

Redefinition Meaning of *Tasawwuf* in Contemporary Times

Centre for Modern Languages & Human Sciences,
University Malaysia Pahang,
26600 Pekan, Pahang Darul Makmur, MALAYSIA
Tel: +6 09 424 5000
Fax: +609-424 5555
www.ump.edu.my

Fatkhiddin Mansurov

Centre for Modern Languages & Human Sciences,
University Malaysia Pahang
fatkhiddin@ump.edu.my

Redefinition Meaning of *Tasawwuf* in Contemporary Times

ABSTRACT

Tasawwuf is the purification of the heart from immoral habits in accordance with the will, to obtain eternal happiness and peace, to reach out to the level of maturation in morality through saving the heart from negative behaviour. Contemporary Muslim scholars consider reconstructing the definition of *Tasawwuf* and highlight its essentiality for our life. Since monasticism was not the subject of classical *Tasawwuf*, there was no problem in its definition. According to them the goal of *Tasawwuf* is to live Islam with *Ihsān*, and join the community actively, share experience and knowledge, and help the others to encourage for establishing the peace in the society. In order to demystifying individuals who are internalizing the regulations of *Tasawwuf*, should be comprehended through the contemporary society in the World. The Muslim is someone who trusts, promises safety to his surrounding, and possess interrelated colourful differences in harmony. He evaluates him based on contributions to the well beings of others. His concentration is always on 'We' rather than 'I'. In this description, the Muslims become a negotiator of 'positive action' and nothing can prevent him from acting and contributing to the community positively. In this study we are going to re-define the meaning of spiritual life in accordance with the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, and identify the problems of misunderstandings and practices of *Tasawwuf*.

KEYWORDS: *Tasawwuf, Wird, Dhikr, Tariqah, Ihsān.*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A variety of factors might be associated with the formation of asceticism in Islam. The spread of Islam, unstoppable invasion of neighbouring lands by Arabs, formation of different groups that had been deprived in Islam can be given as some of many examples. However, Sufism (*Tasawwuf*) emerged as an individual branch of Islamic sciences and developed in parallel with other branches of Islamic Sciences such as *Tafsīr*, *Ḥadīth*, and *Fiqh*.

In Islam, asceticism emerged among people who paid more attention and care to their innermost being by having the reflection of boundless obedience to Allah, are free from excessive pursuit of worldly pleasures and affairs, and live in complete submission to Allah. Ascetics believe that the chief aim of acquiring knowledge should be to know Allah and recognize Him, to avoid arguing with each other on different matters, not to forget or ignore original Islamic teachings by dealing with only sound Prophetic traditions, and to stay away from any discord and jealousy on matters of faith. Despite their avoidance of controversy, they nevertheless faced a measure of resistance and objection of that time due to some of their thoughts and visions.

1.1 Early Development of Sufism

This research does not engage in a discussion of the origins and definition of Sufism as such not much research has been dedicated to this. Furthermore, there are numerous approaches to define the Sufism and it is not possible to mention all of them here, because those definitions are derived through the intellectual experiences, senses, visions and approaches of Sufis and ascetics to spirituality and the different states of their souls. In brief, however, *Sharī'a* is the outward appearance of Islam that consists of rituals, prayers, and worship and Sufism is the representation of the inward aspects of Islam. In addition, leading a Sufi life or following a certain Sufi order is a person's personal choice and preference. In Islam, as in other religions, all religious people might

master all thoughts and concepts in Sufism though they are not become a permanent member or traveller of this path.

The word “Sufi” was used for *‘Ābid* (a person who has devoted his entire life to prayer and meditation) during the time of ignorance or *Jāhiliyyah* (Dark Age) prior to Prophet Muḥammad (SAW) among the Arabs, and after Islam, it was used for Abū Hashim al-Kūfī (d. 155H/772M), Jabir ibn Hayyān (d. 199H/815M) and ‘Abdak as-Sūfī (d. 209H/825M) for the first time (Yilmaz, 2007).

While we focus on the use of the term, it should be stressed that during Prophet Muḥammad’s (SAW) time, the word “renunciation”, largely defined the term Sufi. The people who abandoned the worldly affairs and desires were called *zāhids*. Abandoning the worldly affairs or living a life of self-renunciation was not only understood as living in seclusion and staying apart from people. Rather, it was also understood as an extreme level of piety such as living your life in full submission to Allah, being content with any earnings, being a pious person and not seeking position or reputation. In the course of time, the title Sufi started to be used for pious people in parallel with *zuhd*.

Prior to the 11th and 12th centuries, the title *zuhd* was used for those pious people who had high tendencies of abandoning worldly desires. However, in subsequent decades, the majority preferred using the title Sufi over renunciator. By this time, several Sufi orders had already taken form and Sufism had become an established science of spirituality and well-organised path.

During the primary years of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate, renunciation and giving up all worldly affairs and pleasures were quite popular. We may see that during this time, they started building lodges for *zāhids* or ascetics to assemble, dwell, deliver speeches or give courses. The first of such lodgings was built in Ramla (Hirawī, 1946; Jāmī, 1996), present Palestine or Abadan (in present Iran) (Kayānī, 1990), a city near Basra in about 150H/767M. In Khurāsān, the first Sufi *zāwīyah* was built in 178H/794M by Fadl ibn Yaḥyā when he attempted to conquer Central Asia and Khurāsān (al-Athīr, 1965). It is more likely that the lodges in Central Asia were built during this time. These lodges carried out important political functions and were special places for assembling and dwelling for those who were going to fight against the non-believers.

Researchers seeking to illuminate the history of Sufism primarily start with ascetics and Sufis who lived during Ḥasan al-Basrī’s (d. 109H/728M) time and in subsequent decades. It should be noted that the periods of the *ṣahābah*, and *tābi’īn* are defined as the most authentic and reliable periods for the understanding and practice of Islam. Certain features of Islam which are embraced by Sufism started at that time.

Prophet Muḥammad’s (SAW) companions held different visions and understandings of asceticism. These disagreements and different visions were due to different understandings of self-surrender and contentment. Among them, there were spiritual people who understood abandoning worldly affairs and pursuits as self-surrender and stayed in *Suffa* - the chamber next to Prophet Muḥammad’s (SAW) Mosque – *dhikr* and continuous remembrance, and living an ascetic life without neglecting to earn their living. There were also wealthy people among them. Obviously, Prophet Muḥammad’s (SAW) teachings took top priority in defining the level of abandoning worldly affairs and pursuits. In a tradition, in response to Uthman ibn Madh‘ūn’s (RA) wish that he would like to fast his entire life and abstain from marrying (and other pleasures), Prophet Muḥammad (SAW) forbade him doing so and said:

1.2 The Sufi Knowledge from Asceticism to Sufism

Asceticism started taking a more concrete form during the time of the *tābi’īn* who acquired knowledge from *ṣahābah*. Despite the many virtues of this period, it was marred by the spread of dissent, revolt against the leaders, emergence of apostasy, conflicts, and disagreements between different doctrines, an increasing desire for wealth and worldly pleasures, fights among different groups of the society, attacking each other’s lands and regions and accumulation of wealth. These pursuits caused a reaction by encouraging a group of people to renounce the world and encourage

unity and reconciliation. Gradually, the circles of *dhikr* of these ascetics expanded and developed to the point of perfection. The sincerity, self-surrender, content, and satisfaction they felt led to the formation of a set of beliefs to map the spiritual experience they underwent. Ultimately, this culminated in the formation of different Sufi orders.

In time, these orders attracted the attention of great scholars and *zāhids* such as Ḥasan al-Basrī, ‘Abd al-wahid ibn Zaid, Ibrāhīm ibn Adham, ‘Abd Allah ibn Mubārak and Fuḍayl ibn ‘Iyād who laboured tirelessly to spread the teachings of Islam. Consequently, they facilitated an understanding of asceticism to the next generations and showed easier ways of its practices.

The great *mujtahids* and *faqih*s who lived during the age of the *tābi‘īn* and beyond such as Muḥammad ibn Shihāb al-Dhukhrī (d. 124H/742M), Ibrāhīm al-Nakha‘ī (d. 95H/714M), Imām Abū Ḥanīfa Nu‘mān ibn Thābit (d. 149H/767M), Mālik ibn Anas (d. 178H/795M), Abū ‘Amr ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Awza‘ī (d. 157H/774M), and Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161H/778M) were the contemporaries of the earlier mentioned scholars and also lived a life of asceticism. During the process of learning and investigating the relationships between those scholars and other spiritual figures who took asceticism as a top priority, it could be observed that discussions were held with each other and among the groups of different schools. It should be noted that the discussions and arguments between ascetics and experts in Islamic jurisprudence and *ḥadīth* were held peacefully with due respect of the opinions of others. They exchanged ideas and counselled each other. The great ascetic of Khurāsān, Ibrāhīm ibn Adham (d. 165H/782M) is a good example. One may reasonably claim that the ascetics of that time were more respected and prestigious in comparison with the ascetics of other ages.

In his research, Massignon claimed that the Mu‘tazilah, Shī‘a and Khawārij held a negative opinion towards to the ascetics (Massignon, 1990). Although, there were no negative attitudes towards them, it can be seen that there were attempts to correct and change the thoughts and visions of the famous ascetics. It should be noted that these attempts did not aim to slander or admonish ascetics, but sought to guide and advise them.

It is worth emphasising the thoughts and opinions of Abū Ḥanīfah consigned for Ibrāhīm ibn Adham (d. 165H/782M). During his lifetime, Ibrāhīm Adham strived to fast continually, and lead a life of solitude and seclusion. He used to leave for the mountains and worshipped there constantly. Throughout his lifetime, Ibrāhīm Adham paid special attention to “*Murāqabah*” (self-supervision), “*Kamad*” (sad and sorrow), “*Khulla*” (being close to Allah, like a friend), “*Ma‘rifah*” (spiritual knowledge) (Salāh, 1980; Knysh, 2004). He divided asceticism into three parts:

“Obligatory asceticism-abstain and abandon all unlawful acts and food, virtue asceticism – demand and meet your needs in only lawful and permitted ways, safe asceticism – stay away from doubtful acts and food”, (Bursawī, 1985).

Abū Ḥanīfah said to Ibrāhīm ibn Adham:

“You have earned your living in a permitted and lawful way to perform the acts of worship and prayer, and now you need to get knowledge. Since knowledge is the core of worships, prayer, and the foundation of religion”.

In response to this, Ibrāhīm Adham said:

“I advise you to be on the path of worship and put your knowledge into practice, otherwise you will die in loss”, (Ibn al-Kathīr, 1990).

This is intended to stress that the most important duty is to put our knowledge into practice. One day while Ibrāhīm ibn Adham was passing by Awza‘ī (d. 157H/774M), he saw many people gathered around him and upon this, he said:

“Did you really intend to be in this position in front of people? So many children around you as if you are a teacher... Even Abū Hurayrah remained weak and silent (to deliver speech and teachings) when he saw the circle of that many people around him”. Immediately after this, Awza‘ī stood up and left the circle of people (Asākir, 1982).

There are reports that state that Ibrāhīm ibn Adham (d. 165H/782M) did not consider the narration of *ḥadīth* as a pressing job as other Sufis of his time did so, whereas there are other

reports that state that he expressed his praise and commendation for *ḥadīth* narrators. When Ibrāhīm ibn Adham was asked about the reason of abandoning narration of *ḥadīth*, he answered as follows:

“There are three reasons that prevent me from narrating *ḥadīth*: being grateful for Allah’s bounties upon me, repentance for my sins, being ready for death”, (Ibn al-Kathīr, 1990).

By this, he implied that he will not be able to fulfil these duties if he engages in the narration of *ḥadīth*.

‘Abd Allah ibn Mubārak al-Marwazī (d. 118H/736M), who lived in Merv, is also counted as one of the great figures and scholars of his time. He followed a different path from Ibrāhīm ibn Adham’s in asceticism. He was renowned as a trader, a *ḥadīth* expert and an ascetic. Concerning *ḥadīth*, he authored the collection of “*Kitāb al-Zuhd*” (“The Book of Asceticism”). In that book, as it is seen in the title of his work, he collected Prophetic traditions regarding Prophet Muḥammad’s (SAW) and his *sahāba*’s attitudes towards worldly bounties and pleasures and how they lived a balanced life in front of them. In this way, he determined the direction of his ascetic life and strived to be an ascetic as described in the Prophetic traditions. In addition, he also expressed his opinions on certain matters in Islamic jurisprudence. This might be a chief reason that we do not encounter any criticisms or negative approaches to his work and ascetic path.

Imām Abū Yūsuf Ya’qub ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥabīb al-Anṣārī al-Kūfī al-Baghdādī (d. 182H/797M) was superior of his time in Islamic jurisprudence and the first scholar who spread the Ḥanafī School. Thus, the scholars of the path of asceticism demonstrated a critical approach due to his acceptance of the position of judge. As mentioned in “*Shu‘ab al-’Imān*” (The Branches of Faith) written by Imām Bayhaqī (d. 458H/1066M), a *ḥadīth* expert Yaḥyā ibn Ayyūb said: “One day I went to Fuḍayl ibn ‘Iyād’s association with Zafīr, his sheikh also was there, I sat in front of the door. Fuḍayl, gazing at me, said:

“O, Abū Sulaimān Zafīr, I do not like the act of the people of *ḥadīth* who wish disgrace on *ḥadīth*. Let me tell you the most trustworthy lineage, it is – “Messenger of Allah is from Gabriel, Gabriel is from Allah”, (Bayhaqī, 1986).

One day, Hārūn al-Rashīd (d. 193H/809M) invited a number of scholars to his palace, including Fuḍayl and Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah (d. 198H/814M). He presented a small amount of gold to all of the invited guests as a gift, but Fuḍayl did not accept it. Then Sufyān criticised Fuḍayl and told him:

“You should have taken the gold given to you. If you do not need it, you might donate it”.

Fuḍayl used to have conversations with Hārūn al-Rashīd, and told him that Hārūn al-Rashīd is better than him in asceticism. (Ibn Khallikān, 1971).

It should be noted that Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161H/778M), an expert in Islamic jurisprudence, *ḥadīth* expert and ascetic of that time, also expressed his thoughts and opinions regarding asceticism. Sufyān al-Thawrī’s saying: “Asceticism is not only wearing woollen dresses, it is to diminish the worldly pleasures and desires”, is quite famous (Tabrīzī, 1979).

It could be observed that at the end of this century, thoughts and visions in asceticism were more developed and improved in comparison with the past.

Rābi‘a al-‘Adawiyyah (d. 185H/801M) has a special place among the ascetics who lived during the 8th century and is considered to be the one who introduced the concept of Divine Love. Whenever people tell her:

“I love you for the sake of Allah”, she responded:

“Then do not oppose Allah by committing sins that I love.” (Attar, 2013).

Rābi‘a al-‘Adawiyyah was born in Basra and lived there. At times she secluded from people and left for the desert. Several ascetics such as Sufyān al-Thawrī used to meet with her to discuss asceticism and piety. She is considered to be among the ascetics and Sufis who used to criticise the activities of *ḥadīth* experts. Because, the religious scholars of that time who were studying the science of Prophetic traditions with the chain of narrations had already started investigating the

reliability of narrators in terms of concepts such as *Tawhīd*, asceticism, piety and proper conduct. In general, Rābi‘a al-‘Adawiyyah showed how to love Allah and how to perform it in asceticism.

Abū Maḥfūz Ma‘rūf Ibn Fayruz al-Karkhī (d. 200H/816M) was born in the village of Karkh near Baghdād. He was a Christian and converted to Islam. Ma‘rūf al-Karkhī performed his activities in Baghdād, and stated that love of Allah is a gift given by Him and it is neither something that people achieve by their efforts nor is it a rank; it is a state (Yilmaz, 2007). He also loved the poor and preferred being poor.

One day, while Abū Yūsuf an expert in Islamic jurisprudence of that time and a member of the Ḥanafī School, was suffering an illness, Ma‘rūf al-Karkhī sent one of his disciples to Abū Yūsuf, when his disciple arrived there, his funeral ceremony was taking place and it was too late when Karkhī learned the bad news and made him feel sad about the incident. The bearer of the news asked him:

“Why do you feel sad and sorry for the one who was a judge, close friend of governors and inclined for wealth and worldly affairs?”

Karkhī responded:

“I had a dream yesterday night. In the dream, I entered the paradise and saw a recently-completed castle, and the servants there stood up. I asked them: Who is this castle for? They replied: This castle has been built for Abū Yūsuf Ya‘qub ibn Ibrāhīm Anṣārī”. Astonished by this, I asked again: “Glory be to Allah! How did he get ascended to this rank”?

They replied:

“Because, he educated people and was patient for the sufferings inflicted by them.” (Al-Qurashī, 1993).

Ismā‘īl ibn Shaddād related the following:

One day, Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah asked us:

“What did this ascetic accomplish in Bagdad?”

We asked him: “Who are you talking about?”

He said: “Abū Maḥfūz Ma‘rūf”.

We replied: “He did a lot of good things and favours to people”.

He concluded:

“If he was still alive in this town, it would be of that town’s advantage and benefit” (al-Dhahabī, 1985).

During this time, ascetics undertook their activities particularly in Basra and Kūfah, and this provided them good opportunities to exchange their thoughts and methods with the scholars of different branches of Islamic sciences and discuss certain matters with them.

The above period is considered the era of asceticism, and the thoughts and visions of ascetics caught the special attention of the Muslim religious leaders and scholars of that time. Thus there was no criticism of their thoughts as it would appear in the following decades. It is observed that only the act of wearing woollen clothes by several ascetics who embarked on this path was criticised.

It should be noted that this time’s ascetics avoided preaching at mosques and giving education, and this is a main difference between these ascetics and the ones who lived in the following era. They focused their life on constant worship and prayer.

“Are you the same people who said so-and-so? By Allah, I am more submissive to Allah and more afraid of Him than you; yet I fast and break my fast, I do sleep and I also marry women. So he who does not follow my tradition in religion, is not from me (not one of my followers)”, (al-Bukhari I. I., 2013).

In this way, the Prophet (SAW) set a good example and introduced certain limits when seeking to abandon worldly affairs and pleasures. This indicates that seclusion or abandoning worldly affairs and pleasures was raised as an important issue even during Prophet Muḥammad’s (SAW) time and was discussed between his companions. Moreover, great leaders in terms of

worldly and spiritual matters such as Abū Bakr Siddīq, ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affān, ‘Alī ibn Abi Tālib, Abū Huraira, Salmān Fārisī, Huzaifa ibn Yamān (R. ‘Anhum) set a perfect example of living an ideal life to others.

1.3 The Formation of Sufi *Tarīqahs*

The 12th – 13th century was played a key role in the process of “formalization” of Sufism. Negative approaches and views towards Sufism that had been inherited from the past, especially those resulting from a condemnation of Husain ibn Manṣūr Khallāj for becoming a disbeliever and his execution, began to become positive and their thoughts and concepts started to be evaluated objectively. The Sufis who lived during that age developed and reinforced the concepts, views and other aspects of Sufism that had reached them from the past and endeavored to defend it from various external criticisms. It should be noted that the political situation in the Muslim world bolstered the development process. The threat of the Christians in the West, the weakened central government, the collapsing ‘Abbāsids government and many internal problems rallied people around Sufism.

Among the Sufi scholars who transformed Sufism into the mainstream were ‘Abd Allah Anṣārī al-Hirawī (d. 481H/1089M), Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī (d. 505H/1111M), ‘Abd al-Qādir Gīlānī (d. 561H/1166M), Abū Najib Suhrawardī (d. 563H/1168M), Najmu al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 618H/1221M) and, Khawājah Yūsuf Hamadānī (d. 535H/1140M). These Sufi masters carried out important activities in support of Sufism.

Abū Ismā‘īl ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Qushairī (d. 465H/1072M), one of the renowned Sufi scholars who defended Sufism, is the author of “*Risālah al-Qushairīyya*”. He was known as a great scholar who combined the sciences of *Sharī‘a* and *īmān*. He learnt Sufism from Abū ‘Alī Daqqāq (d. 406H/1016M). He embarked on creating literal works after the death of his teacher, Abū ‘Alī Daqqāq. Al-Qushairī wrote his book concerning exegesis before 410H/1020M. Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī stated:

“There are two principles of sainthood: the first one is abiding by the laws of *Sharī‘a* externally and the second one is being full of the light of truth internally” (al-Naysabūrī, 1996).

If those two principles are found in an individual simultaneously and the person knows them, then in the ensuing step, he will also know sainthood. The symptoms of this are as follows: “The person rejoices in his prayers and worship, and he practices the remembrance of Allah constantly due to his nearness to Him” (al-Naisabūrī, 1996). Al-Qushairī was the adherent of the Ash‘arite *madhhab* in ‘*aqīda* and Shāfi‘ī *madhhab* in *fiqh* (Ibn Khallikān, 1971).

Imām Ghazālī is credited as the most distinguished scholar who composed the most efficient works regarding Sufism. His book titled *Iḥyā ‘Ulūm al-Dīn* (The Revival of Religious Sciences) served to rescue Sufism from criticism. It seems that his masterpiece summarized all the works of scholars before him to defend Sufism. His works made a huge contribution to the development of Sufism.

While Knysh emphasizes his role in defending Sufism in his researches, he claims that Ghazālī succeeded to defend Sufism due to his reputation and weight among the scholars and people rather than the influence of his work, because there had been attempts for the same purpose before his age (Knysh, 2004). In addition to this, we should state that the methods in writing books regarding Sufism differ considerably from each other, and Ghazālī’s works which embrace a diverse range of sciences stand superior compared to other scholars’ works because he was familiar with the philosophical subjects, mastered the Holy Qur’an and the science of *ḥadīth* and considered the level of the people that he addressed. On the other hand, Sufism had already been formed as an independent religious science.

It should also be noted that a number of works are available that were made during his time to refute his thoughts and works. It seems that some scholars such as Ibn al-Jawzī and Ibn Taymiyyah paid great attention to traditional narrations and required every condition to be justified by *ḥadīth*. The truth and all the matters regarding the internal face of deeds and their spiritual

conditions and the states that Sufis were experiencing might not be mentioned or determined in the Holy Qur'an or *ḥadīth* books.

Another influential Islamic Sufi religious figure of that age and the founder of *Qādiriyyah Ṭarīqah* was Sayyid 'Abd al-Qādir ibn Abū Sālih al-Ḥasanī Gīlānī (d. 561H/1166M). 'Abd al-Qādir Gīlānī immigrated to Baghdād in his youth 488H/1095M and received knowledge from the masters of Sufism. He is considered a Sufi of the Ḥanbalī School. He started teaching Sufism in 521H/1127M in Baghdād and Islamic jurisprudence in 528H/1134M at a madrasah that belonged to his teacher Abū Sa'd and began giving fatwās, as well. 'Abd al-Qādir Gīlānī died in 561H/1166M. Critics of Sufism such as Ibn al-Jawzī and Ibn Taymiyyah did not oppose him or refute his thoughts and views because he was an adherent of the Ḥanbalī School and mastered the science of *ḥadīth*. They made use of his views regarding *'aqidah*.

Najmu al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 618H/1221M) held a significant position in Sufism of that age and founded the *Kubrawiyya Ṭarīqah*. He is remembered for his bravery and expressing the truth without the fear of people's blamed or threat. Najm al-Dīn Kubrā was excellent in the fields of *ḥadīth*, *fiqh*, and *tafsīr* and he was interested in Sufism under the influence of Ruzbikhān Wazzān al-Miṣrī (d. 584H/1188M), an adherent of *Suhrawardiyya Ṭarīqah*, while he was studying in Egypt. He embarked on this path and devoted himself to it after Abū al-Faraj Tabrizī (died at the turn of the 5th – 6th H/11th -12th M century) summoned him to do so. He studied in a number of different countries. Furthermore, he received knowledge from the most famous scholars of his time such as Abū Ṭāhir al-Salafī (d. 587H/1191M), Abū al-A'lā al-Hamadānī (d. 569H/1173M), Muḥammad ibn Bunyamin (d. 573H/1187M) and 'Abd al-Mun'im ibn al-Farawī (d. 587H/1191M) (Gokbulut, 2010).

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 605H/1209M) also used to come to him for answers to his questions. One day, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī came to him with a man who was an adherent of the Mu'tazilah doctrine and asked him a question regarding gnosis (*al-Ma'rifah*) and upon their question, they received the following reply:

“It is the weakness and defeat of *nafs* against everything burdened or assigned on it” (Taymiyya, 1995)

This answer was appreciated and supported by Ibn Taymiyyah who would approach Sufic views critically.

When Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī curiously asked him about how to attain this rank, he said: “This can be achieved thorough abandoning fame and pleasure of comfort” (al-Dhahabī, 1985). Upon this, al-Rāzī told him that he was not capable of doing so. However, his partner, an adherent of the Mu'tazilah doctrine, changed his spiritual path and told him that he could do so and became a disciple of Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (al-Dhahabī, 1985).

Abū Najib al-Suhrawardī (d. 563H/1168M) who founded the *Suhrawardiyya Ṭarīqah* bequeathed a collection of his works regarding Sufism to the next generations. Of his works, “*Ādāb al-Murīdīn*” (“Proper conducts of disciples”) played a key role in the formation of his Sufi order. Suhrawardī traces his lineage back to Abū Bakr al-Siddiq (RA). This appeared as a result of demonstrating his disagreement and opposition to the *Shī'a*, another denomination of the religion of Islam. He worked as a teacher at the “*Nizāmiyyah Madrasah*” for two years during 545-547H/1150-1152M.

The principal of “*Nizāmiyyah Madrasah*” might be changed by the Seljuq king Sultan Muḥammad due to the disorder that occurred at the college in 547H/1152M (Ibn al-Jawzī, 1995). He travelled to Shām in 557H/1162M but could not make it to Bayt al-Maqdis, and then returned to Baghdad and died there. During his journey, he stopped in Mosul (in present Iraq) and preached at a mosque called “*Atīq*” (al-Safadi, 2000). Moreover, he also taught people in another madrasah and retreat (Ibn al-Kathīr, 1990). Al-Suhrawardī taught at that madrasah starting from the year 531H/1136M. In addition, he also preached at the mosque of “*Madīnah*” in Baghdād and taught there (Ibn al-Jawzī, 1995).

Abū Najīb al-Suhrawardī facilitated practicing and following the path of Sufism to those who were willing to embark on this spiritual path. Besides enhancing the spiritual life standards of his disciples who lived an austere life, he also created a good atmosphere for those who were living a life of luxury to enter the spiritual path and join his community (Knysh, 2004). Consequently, this accelerated the spread of *Suhrawardiyya Ṭarīqah* which emerged as one of the early Sufi orders.

His nephew Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d. 632H/1234M) also contributed considerably to the formation of *Suhrawardiyya Ṭarīqah*. Besides his high position as a prominent master of Sufism of his time, the support given to his spiritual path's expansion by the 'Abbāsīd caliph al-Nasir (d. 623H/1225M) also helped *Suhrawardiyya Ṭarīqah* spread across the region. Al-Nasir sought to utilize his thoughts as an ideology in his regions to strengthen and fortify his weakened government. This was the first time in the history of Sufism that Sufism was supported by the government on such a large scale and considered by high-ranked authorities of the state seriously. We can assure that there was not any other religious community like *Suhrawardiyya Ṭarīqah* who achieved reputation and the reverence of people of different social standings.

Sufi orders started to emerge in Central Asia from that age, too. Before that age, all Sufi thoughts and views had developed based on Khurāsānian Sufism, but after that age, several independent Sufi orders started to be founded and take form with the initiatives of Sufi people in Central Asia. Sufism had existed in Central Asia mainly in the form of asceticism. Religious scholars of Central Asia were renowned as ascetics besides their reputation and fame as masters of other religious sciences. A number of Sufi scholars such as Fudayl ibn 'Iyād (d. 187H/803M) and Abū Bakr al-Shiblī (d. 334H/946M) who emigrated from Central Asia to the central cities of the Caliphate of that time excelled in their knowledge and established the foundation and principle ideas and thoughts regarding Sufism.

Unlike the Sufis dwelling in Baghdād, Basra or Kūfah, they did not appear in public demonstrating their thoughts and views that might cause discord and resistance. Among them, only al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmīdhī's (d. 255H/869M) ideology named "*Khātām al-Awliyā*" should be excluded (Yilmaz, 2007).

At such a significant turning point, Khawājah Yūsuf Hamadānī travelled to different cities in Central Asia and established the fundamental thoughts of Sufism which would serve for the development of Sufi orders such as the *Khawājagān*, *Yasawiyyah*, and *Naqshbandiyyah* orders (Fatkhiddin Mansurov&Faudzinaim Hj. Badaruddin, 2013).

2.0 REDEFINITION OF *TAŞAWWUF* IN THE CONTEMPORARY TIMES

How can a person practice a Sufi life in other words a spiritual life in these days where everything is accounted with material power and possession, along with personal wishes and desires put before everything else in the contemporary times? How can we explain the *Taşawwuf* to the people at the present century?

Whereas, *Taşawwuf* is the purification of the heart from immoral habits in accordance with the will to reach eternal happiness and peace, to reach out to the level of maturation in morality through saving the heart from negative things, recognition of own and self thoroughly. The Sufi *ṭarīqahs* can be defined simply as the systematic form of Sufism.

There are various forms for definitions of *Taşawwuf* due to the diverse perspectives of Sufis. In order to propose brief introduction to *Taşawwuf*, it is appropriate to focus on two arguments. The first argument is that the classical systematic science of *Taşawwuf* has served thoroughly for a long period of time. In terms of contemporary conditions, Muslim scholars consider to reconstruct definition of the *Taşawwuf* and indicate to the individuals that it is one of the essential parts of our life. The second argument is that since praxis has not been the subject of classical *Taşawwuf*, it seems to be crucial to include this dimension in the renewed study of *Taşawwuf*. It can be argued that such an inclusion will make *Taşawwuf* more encompassing and more compatible with the

overall teaching of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. In this regard, *Taşawwuf* will not only turning to Hereafter and discourages facing to the world, however will also provide a solid ground for the spiritual life of human being.

Overall, the basic point that all agree with is that the goal of *Taşawwuf* is to live Islam. Most probably, one of the most contemplated phenomena by human beings is the truth of its creation, the relation with the universe and the establishment of a true relationship between them. In order to describe this metaphysical system, the prophets were sent by Allah to demonstrate the true path, as well as the scholars, *mujtahids*, and Sufi sheiks undertook this mission to explain and illuminate the paths of prophets. Each one of them addressed one of the parts of the truth, seeking to comply with their duties, and left this temporary world for the sake of the real world, Hereafter. Likewise, the Sufi sheikh shave tried to complete their duties and left behind the signs of the light that helped humanity to reach the truth. Initially, a person has a physical and a metaphysical conscious.

The *Taşawwuf* aims to nourish the metaphysical side of a human being. Therefore, the most crucial purpose of *Taşawwuf* is to provide the flourish of faith in the hearts in terms of the key principles of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. In other words, the most attractive, brilliant and wealthy way of sainthood is adhering to *Sunnah* that is following Prophet (SAW) by concentrating on the prototypical personality of the Prophet of Islam. Hence, *Sunnah* is very significant in *Taşawwuf*. In addition to this perspective, in order to be away from sins, to practice with one's knowledge, and to adjust one's heart and intention, practicing becomes more significant notion as much as preaching. Undeniably, practicing in Islam is an essential stage as much as faith due to the faith may be revealed by practice.

Therefore, both notions are inseparable concept of *Taşawwuf*. In contrary to conventional understanding of asceticism (*zuhd*), the one of great contribution of *Taşawwuf* for understanding the Qur'an and *Sunnah* in nowadays is providing to involve religious deeds continuously as an active participant of the contemporary community in the direct light of Qur'an and *Sunnah*. Thus, Muslims who live according to Sufi principles, may join community actively, share their experience and knowledge, help the others and to encourage for establishing the peace in the society. In order to demystifying individuals who are internalizing the regulations of *Taşawwuf*, should be concentrate on the style of living of the Muslim in the contemporary society in the World. The Muslims have been discussing this understanding what is related to the inner life of believers.

Therefore, divine imperatives, as deeply presented in the Qur'an, constitute the main pillar of this aspect. The Muslim is someone who trusts, a candidate of trust worthy future, promises safety to his surrounding, and who has interrelated colorful differences in harmony. The Muslim is an exemplary person, who opens his/her heart to everyone. She/he loves everyone and everything for Allah's sake, breathes love, and creates an aura of love always around him/her. They evaluate him/her based on contributions to the well beings of others. The concentration of them is always on 'we' rather than 'I.' Therefore, the Muslims are not selfish, but someone who thinks of others. In this description, the Muslims become a negotiator of 'positive action' and nothing can prevent him/her from acting and contributing to the community positively. As highlighted earlier, *Taşawwuf* in general has a direct relationship with everyday life. Therefore, clashes, conflicts and complications among Muslims and non-Muslims may be reduced and the world becomes more peaceful and habitable place for human beings. On the other hand, unfortunately there are misunderstandings in the society regarding micro level difficulties such as individual experiences on *Taşawwuf*.

For instance, when *Taşawwuf* is mentioned, the meaning of the *Taşawwuf* is evoked as insignificance of the world and priority of the Hereafter comes to mind. The importance of keeping distance from the world via giving examples of the life and words of the lives of great personalities in *Taşawwuf* is often cited. Although, some contemporary Muslims who by relating to the stories and anecdotes about *Taşawwuf* lays the reason of Muslims being far below the expected standards on understanding of *Taşawwuf* books keeping Muslims away from the world. Similarly, those who read literature related to *Taşawwuf* and learn the lives of Sufis claim that they detach themselves

from the worldly life and sustain worship centered life. Thus, it is said that all these caused Muslims to lag far behind the non-Muslim nations.

However, this is one the result of misunderstanding and misevaluation of *Taşawwuf*. In regarding these issues, scholars should thoroughly study the political history of the eras of great personalities of *Taşawwuf*. If scholars consider it from this perspective, they can see that ignoring the world in the expense of Hereafter or exclusion of the world does not exist in Muslim states especially in the times of such great personalities and leading figures of the Sufi tradition. When scholars look at the lives of those who truly understand the practice of Sufism nowadays, they can observe that they neither ignore worldly life nor cloister themselves in retreats and spend all their nights only with worship. The way they follow is an endeavor to be a righteous servant to Allah and gain proximity, giving significance to supplementary prayers more than others, establishing solidarity among themselves more than other Muslims, and continuing their worldly lives as usual.

Therefore, not only do they give importance to what is mentioned in these studies or books however also endeavor to elevate their life standards providing better facilities to their families and to mobilize their financial means so that Islam can be dwelled in wider geographies. Moreover, scholars all know that many Muslims regardless of their profession adopt Sufi principles as their lifestyle. It does not hinder their business, cultural and economic developments. On the contrary, it helps improving tolerance and solidarity among communities, besides material and spiritual welfare of their countries. This reality shows us that the claims the words that promote asceticism, stories and Sufi tales, which tear Muslims off the world are not right. The Muslim perspective on the worldly affairs in past was the same as the Muslims today. Nevertheless, there are groups that observe different lifestyles and practices compared to common Muslim communities in regards of Islamic perspectives in today's world. They do not have any inclination to change the majorities' direction. The best way is to accept these people as they reflect one part of the 'truth' as long as they do not contradict pillars and visible commands of the religion.

Finally, as an advice of Yūsuf Hamadānī to his *murīd* Abdukhāliq Ghijduwānī: "*O my son! Close two doors, and open two doors! Close the door of being Sheikh, open the door of service; close the door of privacy, open the door of preach and intercourse!*" (Tosun, 2002), we can say that publics who engaged the Sufi lifestyle nowadays emphasize the same things strongly and discourages heading/facing to the world. When we go through the lives of these people who live in *ṭarīqah*, we see that they neither split from the world nor worshipping days and nights by shutting themselves in a place. What is only seen in their life is giving priority to servant hood, giving more importance than other people to supplementary prayers, never missing *wirds* (daily *dhikr*) that narrated from great scholars in additions to five daily prayers, practicing solidarity among each other more than other Muslims and continue their daily lives. It means they give importance to what is written in these books and at the same time strive to lift their life standards, provide better facilities to families, and mobilize their financial facilities to make Islam practiced in wider geographies. It is known that many high-level businessmen, bureaucrat, engineer, and doctors have adopted Sufi principles as their lifestyle.

3.0 CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, many significant works and books regarding Sufism were created by the Sufi scholars of that time and some of those prominent scholars were renowned as the founders of the great Sufi orders.

One of the key factors for Sufism to be accepted by many people was the influence of the political and social atmospheres. On one hand, the formation of Sufi orders through the process of people's increasing interest towards them, and on the other hand, the science of Sufism that developed and enriched over many centuries required to be channeled in a certain direction and discipline the rules and regulations concerning proper conduct and good nature.

During that age, for the first time in the history of Sufism, prominent Sufi scholars and leading figures of Sufi orders began to be involved in stabilizing the government as an ideological power and authority.

Taşawwuf, as the content, became a science that is away from “*shatafāt*”, in the frame of *Ahl al-Sunnah* and tightly connected to Qur’an and *Sunnah*. It was under the spiritual influence of Sufis like İmam Abū Ḥamid Ghazālī and Khawājah Yūsuf Hamadānī who emphasized “*Şahw*” and “*Tamkīn*”. At the same time, they have shown the path to be “*İnsān Kāmīl*” (complete human) for the modern man who approves every way permissible to reach and satisfy the desires of the *nafs*, and get confused under the pressure of never ending desires and wishes.

In addition, we can say that in accordance with the mystery of the expression “*man lam yadhuq lam ya’rif*” (can’t know without tasting), those who do not follow the Sufi path should not criticize followers of the Sufi path, not to open the door of criticism, and not to make conclusions on secrets that they have not experienced. Also those who are in the path of *ṭarīqah*, should know that *Sharī’a* is the essence, and *ṭarīqah* is fruit and value of *Taşawwuf*.

REFERENCES

- Al-Athīr, I. 1965. *Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh* (Vol. IV). Beirut.
- Al-Bukhārī, I. 1993. *al-Jāmi' al-Sahīh*. Istanbul.
- Al-Dhahabī, S. 1985. *Siyar-u A'lām al-Nubalā* (Vol. 8). Dimashq: Dār al-Fikr.
- Al-Dhahabī, S. M. 1989. *Tarīkh al-Islam (History of Islam)* (Vol. 5). Beirut.
- Algar, H. 1980. *A Brief History of the Naqshbandi Order*. University of Chicago.
- Algar, H. 1985. *Abū Ya'qūb Hamadānī*. Encyclopedia Iranica, 1.
- Algar, H. 2007. *Nakshibendilik*. Istanbul: Insan Publication.
- Al-Ghazālī, A. H. 2002. *Ihyā' Ulūm al-Dīn* (Vol. 2). Istanbul: Bedir Publication.
- Al-Isfahānī, A. N. 1983. *Hilyatu'l-Awliyā* (Vol. 4). Beirut.
- Al-Qurashī. 1993. *al-Jawāhir al-Mudiyyah fī Tabaqāt al-Ḥanafīyyah*. (Vol. 2). Cairo.
- Al-Qushairī, A. 2014. *Risālah al-Qushairiyya (Kuseyri Risalesi)*. (S. Uludag, Trans.) Istanbul: Dergah.
- Al-Naisabūrī, N. 1996. *Tafsīr Gharāib al-Qur'ān wa Raghāib al-Furqān*. Beirut.
- Al-Safadī, S. 2000. *Kitāb al-Wāfi bi al-Wafāyāt*. (Vol. 1). Beirut: Dār al-Ihyā al-Turāth al-'Arabī.
- Al-Safī, 'A. 1977. *Rashahāt 'Ain al-Ḥayāt*. Tehran.
- Al-Sha'rānī. 2006. *al-Tabaqāt al-Kubrā al-Musammah bi Lawāqih al-Anwār fī Tabaqāt al-Akhyār*. (Vol. 1). Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah.
- Asākir, I. 1982. *Tarīkh-i Dimashq*. (Vol. 37). Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah.
- 'Attār, F. 2013. *Tadhkirah al-Awliyā (Tezkiretul Evliya)*. (S. Uludag, Trans.) Istanbul: Semerkand.
- Bayhaqī, I. A. 1986. *Shu'ab al-'Imān*. (Vol. 3). Beirut: Dār al-Fikr.
- Bursawī, I. H. 1985. *Ruh al-Bayān*. (Vol. 2). Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah.
- Fatkhiddin Manşurov & Faudzinaim Hj. Badaruddin. 2013. *Hace Yūsuf Hemedani: İki Büyüük Sufi Tarikatının İlham Kaynağı (Khawājah Yūsuf Hamadānī: The Inspirer of Two Major Sufi Tariqahs)*. Turkey: Journal of Islamic Studies, 159-174.
- Gokbulut, S. 2010. *Necmeddin-i Kubra*. Istanbul: Insan.
- Hamadānī, K. Y. {n. d.}. Manuscript no.1028. *Risālah dar Ādāb'ī Tarīqa*. Istanbul: Istanbul Millet Library 'Alī Emīrī Farsī.
- Hirawī, A. 1946. *Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyyah*. Kābul.
- Ibn al-Jawzī, A. 1995. *al-Muntazam fī Tarīkh al-Mulūk wa al-Umam*. (Vol. 3). Beirut.
- Ibn al-Kathīr, I. 1990. *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*. (Vol. 10). Beirut: Maktabah al-Ma'ārif.
- Ibn Khallikān, S. D. 1971. *Wafāyāt al-A'yān*. (Vol. 4). Beirut: Dār al-Sadr.

- Jāmī, A. 1996. *Nafakhāt al-Uns min Hadharāt al-Quds*. Tehrān.
- Kayānī, M. 1990. *Tarīkh-i Khonqoh dar Eron*. Tehrān.
- Khismatulin, A. A. 2001. *Sūfī zm v Sentralnoy Azii. (Sufism in Central Asia)*. Sankt Petersburg: Science of Academy of Russia Oriental Institute of Sankt Petersburg.
- Knysh, A. 2004. *Islamic Mysticism*. Saint Petersburg.
- Massignon, L. 1990. *Sufism* (Vol. 9). Cairo: Dāirat al-Ma‘ārif al-Islāmiyyah.
- Mustafa, R. E. 2008. *Tasavvuf Sozlugu (Dictionary of Sufism)*. Istanbul.
- Salāh, I. 1980. *Muqaddimāt*. Beirut.
- Shushud, H. L. 1958. *Islam Tasavvufunda Hacegan Hanedani*. Istanbul.
- Tabrizī, W. 1979. *Mishkāt al-Masābih* (Vol. 3). Beirut: Dār al-Fikr.
- Taymiyya, I. 1995. *al-Fatāwa al-Kubrā: Majmū‘āt Fatāwā* (Vol. 1). Riyād.
- Tosun, N. 2002. *Bahaeddin Naksbend*. Istanbul: İnsan.
- Trimingham, J. S. 1989. *The Sufi Orders in Islam*. (O. F. Akimushkin, Trans.) Moscow.
- Yilmaz, H. K. 2007. *Tasavvuf ve Tarikatlar (Sufism and Sufi Orders)*. Istanbul.

Bio Data

Fathuddin Mansurov from Uzbekistan is a Lecturer at Centre for Modern Languages & Human Sciences, University Malaysia Pahang. His PhD. is in Sufism from University Kebangsaan Malaysia (waiting for Viva). Islamic Civilization, Islamic Theology and Turkish Language and Literature are some areas of his specialization.