From Mystical Unveiling to Spiritual Therapy: Kasyf and the Reconstruction of Sufi Healing in the Syadziliyah

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Abstract

This article seeks to discuss of *kasyf*—the unveiling of inner truths—in the Syadziliyah Sufi healing practices of Tulungagung, Indonesia, focusing on *santri* experiences. Employing a phenomenological approach, data were gathered through observations and in-depth interviews with *santri* who have undergone *kasyf*. This article argues that *kasyf* significantly supports *tazkiyatun nafs* (self-purification) and enhances spiritual well-being. Notably, *santri* display differing levels of *kasyf* despite following the same *zikir* practices, highlighting its nature as a divinely bestowed experience rather than a structured objective. This sets Syadziliyah healing apart from other Sufi traditions, which often emphasize more systematic spiritual and psychological frameworks. The study also critiques Karim Mitha's notion of "self-knowledge," proposing "soul-knowledge"—an integrative framework combining self-knowledge and *tazkiyatun nafs*—to guide *salik* toward discovering the "true soul." The research presents a novel model of transformative Sufi healing in the Syadziliyah tradition, emphasizing individualized spiritual experiences and the central role of divine grace in personal spiritual development.

Keywords: *Kasyf, Sufi Healing, Spiritual Therapy, Tarekat Syadziliyah*

Introduction

Sufism is a mystical dimension within Islam. Mysticism itself is the great spiritual current that runs through all religions. In its widest sense it may be denned as the consciousness of the One Reality—be it called Wisdom, Light, Love, or Nothing.[1] Islamic mysticism, or Sufism, seeks to distinguish between the Real and the unreal, directing the soul toward the Real and aligning it with ultimate truth. According to this perspective, Sufism represents the spiritual core of the Islamic tradition. Its teachings, which harmonize the paths of love and knowledge, are deeply

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[1] Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (The University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 2011), 4–23.

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How to Cite this Article
Sauqi, A. (2026). From Mystical Unveiling to Spiritual Therapy; Kasyf and the Reconstruction of Sufi Healing in the Syadziliyah. *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman*, 37(1), 191-210. https://doi.org/10.33367/tribakti.v37i1.8008

rooted in some of the most profound verses of the Qur'an and the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad.[2]

One of the Sufi orders that continues to thriving in Indonesia and has gained significant followings in various countries is the Syadziliyah. From the eleventh century onward, Sufi movements became increasingly organized into orders, often named after their founders. The Syadziliyah, for instance, takes its name from the prominent Moroccan-born Sufi master, Abu Hasan Asy-Syadzili. Since the early twentieth century, Sufi orders—beginning with the Syadziliyah—have expanded beyond the Islamic world, establishing a presence in Europe, the Americas, and Southeast Asia, including Indonesia.[3] In certain countries, such as Senegal and Sudan, the influence of Sufi orders is so pervasive that religious and communal identities at the level of sharia are often shaped by affiliation with a particular order.[4]

The Syadziliyah has been experiencing steady and significant growth. In East Java, the Tulungagung Regency has emerged as a central hub for the order's development. Within this southern coastal region, a key institution contributing to the spread and consolidation of the Syadziliyah is the Pondok Pesulukan Agung (PPA), an *pesantren* that has played a pivotal role in nurturing and promoting the order's teachings.[5]

In practice, the PPA emphasizes the cultivation and experiential realization of the inner (*esoteric*) dimensions of Islam, without neglecting the outer (*exoteric*) aspects. Central to its spiritual practice is the purification of the soul (*tazkiyatun an-nafs*), pursued through rigorous spiritual struggle (*mujahadah*). This process involves the disciplined efforts of the Sufi practitioner to attain self-mastery, maintain constant awareness of divine supervision, and live with a continuous sense of being in the presence of Allah (SWT). The attainment of such spiritual refinement necessitates sustained mental training and spiritual exercise (*riyadah*), which are systematically structured to develop proper inner attitudes and enforce strict behavioral discipline.[6] The teachings of the PPA do not emphasize supernatural powers, as is the case with some other religious orders in Indonesia. Instead, they place greater emphasis on purity of heart.[7] This focus constitutes one of the primary reasons the PPA is of particular scholarly interest.

The teachings of the Syadziliyah are widely appreciated for their clarity and accessibility. One such teaching concerns the concept and experience of *kasyf*. In general terms, *kasyf* refers to the unveiling of spiritual veils (*hijāb*) or the illumination of the inner vision (*baṣīrah*). In the context of this study, the phenomenon of *kasyf* is approached epistemologically, drawing upon the arguments of Al-Ghazali. This connection is understandable, given that Shaykh Abu Hasan Asy-Syadzili, although he did not author any written works, is known to have studied Al-Ghazali's writings—particularly *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*—which significantly influenced his spiritual outlook.[8]

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[2] Reynold A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam* (Canada: World Wisdom, Inc., 2022), vii.

[3] Uka Tjandrasasmita, *Arkeologi Islam Nusantara* (Jakarta: Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia, 2009), 236.

[4] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 2002), 64.

[5] PPA established in 1970 by KH. Arief Mustaqim bin Syekh Mustaqim bin Husen, the founder of the *Pondok PETA Tulungagung*. According to the family, there are no official records of the number of *santri* at the PPA. However, it is estimated to be close to a thousand. An interview was conducted with AS—one of KH. Arief Mustaqim's sons.

[6] Amin Syukur, *Pengantar Studi Islam* (Semarang: Bima Sejati, 2000), 155.

[7] "'An Interview Was Conducted with 'MR' (a Pseudonym), One of the Santri at Pondok Pesulukan Agung'" (Tulungagung, 2024).

[8] Saifulah, "Distingsi dan Diaspora Tasawuf Abu Al-Hasan Al-Shadili," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam* Vol. 4, no. No. 2 (2014): 353–81, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2014.4.2.353-381.

Issues concerning *kasyf* and Sufi healing have been the subject of considerable scholarly attention. However, most existing studies tend to focus narrowly on specific dimensions. For instance, Syamsuddin 'Arif examines the theological and epistemological aspects of Al-Ghazali's concept of *mukāsyafah*,[9] Sri Mulyati discusses the abstract notion of spiritual well-being,[10] M. Amin Syukur addresses Sufi healing in broad, macro-level terms without explicitly connecting it to the *kasyf* phenomena,[11] Howard Hall explores the relationship between Sufism and healing in the context of "deliberately caused bodily damage" (DCBD), and Karim Mitha argue about the concepts of "knowing one's self".[12] Despite their contributions, these studies often overlook the integrative connection between *kasyf* experiences and practical Sufi healing.[13]

To date, no prior research has conducted an integrative analysis of the relationship between *kasyf* and Sufi healing within the context of the Syadziliyah. Existing studies have not documented specific healing practices such as "soul recognition" as a beyond aspect of "knowing one's self" performed by disciples under the direct guidance of a *mursyid*, nor have they explored other distinctive spiritual traditions practiced at PPA. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the understanding and lived experiences of the *kasyf* phenomenon as it relates to Sufi healing among students of the Syadziliyah at PPA in Tulungagung, Indonesia.

Method

This study primarily employs qualitative methods.[14] The research focuses on the social phenomenon of *kasyf* within the context of Sufi healing practices among students at Pondok Pesulukan Agung (PPA) Tulungagung. By examining the meanings and lived experiences of *kasyf* as perceived by the students, the researcher aims to obtain an authentic and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

Paradigmatically, this research adopts a phenomenological approach, grounded epistemologically in the perspective of Edmund Husserl. Husserl posited that human behavior and actions are meaningful because individuals ascribe meaning to them. Such meaning emerges from human awareness of their own behavior and actions, as well as from the purposes they attribute to these acts.[15]

These meanings exist at the individual, social, and collective levels. In other words, they are intersubjective, shared among individuals. Such collective meanings emerge through human interaction and communication, primarily facilitated by spoken language.[16] The existence of collective meaning, which forms the basis of collective consciousness, gives rise to collective behaviors—one of which is religion.[17] Husserl developed the phenomenological method to identify

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[9] Neneng Uswatun Khasanah Syamsuddin 'Arif, Kholili Hasib, Zainal Abidin, "Teologi dan Epistemologi: Kajian Tentang Ilmu Kasyaf dalam Pemikiran Al-Ghazali," *Tsaqafah: Jurnal Peradaban Islam* Vol. 16, no. No. 2 (2020): 343–66.

[10] Puti Febrina Niko Sri Mulyati, Rinova Cahyandari, 'Peran Pengamalan Zikir Tarekat Syadziliyah Terhadap Kesejahteraan Spiritual', *Esoterik: Jurnal Akhlak Dan Tasawuf* Vol. 08, no. No. 02 (2022): 241–62.

[11] M. Amin Syukur, 'Sufi Healing: Terapi Dalam Literatur Tasawuf', *Walisongo* Vol. 20, no. No. 2 (2012): 391–412.

[12] Karim Mitha, 'Sufism and Healing', *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health,* Vol. 21, no. No. 03 (2019): 1–12.

[13] Howard Hall, "Sufism and Healing," *H. Walach et Al. (eds.), Neuroscience, Consciousness and Spirituality* Vol. 1 (2011): 4–16.

[14] Denzlin & Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, trans. Dariyanto (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2009).

[15] James H. Watt &Sjef A. Van den Berg, *Research Methods for Communication Science* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995).

[16] Berg.

[17] Émile Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology, Suicide: A Study in Sociology* (New York: The Free Press, 1979).

the essential structure and distinctive characteristics of human experience.[18] Phenomenology aims to explore human experience from the first-person perspective, that is, from the standpoint of the individual who directly undergoes it (subjectivity).[19]

However, because Edmund Husserl's phenomenological concept is largely philosophical and less oriented toward practical application, this study also draws on Max Weber's phenomenology—specifically, the concept of *verstehen*, or social interpretive phenomenology. This approach emphasizes understanding the subjective meaning of social actions from the perspective of the individuals who perform them. It not only identifies objective patterns of social action but also uncovers the motivations, values, and meanings that underlie those actions.[20]

In practice, the author will apply *verstehen* to grasp the subjective meanings underlying the *kasyf* experiences within the Sufi healing practices of students at PPA. Subjective understanding lies at the core of Weber's approach to social science, particularly within phenomenology. In this context, Weber distinguished between two types of understanding: direct understanding, which refers to intuitive insight into the meaning of an action, and explanatory understanding, which involves identifying the causal relationships between actions. While prioritizing understanding, Weber also emphasized the importance of explaining causal relationships in social phenomena.[21]

This study selected four informants based on specific criteria, including educational level, age, and experience in *kasyf*. Additional criteria required that the participants had already attained *kasyf* status and had taken the oath of allegiance (*baiat*). In the *tarekat* tradition, *baiat* is a significant marker of a *santri's* spiritual journey. To protect the privacy of the informants, and in accordance with their requests, their real names have been intentionally concealed and replaced with pseudonyms.

Data collection in this study was conducted through observation and in-depth interviews. The in-depth interviews were employed to obtain information, perspectives, and an overall understanding of the issues under investigation directly from the informants. In this article, four PPA *santri* were interviewed, representing participants from various geographical locations, including Tulungagung and its surrounding areas.[22]

Result and Discussion
Kasyf: Nafs and Ruh in the Sufi Tradition

In Arabic, the term *kasyf* is composed of three letters: *kaf, shin*, and *fa'*. According to Ibn Manẓūr in *Lisān al-ʿArab*, the word refers to the act of uncovering or removing what conceals something. Ibn Manẓūr cites Abu Ḥanīfah's description of *kasyf* as resembling a flash of lightning that illuminates the clouds, revealing their whiteness. In this analogy, the lightning dispels the darkness, allowing what was hidden to be seen.[23]

In the study of Sufism, *kasyf* represents the highest stage of spiritual attainment. It refers to the unveiling of the *hijab* that conceals the divine mysteries or the ultimate essence of life. This

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[18] Jonathan A. Smith; Paul Flowers; Michael Larkin, *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research* (London: Sage Publication, 2009), 13.

[19] Larkin, *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research*.

[20] Max Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences* (USA: The Free Press, 1949); Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretative Sociology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

[21] Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*.

[22] John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Pendekatan Kualitatif, Kuantitatif, dan Mixed* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2014), 21–22.

[23] Ibn Manzur, *Lisan Al-Arab Vol. 9* (Bairut: Dar Sadir, n.d.), 300.

occurs when a *salik* (Sufi practitioner), through spiritual discipline and the purification of the heart, attains profound closeness to Allah. In this context, *kasyf* is understood as the experiential disclosure of hidden mystical realities.

Some Sufis present their teachings through a comparative and systematic framework that is closely interwoven with spiritual experiences. These experiences are then related to distinct spiritual faculties accessible to each individual. Within this framework, various forms of revelation concerning the purity of the human heart are classified according to the degree of human awareness. This classification further considers whether such revelations pertain to intellectual understanding or to intuitive insight into divine realities.

Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawzi identified certain Sufis who employ traditional terminology to classify *kashf* into four distinct levels: *al-kasyf al-kauni*, *al-kasyf al-ilahi*, *al-kasyf al-aqli*, and *al-kasyf al-imani*. *First, al-kasyf al-kauni* refers to the unveiling of secrets or aspects of the created order. This level arises from righteous deeds and a relatively lower degree of spiritual purity. Such experiences may manifest in the form of dreams or heightened states of awareness. *Second, al-kasyf al-ilahi* denotes the unveiling of divine mysteries, attained through consistent acts of worship and the purification of the heart toward complete holiness. This form of *kasyf* results from profound spiritual discipline and deep remembrance (*zikir*), enabling the practitioner to perceive hidden realities and even discern unspoken thoughts. *Third, al-kasyf al-aqli* is the unveiling of truths through the intellect, representing the lowest form of intuitive knowledge. It can be achieved by refining one's character and eliminating blameworthy traits, and is experienced by both spiritual adepts and philosophers. *Fourth, al-kasyf al-imani* is the unveiling that arises through faith, achieved after reaching a state of perfect belief and striving toward prophetic perfection. Each of these levels possesses its own unique characteristics and is subject to further development over time.[24]

Ibn 'Ata' Allah Al-Iskandari offered an insightful perspective on the degree of *kasyf al-hijab* (the unveiling of the veil). According to him, *kasyf al-hijab* is closely linked to obedience and disobedience. He maintained that honor is inherently connected to obedience, while humiliation accompanies disobedience. Thus, in obedience there exists light, honor, and the potential for *kasyf al-ḥijāb*, whereas in disobedience there is darkness, disgrace, and a veil separating the human being from God. Ibn 'Ata' Allah illustrated this concept with an analogy: if one's child commits a sin, the proper response is to educate them according to the principles of the law, without severing ties, but dealing with the matter firmly so that the sin is abandoned. For him, what truly penetrates the heart of a believer is the awareness of having sinned. Therefore, to humiliate or mock a sinner is itself a deviation from the right path. When a believer commits a sin, they are already in a state of grave difficulty, and the appropriate way to respond is to maintain an outward distance while privately supplicating for them. He also cautioned against envying those who prioritize worldly pursuits, for such envy distracts the heart toward what they possess and away from higher concerns. In doing so, one becomes more foolish than those envied—absorbed in what they give, yet heedless of what one has failed to give oneself.[25]

In this context, *kasyf* is also closely connected to the soul (*nafs*) and the *ruh* (spirit). Conceptually, the *nafs* refers to the lower self, comparable to the ego. It constitutes the aspect of the soul inclined toward

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[24] Ibn al-Qayyim Al-Jawzi, *Tariq Al-Hijratayn Wa Bab Al-Sa'adatayn* (Bairut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1995), 338–40.

[25] Ibn 'Ata' Allah Al-Iskandari, *Taj Al-'Arus Al-Hawi Li Tahdzib Al-Nufus* (Bairut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2005), 10.

worldly attachments and enveloped in desire. The *nafs* distracts a person from God and renders them susceptible to the influence of Satan.[26]

The term *nafs* is also interpreted as "soul." Ibn Manzūr argued that *al-nafs* may share the same meaning as "spirit." However, Abū Ishāq distinguishes between *nafs* and *ruh*. In the Arabic tradition, *al-nafs* is used in two principal senses. First, in expressions such as "the *nafs* of so-and-so has left his body" or "so-and-so in his *nafs* desires this or that," the word can signify, respectively, "spirit" and "heart" or "mind" (*raw'*). Second, *nafs* may denote the totality or essence of something. For example, in the saying "so-and-so committed suicide (*qatala nafsahu*) and destroyed himself (*ahlaka nafsahu*)," the meaning refers to the destruction of one's entire being and essential reality.[27]

Ibn Faris, in *Muʿjam Maqāyīs al-Lugha*, explains that the root letters of *nafs*—*nūn, fāʾ*, and *sīn*—convey the basic meaning of the release of air, in whatever form it may take, whether as a gentle breeze or a stronger wind. He further notes that *nafs* can also denote "blood," a meaning he considers the most accurate, since when a person's blood flows out, their *nafs* is diminished. From this same root, a woman in a state of menstruation is called *al-nufasāʾ*, because the outflow of blood represents the partial loss of her *nafs*. The same root also yields the term *nifās* (postnatal bleeding). Likewise, a fetus emerging from the womb is referred to as *manfūs.*[28]

Meanwhile, *ruh* denotes a gently blowing wind (*nasīm al-hawā*).[29] In the human context, the *ruh* refers to the vital breath by which a person lives. The Qur'an employs the term *ruh* in several distinct contexts. In Sūrat al-Shuʿarāʾ (26:193–194), it signifies the angel Gabriel.[30] The term also appears in reference to God imparting life to the Prophet Adam through the *ruh* in Sūrat al-Sajdah (32:9), and likewise in the account of Maryam in Sūrat al-Taḥrīm (66:12).

Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali argued that the angels referred to as *ruh* are those entrusted with infusing souls into bodies, breathing into them with their own attributes. Consequently, each breath they take constitutes a spirit entering the body. For this reason, it is called *ruh*. What is stated concerning these angels and their attributes, he maintains, is a reality discernible to those endowed with reason.[31]

Sufi thought generally maintains a distinction between the *nafs* and the *ruh*. For the Sufis, the *nafs* is regarded as the source of base inclinations and immoral traits, whereas the *ruh* is viewed as the source of noble character and virtuous conduct. This distinction also extends to their essential nature: the *nafs* is associated with the human aspect of existence, while the *ruh* is connected to the divine dimension.[32]

However, Ibn Sina offered a different perspective. He classified *al-nafs* into three types. The first is *al-nafs al-nabatiyyah*, which represents the initial stage of perfection in natural beings that subsist through nourishment, growth, and reproduction. The second is *al-nafs al-hayawaniyyah*, which signifies the initial perfection of living beings capable of perceiving particular things and acting upon impulses driven by desire. The third is *al-nafs al-insaniyyah*, which is also referred to as the

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[26] Abdallah Rothman, *Developing a Model of Islamic Psychology and Psychotherapy: Islamic Theology and Contemporary Understandings of Psychology* (New York & London: Routledge, 2022).

[27] Manzur, *Lisan Al-Arab Vol. 9.*

[28] Abū al-Ḥusan Aḥmad Ibn Fāris Zakarira, *Al-Muʿjam Al-Maqāyis Fi Al-Lughah*, Juz 1 (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1994), 5.

[29] Ibn Manzur, *Lisan Al-ʿArab Vol. 2* (Bairut: Dar Sadir, n.d.), 455.

[30] Abū al-Ḥusan Aḥmad Ibn Fāris Zakarira, *Al-Muʿjam Al-Maqāyis Fi Al-Lughah.*

[31] Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' ʿUlum Al-Din Vol. 4* (Beirut: Dar al-Maʾrifah, n.d.), 257.

[32] Syafi'ah & Ahmad Ismail M. Abdul Mujieb, *Ensiklopedia Tasawuf Al-Ghazali* (Jakarta: Penerbit Hikmah, 2009), 384.

spirit. This type represents the highest form of perfection in living beings, enabling them to act according to reason, make decisions based on logical inference, engage in observation, and derive universal (*kulliyyah*) conclusions.[33]

In this context, Al-Ghazali argued that death does not entail the annihilation of the *ruh* and *nafs*; rather, it signifies a transformation in the state of the *ruh*, while its essence remains eternal. The body perishes because it can no longer respond to the commands of the *ruh*. Consequently, death is an individual, rather than collective, experience. From this perspective, philosophers and Sufis concluded that the afterlife is spiritual in nature rather than physical. Al-Ghazali further affirmed that the *ruh* is an immaterial substance that does not disintegrate with the body.[34]

Ruh and *nafs* are two central concepts in the Islamic (psychological) tradition, each bearing intertwined meanings and functioning together to describe the spiritual and psychological dimensions of human nature. *Ruh*, refers to the spiritual essence bestowed upon humans by God. In the Qur'an, the *ruh* is often described as the element that imparts life and consciousness to living beings. It represents the purest and most divine aspect of human existence, continually yearning to return to the Creator. The *ruh* serves as the source of spiritual inspiration, intuition, and connection with God. Within the Sufi tradition, it is regarded as the innermost core of the self, whose purity must be preserved through various spiritual disciplines in order to attain closeness to God.

This aligns with Iqbal's view that the *nafs* may be understood as the "self" or "ego," encompassing the psychological and emotional dimensions of human beings. The *nafs* is the locus of worldly desires, passions, and inclinations that often draw individuals toward negative or harmful actions. In the Qur'an, the *nafs* is described in various states: *nafs al-ammārah* (the self that commands evil), *nafs al-lawwāmah* (the self that reproaches), and *nafs al-mutma'innah* (the self at peace). The *nafs* must be disciplined and purified through spiritual practice so that it does not overpower the spirit, thereby preventing it from leading individuals toward destructive behavior.[35]

Thus, in this study, the *ruh* and *nafs* are understood as closely interconnected within the framework of human spiritual life. The *ruh* represents the pure, divine dimension of existence, whereas the *nafs* embodies the worldly dimension, characterized by desires and passions. In Sufism, the spiritual journey often involves the purification of the *nafs* (*takhallī*), enabling the divine light of the *ruh* to shine more brightly and guide an individual's behavior and consciousness. The cultivation of virtuous qualities (*tahallī*) further refines the *nafs* and draws the individual nearer to God. Ultimately, spiritual illumination (*tajallī*) is attained when the *ruh* fully governs the *nafs*, resulting in genuine inner peace and spiritual fulfillment.

Drawing together the elements that we have elaborated, according to this model, the human soul has an innately pure and good nature, *fitrah*, that comes from and is connected to God but that becomes covered over and forgotten as a natural part of life in the *dunya*. Throughout its life in the *dunya*, within the soul there exists a dynamic interplay of conflicting forces that affect the psychological state of the person and determine relative levels of alignment or misalignment with *fitrah*. This process is represented by the purple elements in the middle of the model in Fig 1.[36]

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[33] Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum Al-Din Vol. 4*.

[34] M. Abdul Mujieb, *Ensiklopedia Tasawuf Al-Ghazali*.

[35] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934).

[36] Abdallah Rothman & Adrian Coyle, 'Toward a Framework for Islamic Psychology and Psychotherapy: An Islamic Model of the Soul', *Journal of Religion and Health* Vol. 57 (2018): 1731–1744.
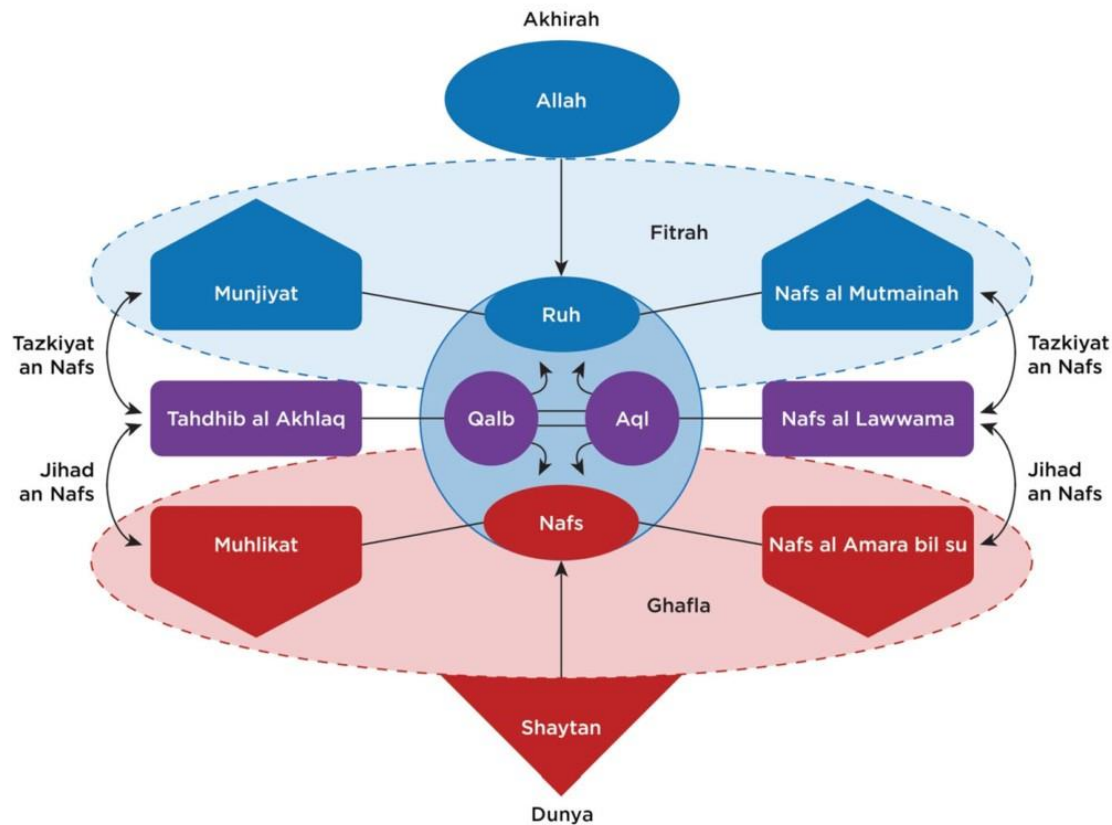
Figure. An Islamic model of the soul

The *qalb*, which is the spiritual center of the person, and where the faculty of intellect is located as the *aql*, has the potential to turn in either of two directions which shapes the relative, transient outcome of this conflict. It can turn toward the lower impulses of the nafs and become further misaligned with *fitrah* by the influences of the *dunya* and *shaytan*, resulting in increased negative characteristics of the *muhlikat* and a state of *ghafla*. This process is represented by the red elements toward the bottom half of the model in Fig. 1, from the nafs downward. Or it can turn toward the higher, Godly nature of the ruh with the remembrance of Allah and the *akhirah* (afterlife), resulting in increased positive characteristics of the *munjiyat*, and come more in alignment with the soul's state of *fitrah*.[37] This process is represented by the blue elements toward the top half of the model in Fig. 1, from the *ruh* upwards.

The relative state of the soul in relation to either of these two poles at any one time is articulated in three distinct stages of the soul's development throughout life in the *dunya*, namely: *nafs al ammarah bil su, nafs al lawwama*, and *nafs al mutmainah*. The model posits that the soul has an inherent inclination toward growth and an upward trajectory in relation to this model, due to its primordial nature of knowing God, and that the Islamic tradition, as guided by the Qur'an and Sunnah, encourages and maps out a path for the human being to pursue this trajectory. This is demonstrated in the description of processes along the path that act as mechanisms for exerting effort in the dynamic interplay within the soul as it struggles between the two opposing forces, namely *jihad an nafs, tahdhib al akhlaq*, and *tazkiyat an nafs*.[38]

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[37] Coyle.
[38] Coyle.

A Historical Overview of Sufi Healing and Its Psychological Dimensions in Islam

Sufism is a spiritual tradition within Islam that emphasizes the pursuit of a direct and experiential connection with God through inward practices and personal spiritual development (*tajribah rūhiyyah*). As a mystical discipline, it possesses a long and rich history, originating in the earliest period of Islam. Adherents, known as Sufis, seek the ultimate goal of closeness or union with God through rituals, meditation, and rigorous spiritual training. Sufism is not solely a spiritual phenomenon but also a social one, with various Sufi orders (*tarekat*) playing a pivotal role in disseminating Islamic teachings and shaping cultures and societies across the world.[39]

It may be observed that Sufism places significant emphasis on *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul), a process involving the removal of sins and blameworthy traits from the heart, and the cultivation of praiseworthy qualities such as patience, humility, and love for God. Sufi orders (*tarekat*) function as organized spiritual communities under the guidance of a *mursyid* (spiritual guide), who provides instruction, structure, and support for adherents in undertaking various spiritual practices aimed at attaining closeness to God.

In contemporary, *tazkiyat al-nafs* is often referred to in scientific terms as "Sufi healing." Historically, this terminology is relatively recent, gaining popularity over the past two decades, although the practice itself dates back to the earliest emergence of Sufi orders.[40] In its applied form, Sufism seeks not only to foster closeness to God but also to cleanse the soul of the "diseases" of the heart (*fasād al-qalb*). Such afflictions are spiritual rather than physical, manifesting as envy, jealousy, greed, excessive attachment to worldly life, and similar moral vices. Raid Salim identifies these ailments as *amrād} al-nafs* (diseases of the *nafs*), which Sufis—acting as spiritual "physicians"—strive to remedy.[41] Under the guidance of *mursyid*, disciples are taught to draw nearer to Allah, ultimately aiming for *maʿrifatullāh* (gnosis of God). This process is grounded in the concept of *tazkiyat al-nafs*, which unfolds through distinct stages, notably *takhallī* (emptying the self of vices), *tah}allī* (adopting virtuous qualities), and *tajallī* (spiritual illumination or *kasyf*).[42]

Sufi healing constitutes a spiritual therapeutic framework grounded in the principles and practices of the Sufi tradition, with the objective of cultivating inner equilibrium and spiritual tranquility. Central to this framework are practices such as *takhallī*, *tah}allī*, and *tajallī*, along with other foundational Sufi concepts that collectively facilitate the purification of the soul. This process of inner cleansing serves as the essential basis for comprehensive healing, encompassing moral refinement, the development of positive character traits, and the realization of spiritual enlightenment.[43]

Research indicates that the prevalence of mental health disorders in Indonesia is 18.5%. This figure suggests that, on average, approximately 19 out of every 100 individuals experience mental

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[39] Abu al-A'la Al-'Afifi, *Al-Tasawwuf: Al-Thawrah Al-Ruhiyyah Fi Al-Islam* (Mesir: Wakalah al-Sahafah al-'Arabiyyah, 2020), 15.

[40] Ramadani Mohammad Rindu Fajar Islamy, Puwanto, Romli, "Spiritual Healing: A Study of Modern Sufi Reflexologi Therapy in Indonesia," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam* 12, no. 02 (2022): 187–208.

[41] Ra'id Syarif Al-Ta'I, *Amrad Al-Nufus Wa 'Ilajuha 'ind 'Ulama' Al-Tasawwuf* (Bairut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2013), 6.

[42] Abd al-Rozzaq Al-Qashani, *Lataif Al-I'lam Fi Isharat Ahl Al-Ilham* (Bairut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2004), 117.

[43] Usamah Isma'il Quli, *Al-'Ilaj Al-Nafsi Bayn Al-Tibb Wa Al-Iman* (Bairut: Dar Al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2006), 426.

health conditions of varying severity, including anxiety, restlessness, depression, stress, and other related disorders.[44]

Contemporary psychologists employ a variety of counseling methods aimed at resolving mental health issues efficiently. However, many have not adequately addressed what may be considered the core human concern—the soul. Existing psychological theories of the soul often prove insufficient in addressing the broader spectrum of human life challenges. William James's (1842–1910) theory of religious experience, while influential, similarly falls short in providing a comprehensive framework for addressing contemporary mental health problems. His work primarily delineated the epistemological foundations of the psychology of religion at a macro level. Nonetheless, James's theoretical contribution remains significant, as he conceptualized religious experience as a universal phenomenon that reflects profound dimensions of human nature. He emphasized that such experiences influence an individual's life, offering meaning and orientation within the world. For James, religious experience constitutes tangible evidence of humanity's connection to a "higher" or transcendent reality.[45]

A similar limitation can be observed in the theories of the soul proposed by figures such as Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), B. F. Skinner (1904–1990), Abraham Maslow (1908–1970), and others. While each theoretical framework presents its own claims to validity and justification, none has succeeded in providing a comprehensive explanation of human reality. The prevailing conceptualization of the human being in much of modern Western psychology remains largely confined to physical and emotional dimensions, neglecting the spiritual or metaphysical aspects that many traditions consider central. This reductionist perspective significantly constrains the capacity of these approaches to address the full complexity of human existence. Even transpersonal psychology—which is often regarded in the West as a form of spiritual psychology—continues to encounter conceptual and methodological challenges.[46] These limitations ultimately compromise the adequacy of its therapeutic models in addressing the deeper existential and spiritual dimensions of contemporary psychological distress.

Consequently, the therapeutic practices of modern psychologists differ fundamentally from the experiential methods employed by Sufis in their efforts to heal the soul. Early Sufis developed a distinctive and compelling approach to spiritual healing, notable for its accessibility and minimal cost—often provided entirely free of charge. Its distinctiveness lay in the emphasis on the patient's active willingness to engage in spiritual discipline, consciously adopt prescribed practices, and strive for moral and spiritual improvement. Among the techniques utilized, *muhasabah al-nafs* (self-examination) and *al-wa'iyyah* (self-awareness) functioned as primary diagnostic tools for the early detection and treatment of mental and emotional disturbances.

Within the framework of Sufi healing, there is a clear conceptual intersection with Islamic psychology, which offers a more robust theoretical and academic foundation. Islamic psychology is not merely the "Islamization" of Western psychology—a field frequently criticized for its epistemologically secular underpinnings. Rather, it represents a distinct paradigm grounded in

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[44] Achir Yani S. Hamid, *Bunga Rampai Asuhan Keperawatan Jiwa* (Jakarta: Penerbit Buku Kedokteran EGC, 2008); Jarman Arroisi, 'Teori Jiwa Perspektif Fakhr Al-Din Al-Razi: Studi Model Pemikiran Psikologi Islam' (UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2016).

[45] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[46] Jarman Arroisi, "Spiritual Healing dalam Tradisi Sufi," *Tsaqafah: Jurnal Peradaban Islam* 14, no. 02 (2018): 323–48.

Islamic epistemology, ontology, and anthropology. As Abdallah Rothman emphasizes in *Developing a Model of Islamic Psychology and Psychotherapy*, Islamic psychology diverges fundamentally from Western psychological models in its conceptualization of the human being, the nature of the soul, and the ultimate aims of therapeutic practice.[47]

According to Abdallah Rothman, the relationship between religion, spirituality, and psychology has undergone cyclical development over the course of history. In its earliest stages, spirituality was a central component in the study and understanding of human psychology. Over time, however, it receded from mainstream psychological discourse, only to re-emerge in recent decades as an area of renewed scholarly and clinical interest. Rothman argues that the development of Islamic psychology should not be limited to the historical trajectory of Western psychology. Epistemologically, the field draws upon a rich intellectual heritage established by classical Muslim scholars such as Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Khaldūn, Ibn Sīrīn, al-Ghazali, and al-Muḥāsibī. Ibn Sīnā contributed foundational insights in psychotherapy and psychiatry; Ibn Khaldūn advanced the fields of sociology and social psychology; Ibn Sīrīn specialized in dream interpretation; while al-Ghazali and al-Muḥāsibī made significant contributions to the study of personality and moral psychology.[48]

Furthermore, G. Hussein Rassool asserts that Islamic psychology is fundamentally grounded in the Qurʾan and Sunnah. Its primary aim is to examine human behavior and experience through a holistic lens—encompassing the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions—within the framework of an Islamic worldview. In clinical practice, the application of Islamic psychology draws upon principles of Islamic healing and incorporates spiritually based interventions as integral components of the therapeutic process.[49]

Rassool contends that Islamic psychology is fundamentally grounded in the doctrine of *tawḥīd*, which affirms the oneness of God as the central principle underpinning all aspects of Islam. Within this framework, no act of worship or ritual—whether outward or inward—possesses meaning or value if this core concept is in any way compromised. To ensure its legitimacy, Rassool emphasizes that Islamic psychology must align with the five pillars of faith. In practical terms, this entails that Muslim psychologists prioritize Islamic ethical principles above rationality and empirical evidence, positioning the latter as secondary to the primary sources of the Qurʾan and Sunnah. Nevertheless, Rassool maintains that there is no inherent conflict between divine knowledge derived from revelation and knowledge gained through rational and empirical inquiry, as both ultimately originate from the same source: the One God.[50]

From a macro-level and conceptual perspective, the connection between Sufi healing and Islamic psychology lies in their shared foundations within the Islamic intellectual and spiritual tradition. While Islamic psychology is widely recognized as a distinct academic discipline by both Eastern and Western scholars, Sufi healing—also referred to as Sufi psychotherapy—can be understood as a specialized branch within it, drawing upon spiritual principles and practices rooted in Sufism. Conceptually, therefore, Sufi healing forms part of the broader framework of Islamic psychology. Nevertheless, within higher education contexts, the two are often treated as separate fields of study, with dedicated programs addressing each area independently.

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[47] Rothman, *Developing a Model of Islamic Psychology and Psychotherapy: Islamic Theology and Contemporary Understandings of Psychology*.

[48] Rothman.

[49] G. Hussein Rassool, *Islāmic Psychology: The Basics* (London & New York: Routledge, 2023), 5–6.

[50] Rassool, *Islāmic Psychology: The Basics*.

There are several notable similarities between Sufi healing and Islamic psychology. First, both adopt a holistic approach, viewing mental, emotional, and spiritual health as inseparable components of overall well-being.[51] Second, each emphasizes the central role of spirituality in the attainment of optimal mental health.[52] Third, healing practices within Sufism frequently incorporate the recitation of Qurʾanic verses and supplications, methods that are likewise acknowledged within Islamic psychology as having therapeutic value.[53] Finally, the process of *tazkiyah al-nafs* within Islamic psychology corresponds closely with Sufi healing practices, both of which seek to cleanse the heart and soul of detrimental traits and dispositions.[54]

In essence, Sufi healing and Islamic psychology share significant similarities in their approaches to healing and mental well-being. Both fields integrate Islamic spiritual principles with holistic healing methods that encompass the mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of human experience, while maintaining relevance to contemporary contexts. Furthermore, Sufi healing can be meaningfully linked to modern psychological concepts such as mindfulness and self-efficacy. Within the domain of mental health, Sufi healing underscores the importance of incorporating spirituality and religious practices into therapeutic processes, particularly through methods such as *zikir* and the cultivation of self-awareness, which serve to foster inner peace, resilience, and moral refinement.[55]

From Inner Vision to Healing: The Experience of Kasyf in the Syadziliyah Sufi Path

In the Syadziliyah tradition, *kasyf* is understood as a divine gift. It is a profound and challenging experience to articulate, particularly within a modern context. A person may attain *kasyf* when the heart is fully devoted in every action, directed solely toward serving Allah. When the "barrier" is lifted, the seeker is granted access to extraordinary spiritual experiences. Such encounters, however, can only be realized when the disciple establishes a deep connection with their *mursyid* (spiritual guide). In addition, the disciple is required to engage in various *zikir* practices as a means of *tazkiyatun nafs.*[56]

Within the Syadziliyah PPA tradition, *kasyf* is generally classified into two types. The first is *kasyf bil ghaib*, which may be described as the capacity to perceive realities of a supernatural or metaphysical nature. The manifestations of this form of *kasyf* vary: individuals who experience it may encounter spiritual entities or saintly figures beloved by Allah. The second type is *kasyf 'ilmi*, which refers to the unveiling of divine knowledge that cannot be attained through conventional education or empirical observation. This form of *kasyf* may involve, for instance, being granted direct insight into the oneness of Allah, receiving knowledge of forms of life beyond the earthly realm, or being taught modes of prayer that transcend sound and articulation. Moreover, *kasyf 'ilmi* is intimately connected to the practice of *zikir*, where in the self is effaced in the remembrance of

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[51] Javad Nurbakhsh, *The Psychology of Sufism* (Washington: Khaniqahi Nimatullahi Publications, 1993).

[52] Nasr, *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity*.

[53] Zeki Saritoprak, *Islamic Spirituality: Theology and Practice for the Modern World* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018).

[54] Abdur Rashid Siddiqui (ed.), *Tazkiyah: The Islamic Path of Self-Development* (United Kingdom: The Islamic Foundation, 2004).

[55] Mitha, 'Sufism and Healing'.

[56] "An Interview was conducted with 'Kholil' (a Pseudonym), one of the *santri* at Pondok Pesulukan Agung, Tulungagung" (Tulungagung, 2024); "An interview was conducted with 'Ezra' (a Pseudonym), one of the santri at Pondok Pesulukan Agung, Tulungagung" (Tulungagung, 2024).

God, culminating in the realization of the absence of independent existence and the affirmation of the Divine as the sole reality *(wahdat al-wujūd)*.

Furthermore, within the context of Sufi healing, *kasyf* in the Syadziliyah is understood as a process of discerning inner realities and addressing psychological difficulties through spiritual means. In this sense, it often functions as a form of Sufi psychotherapy. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that within the Syadziliyah tradition, *kasyf* is not regarded as the ultimate goal of the spiritual path.[57]

More specifically, the Sufi healing process within the Syadziliyah encompasses several dimensions, including the identification of mental and spiritual ailments, the provision of spiritual counsel, and guidance in practices of self-purification, all of which are directed under the supervision of a *mursyid*. Together, these three components form the foundational framework for understanding the Sufi healing process in the Syadziliyah tradition.[58]

In this regard, *kasyf* within the Syadziliyah Sufi tradition at PPA is not merely understood as the lifting of the *hijāb* (veil) or the capacity to perceive the unseen. Rather, *kasyf* is regarded as another form of *karamah* (divine grace), the occurrence of which is often associated with the psychological state of a Sufi practitioner. The degree of *kasyf* varies among disciples of the Syadziliyah, and it is often likened to a long spiritual journey consisting of successive stages. Some may find themselves at the first, second, or third level, while others may not yet have reached these stages at all.[59]

Furthermore, the teachings of PPA place emphasis on *tazkiyat al-nafs* rather than the pursuit of esoteric sciences or supernatural powers. A clear distinction is drawn between *karamah* and what is referred to as the "science of power." Unlike the latter, *karamah* cannot be summoned at will or repeated upon command; for this reason, *kasyf* is understood as an authentic manifestation of *karamah*. Any claim of being able to demonstrate *karamah* repeatedly on demand is considered deceptive. This distinction represents one of the defining characteristics of the Syadziliyah as practiced at PPA, which does not prioritize extraordinary or occult knowledge, but instead stresses *zikir* as the primary means of purifying the heart—particularly the *zikir* of *Izmu dzat*—to be practiced continuously, at all times.[60]

This understanding is consistent with al-Ghazali's conception of *kasyf*, which he describes as being closely connected to the notion of the *hijāb* that separates a servant from the Divine Presence. According to al-Ghazali, Allah is veiled by seventy *hijāb* composed of both light and darkness. In his *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, he states that if Allah were to unveil these veils, the radiance of His Face would consume all who stand before Him. Other narrations, however, report different numbers—some mentioning seven hundred *hijāb*, and others up to seventy thousand.[61]

From a phenomenological perspective, the concept of *kasyf* as presented in the foregoing discussion may be understood as a phenomenon manifested within individual subjective experience. This interpretation resonates with the central concern of phenomenology, which is the

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[57] "An Interview was Conducted with 'Kholil' (a Pseudonym), one of the *santri* at Pondok Pesulukan Agung, Tulungagung."

[58] "An Interview was Conducted with 'Kholil' (a Pseudonym), one of the *santri* at Pondok Pesulukan Agung, Tulungagung."

[59] "An Interview Was Conducted with 'MR' (a Pseudonym), one of the Santri at Pondok Pesulukan Agung" (Tulungagung, 2024).

[60] "An Interview Was Conducted with 'MR' (a Pseudonym), one of the Santri at Pondok Pesulukan Agung."

[61] Abū Ḥāmid Al-Ghazālī, *Mishkāt Al-Anwār* (Cairo: al-Dār al-Qawmiyyah, n.d.), 84.

study of how phenomena are given in human experience, how they are apprehended, and the meanings they acquire within the horizon of subjective consciousness.[62]

Edmund Husserl, in his transcendental approach to phenomenology, argued that individual consciousness perceives phenomena in ways that make them legitimate objects of scientific inquiry. In this sense, we can understand the experience of *kasyf* in relation to Sufi healing as what Husserl calls "individual's intuition." Therefore, this article validates its use of a phenomenological approach, even without relying on philosophical deduction, scientific reasoning, empirical verification, or psychological speculation.[63]

Interestingly, *santris* at PPA report diverse forms of *kasyf* during the process of *tazkiyat al-nafs* or Sufi healing. Chronologically, Kholil began to experience *kasyf* after he pledged allegiance to Syeikh Mulyogati.[64] His first *kasyf* occurred while he was performing a *zikir* (*hizib salamah*).[65]

During the process, Kholil reported a spiritual experience in which he walked through a wilderness. Along the way, he encountered various apparitions, including wild animals such as large snakes, tigers, and monkeys; however, none of them disturbed him. Eventually, he and Syeikh Mulyogati arrived at a small prayer room located in the middle of the forest. After entering the room, Syeikh Mulyogati instructed Kholil to face the qibla and recite *istighfar*. While Kholil complied, Syeikh Mulyogati sat behind him, placing his hands on his back. Unexpectedly, Kholil began to expel visions of a tiger, a snake, and finally a monkey from his mouth, an intense experience that left him vomiting and physically exhausted. Following this, Syeikh Mulyogati asked him to lie down on a wooden board. A few moments later, Kholil reported the presence of a deceased murshid, who appeared to accompany the ritual being performed by Syeikh Mulyogati and himself.[66]

This experiences often regard them as the beginning of a process of "detoxification" from one's animalistic traits. A *santri* who establishes *rābitah* (spiritual union) with a living *mursyid* may also connect with deceased *mursyids*, since a *sanad* (chain of spiritual transmission) continues to link them. Nevertheless, not all *santris* undergo this experience. Their likelihood of doing so is partly shaped by their conduct prior to pledging allegiance to the Sufi order. In short, this kind of spiritual encounter serves as a sign that the *santri* has been accepted as part of the order.[67]

In continuation of the previous account, Ezra reported experiencing the phenomenon of *kasyf*, which she described as significant. According to her narrative, this experience was preceded by a long process. She explained that it began during a period of prolonged illness that she had endured since childhood, for which ongoing medical treatment had not resulted in complete recovery. Her encounter with a spiritual guide, Syeikh Mulyogati, marked a turning point, as she was introduced to the recitation of the *ismu dzat*, specifically the *zikir* of "Allah." During the practice of *zikir*, Ezra stated that she experienced a vision in which she perceived a realm of intense

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[62] Lara Varpio Brian E. Neubauer, Catherine T. Witkop, "How Phenomenology Can Help us Learn from the Experiences of Others," *Perspect Med Educ* 08 (2019): 90–97.

[63] Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (Milton Park: Routledge, 2000).

[64] At the request of the *mursyid*, this name was used as a pseudonym.

[65] Within the Syadziliyah tradition at PPA, this *hizib* serves as the initial *wirid* prescribed for *santri*, regardless of whether they have undertaken the *bai'at* (initiation oath) or not.

[66] "An Interview was Conducted with 'Kholil' (a Pseudonym), one of the *santri* at Pondok Pesulukan Agung, Tulungagung."

[67] "An Interview was Conducted with 'Kholil' (a Pseudonym), one of the *santri* at Pondok Pesulukan Agung, Tulungagung."

brightness, characterized by radiant light and the presence of several figures dressed in white garments, whose luminous faces appeared to be smiling at her.[68]

In addition, Ezra experienced a vision of a profoundly dark place, filled with thick, black liquid that emitted a pungent odor, and engulfed in flames. Within this environment appeared grotesque creatures of repulsive form and unbearable stench. Following this, Ezra was instructed to perform the *zikir ismu dzat* and was introduced to a spiritual technique referred to as "*penelusuran jiwa* (soul tracing)." During his first experience with this practice, Ezra described intense fear, as she encountered a tall, imposing black figure with a terrifying face, glowing red eyes, and an overwhelming foul odor. This moment marked the beginning of what was described as the unveiling of the "*hijab*," initiating a long and challenging spiritual process. Over several months of repeated practice, particularly through the sustained recitation of *zikir*, Ezra tell significant improvements in her physical health. A subsequent medical examination revealed that the uterine cyst previously diagnosed had unexpectedly disappeared, much to Ezra's surprise. Despite this outcome, the process of "*penelusuran jiwa*" continued on a weekly basis under the guidance of the *mursyid*. She practiced the *Hizib Asyfa'* and the *Hizib Salamah*.[69]

Nara—a female subject—experienced a similar phenomenon. In late 2015, she developed a generalized pruritic rash affecting her entire body. Notably, the itching consistently manifested at approximately 12:00 AM each night and resolved spontaneously before dawn. After several days of recurring symptoms, Nara's family sought medical consultation with their regular physician in the Tulungagung area. The physician, who was affiliated with a private hospital and well known to the family, conducted a clinical examination and diagnosed the condition as an allergic reaction, with potential etiologies including food, environmental factors, or other allergens. Pharmacological treatment was prescribed for a duration of one week. Following initiation of the medication, symptomatic relief was observed on the first day. However, by the fifth day, the nocturnal itching recurred, presenting each night and resolving by dawn.[70]

Subsequent to this episode, Nara and her husband sought guidance from the *mursyid* of the Syadziliyah at PPA. Under his instruction, Nara was prescribed a regimen of fasting for a duration of 40 days. During the course of this observance, she reported the occurrence of unusual experiences. On multiple occasions, prior to the time of breaking the fast, she experienced episodes of intense abdominal pain. On one such occasion, she described undergoing a state of *kasyf* in which she perceived phenomena that she characterized as extraordinary and unfamiliar. With the continued and consistent practice of *zikir*, Nara subsequently reported a gradual resolution of her illness.

Within the epistemological framework of Sufi healing, such experiences are conceptualized as part of a process of "unraveling problems," which refers to the gradual *tazkiyat al-nafs*.[71] This process is achieved primarily through the practice of *zikir*, which functions not only as a devotional act but also as a therapeutic mechanism aimed at reducing psychological and existential distress. From the perspective of mystic, this practice is often described in terms of the transmission of

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[68] "An Interview Was Conducted with 'Ezra' (a Pseudonym), one of the *santri* at Pondok Pesulukan Agung, Tulungagung."

[69] "An Interview was Conducted with 'Ezra' (a Pseudonym), one of the *santri* at Pondok Pesulukan Agung, Tulungagung."

[70] "An Interview was Conducted with 'Nara' (a Pseudonym), one of the *santri* at Pondok Pesulukan Agung" (Tulungagung, 2024).

[71] Ngatawi El-Zastrouw, "Menuju Sosiologi Nusantara: Analisa Sosiologis Ajaran Ki Ageng Suryomentaram dan Amanat Galunggung," *Islam Nusantara: Journal for Study of Islamic History and Culture* 01, no. 01 (2020).

"healing energies." The *mursyid* is understood to mediate and channel this transformative energy through *zikir*, operating within a hierarchical chain of spiritual transmission. This chain symbolically and metaphysically connects the disciple to the guide, and through successive links to the Prophet Muhammad, ultimately culminating in divine presence with Allah.[72]

This framework is consistent with the conceptualization advanced by M.A. Subandi, who identifies "mystical experiences" as one of the key indicators of what he terms religious transformation. According to Subandi, religious transformation refers to a reorientation of religious life from an ordinary or conventional mode of practice toward a mystical form of religiosity. He argues that such transformation is an outcome of sustained engagement in *zikir*, particularly what he refers to as "*zikir ikhlas*."[73]

Furthermore, from the perspective of Max Weber's interpretive phenomenology, such experiences may be understood as processes through which individuals interpret their own participation in social action. Interpretation, in this sense, enables subjects to articulate the motivations, values, and meanings that underlie their actions, thereby situating personal religious or mystical experiences within a broader sociocultural and symbolic framework.[74]

Thus, the understanding of *kasyf* that emerges from the experiences of Syadziliyah at PPA Tulungagung may be likened to the work of a natural scientist who discovers a previously unknown dimension of reality. In line with Husserl's phenomenology, such experiences highlight that all genuine knowledge—including scientific knowledge—ultimately rests upon internal evidence. It is this internal evidence, namely that which appears within consciousness, that constitutes the proper domain of phenomenological inquiry and the foundation upon which phenomena must be examined.[75]

Within Husserl's phenomenological framework, every lived phenomenon may serve as a legitimate object of study, thereby extending analysis beyond the limits of sensory perception—what is seen, heard, or touched—to include experiences of thought, memory, imagination, and emotion.[76] In this light, the phenomenon of *kasyf* within the practice of Sufi healing in the Syadziliyah, particularly as observed at PPA Tulungagung, should not be regarded as an ultimate goal. Rather, it represents cultivating an intimate relationship with the Divine. For practitioners who experience *kasyf*, it can serve as a medium in the broader process of Sufi healing. Ultimately, this spiritual trajectory is oriented toward attaining a higher state of realization, described as the attainment of "soul-knowledge" (*ma'rifat al-nafs/pengenalan jiwa*).

Thus, the concept of "soul-knowledge" diverges from prior research, which has predominantly emphasized the process of "self-knowledge," as argument by Karim Mitha.[77] "Soul-knowledge" as an integrative endeavor that encompasses *tazkiyat al-nafs*, self-awareness, self-recognition, and soul-searching, with the aim of traversing and ultimately transcending successive stages of spiritual development. In contrast, within the Syadziliyah framework, the realization of the "true soul" (*al-nafs al-ḥaqīqīyah*) is conceived as the culmination of a more comprehensive and

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[72] Hall, 'Sufism and Healing'.

[73] M.A Subandi, *Psikologi Dzikir: Studi Fenomenologi Pengalaman Transformasi Religious* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2009), 7.

[74] Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*; Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretative Sociology*.

[75] Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970).

[76] GM. Reiners, 'Understanding the Differences between Husserl's (Descriptive) and Heidegger's (Interpretive) Phenomenological Research', *Journal of Nursing & Care* 01, no. 05 (2012).

[77] Mitha, 'Sufism and Healing'.

profound spiritual process. This attainment constitutes an advanced *maqām* (spiritual station), one that remains inaccessible to the majority of students and practitioners of the Syadziliyah.

Conclusion

At PPA Tulungagung, Sufi healing emphasizes the practice of. The process begins with the setting of intentions, which is regarded as the most fundamental aspect of the PPA tradition. Once intentions are established, *santris* are introduced to the *zikir* basic, known as *Izmu Dzat*. This practice involves invoking the name of "Allah" while cultivating a receptive heart and expressing gratitude for the blessings bestowed by Him.

Following this initial stage, *santris* may progress to more advanced practices, *including Hizb Salamah, Hizb Asfa', Hizb Baladiah, Hizb Tala'lu'*, and *zikir* of the Syadziliyah. The stages of *zikir* are adapted to each student's capacity and prior experience. It is not predetermined which stage a *santri* will ultimately reach, as progression in the *tarekat* is not the primary objective and is considered entirely within the will of Allah. At its highest level, a *santri* who attains *kasyf* embodies a "soul-knowledge," reflecting the outcome of consistent and earnest efforts in disciplining both the heart and one's actions.

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