Socio-Sufism Practices within the Indonesia’s Tariqah Practitioners

Aminah Azis¹, Mustaqim Pabbajah², Hannani³, M. Taufiq Hidayat Pabbajah⁴, Muhiddin Bakry⁵

Abstract

Sufism activities in the teachings of tarekat have shown the socio practice of a Muslim. This study addresses the practice of dhikr by the community of Tarekat Khalwatiyah Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary (TKSYA) in improving daily life social personality. This study relies on qualitative research. Data were collected from observation, interviews, and literature review. The study results indicate that socio-sufism activities can build social congregation, which has implications for social life. It is implemented in the sharia or worship, tauhid or faith, and akhlak or ethics and muamalah as seen in everyday life. Sufism activists can interpret a complex life manifested through the nature of tawadhu; they respect each other, even towards their environment. Thus, the implication of dhikr continuously shapes community character and has a strong and calm personality. This study recommends further studies on the tarekat community with a contextual approach as an initial mapping of the potentiality of tarekat teachings in responding to the threat of an ongoing moral and social crisis.

Keywords: Socio-Sufism, Tarekat Khalwatiyah Syekh Yusuf Al-Makassary, Tariqah Practitioners

INTRODUCTION

The teachings of tarekat as a medium for approaching servants with God can be a solution to forming one's personality, which has implications for social life. The tarekat practitioners who consistently practice the teachings of tarekat realize a strong personality, where the spiritual approach can overcome social and moral problems (Rahman et al., 2018). The moral crisis has significantly increased, as data showed by Unicef that 50% of violence occurred in 2016 (https://www.unicef.org/). It shows that the lack of morals afflicting children and adolescents stems from a lack of appreciation of religious values. Where religion becomes a soft power that can solve social problems (Ozturk, 2023). If their faith and morals are strong, they will be able to control behavior that can be detrimental and contrary to the will and views of society.

Existing studies related to tarekat teachings tend to focus on three things. First, a study that explains the teachings and practices of the tarekat (Azwar, 2018; Habiba Abnor et al., 2021; Ziadi, 2018). Second, tarekat is a response to the problems of today's society (Abdullah, 2018; Abdurahman, 2018; Hamzah & Nasrul, 2020; Kertayasa et al., 2021; Shadiqin, 2018). In this case, the tarekat teaching in building religious awareness responds to the erosion of moral and spiritual values (Jamaludin et al., 2021). Third, the instructions of the tarekat are used to strengthen character in the education process (Mudlofar, 2020; Rasyad et al., 2021; Saude et al., 2018), where tarekat teachings have great potential in responding to ongoing global challenges.

This study aims to complement the previous research by focusing on explaining one of the tarekat teachings practiced by TKSYA. Where remembrance, which is TKSYA’s practice, apart from being a medium for remembering and interacting with God, is also a shaper of the tarekat community’s personality. The remembrance practiced can respond to the problems of life faced by TKSYA with humility and mutual respect for fellow human beings and relate to nature through concern for the surrounding environment. Likewise, this study explains that remembrance has character and personality formation implications.

In line with the aim of the study, this study is based on an argument that tarekat teachings are not only understood as a medium of interaction between humans and God but can also be a medium that connects humans with humans as humans with the surrounding environment. With remembrance practiced regularly

¹ State Islamic Institute of Parepare. Indonesia. Email: staminah@iainpare.ac.id.
² Universitas Teknologi Yogyakarta. Email: mustaqim_pabbajah@uty.ac.id.
³ State Islamic Institute of Parepare. Indonesia. Email: hannani@iainpare.ac.id
⁴ State Islamic Institute of Parepare. Indonesia. Email: adampabbajah@iainpare.ac.id
⁵ State Islamic Institute of Parepare. Indonesia. Email: muhiddinbakry@iainpare.ac.id
and consistently, it will form a person’s personality who can respond to life’s problems calmly and wisely. In other words, remembrance as a tarekat practice can solve the complexity of society’s issues during the challenges of uncertain global change.

**ISLAMIC SUFISM**

Sufism was present when materialistic life began to emerge. In response to this, some people distance themselves and focus on worship. These are called the Sufis, and the teachings are Sufism (Siregar, 2012). Sufism teaches morality, including outer and inner aspects (Al-Kaisi, 2021). Sufism is a scientific and practical education of the soul, a cure for heart disease, cultivating virtues, and an essential characteristic in the religious field (El Mouden, 2021). Sufism is tawakkal, a belief in God (trust in God). In this case, sufism is a level of religiosity that emphasizes holiness and purity of the soul (Bakhtyar & Eizadpanah, 2016; Tuychieva, 2020). An understanding in which worshipping God is related to God and all creatures (Richmond, 2020; Serttaş, 2020). Thus, sufism is the basis or fundamental of actualism in forming morals and morals individually and in groups (Conde Solares, 2020; Ishmah, 2020).

Islamic sufism is manifested in the practice of the tarekat, a method or path taken by Sufis to achieve the goals of Sufism (Usman, 2019). The way the tarekat is predicted will gradually become extinct within the scope of modern society. However, some orders still exist and can adapt (Habiba Abor et al., 2021). In this case, the Jam'iyah Khalwatiyah congregation. Tarekat with the modern system or neo-Sufism that follows the development of religious dynamics. The Jam'iyah Khalwatiyah congregation performs rituals and practices in an organized and formally standardized manner (Aminah et al., 2020; Ubaedillah, 2017). Azis (2019) stated that on certain days, the implementation of Jam'iyah Khalwatiyah religious activities such as collective remembrance, recitations, and social events was carried out for the followers of the trek and the general public. Therefore, tarekat, in practice, is a process of self-approach the essential truth, which refers to Sufism (Aziz, 2019).

**Socio-Sufism and Tarekat in Islam**

The term socio-Sufism is a new discourse in the field of Sufism studies. Socio-Sufism emphasizes the internalization of Sufism values within human individuals which makes social reality a vehicle for monotheism (Frishkopf, 2022). Socio-sufism is a teaching of morality that includes inner and outer aspects of life (Muhtador, 2017), a level of religiosity that emphasizes piety and purity of the soul (Muhammad et al., 2013; Zuhri, 2016). An understanding in which worshipping God is related to God and all creatures (Farid, 2017). In this case, sufism is inseparable from the times, as neo-sufism popularized by Fazlur Rahman is the awakening of an appreciation of religious life that is in balance with social life (Sakdullah, 2020). Neo-sufism is also related to the revival of religion that rejects the excessive values of science and technology as a product of modernism (Muzakkir, 2015). There is an awareness of the essentiality of religious aspects and values to understand the concept of religious life in socio-religious reality (Pabbajah et al., 2019). Furthermore, neo-sufism also shapes relations between the state and religious communities (Haroon, 2021). Thus, neo-sufism is an effort to engage in a balanced way in the life of society.

Socio-sufism tends towards socio-moral reconstruction, is an activist in nature, and is enthusiastic about worldly life. It concerns diversity and balance in life (Puttick, 2021). Sakdullah (2020) mentions three backgrounds for the birth of neo-sufism: First, the assumption that sufis are individuals and do not care about their surroundings, resulting in an imbalance in fulfilling physical and spiritual needs. Second, sufis are considered to have a different degree from other humans, namely having higher ma’rifat and mahabbah. Third, the debate about ittihad or the level at which sufis are considered to have united with God. This illogical assumption has led to reactions and criticism by other sufis (Rasool, 2010). This background offers another perspective on how sufism is interpreted until neo-sufism is developed. Therefore, there is a more sociological or contextual view of neo-sufism to contribute to religious life (Asbury, 2022).

The obligations of every Muslim are explained in the field of sufism, including sharia, tariqah, and haqiqah. In this context, tariqah is a method, way, and spiritual path with an esoteric system toward ultimate truth and ma’rifat knowledge (Mawardi, 2022). An inner behavior and a series of religious rituals oriented toward Allah (Islam, 2012). Aside from being a way of spiritual achievement, tarekat is also known to develop institutionally.
(Riyadi, 2014). In it, there is a system of interaction between teachers and students, between members of the congregation, as well as the norms of religious life. Badaruddin & Mahyuddin (2021) state that these interactions are integral to the sufi path as the sanad; the sanad has authority in spiritual cultures such as tarekat. In an organized tariqah, the sanad provides a standard of legitimacy and recognition of a sufi as a teacher and spiritual guide. Therefore, tariqah in Islam has doctrinal and institutional normative sides that complement each other (Riyadi, 2014).

Tarekat is a manifestation of Islamic sufism, a way or path sufis takes to achieve the goals of sufism (Usman, 2019). Dozens of tarekat types were developed, as Nahdlatul Ulama mentioned that 45 types of tarekat are at least implemented in Indonesia (Abdillah, 2014). Tarekat is predicted to become extinct in the scope of modern society slowly. However, some tariqahs still exist and can adapt (Abror et al., 2021), namely the Jam’iyah Khalwatiyah. Tariqah with a modern system or neo-sufism that follows the development of religious dynamics. Tarekat Jam’iyah Khalwatiyah performs rituals and practices in an organized and formally institutionalized manner (Aminah et al., 2020; Ridhwan, 2017). Aminah (2019) states that on certain days the implementation of religious activities of the Jam’iyah Khalwatiyah order, such as dhikr together, recitation, and social events, is not only carried out for the followers of the order but also for the general public. Therefore, tarekat—in practice—is a process of approaching oneself to the essential truth together (Ulum & Dewi, 2021).

**Socio-Sufism: The Transformation of the TKSYA**

The transformational development factor of TKSYA in the leadership of Puang Makkah has brought his congregation to socio-sufism, unlike in the era of Puang Ramma leadership which was in the traditional style. Nowadays, this organization is organized structurally and systematically. Its members or followers have membership card ID, membership database, routine and scheduled Islamic studies or preaching, Ratibul reciting every Friday night, and haul ceremony every year. It is surely contradictory in the era of Puang Ramma, the traditional era (Interview, PR, 2023).

Among the number of congregant who have been blessed, 25 people are worried about being divided into two sects, Am (general) blessed and Tarekat (special) blessed. For the tarekat blessed practice, the congregants sit on a white cloth, while Am blessed only gather after meeting Puang Makkah and are given diplomas. These blessed members are around 20 thousand, excluding the other 20 thousand sympathizers of TKSYA. Furthermore, Puang Makkah also established Zawiyah in Paralloe as a headquarters and center of Halaqah Dhikr at Jalan Baji Bicara number 07, as well as being the residence of Puang Makkah. TKSYA is now increasingly existing along with the increasing number of worshipers and the increasing popularity among the community through various activities, such as the Tarekat syiar, which is simultaneously held. In the syiar or preaching, the worshipers come from various regions such as Papua, Sumatra, Java, and Kalimantan. Thus, if averaged, the number of initiated TKSYA followers is around 50 to 100 people every month.

In its development, TKSYA made various responses to the ongoing changes. TKSYA experiences two forms of change. First is the increase in the number of worshipers following the recitation from Mursyid to Mursyid, such as the 12th Mursyid, Habib Puang Makka. At first, the number of worshipers was only about tens to thousands of people, especially in Makassar. In addition, the development did not only occur in Makassar but also in other parts of the archipelago through the spread of students of the tarekat even abroad. The congregation now also comes from various professions. Second, the changes in the recitation process by the 12th Mursyid, Habib Sheikh Sayyid Abdul Rahim Assegaf Puang Makkah. Initially, the tarekat model was based on Talakki or face-to-face with the Mursyid or teacher. However, at this time, TKSYA creates an organized institution through an association organization like other formal organizations.

**Factors Driving TKSYA’s Change and Development**

The factor influencing change and development is that everyone needs spiritual things. In addition, TKSYA followers come from many regions with multi-professions. It is as expressed by one of the leaders of TKSYA “Where previously followers were more identical to Santri children, while currently, the congregation has many professions, I think with the conditions of the development of the times which are so extraordinary that they
Azis, Pabbajah, Hannani, Pabbajah and Bakry

are looking for spiritual things, of course by learning in a sanad. Let them look for clear sanad, especially this tarekat. I think that is the most influential change in this change” (Interview, with MS, 2023).

TKSYA currently, a few months ago or last year, Mursyid appointed several Caliphs starting from Parepare Pangkep Maros Makassar; about 6 or 7 people were appointed. The aim is to cover areas approximately far from Makassar so those in Pare-pare can stop by Parepare for initiation; it is one way of adding students to this TKSYA so the caliph is an extension of the representation of our Mursyid Habib Puang Makkah. It is also one of the current newly appointed caliphs that is part of the breakthrough from our Mursyid now.

In addition to the Zoom meeting, we also have a podcast about tarekat about sufism, and we have done it several times with our Mursyid, Sheikh Puang Makkah; the podcast is a question and answer related to sufism, the teachings of Sheikh Yusuf then. We put it on our channel it is part of our efforts in this TKSYA to continue to exist and continue to introduce to the congregation, even to all Muslims, what is conveyed in the podcast is the concept of Sheikh Yusuf’s Sufism in general if the Amaliah, of course, cannot also be conveyed to the general public except specifically for congregants who have pledged allegiance.

Islam has provided a framework for the development of science and world civilization. The scientific attitude and spirit shaped by the Islamic world in the Middle Ages gave birth to encyclopedic figures from various sciences. Civilization and progress in the field of science that the Muslims have achieved before are no longer visible. Even Muslims seem static in thought, including many religious views (Said et al., 2006).

The conception of the Tarekat Khalwatiyah

The process of entering the tarekat into Indonesia, apart from being through ulemas who came from outside, there are also most of them through the ulema from among the Indonesian people. Outside clerics were referred to as tarekat carriers to Indonesia, such as Sheikh Nuruddin al-Raniri (d. 1666 AD), a cleric from India. It is suspected that this cleric was the carrier of the Rifa’iyah order for the first time to Indonesia because he was a follower of this tarekat. (Kaprabowo, 2019). However, it is possible that he also mastered the Qadiriyah order because Sheikh Yusuf studied the last order with him in 1644 AD (Van Bruinessen, 2021). Apart from al-Raniri, an outside cleric still brought a certain tarekat for the first time to this country. The scholar in question was named Ali bin Abdallah al-Tayyib al-Azhari, from Mecca. Through this ulema, the Tijaniyah order could be introduced in Indonesia in 1920 AD, with its center in Pagendangan, Tasikmalaya, West Java (Ainah, 2016).

From there, many Indonesians who returned from the Hajj pledged allegiance to be followers of a religious order as long as they lived in Mecca. Some obtained degrees to teach their various religious orders. That is why many Indonesian scholars are going through this second path. Some people are famous as carriers of specific demands for the first time in Indonesia. For example, Hamzah Fanzuri (d. 1590 AD) introduced the Qadiriyah order in Aceh, and Abdul Rauf Singkel (1620-1693 AD) introduced the Syattariyah order also in Aceh (Faslah, 2020; Shadiqin, 2017), Sheikh Yusuf al-Makassariy (1626-1699 AD) introduced the Khalwatiyah order in South Sulawesi (Ridhwan, 2017).

Khalwatiyah comes from the word khalwat, which means to be alone to meditate. As with the Prophet, peace and blessings are upon him when he meditates daily in Cave Hira before receiving revelation. From another perspective, the term and the name Khalwatiyah are attributed to the figure and Sufi, Sheikh Muhammad bin Nur al-Khalwati (w 665 H), as an early mursyid of the Khalwatiyah order, who in his life always lived in lonely places. Viewed in terms of its historical sense, the Khalwatiyah Order is part of the Al-Suhrawardiyah Order (Kaukua, 2020), whose central figure is Sheikh Syihabuddin Abi Hafs Umar al-Suhrawardi al-Baghdadi (539-632 H).

The Khalwatiyah order initially developed rapidly in Egypt thanks to the steadfastness of a murshid, Mushtafa bin Kamaluddin bin Ali al-Bakri al-Shiddiqi, who is more famous as Mustafa al-Bakri, a Sufi from Damascus-Syria, received the order’s degree from his teacher, Sheikh Abdul Latif bin Sheikh Husamuddin al-Halabi (Estuningtiyas, 2020; Malisi, 2012).

The development was more mature when Sheikh Shadruddin al-Khalwatiy (d. 832 H), who received the religious order degree from Sheikh Izzuddin al-Syarwani al-Khalwatiy (d. 815 H/1312 H), received the religious
order degree from his teacher, Sheikh Muhammad al-Khalwati (780 AH/1277 AD), from Sheikh Umar al-Khalwati (d. 730 AH) — even more developed during the period of Sheikh Baha’uddin al-Syarwani al-Bakwi (d. 879 H) who is famous as a mujaddid of the Khalwatiyah Order in practice, along with the development of the order under the control of the murshid Sheikh Yahya Jalaluddin bin Sayyid Baha’uddin al-Syarwani al-Bakwi, which in turn branched off the Khalwatiyah order in the sense of continuing to grow, until now.

Khalwatiyah Socio-religious Practice of Sheikh Yusuf al-Makassar

Various arguments confirm that when the congregational remembrance is carried out, the angels gather and participate in the memory, as well as confirming, and Allah SWT blesses whatever the congregation asks for through their prayers and remembrance. Zikr has a very urgent position, and its implications require specific actualization according to the Sufism perspective and its implementation in the philosophy of Sheikh Yusuf al-Makassary’s Khalwatiyah. According to Sheikh Sayyid Jamaluddin Assegaf Puang Ramma, there are two types of remembrance: oral and qalb (Aminah et al., 2020). In terms of levels, it consists of three, namely (1) ordinary dhikr people, dhikr with the tongue, but the heart forgets, (2) the dhikr of the khash, dhikr with the tongue and the heart is present, (3) the dhikr of the akhash, dhikr with the heart and feel the presence of Allah SWT/ma’rifatullah. Zikr, with this last level, requires Riyadah and the guidance of the mursyid. Jam’iyah Khalwatiyah that the order of al-Khalwatiyah that Sheikh Yusuf took from his teacher is based on the teachings of three types of dhikr, which are compared to the three levels of the soul, nafs-al-ammārah, nafs al-awwamah and nafs al-muţmainnah. Zikr producers deploy interpretive repertoires to construct spirituality’s psychological, interactional, emotional, behavioral, imaginative, and perceptual dimensions (Hussein, 2018).

According to them, the three types of remembrance are as follows:

a. Zikr with the sentence al-tawhid: لا إله إلا الله

b. Zikr with the pronunciation of al-jalalah: الله الله

c. Zikr with the ism al-isyarah: هو هو

In Sheikh Yusuf’s work, Fatḥ Kaifiyyat al-Dhikr, it is called, O brother fillah, if you want to be an expert in the remembrance of Allah and be a special one of His servants, then you must recite the sentence “لا إله إلا الله” in the heart or with the voice, together or alone. You must know and understand that there is no one to be worshipped but Allah; nothing is meant except Allah, who existed before Him.

After completing the dhikr, it seems that what is called warid (benefit = result) of dhikr is expected; hopefully, God will grant it to him. If this is achieved, his existence, that is, his heart, will be improved at that very moment, which may not be able to be enhanced by mujahadah and riyadah in 40 years or more.

Regarding the levels of remembrance in Yusuf’s khalwatiyah order, there are three:

a. Zikr al-Nafi wa’l Isbat is the sentence, لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَٰهَ إِلَٰهُ

b. Dhikr al-Mujarrad wa-al-Djalalah, is the utterance of Allah, Allah

c. Dhikr Isyārahwa al-Anfas is the pronunciation of Huw-Huw

The first dhikr is called oral dhikr as food for the tongue, the second dhikr qalb as food for the heart, and the third dhikr of the soul or dhikr sir as food spirit or secret. It is said that food from the sentence لا إله إلا الله is the life of the body (body); food from the pronunciation of الله الله is the life of the qalb (heart), and the meaning of هو هو is the life of the spirit or sirr (secret). According to Sheikh Yusuf, a servant who remembers (remembers), Allah will be remembered, one who knows (knows) will be known, one who sees will be seen, and one who loves will be loved. It is called the level or maqam fanā’ [(Bugti & Khan, 2019). In such a situation,
the servant feels like he has become God because he has acquired some of God’s attributes. Previously, he purified himself by abandoning his human attributes. Because all that remains are divine attributes, he strives in that situation, called baqā’ (Wilcox, 2011). Meanwhile, Salik is looking at His greatness by witnessing as if he had disappeared and died (Yusuf, 2020).

**TKSYA Practices in Socio-reality**

Implications have the meaning of involvement where there is a value in life through remembrance. Saying the name of Allah SWT in the mouth or the mind or heart by remembering asthma, substance, nature, and what it means, then surrendering to Him our life and death so that there are no more worries and fears in undergoing all trials. In this case, in the social practice Islam and local traditions have been struggling dynamically as seen in the reality of the social and religious life in the Indonesian context (Pabbajah, 2020). Daily remembrance implies that humans sincerely and sincerely will be able to control their breath and blood so that nerves can easily be controlled and can control feelings, and hold anger so that under any circumstances always feel calm. So in thinking, they are wise in dealing with situations. (Molotova & Molotova, 2020)

A person will understand the true meaning of remembrance and carry it out with sincere intentions. Then the benefits of remembrance will have implications for oneself at every step of daily life. Thus, the impact and implications for people who carry out remembrance regularly will always maintain their behavioral movements in improving their personality (Sumanta, 2021). In other words, remembrance can respond to problems of character and morality during the current flow of industrialization and technology (Pabbajah et al., 2020).

Dhikr is an inner relationship with God verbally that begins with justification and belief and then forms heart awareness that causes love. Essentially, remembrance is not an oral act but an act of conscience. Someone who does dhikr means showing the quality of identity as a picture of the thought process's soul because remembrance reflects positive thinking in seeing everything. According to the Islamic perspective, dhikr is the basic principle of management to improve the quality of work performance. These fundamental principles include values such as insaniyyah (humanity), tawhid (unity), shūra (consultation), and istiqamah (steadfastness) in every action (Idris et al., 2019).

In addition, the implications of improving personality are stated by Slodovkaya as, Self-understanding, Positive action, Relationship intimacy, Creative value, appreciation value, and attitude value, worship. Islam is positive teaching, avoiding all negative and descriptive forms (Slobodskaya, 2021). Positive thinking will encourage positive attitudes and behavior and show courage and confidence. Thus, remembrance can give birth to optimism that they will never be afraid of difficulties because they believe every problem must be accessible. Dhikr, in improving personality, according to the author, cannot be separated from efforts to guide the human heart to find the true meaning of life's purpose. The practice of tarekat, apart from being a way to recognize God, can also be used as a medium to shape the personality of a Muslim. This study shows that remembrance, one of the ritual practices of the tarekat congregation, is considered effective in building one’s personality. It can be seen in the findings of this study which explains the conception of the tarekat, which is the basis of TKSYA in historical worship practices. In addition, the practice of worship.

**CONCLUSION**

This preliminary study looks back at the potential of tarekat teachings in responding to today’s social problems. The instructions of the tarekat are not only used as the practice of religious rituals related to God alone but also provide a solution to the socio-moral crisis through the practice of remembrance in shaping personality. In other words, this study can provide an alternative offer for the emergence of some unresolved problems of demoralization and dehumanization. The limitation of this study lies in the data source, which only looks at one tarekat community, considering that there are still several tarekat communities spread across several regions of Indonesia. Therefore, comparative studies are needed by looking at other tarekat communities. Another limitation is that the conception of personality used as the basis for the analysis of this study has not touched the complexities of the tarekat teachings comprehensively. Thus, studies on the tarekat still need to be carried out to explore its potential to respond to changing social developments.
REFERENCES


Pabbajah, M. (2020). Religious Consistency and Commitment to Local Tradition Within the Bawakareng Community in Indonesia’s South Sulawesi. Al-Albab. https://doi.org/10.24260/alalbab.v9i2.1789


Ubaedillah, A. (2017). The rise of the khalwatiyyah Sammān Sufi Order in South Sulawesi: Encountering the local, escaping the global. In Studia Islamika. https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v24i2.4186


INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RELIGION 177

