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Urgency Education Morals of Sufism in Millennial Era

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Abstract

Sufism is morally defined as a character and attitude builder which satisfies the intellectual requirement through its philosophical approach. This act is practiced by every Muslim irrespective of their social status and region. However, there is a significant relevance with its use in the new millennial era, as it gives peace of mind and sharia discipline concurrently. The qualitative descriptive approach was utilized in this study, with data obtained from the library. The result show that Sufism moral education is urgently required, as it controls humans toward the right path, thereby, avoiding moral decadence, spiritual anomaly and suprematism of morality. Currently, reinterpretation and recontextualization of Sufism's spiritual values are needed to adequately face the challenges , in order to build a ritual and righteous social personality.

Keywords:

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Introduction

The main pillars of Islamic religion are Iman, Islam, and Ihsan. Iman is faith that moves the heart, Islam is associated with deeds, while Ihsan ascertains the perfection of realization as well as the objectives of the integration of faith and deeds. However, the Morals of Sufism are at the highest level more than to Ihsan. Currently, Sufism is seen as an important alternative to the spiritual needs and moral development of the millennial generation (Bilqies, 2014).

But, many people now ignore its teachings and tend to prioritize worldly things,thereby, being materialistic than spiritual (Zamhari, 2013). The millennial generation cravesfor material pleasures while ignoringits eschatological effects (punishment).

The 21ˢᵗ century evolved with the advancement in science and technology, thereby exploding fundamental changes in all parts of human life. The accelerated changes which was followed by turmoil in all fields makes human life highly competitive in attempts to fulfill unending desires. This situation has a domino effect on the number of people finding it difficult to solve life problems, such as stress, anxiety, insecurity, etc. (Makhasin, 2016).

In accordance with these life inconsistencies associated, humans tend to seek therapy through spirituality (religion). This is, however understood due to the main purpose of Sufism is to bring its followers to a serene, safe, and happy life in the world and hereafter. In Islam, this is known as Sufism, with its area of coverage related to the human esoteric dimension.

Currently, people's interest in development has increased not only among the educated class but also in the middle and uneducated Muslim community (Nasir & Malik, 2013). This situation reflects the failure of modernity and the advancement of science and technology's ability to meet the esoteric needs of humans. Therefore, Sufism is an important aspect associated with building human spirituality and lifeThis research, therefore, determines the importance in guiding human life in the millennial era.

Human Spirituality Crisis in the Millennial Era

The millennial erais the beginning of supremacy victory of rationalism and the religious dogmatism (Burhan, 1989). This is understood due to the modernityof the century which tends to separate science and philosophy from religion and secularism. The epistemological unity between rationalism

and empiricism therefore, produced what Thomas Henry Huxley called "a scientific method" (Assegaf, 2011).

According to Modern Western Philosophy, humans are free from all external forces, through rational knowledge. Humans revolve their thoughts around the world, therefore, abstract things like God, Heaven, Hell, religion,magic, and other eschatological matters are irrelevant. As illustrated by Descartes, Frederich Nietzsche, Immanuel Kant, and Sartre, human dignity is raised as a free and autonomous creature. According to Ahmad Mubarok (2000), amid the global area of life, there is a phenomenon in social groups that are trapped in isolation, sociologist called this alienation. These class of people tend to cause alienation of the phenomenon namely (1) homogeneous society turning into a heterogeneous; (2) relationship between humans turning into courtship; (3) fast occurrence of social changes; (4) social stability turning into mobility; and (5) traditional institutions have turned into rational institutions.

The millennial generation is struck by spiritual emptiness, with rationalism unable to fulfill basic human needs in terms of transcendental values. However, only vital needs are dug up, with its origin from an absolute mandate that used to be carried out, by following God's instruction. However, the world, its contents, and human product tends to fight for power, thereby, destroying and exploiting nature (Nasr, 1991). This is owing to the fact that it follows free values and science's neutral philosophy, therefore, humans believe that whatever they indulge in, has no repercussion (Mulyati, 2005: 4).

Technological revolution has increased control of material, space, and time, thereby, leading to economic evolution, lifestyle, paradigm, and referral system. While the presence of science and technology has delivered the societal problems which includes:

Silencing of Faith

The impact of the dichotomic scientific paradigm between rationality and spirituality tends to silence the faith of humans. This not influenced by the revolutionary information obtained.

Split Personality

The life patterns associated with the silencing of faith split the personality of humans. Currently, it is always ruled by the formula of mechanical work, which resulted in the loss of spiritual values. Furthermore,

developing science is also not controlled by religion, therefore, the process of human destruction continues.

Stress and Frustration

The modern society works and moves without limitations and satisfaction, therefore, no gratitude is shown for achieved success. When they fail, stress and frustration set in, making it difficult for them to think clearly. During such conditions, the possibility of making wrong decisions is very high, hence, they fall into negative things and eliminate their self-esteem and future.

Dis-integration of Science

The development associated with the current era turnsthe universe into a specialized field of science consisting of paradigm in solving its problems. Assuming someone experiences a problem and goes to the scientists, theologians, psychologists, economists, politicians for solution, different answers are obtained thereby, the individual is confused.

The Pattern of Materialistic Relations

In this era, the spirits of help and brotherhood based on the call of faith is almost not available, due to the relationship patterns which are seen from the ability of someone to give material benefits to others. Humans tend to place material considerations above common sense, conscience, faith, and humanity.

Abuse of Science and Technology

The implications of the separation of science and technology from spiritual bonds cause huge impacts. The ability to change iron ore into firearms has been directed to colonization between nations thereby, leading to wars. It is also a human moral degradation as a result of the abuse of science and technology.

Legalizing all Means

The human faithand materialistic life patterns become their orientation, and justifies all methods used to achieve goals. However, assuming this continues, moral degradation is bound to occur.

Modern life offers three things to the millennial generation, namely, expectations, opportunities, and challenges. It promises expectations for the improvement of fate and abundance of materials, opens wide opportunities to actualize goals by pushing humans to work hard and face challenges due

to the high competitive life style associated withmodernity. While there isa possibility to prolong experience and lose self-esteem or commit suicide.

Modernization gives expectations to improve achievement and prestige with an equal opportunity to success and failure. It tends to demand a rational, efficient, and effective perspective with an increase in speed and volume of work often ignored by other things that are also full of life and its meaning. Furthermore, it causes modern humans to experience a psychiatric crisis, which is manifested from a spiritual crisis.

The need to present spiritual values as a system of this life is due to Western civilization in which capitalistic-egoistic fails to build morality and spirituality of humans (Hamka, 1990). American psychologist, Erich Fromm, reveals that humans are associated with success, with empty values and soul restlessness. Many millennial generations are vulnerable to stress, depression, and feeling of alienation with various other psychiatric illnesses. This type of modern phenomenon has entered the psyche of some Indonesian citizens, as they often feel deeply unsecured and worried without knowing the source (obsessional neurosis) (Howell, 2010).

Causative Factors of Human Spiritual Crisis in the Millennial Era

The causes of human spirituality crisis are: (1) Forgetting religious prescriptions responsible forpsychological behaviors (2) Trying to understand psychopathology through modern theories, which are unable to penetrate the deepest psychiatric areas such as spirituality and religion.

Spirituality in modern society is also associated with challenges. The entries of popular commodities, consumerist lifestyle, and image game has dragged various religions into extinction. Often, modern society considers the spiritual path as a lifestyle with duration, intensity, and quantity in accordance with social life. Therefore, it is called post or hyper spirituality with its path taken as the control engine toward the capitalism and consumerism which are worshiped, praised, and loved by modern Islamic society (Syukur, 2003).

The release of everything capable of failing the soul's sanctification process needs to be carried out. It is time for religious humans to minimize and even stop all forms of pseudo-spirituality that are embellished with identity, prestige, image, and lifestyle capable of damaging the essence of spirituality. Honesty and sincerity of heart in worship are very necessary to achieve spiritual goals completely (Rif'i & Mud'is, 2011). Stepping on a

spiritual path with sincerity, tend to deliver humans to the glory and goodness of life.

The Urgency of Morals and Morality Education in Life

Moral education comprises of three main concepts which act education materialsmandatory for the needs of the body, soul, and relationships with others. These materials are obtained from science which is broadly grouped into two, namely, those related to thought (*al-ulum al-fikriyah*) and senses (*al-ulum al-hissiyat*) (Nata, 2011a). The mandatory moral education materials for the needs of the human body are prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage. Prayer is a type of body exercise felt and realized during exercise (body movements) while standing, bowing, and prostrating for a longer period. The moral education materials that need to be learned for the soul are exemplified by a discussion of true creed, affirming that God is one with greatness, and motivation to love science. The materials required by humans are exemplified by muamalat, agriculture, marriage, mutual counseling, wars, and others.

These materials are associated with service to God, therefore, anything inherent the existing knowledge, should be extracted. For example, the Knowledge of Nahwu (Grammar), in moral education, and its materials are very important, for humans to speak straight. Furthermore, the materials contained in the Knowledge of Manthiq (logic), assist humans in straight-thinking, while, those contained in arithmetic (*al-hisab*) and geometry (*al-handasat*) help them to speak right and hate falsehood. In addition, history and literature helps humans to behave politely, and the materials in Shari'a assist them to be firmly-determined, get used to conducting what is blessed by God and the soul in order to receive wisdom till happiness is achieved (*as-sa'adat*).

Morality in Islam is a comprehensive term that enters the concepts of truth, good characters, and the body of moral qualities and virtues determined in Islamic religious texts. The idea underlying Islamic morality is love, for God and His creation. The idea is that humans receive and follow a moral quality body to seek God's pleasure and treat others in the best way possible (Gunawan, 2012).

Studies on morality and moral behaviors are the basic principles of Islam, while the Al-Qur'an and Hadiths are their main sources. Both often speak firmly to instruct Muslims to adopt moral and good characters by

showing kindness to people and giving charity to the poor. It specifically, helps, forgives, respect parents and fulfills promises, by being kind and patient, keeping justice, being honest, and controlling anger.

Urgency and Benefits of Learning Morals of Sufism

The principles in Sufism are used as a source of movement, normative reference, motivation, and values of life. The essence of its teachings aims to obtain a direct relationship with God for one to feel consciousness and presence. This effort is carried out by contemplation, releasing oneself from the ever-changing and relative world (Nata, 2011b; Usman, 1982). The nature and views of Sufism are very necessary for the society, especially for those undergoing troubles, as long as the views on the life goals are not carried out exclusively and individually, but have implicative and responsive power toward various life problems faced. Furthermore, the concept of truth in science and technology is not only based on correspondence, coherence, and pragmatism but also the spiritual-divine nature. This means the sources of knowledge, besides being obtained through rational and sensory empirical (observation) senses, is also acquired and strengthened through revelation instructions, history lessons, spiritual exercises, witnessing, and spiritual disclosure (Polat, 2017).

Sufism, as an educational program provides an overview of humanity as the perfect creature of God, both functionally and ontologically (Polat, 2017). Islamic teachings come from the basic norms n the Al-Qur'an and Sunnah of Allah's Prophets, which are related to human morals as role models in daily life such as the Prophet Muhammad SAW. However, having Islamic morals means implementing its teachings in a straight way consisting of Faith, Islam, and Ihsan. Noble moral in Islam is carrying out the commands of Allah SWT, which are obligations and avoiding His prohibitions.

Morals are conditions permeated into the soul. In this, various kinds of behavior or action occur spontaneously without requiring thought. Morals are science that teaches humans to indulge in acts of good and prevent evil deeds not associated with Allah SWT and humans. Moral position occupies an important place in human life in the context of individuals, nature of the society, as well as the glory of a person.

Humans consist of physical and spiritual elements, without the spirit, the person is dead, and without a body, there is no human. The same is

applicable to life, with non-static material problems ('Afify, n.d). For example, assuming humans desire for material things, they will never be satisfied, because when they acquire something, they tend to opt for another and so on. Moral teachings make humans able to apply some other actions as good and bad deeds, cleansing the heart from lusts, and anger so that it becomes pure and clean. This means that knowledge of morals functions to guide humans to be able to assess and determine good and bad deeds.

There is adequate importance for Sufism in life and education, even for the advancement of Islamic civilization in this millennial era. Its morals are very necessary for a defense to face an increasingly practical-pragmatic-technological life with its existence, able to provide benefits to humans. Similarly, with the knowledge of Sufism Morals, Hasanuddin Sinaga and Zahruddin AR formulated the benefits of learning Morals as follows:

➢ It illuminates humans in solving routine difficulties faced daily which is related to behaviors.

➢ It explains the cause to choose good deeds and its benefits.

➢ It stems and prevents human from being continuously trapped in the desires of lust, by directing it to positive things, thereby strengthening the iradah (will of God) element.

➢ It makes people understand that good deeds help in tackling actions with full interest and willingness.

➢ People studying the knowledge of morals tend to keep assessing the behaviors of others and will not follow something without careful considerations.

From the above described, knowledge of morals guides humans to be able to assess and determine whether actions are classified as good or bad deeds. This encourages positivitywhile avoiding negativity. Furthermore, the knowledge of morals is also effectively useful to cleansing humans from sins and immoralities outwardly through Fiqh (Jurisprudence), and inwardly through morals.

Spiritual Needs of Humans in the Millennial Era: Sufism as an Offer
Humans consist of body and spirit unanimously linked irrespective of their different characteristics. The body is satisfied with worldly materials, while the spirit is formed by the state of the heart. To obtain a healthy spirit, the body need to be fulfilled with an effort to get close to God. The spirit of

each human is always oriented toward its Creator, while the body is oriented toward the world, which tends to be examined using the Sufism approach.

Sufism is a state of the heart where a person has a close relationship with the God. Those utilizing this strategy depend on Allah SWT, and are always at peace.

Some experts gave their opinions on the concepts of Sufism, for instance, H. M. Amin Syukur stated that it is a system of training with sincerity (*riyadhoh mujahadah*) to cleanse, enhance, and deepen the aspects of spirituality *taqarrub* for attention to be aimed at Allah (Syukur, 2003). According to Abu al-Wafa' al-Ghanimi at-Taftazani, Sufism is a philosophical view of life that aims to develop the morality of the human soul and is realized through certain exercises, in such a way that feelings becomes dissolved in the transcendental essence. While Ibnu Khaldun stated that the way to obtain the knowledge of Sufism is by worshipping diligently, cutting relationships with everything other than Allah, refusing all the jewelry of the world, hating things that deceive many people, and not having pleasure in property as well as the luxury of the world.

Currently, some people have forgotten their origins and where they will return upon death. Instead, they are dragged into the current state of globalization, which causes them to leave their religion. Therefore, people's hearts become closed by worldly affairs. Sufism is also considered as a knowledge that makes civilization retreat, with the ability to compete and encourage someone to be active in the world. When correctly understood, no one gets trapped in the wrong description.

Sufism balances life in the world, in accordance with Al-Qur'an language, it is called a leader on earth (*khalifah fi al-ard*) and in the hereafter with Allah. Humans as caliphs should develop and manage the world while preserving the living environment. As servants of Allah, humans are also obliged to be diligent in worship, fill their hearts with Allah's greatness, guidance, and blessing. Therefore, the knowledge of Sufism is needed to control human actions with life of the mortal world.

One of its urgencies in current situation is the implementation of knowledge toward the social and ecological environment (Howell, 2011). This means that someone with a filled heart has the greatness of Allah SWT to behave well to the people, and not harm others, work sincerely, diligently, and professionally.

The correlation between Morals and Sufism is unified, therefore, its application, makes no sense. Therefore, it need to have a noble character to Allah SWT, fellow humans as well as the environment. Islam is a religion which highly maintains a balance between ritual, social, and public pieties, therefore, Sufism need to be accompanied by good morals for its generalization which is one of the urgencies of its past, present and future (Din, 2003). The implementation of Sufism following the context of the millennial era is sincerity, *wara'*, and *qana'ah*. These three characteristics are used as a medium to control ourselves without being complacent with the rapid development of technology. Its teachings, creates moral and behavior development with fellow humans and also other creatures of Allah, which is used in the millennial era amid the blooming technology that make humans more individualistic.

Good morals, a strong willingness to be able to bring benefits to the surrounding community, are the main capitals to develop and live in the world. However, the big problem that shows up in the human in the crisis of spirituality. Postmodernity is indeed successful in fulfilling human needs without limitations but fails to fulfill that of spirituality. The advancement of science and technology, dominance of rationalism, empiricism, and positivism turns out to bring people to the modern life where secularism becomes the overall mentality of the era.

Approximately four reasons make Sufism more interesting among the Islamic society. The first is the al-Ghazali which states that during conflicts the truth is achieved. The strong influence of al-Ghazali organized Islamic theology and cleansed Sufism from non-Islamic elements, and also succeeded in making Sufism an integral part of Islamic teachings and the acceptance of *ijma'* for Muslims (Zaini, 2016).

Secondly, the fall of the Islamic empire created a feeling of insecurityy. History recorded that in 1258, Baghdad was destroyed by the Mongols.They took control of the Persia and Central Asia regions by destructing large portions of the surrounding. During this period, the community sought protection and finally found the Tarekat (method) as an institution that filled the vacuum of the stable government and guaranteed social order.

Thirdly, itcreates a medium for humans to communicate directly with God through the Tarekat teachings on blessings, benefits, *karamah*, and pilgrimage to the grave. Fourthly, Sufism taught by the Tarekat is tolerant of

local religious beliefs and practices. This attitude attracts the attention of those who have just converted to Islam or among Muslim society to the teachings of *rahmatan lil'alamin.*

Sufism and Moral Development in the Millennial Era

Modern society is a class of people living together in a place with certain sophisticated bonds and rules. Deliar Noer identifies modern characteristic as follows:

➢ A rational that is it prioritizes more on the opinions of the sense rather than emotions;

➢ The ability to think into the future, not only regarding temporary problems but on social impacts;

➢ Defines time as a valuable;

➢ Ability to accept criticism, suggestions, input, ideas, and input on improvements; and

➢ Objective thinking of the community.

According to Komarudin Hidayat (2011), one of the identities of modern society is its aggressive attitude toward advancement (progress) driven by various achievements through science and technology. It also favors rationality, with changes in the characteristics of modern society where people seek the meaning of something rationally and in the form of materials.

Conversely, due to modernization, the spiritual dimension of the society has become empty and reduced, thereby, increasing the process of seeking spirituality. People who only prioritize materials tend to feel insecure and unhappy with the pleasures it offers. This insecurity and dissatisfaction lead to negative and unfavorable things, such as the collapse of society.

The emergence of Sufism as an alternative method use in responding to the spiritual emptiness seems reasonable. The big crisis cannot only be overcome by the superiority of science and technology as a great ideology embraced by countries in the world. The ideology of socialism-communism has failed, and capitalism-liberalism is considered fragile and unstable. Future observers, especially scientists that learned the scientific prognosis of future situations and conditions (futurologists) almost agree to these predictions. Therefore, it is not surprising that religion is now beginning to be looked at as the hope in saving human civilization from destruction (Howell, 2010).

Modern science and technology do not give the meaning of life and in the 21ˢᵗ century, religion experienced a revival with its rebirth. A similar opinion is stated by Said Agil Husin al-Munawar that the trend of returning to religion is more oriented to spiritualism, and not in conventional. However, modern society is reluctant to be bound by formal religions, due to the fact that they are more interested in meditation, *dzikir* (pray), and other spiritual practices than the ritual, moral, and social dimensions of formal religions. This assessment is based on the failure of religions in the West, especially with regards to Christianity. Of the three major religions, and successors of Hebrew teachings, Christianity has the worst reputation in terms of tolerance as it tends to demand loyalty and produces an exclusive attitude which causes resistance and opposition.

The failure of religions in overcoming social changes and the problems in the West led to the evolution of cults and sects such as People's Temple, Children of God, David Kores group, Haven Gate, and Aryan Nations. These are all compensations from religious impulses not reflectively channeled to dealing with the frustration. Rational understanding of religion added with its formal implementation is not enough to guarantee the loyalty of the followers (Din, 2003). Therefore, in this case, Sufism becomes an offer to overcome the issues previously mentioned. This is because the forms of spiritual virtue in Sufism have been packaged with a certain philosophy, thought, science, and, spiritual disciplines based on Islamic teachings (Yamamoto, 2013).

Amin Abdullah (2010) defined it as a magnet that does not reveal itself to the surface but has extraordinary power. In modern materialistic life, Sufism is developed in a constructive direction, both concerning personal and social life. Sooner or later, the millennial generation is exposed to what is called the disease of alienation. Therefore, life guidance is spiritual needed to maintain the integrity with the dimensions of Sufism in Islam used to answer and determine solutions to the existing difficulties.

Sufism trains humans to possess inner sharpness and subtlety that makes followers to always prioritize the considerations in every problem they face (Ridhwan, 2017). The *Tarekat* (method) in Sufism brings people to have an *istiqamah* (strong-determined) soul, which is always filled with divine values. Such conditions make them always be steadfast and patient in facing various life problems, from mental insecurity, stress, and despair. The teachings of

resignation to God completely guide people through life in a calm and peaceful manner. The frustration is overcome by the *ridha* (content) attitude taught by Sufism, which means always surrender and accept God's decisions without complaining or feeling disappointed. Materialistic and hedonistic attitudes that undermine modern humans are overcome by applying the concept of *zuhud* that is the attitude of not being enslaved by worldly or materialistic influences.

Conclusion

The advancement of science and technology, associated with the modern world is capable of destroying human dignity. Therefore, Sufism, concrete and forms noble morals, needed for humans to be saved. Hedonistic and materialistic attitudes rampant in modern life are overcome by applying the concept of *zuhud*, which is essentially not willing to be enslaved by worldly influences. Assuming this attitude is embedded in humans, there is every possibility that it was going to be used to achieve goals associated with good communication with God.

Sufism, is associated with positive principles that are able to develop the future of mankind such as conducting muhasabah, emptying the soul from despicable qualities namely arrogant, envy, jealousy, riya, and love of the world (takhalli), and decking oneself with noble qualities (tahalli).

One way to overcome the problem of life is to develop morals in the community. Some of the goals of Sufism include: (1) participating in various roles in saving humanity from conditions due to loss of spiritual values; (2) introducing literature or understanding the esoteric aspects of Islam, towards the Islamic and non-Islamic community, and (3) providing reaffirmation that actually, the esoteric aspects of Islam that is Sufism is the heart of Islamic teachings. Assuming the territory practices Islam, then other places are likely to follow same fate. In Sufism, there are positive principles that develop the future of humans such as conducting *muhasabah*, emptying the soul from despicable characteristics for instance arrogance, envy, jealousy, showing off, and love of the world (*takhalli*), and equipping ourselves with noble characteristics (*tahalli*).

Theological problems in the millennial era make people lose their future, feel lonely and empty amid the rush of life. Therefore, the teachings of Sufism, which is related to worship, *dzikir* (pray), repentance, and prayer, are important for hope. Morals of Sufism provide an opportunity for human

salvation and should be carried out to avoid the trapped practice of spiritual life that is misleading. Furthermore, it is a positive contribution developed from the teachings of Sufism in overcoming the problems of society in the millennial era. With its dimensions of spirituality, religion functions and roles cannot be separated from human life. Therefore, when humans try to escape from the teachings of religion, they experience aridity of the soul, lose direction and intrinsic goals, thereby, bringing about misery. Conversely, with consistency in making the religion (Islam) as their foundation, peace and find the true essence of life is realized.

The contextualization of Sufism's spiritual values and reinterpretation is currently used in the applicative order of society's life. It is also used daily in the millennial era to form righteous personality individually and socially, with good quality in worship. In modern life, Sufism becomes the antidote to overcome the millennial human spiritual crisis that has been separated from people thereby, preventing them from recognizing their purposes in life.

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