly marked by pluralism. Furthermore, sufi practices and rituals have been reimagined and contextualized to address contemporary dilemmas such as gender parity, environmental sustainability, and social equity. For instance, sufi collectives may incorporate principles of gender inclusivity into their gatherings and ceremonies, effectively challenging patriarchal norms and advocating for women's greater participation and empowerment.

Moreover, the sufi customs have adapted to the forces of urbanization and globalization by establishing communal hubs, educational establishments, and philanthropic organizations to cater to the demands of modern society. Through these adaptations, the sufi customs continue to evolve while remaining firmly anchored in their fundamental principles of spiritual progression, inner metamorphosis, and the relentless pursuit of love and benevolence.

Sufi traditions have demonstrated remarkable adaptability in response to the challenges and changes brought about by modernity. One significant adaptation lies in the utilization of modern communication technologies. sufi orders have embraced social media platforms, websites, and digital tools to disseminate their teachings and connect with a broader audience beyond traditional boundaries. This digital outreach enables sufi masters to reach individuals worldwide, fostering community and spiritual

guidance in an increasingly interconnected world.

Moreover, sufi traditions have engaged in interfaith dialogue and outreach efforts to promote understanding and harmony among diverse religious communities. Sufi leaders contribute to fostering peace and cooperation in societies marked by religious diversity by participating in discussions on common values and shared goals.

Sufi practices and rituals have also been adapted to address contemporary issues such as gender equality, environmental sustainability, and social justice. Some sufi groups integrate principles of inclusivity and equality into their gatherings, challenging traditional patriarchal norms and advocating for the empowerment of marginalized groups.

Furthermore, sufi orders have established community centers, educational institutions, and charitable organizations to address the needs of modern society. These initiatives provide valuable resources and support to individuals and communities facing socio-economic challenges, promoting social welfare and development.

Overall, sufi traditions continue to evolve while remaining grounded in their core principles of spiritual growth, inner transformation, and the pursuit of love and compassion. Through their adaptability and resilience, sufi traditions demonstrate a timeless relevance in navigating the complexities of the modern world.

Sufism and the Philosophy of Peaceful Coexistence

Unlike radical Muslims who preach the concept of seclusion or staying away from non-Muslims, sufism, on the other hand, promotes mingling and mixing between Muslims and non-Muslims. It is identified as "a connector for Muslims and non-Muslims; it focuses on esoteric elements of religion rather than the exoteric or public: inner peace, meditation, spiritual truth, connection to the earth and humanity. The divine is mysterious, but adopting an approach of interfaith dialogue and sufi teachings can be key strategies to convey the message of love and peace to people to reduce hatred in society and" promote unity in diversity (Ahmed 2011).

Sufi Shrines have both Muslim and non-Muslim visitors. sufism has a wide fan following amongst non-Muslims, as seen in Ajmer, where practically every Indian, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, must have visited once in his lifetime. Non-Muslims participate in the '*Ursh'* (death anniversary of a saint) gatherings with equal enthusiasm as the Muslims. Thus, with the example of countries like India and Pakistan, where sufism has a broad base in society, it can be proved that it has promoted peaceful coexistence and unity among Muslims and non-Muslims.

Sufism and Humanism

Sufism stresses human values more than religious obligations and

strives to serve humankind first. More sufism does not only speak about one religion—it speaks about humanity, so the children who get this message of sufism will never hate Sunnis, Shiites, Christians, Hindus, lower caste, upper caste, poor, or rich, and extremists will not persuade them. Indeed, there is a potential in every person to become a terrorist or a peace lover; hence, it is of utmost importance to think about which way we are guiding people: to become a terrorist or peace lover (Ahmed 2011).

Moreover, the Sufi Orders in the present times are doing works of charity often associated with NGOs. For example, the International Association of Sufism works near the U.N. to serve humanity. Other than that, free distribution of food and other essential commodities, providing shelter homes, medical facilities (accessible dispensaries), and free educational institutions (*madrasah*) for the poor, irrespective of whether they serve Muslims or non-Muslims.

In this modern era, where individuals are consumed by their hectic lives, they place greater importance on material wealth, possessions, and physical comfort, overshadowing the spiritual essence of existence. Regrettably, we fail to recognize that the events that occur to us are not a consequence of our thoughts and plans but rather the divine blessings bestowed upon us. Our inflated egos deceive us into believing we are the architects of our actions. We must rein in our arrogance and conceit, for that which God bestows upon us, He is also capable of swiftly taking away.

As the teachings of sufism enlighten us, it is within our realm of possibility to transcend the dark veils that shroud our belief systems. Those who wholeheartedly dedicate themselves to sufi training may eventually reach a state of heightened awareness, enabling them to perceive reality in its most accurate form. They will worship God as if they can truly see Him and will realize that they exist in this world yet are not bound by its ways.

The significance of sufism is readily apparent when we reflect upon the aftermath of the tragic events of 9/11. Often, we are inclined to assign labels to religions without truly comprehending their essence. Politicians capitalized on this ignorance to cultivate hatred towards Islam, falsely portraying it as a religion of terrorism. Yet, it can be believed that delving into the teachings of sufism would enable individuals to grasp the true essence of Islam. Embarking on the path of a sufi life allows one to attain a profound understanding and discover answers to their deepest inquiries. As we know, a sufi is someone who ardently follows the Sunnah and adopts the lifestyle of Prophet Muhammad (Nasir and Malik 2013, 4)

Sufism, an eternal beacon, continues to illuminate the path of humanity, transcending time itself. Each religion possesses fundamental principles, while countless secondary principles exist alongside them. The core tenet of Islam is the unwavering belief in God and the Prophet. Sadly, modern

individuals have grown oblivious to these timeless pillars, not only within Islam but also in other religions.

Today, humanity has strayed from the path of brotherhood and lost sight of the sacred bonds among fellow humans. We neither uphold the principles of our respective religions nor emulate the exemplary lifestyle of the Prophet. Love, affection, and justice have been overshadowed by manipulation, exploitation, dishonesty, and greed.

In this contemporary era, sufism arises as a panacea for the world's maladies. It offers solace and guidance, nurturing individuals by instilling essential values such as respect for relationships, appreciation for authentic love, and reverence for the sanctity of life:

1. Sufism imparts the profound wisdom of embracing and upholding the existence and principles cherished by the esteemed Prophet Muhammad.

2. Sufism imparts the deep-rooted values of admiration and adoration towards fellow beings and advocates for the equitable treatment of all individuals.

3. Sufism imparts the wisdom of adoring existence, including humanity, animals, blossoms, fruits, foliage, and majestic trees. This encompasses both the luminous day and the enchanting night, as well as the vast tapestry of creations bestowed upon us by the divine presence.

4. The profound teachings of sufism advocate for the employment of gracious words and expressions, ensuring that no soul shall suffer any harm, as love stands as the resplendent cornerstone of the sufi creed.

5. Sufism imparts the wisdom of acquiring a pristine vision, thus safeguarding the sanctity of the soul.

6. Sufism imparts the divine knowledge of steering clear from the forbidden, ensuring spiritual purity.

7. Sufism imparts the sacred teachings of refraining from utilizing one's hands for immoral endeavors.

Sufi and Modern Life

Contemporary followers of Islam are currently grappling with a crisis of self-assurance and belief in their abilities as they find themselves unable to confront the various trials and tribulations of the modern world. As we venture into the new millennium, humanity faces unprecedented peace, unity, and love challenges.

The complex nature of contemporary society has given rise to a

yearning for spiritual values that birthed the neo-sufism movement (also known as the new sufi), which seeks to strike a harmonious balance between worldly affairs and the afterlife. This departure from a secluded ascetic lifestyle allows individuals to participate in society actively. It is imperative to recognize that the world is an integral part of human existence; it cannot be detached or ignored. Instead, it is a crucial conduit for attaining spiritual fulfillment and reaching the hereafter.

The discourse surrounding the intersection of sufism and modernity promises to shed new light and offer fresh perspectives on this resurgent phenomenon. It aims to demonstrate the revelations within by drawing connections between sufism and the various currents brought forth by Muslim reformists. Additionally, it explores the pervasive presence of sufi practices and ideologies in every facet of life. It is worth noting that sufism has exerted a significant influence on contemporary Muslim communities, manifesting itself in intellectual, economic, and political realms, thereby challenging the prevailing modernization theories within these societies.

The advent of Western civilization has undeniably introduced profound changes that have significantly impacted modern life. Amidst this transformation, it remains intriguing to observe how the principles of sufism can enhance our understanding of the human condition in the present age. In the context of contemporary religious practices, adherents who are steeped in tradition have consistently argued that sufism contradicts the dogma and essence of Islam, deeming it heretical or an unacceptable deviation from the true faith. This perceived incompatibility between Islam and sufism can be traced back to the pantheistic ideologies that permeate the mystical aspects of sufi thought, thereby challenging the fundamental tenets of Islamic belief. However, as aptly characterized by Barbara van Schlegell, pre-modern sufism was a unifying force that bridged the gap between elite and ordinary Muslims worldwide (Schlegell 2002, 578–86).

The influx of highly educated and professionally qualified individuals into traditionally rooted sufi orders has facilitated the establishment of a parallel bureaucratic structure, thereby augmenting the informal connections between the sheik (spiritual leader), their spiritual deputies, and the initiates. This organizational transformation builds upon the groundwork laid by the earlier neo-sufism movement.

Neo-sufism espouses a doctrine that emphasizes the esoteric values of religious practice, urging individuals to engage with society and tackle social issues actively. It seeks to strike a harmonious balance between worldly affairs and the pursuit of spiritual enlightenment, recognizing the equal importance of both realms in the lives of Muslims. In this regard, as posited by researchers, neo-sufism seeks to embody the concept of *tawāzun*, or balance, as its foundational principle. As traditionally constituted, sufis orders have persisted in Muslim heritage societies and

diaspora communities worldwide; there has also been much innovation in the institutional arrangements through which the study and practice of sufism are carried out today (It, Rijal, and Prasojo 2019, 16).

In this contemporary era, Muslims must cultivate and enhance their spiritual journey. A profound and enriched sense of spirituality, with prayer as its essence, will form an integral aspect of the distinctively religious engagement with the secular world. Mental exertions alone cannot salvage religion. We must live as devout individuals, fortifying our approach to modernity by abiding within the boundaries of faith and actively striving for an authentic religiosity that seeks and discovers reservoirs of integrity, including intellectual integrity, amidst the challenges of our times (Akhtar 1998, 207–9).

Sufism, widely known as the Islamic mystical tradition, is perceived by many as providing nourishment for the soul. Sufism is not a singular and delineated movement but rather an interconnected web of concepts and practices that aim to attain a more profound comprehension and devoted pursuit of the messages conveyed in the Qur'an. This perspective is acknowledged by non-Muslim scholars but also by sufis themselves.

Role of Sufism in the Contemporary World

Without a doubt, the modern world finds itself immersed in a vast sea of diverse religious, social, economic, and political matters. These matters encompass religious fanaticism, acts of violence, the erosion of fundamental human values, the violation of global human rights, greed, and the absence of love, compassion, and justice. Naturally, such issues become a breeding ground for manipulating and exploiting humanity, giving rise to insidious consequences within the fabric of society. These issues harm society, proving to be pernicious to its moral foundation. Henceforth, sufism is a remedy for this social malice and its problems. It champions the creation of a harmonious social atmosphere, guaranteeing justice, honesty, and altruism within society while fostering an enthusiasm for selfless service towards those deserving, thus ensuring the security and well-being of humanity. Sufism plays a significant role within Islamic societies, its influence extending from the public realm to the personal sphere (Sells 1996, 1–2).

It stimulates the awareness of individuals regarding their obligations towards society and inspires them to act with sincerity, thereby establishing a thriving culture rooted in morality, spirituality, and human values. However, the understanding of sufism must encompass the modern needs of society to address all its aspects comprehensively. Furthermore, sufism must free itself from un-Islamic elements and align its objectives with the principles of the Qur'an and Sunnah (Howell 2001, 705–9).

During the nineteenth century, religion took center stage in

Muslim scholarship, giving rise to various Islamic revival movements. Unfortunately, these movements predominantly focused on the political dimension of Islam, leaving the spiritual aspect primarily overlooked. In contemporary Muslim societies, it is crucial to recognize the dynamism and significance of sufism, as its effectiveness can be witnessed in numerous ways in recent times. In the Age of Enlightenment during the eighteenth century, Western scholars targeted religion, proclaiming its decline in society and envisioning a future where science would replace it, leading to a society devoid of religious influence. Therefore, sufism can serve as a means to avoid conflicts between religion and state and demonstrate religion's authenticity and legitimacy in modern societies. Sufism highlights the profound guiding principles of religion about individuals' spiritual and worldly concerns. Furthermore, modern societies lack brotherhood, resulting in widespread social malice and human rights violations. In this regard, sufi brotherhoods (ṭarīqāh) can foster a sense of brotherhood among individuals and build peace and harmony (Bruinessen and Howell 2007, 282–3).

Islamic mysticism nurtures individuals spiritually and binds them together as a community to combat social problems collectively. Due to its unifying nature, the significance of sufi brotherhood is evident in societies where Muslims form the majority, as well as in societies where Muslims constitute a minority. In essence, sufism acknowledges the inevitability of change in society, as it is inherent in Islam, and fosters a sense of brotherhood among its followers (DeGorge 2005, 20).

In contemporary times, the prevalence of ideas related to modernization, development, and progress, especially in materialistic Muslim societies, has created a divide between individuals' spiritual and material dimensions. People are increasingly inclined towards worldly concerns, leading to a significant decline in their spiritual well-being. Therefore, sufism can be a powerful tool to restore and maintain this balance (Nasr 1987, 117).

In the present era, advancements in science and technology play a crucial role in providing the necessities of life in a community. However, these advancements fail to satisfy individuals spiritually and morally. As a result, there is a discrepancy in the lives of individuals. Hence, the enduring societal efficacy of sufism exists continuously, and it becomes imperative to acknowledge the utility of *taṣawwuf* in constructing a wholesome and egalitarian society based on spiritual and religious values. Moreover, in the contemporary world, where Islam is often targeted as a source of violence and terror, sufism can be fruitful in presenting a positive and lucid portrayal of Islam (Trimingham 1971, 57–8).

During the nineteenth century, sufism faced criticism and was accused of instilling detachment from worldly matters in its adherents at the societal level and introducing innovations in Islamic teachings

at a spiritual level. However, this accusation stemmed from a lack of understanding of sufism. Muslim scholars underwent a reformation process in the nineteenth century to establish the legitimacy of sufism in Islam and recognize its social vitality in modern Muslim societies. The sole intention behind the revival of sufism was to bridge the gap between sufism and Sharia and to make sufism subservient to the Qur'an and Sunnah. Consequently, sufism proved beneficial for Muslim societies in constructing a community based on socio-moral values (Lone 2022, 96).

Hence, *taṣawwuf* can persist and remain steadfast in the contemporary world with its social implications, profoundly impacting the socio-economic structure of society. Furthermore, its importance can be observed in public spheres relating to development and other modern social changes.

Living in a state of concord and collaboration is essential in a society distinguished by many ethnicities, religions, and cultures. Given that we reside in a world that portrays a tapestry of heterogeneous religious customs, traditions, and ethnic backgrounds, engaging in discussions, particularly on a spiritual plane, is crucial to avert any potential threat to tranquility. This endeavor is imperative to uphold harmony, fraternity, and coexistence amongst the adherents of various belief systems. Since its inception, Islam has assumed a pioneering role in interfaith dialogue, aiming to unite individuals. This unity serves as a manifestation of a harmonious society. Holy Qur'an mentions:

> "*Say, 'People of the Book, let us come to a word common to us that we shall worship none but God and that we shall associate no partner with Him and that none of us shall take others, besides God, for lords.' And if they turn away, say, 'Bear witness that we have submitted to God*" (Q.S. Āli 'Imrān [3]:64).

The discourse of unity among different faiths is more than just a theological exchange; its ultimate aim is to cultivate tranquility, concord, and empathy among individuals, beckoning them toward a reality that permeates their everyday lives. Within the realm of sufism, the virtue of religious tolerance assumes a profound significance, finding itself nestled within the teachings of this discipline. Possessing a plethora of essential qualities crucial for deep and fruitful interfaith dialogue, sufism showcases traits such as altruism, forbearance, thankfulness, modesty, and acceptance. Indeed, the nature and teachings of Sufism are inherently open-minded and accommodating, thus rendering it paramount in our present-day world, which fervently seeks peace and harmony.

Conclusion

After reviewing the relevant literature, I definitely can say that sufism is an answer to counter-terrorism via promoting the essential Islamic Humanistic values of peace, freedom, kindness, charity, fraternity or brotherhood, modernity, humanism, and respect for differences of opinions are the fundamentals of sufism. Sufism looks beyond class, religion, caste, creed, and sect. Therefore, it has a broader acceptance in society amongst Muslims and non-Muslims. It can diffuse terrorism by instilling the valid values of Islam in the hearts and minds of the misguided people who have taken up arms or filled their hearts with malice and hatred. Sufism can cure the disease of terrorism that has crept into our society.

Sufi philosophy fosters inner peace and spiritual fulfillment, addressing the root causes of extremism by offering individuals a path toward self-awareness and enlightenment. By cultivating a deep connection with the divine and promoting introspection, sufism offers adherents an alternative to the nihilistic ideologies espoused by terrorist groups. Furthermore, sufi philosophy emphasizes the interconnectedness of all beings, transcending boundaries of nationality, religion, and ethnicity. This inclusive worldview promotes empathy and understanding, undermining the 'us versus them' mentality that fuels terrorist ideologies. By celebrating diversity and promoting dialogue, sufism offers a powerful counter-narrative to the divisive rhetoric of extremism.

Additionally, sufi philosophy advocates for non-violence and reconciliation, rejecting using force and coercion to achieve political or ideological goals. Through practices such as *sama'*, spiritual music, and *dhikr*, or remembrance of the divine, sufis promote harmony and cooperation, demonstrating true strength in compassion and forgiveness. The Doctrine of Sufi Philosophy offers a compelling antidote to global terrorism, addressing its underlying causes while promoting peace, tolerance, and mutual respect. By embracing love, unity, and spiritual enlightenment, sufism provides a transformative framework for individuals and communities seeking to transcend the cycle of violence and build a more harmonious world.

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