

BETWEEN BAGHDAD AND KHURASAN: EARLY SUFISM IN ISLAMIC HISTORY AT 7-9 M CENTURY**Fahmi Rizal Mahendra*, Muhammad Aldiansyah, Rifdah Shofiyah Wulandari, Mursyidan Prakasa,
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Abstract

This article describes the early movements of sufism or sufism in Islamic history. By using the historical method, this article explains the origins of Sufism, both from the teachings, sources, first figures and early developments in the history of early Sufism. The focus of this article is the early development of Sufism in two different areas, namely Baghdad and Khurasan. Each region gave birth to different figures, styles of thought and teachings of early Sufism. In general, the Baghdad school is famous for its "conscious" teachings, which are different from the Khurasan school, which is known for being "drunk" or "unconscious". Historically Sufism was born as an individual movement that was born to respond to the complex political situation of Muslims after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. Initially this movement was individual before eventually developing into a group movement or forming schools with different styles of teachings.

Keywords: Sufism; Tasawuf; Baghdad; Khurasan; Islamic history.

INTRODUCTION

A Sufi is a Muslim whose entire life is devoted solely to surrendering to Allah, while the method used to draw closer to Him is called sufism. Although the term Sufism surfaced after the death of Prophet Muhammad (632), the early roots of Sufism cannot be separated from the Islamic teachings conveyed by Prophet Muhammad, one of which is found in *Surah Al-An'am*: 71. Sufism, as one of the phenomena in Islamic history, has evolved from its growth and development to the modern era. Several scholars and researchers have produced works on Sufism, covering its teachings, practices, culture, and history, written by Sufi scholars themselves or from among orientalists.

Many types or categories of studies have been conducted by various researchers on Tasawwuf, such as teachings, thoughts, concepts, and theories of Tasawwuf, as well as its history. This article will discuss one of these studies, namely the historical aspect. It is important to explore the historical aspect of Sufism, as it is crucial for a topic that revolves around Sufism or Tasawwuf. Many individuals from the Muslim community and Western scholars, known as orientalists, have attempted to write about this historical aspect.

Many individuals from the Muslim community and Western scholars, known as orientalists, have attempted to write about this historical aspect. For example, Jamal Malik divides the periodization of Sufi growth into seven periods. First, from 700 to 900, the era began with individual Sufism emerging slowly and developing in conjunction with the rise of Muslim empires such as the Abbasids and Fatimids. Second, the second period took place from 950 to 1100, coinciding with the disintegration of the Abbasid empire, which Malik refers to as the accommodative approach of Sufis with orthodoxy. The third period (1100-1300), where some early mystical groups (*thaiifah*) emerged and later became Sufi orders (*tarekat*). This period can also be called the birth and flourishing of Sufi orders, spreading across the Islamic regions.

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The fourth period, occurring from 1300 to 1700 represents a continuation of the previous period, where the institutionalization of Sufi orders began to take shape. This period also coincided with the establishment of three major empires: the Ottoman Turks, the Mughals, and the Safavids. The fifth period, spanning from 1700 to 1900, occurred alongside the disintegration phase of the aforementioned significant empires. The sixth phase began around 1900, concurrent with national, anti-colonial, and nationalist movements. During this period, several Sufi orders provided channels for articulating and mobilizing Muslim communities. As for the seventh phase, it is referred to as the development phase of Sufism, whether organized or not, represented by Sufi orders and traditional religious practices. These serve as alternative religious sources or complementary elements to social-intellectual identity and contribute to the development process of mainstream orthodox Islam (Malik & Hinnells, 2006).

Abu al-Wafa al-Taftazani, in his work "*Madkhal ila al-Tashawuf al-Islam*," divides the developmental periods of Sufism into five phases. Firstly, he refers to the era that began with the ascetic movement or asceticism in the first and second centuries of the Hijri calendar. Secondly, in the third and fourth centuries, he mentions that Sufism developed and gained a profound understanding during this period. Thirdly, in the fifth century of the Hijri calendar, efforts were made to systematize Sufism, pioneered by al-Ghazali and Imam Qusyairi, who aimed to rectify deviations from Sufi teachings that had occurred earlier. Fourthly, it was the period of the emergence of Sufis with a philosophical orientation, such as Ibn Arabi with his doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud* (unity of existence) and al-Suhrawardi with his teachings of al-Isyraq (illumination). Finally, in the sixth century of the Hijri calendar, various Sufi orders began to appear in Islamic history (Taftazani, 1985).

Almost in line with al-Taftazani, Hamka divides the development of *tasawwuf* into five periods. First, he refers to it as the beginning and growth of ascetic life. Second, he calls it the golden age in the history of *tasawwuf* due to the emergence of renowned Sufi figures. Third, he dedicates a particular chapter to the influence of Imam al-Ghazali in the fifth century of the Hijri era. Fourth, he also devotes a particular chapter to the emergence of philosophical doctrines in Sufism that originated in the sixth and seventh centuries, giving rise to doctrines such as *wahdat al-wujud* and the unity of religions. In this chapter, he also pays attention to the rise of Sufi orders. Fifth, he provides a chapter on the decline of Sufi teachings in the eighth century and beyond (Hamka, 1993).

From these categorizations, this article will attempt to review and discuss the first phase of each periodization provided by several scholars. Namely, the period concerning the emergence of the Sufi movement or the teachings of *tasawwuf*. The article will discuss various opinions about the early period of *tasawwuf*. Starting from terminology, etymology, teachings, early Sufi figures, and various styles or schools of early *tasawwuf*.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method employed in this research used the historical research method, which consisted of four stages. Firstly, heuristic or source collection, where the sources for this writing specifically pertained to Sufism or *tasawwuf*. In this research, the author gathered sources through library research or literature review. The second stage was source criticism, where the process of critiquing sources was conducted to sift through and select those relevant to this writing. The third was interpretation or analysis. After the critique, the next step was to analyze whether the selected sources were suitable and pertinent to the research. The fourth stage was historiography or historical writing. After going through several stages, the subsequent step was to document the historical findings in the form of a journal (Sjamsuddin, 2007).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Origins of Tasawwuf

Several Sufi sources, including those written by the Sufis themselves, open with a discussion on the etymology of this term. The word "Sufism" is a Latin derivation from the Arabic word

originating from *s-w-f*, and the meaning of these words is debated in early Sufi literature. Some interpret it as mystics often trace it from the root *kara safa*, generally meaning "purity," to the phrase *ahl-suffa* (people who reside or stay), referring to the companions of the Prophet and the poor who lived in the Prophet's Mosque. However, in general and etymologically, it refers to the word "suf," meaning "wool" (Knysh, 2000). Muslim mystics are commonly referred to as Sufis or *mutasawwif*, with the plural forms *sufiyya* or *mutasawwifa*.

The term "Sufi" was first coined in the early eighth century AD to refer to certain ascetic hermits and righteous individuals who wore wool instead of the majority of Muslims who wore linen and cotton. The use of woolen garments was a form of self-abnegation to protect oneself and a political protest (Karamustafa, 2007).

Various opinions have been expressed regarding the origins of *tasawwuf*; some argue that the roots of *tasawwuf* can be traced back to pre-Islamic religious traditions, while others believe that verses from the Quran and the actions and sayings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) provide the foundations for Sufi doctrines and practices. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Western orientalists generally supported the former view, whereas historians, scholars, and later Sufi scholars tended to uphold the latter perspective (Anjum, 2006). For instance, Trimmingham stated that "Sufism borrows some elements from non-Muslim sources, such as adopting the life and thoughts of Eastern Christian ascetics." He added, "A distinct and tangible system began to take shape, although it borrowed from Neo-Platonism, Gnosticism, Christian mysticism, as well as from other systems and doctrines" (Trimingham, 1973). Others, for example, August Thuluck, as cited by al-Taftazani, argued that Sufism originated from Persian sources. He radically asserted that *tasawwuf* was derived from the Magi (Zoroastrians), providing the argument that several people practicing Zoroastrianism in northern Iran, after the Islamic conquest, continued to adhere to their religion. Thuluck also highlighted the significant number of Sufi figures originating from the northern region of Khurasan, where he claimed Zoroastrian influences were prevalent. This perspective suggests that some early Sufi figures may have had Zoroastrian backgrounds (Taftazani, 1985).

In his work "Arabic Thought and Its Place in History," O'Leary, quoting Von Kramer, states, "This growing group of Arab ascetics further developed itself without relinquishing the influence of Christianity that existed before Islam. As known, Christian monasticism was already familiar to the Arabs along the deserts of Syria and Sinai. O'Leary strongly suggests that these Islamic ascetics were affected by Christian monks." However, opinions stating that Sufism originated from non-Islamic religions and elements were refuted by Islamic scholars themselves, as well as Orientalists who specialized in the study of Sufism. Generally, they drew upon verses from the Quran, hadiths, and the experiences and events lived by Prophet Muhammad as the origins of Sufi teachings.

One of the Islamic scholars who focused on the study of Sufism, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, asserted that the spiritual path of Sufism is an inner and esoteric dimension of Islam similar to Sharia, with its foundation in the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet (Nasr, 2000). In his other work, "The Garden of Truth: The Vision and Promise of Sufism," he emphasizes that metaphysically, the origin of *Tasawwuf* is derived from Allah Himself. The origins of *tasawwuf* must be sought in the Quran and the life realities of the Prophet. Some verses of the Quran have direct and spiritual meanings, while the Quran, comprehensively, is considered to have inner levels, as mentioned in the sayings of the Prophet. Moreover, many of the sayings of the Prophet, especially the Qudsi hadiths, contain teachings of *tasawwuf* (Nasr, 2007).

Renowned orientalist Louis Massignon, as quoted by al-Taftazani, acknowledged that *tasawwuf* originates from the teachings and sources of Islam. In his work titled "Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane," he concluded that there are four sources of *tasawwuf*, including the Quran as a crucial source, along with the sciences of hadith, jurisprudence (*fikih*), and grammar (*nahwu*) as Islamic sciences (Taftazani, 1985).

Various factors contributed to the emergence of the ascetic or abstinent movement in the 1st century of the Hijri era. For instance, during the caliphate of Muawiyah (661-680), significant

changes were initiated in the Umayyad dynasty. His successor, Yazid (680-683), was known for his heavy indulgence in alcohol, marking a decline in piety alongside transferring the capital from Mecca to Damascus. The presence of women from Syria replaced the ascetic figures in the kingdom (Arberry, 1950).

One of the factors considered vital by some observers and writers for the emergence of this ascetic movement is politics. As known, after the death of the Prophet and the end of the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, the Muslim community experienced various political events regarding leadership succession. This culminated in the division of the Muslim community into several groups or sects within Islam, a division that can still be felt to this day.

Political disputes cannot be separated from religion because each conflicting group uses religious texts as legitimacy for their group's statements. This has led to the withdrawal of some individuals from such activities and conflicts. They choose neutrality to avoid unwanted turmoil, practicing *uzlah*, and these are the individuals who formed early Islamic asceticism (Ali, 2015).

Perhaps they did this to seek safety, distance themselves from the conflict, and prefer a solitary life. Al-Naubakhti, as quoted by al-Taftazani, said, "Some groups that separated, after the appointment of Ali bin Abi Thalib as the Caliph, were groups that isolated themselves along with Sa'ad ibn Malik, Sa'ad bin Abu Waqash, 'Abdullah bin Umar ibn al-Khattab, Muhammad bin Maslamah al-Anshari, and Usamah bin Zaid bin Haritsah. They were the ones who separated from Ali, choosing neither to fight against him nor to fight alongside him".

Al-Taftazani emphasizes, "The first century of Islam specifically saw many factors that contributed to the emergence and widespread adoption of ascetic movements. This was due to the prolonged wars of brother against brother, the extreme nature of each political sect, and the increasing indifference and light regard for moral issues. The government imposed its will on the people, and the rulers openly rejected any ideas related to the reestablishment of religious governance by the Muslim community. All of these factors led people to distance themselves from the world and its pleasures".

These factors encouraged the emergence of early ascetic movements, which quickly spread. Initially, *tasawwuf* was purely asceticism. Over time, some mystical elements were introduced, eventually forming *tasawwuf* in its earliest form. During the Umayyad Dynasty, spanning a century (660-750), this movement was characterized as Sunni. Its practitioners were righteous Muslims. Among them were experts in religious fields, such as *qaris*, *hadith* scholars, and *ulama* (Taftazani, 1985).

First Sufis

When it comes to naming the first Sufis, scholars and religious authorities may have differing opinions. Generally, they would mention the name of Hasan al-Basri (728) as the first Sufi or ascetic. However, some individuals state that Prophet Muhammad or Rasulullah himself was the first Sufi. This section will discuss various perspectives on this matter.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, for example, mentioned Ali bin Abi Thalib (661) as the most significant figure in the world of *tasawwuf*. Ali was considered the primary inheritor of the esoteric teachings that emanated from the founder of Islam and a significant source in the chain of spiritual transmission. Ali bin Abi Thalib was highly respected in both Sunni and Shia communities. Many stories about him formed the foundation of asceticism in the history of Sufism. Furthermore, Nasr mentioned the names of companions such as Abu Dzar al-Ghifari (652/53). Abu Dzar was known for his effortless and ascetic lifestyle and exceptional humility. Another figure is Salman al-Farisi (656), who hailed from Persia. Nasr noted that Salman al-Farisi was considered one of the founders of Sufism and spiritual chivalry (*futuwwah*) (Nasr, 2007).

The name Hasan al-Basri typically took center stage in studying early Sufism. His life, transformed from the tumultuous politics of the Umayyad dynasty, was a key reason why Hasan al-Basri stood out in leading an ascetic or austere life during the early periods of Sufism.

In the late seventh and eighth centuries, when many Islamic societies became affluent and shifted their focus towards worldly pursuits, early Sufis called on believers to return to a simple and pure life in line with early Islamic society. This was emphasized through the presence of several disciples of Hasan al-Basri, including 'Abd al-Wahid ibn Zayd (794). Among the prominent figures of Sufism in this period in Iraq were Habib al-Ajami (737), a disciple of Hasan al-Basri, and Daud al-Tai (777), a disciple of Habib. Like Hasan, they left a profound impact on later periods of Sufism.

Arberry mentions that the term "Sufi," meaning "wool," is attributed to Abu Hasyim Utsman bin Syarik from Kufa, who passed away around 776 M. By the mid-3rd century Hijri, the name became a permanent designation for ascetics. In the 4th century Hijri, the term acquired theosophical connotations (Arberry, 1950).

Another significant figure in the early development of Sufism was Rabiah al-Adawiyah (801), a renowned female ascetic. Her name holds excellent prominence. The level of asceticism originally formulated by Hasan al-Basri, which involved fear and hope, was elevated by Rabiah to asceticism driven by love.

According to an account by Imam Sya'roni quoted by Hamka, there was a time when someone mentioned the punishment of hellfire in front of Rabiah al-Adawiyah. Upon hearing this, Rabiah fainted. She fainted while reciting *istighfar*, seeking forgiveness from God. After Rabiah regained consciousness and awareness, she said, "I must seek forgiveness again in the same way as my first request for forgiveness" (Hamka, 1993).

Despite being somewhat reserved, Rabiah taught Sufism and had several disciples. Among them, the most notable were Sufyan al-Thawri (778) and Shaiq al-Balkhi (809) from Khurasan. They were skilled in discussing trust in God (*tawakkul*). Sufyan al-Thawri is also recognized as the first Sufi to talk about spiritual states while emphasizing the "pure light of love for God" (Nasr, 2007).

The figures mentioned above primarily passed down brief sayings and suggestive metaphors that can be found in subsequent Sufi works. Some of them wrote works, but many of these have been lost. In Shia literature, the statements of the Sixth Imam, Ja'far al-Sadiq, were extensive and covered all aspects of Islamic tradition, from the Quran to eschatology and the teachings of Gnosis. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq is even considered one of the prominent names in the first-generation Sufi tradition. He was free to openly propagate because he lived at the end of the Umayyad Dynasty and the beginning of the Abbasid dynasty. As a teacher of gnosis, he instructed Jabir ibn Hayyan, a chemist and one of the first figures referred to as a Sufi (Nasr, 1987).

Mazhabs of Tasawwuf

Several introductory or beginner's books on tasawwuf typically categorize it based on its doctrinal patterns, such as Amali or Falsafi Sufism. Alternatively, they may categorize it based on Islamic sects, for example, Sunni Tasawwuf and Shia Tasawwuf, or in terms of its practical aspects, such as theoretical and practical Sufism. Rarely do these works discuss tasawwuf from the perspective of the geographical or locational context where it originated and developed.

For example, Seyyed Hossein Nasr categorizes tasawwuf into two schools based on regions: the Baghdad and Khurasan schools (Nasr, 2007). Meanwhile, Abu al-Wafa al-Ghanimi al-Taftazani classifies tasawwuf into four schools: Madinah, Basrah, Kufah, and Egypt. Each of these regions gave rise to renowned sufi figures, exhibiting distinct characteristics or traits associated with their respective areas (Taftazani, 1985).

Ma'ruf al-Kharkhi (815) was referred to as the first sufi who initiated the teachings of tasawwuf in Baghdad. He was also a disciple of Ali al-Rida (817), the eighth imam in Shia Islam. Ma'ruf's influence extended not only in Baghdad but also in other regions. He often imparted teachings on contentment (*ridha*) and the significance of spirituality. His most famous disciple was Sari al-Saqati (867), who further elaborated on two principles: states (*hal*) and stations (*maqamat*), as well as the meaning of Unity (*tauhid*), a central doctrine in Islam. Subsequently, these teachings

were more comprehensively developed by his nephew, Junayd, who also played a central role in Baghdad. Another disciple of al-Saqati, Abu Bakar al-Kharraz (899), delved deep into the meaning of tawhid and served as Junayd's teacher. Al-Kharraz emphasized that Allah is the Truth (al-Haqq), capable of uttering "I" in the most profound sense of the word, and this doctrine was echoed by Mansur al-Hallaj (Nasr, 2007).

Sari al-Saqati was the son of a successful trader. He lived in Karkh, a part of the capital city of Baghdad. Like many members of other merchant communities, he was deeply interested in religious studies and was himself a collector of hadiths (*muhaddiths*). One day, he encountered Ma'ruf al-Kharkhi and listened to his fiery sermon. Following that event, he eventually abandoned his trade activities, turned away from worldly pursuits, and devoted himself to the pursuit of the afterlife (Knysh, 2000). He initially studied in Basrah and then proceeded to Abadan. During his journey, he acquainted himself with Ali al-Jurjani, an ascetic from Syria. From al-Jurjani, he received teachings from Ibrahim bin Adham and some of his colleagues from Syria. After this meeting and at an advanced age, he embarked on a journey to Syria and the Byzantine-Arab border, joining forces to participate in the jihad against Christians. His military service concluded in 833 when he returned and settled in Baghdad.

Sari al-Saqati's intricate teachings blended elements of the Baghdad tradition (represented by Ma'ruf and Bishr al-Hafi) with the distinctly austere Syrian pattern of worship in the stream propagated by Ibrahim bin Adham. Ideas of sincerity, selflessness, and loyalty to friends and the broader community, dominated by the teachings of Ibn al-Mubarak, intermingled in al-Saqati's doctrine with eloquent expressions emphasizing righteous actions, possibly inspired by Ma'ruf and Bishr. Like early Sufi figures, he was skeptical of legal studies and scholastic activities by hadith transmitters. He somewhat derided their activities, deeming them not conducive to the afterlife. Regarding practical virtues, he particularly emphasized endurance in adversity (*sabr*), humility (*khumul*), trust in God (*tawakkul*), and sincerity (*ikhlas*) (al-Ishfahani, 1932-1938).

Like his uncle, Abul Qasim bin Muhammad bin al-Junayd (910) was a prominent figure in the school or tradition of Baghdad. Under the influence of al-Saqati, who became his spiritual mentor during his youth, al-Junayd was drawn to mystical ideas and ascetic ethos. Eventually, he succeeded his uncle as the leader of the Sufi school in Baghdad. Similar to al-Saqati, he received instruction on law and theology under the guidance of Shafi'i scholars such as Abu Thawr (855) and Ibn Kullab (855). He also fulfilled the qualifications to act as a *mujtahid*, issuing legal opinions (*fatwa*) on legal matters (Knysh, 2000).

The first Sufi author who served as the spiritual guide to al-Junayd was named al-Harith bin al-Muhasibi (837). He was born in Basra and spent much of his life in the Abbasid capital until his passing. For him, Sufi knowledge should not contradict the teachings found in the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. His perspective consistently emphasized that gnosis (*ma'rifah*) is paramount and more noble than mere actions. According to him, gnosis or knowledge leads humans to perfection, while ignorance hinders this path. Actions belong to the realm of human nature, while knowledge is a divine attribute possessed by Allah (al-Hujwiri, 1992). His Sufi principles were strongly against anything that went against the prohibitions of Islam. Al-Muhasibi divided the steps to attain gnosis into four stages, including: the stage of obedience, the stage of an illuminated heart (happiness), the stage of the opening of the treasury of knowledge and the secrets of the unseen, and self-denial (*fana*) followed by permanence (*baq'a*) (Hilal, 2002).

The subsequent generation of Sufis portrayed Junayd as an exponent of Sufism who had a "conscious" mystical experience. This characterization was attributed to him in conjunction with some of his peers described as "intoxicated," such as Abu Yazid al-Bustami, al-Hallaj, or others like al-Nuri, Sumnun, and al-Shibli. Additionally, several Sufi writers bestowed titles upon him, such as sayyid al-taifa (the Master of this group [i.e., the Sufis]) and saykh al-masyaikh (the Teacher of Teachers), indicating the respect he held in his time and after that (Knysh, 2000: 54). Arberry referred to him as the "most genuine scholar and penetrating intellect among the Sufis of his time" (Arberry, 1950).

It feels incomplete to discuss the Baghdad School without mentioning Mansur al-Hallaj. He is one of the controversial Sufis from Baghdad who was sentenced to hanging by the ruler due to his controversial statements and became famous in the history of tasawwuf with his declaration: "*Ana al-Haqq*" ("I am the Truth").

One of the Orientalists, Louis Massignon from France, dedicated and devoted his life to researching one of the legendary figures in the history of Sufism. He deciphered the highly difficult prose in the book "*Kitab at-Tawasin*". He collected scattered poems of al-Hallaj, revealing the excellence of God and His immanence in the human heart. This work was published in 1922, a thousand years after the death of al-Hallaj (Massignon, 2018; Schimmel, 1975).

Al-Hallaj was born around the year 857 in Tur, which is part of the Persian province. His father worked as a wool (Hallaj) craftsman, and the family left Tur for the textile-producing region between Tustar and Wasit. They settled in Wasit, an area dominated by Sunni Islam of the Hanbali school. There, al-Hallaj received a rigorous education in traditional Islamic sciences. He became known for his expertise in the Quran, which he wholeheartedly studied from age twelve.

At that time, he was busy seeking the esoteric meaning of the Quran, and around the age of twenty, he went to Basra and became a follower of the renowned Sufi interpreter Sahl al-Tustari (d. 896). He was initiated into Sufism in Baghdad by 'Amr al-Makki in Basra (Karamustafa, 1994). In Basra, he married Umm al-Husayn, the daughter of the famous Sufi teacher Abu Ya'qub al-Aqta, with whom he had three sons and a daughter (Ernst, 1984).

In summary, due to his famous theophanic statement "*Ana al-Haqq*" ("I am the Truth"), many Sufis opposed him, considering him reckless in disclosing Divine secrets to the general public. Eventually, he moved to Khurasan and resided there for five years. He performed the Hajj twice and traveled to Central Asia and India. During these journeys, he gained numerous followers and became known as a person with mystical powers, attributed to his ability to heal diseases (Nasr, 2007).

After completing his third Hajj to Mecca, al-Hallaj returned to Baghdad. There, he bought a house and decided to settle down. In 912, he was arrested on charges of spreading heretical ideas. He ultimately faced execution in 922 with joy, as for him, it was a testament to his love for the Divine. He then composed his most famous Sufi poem, the opening lines of which he wrote as follows (Schimmel, 1975):

*"Kill me, O my trustworthy friends,
For in being killed, I come to life."*

After al-Hallaj's death, some of his disciples went into hiding or disappeared, while others were captured and beheaded in Baghdad. Some fled to Khurasan and Central Asia, spreading his teachings among local mystical groups. Through their efforts, the trend of "intoxication" or "ecstasy" in the Islamic mystical tradition, known as tasawwuf, was developed by prominent Persian Sufis such as Muhammad al-Dastani (1026), al-Kharqani (1033), Abu Said bin Abi Khayr (1049), and Farmadi (1084). These Sufis connected their spiritual lineage to either al-Bustami or al-Hallaj, or both. Al-Hallaj's disciple, Ibn Khafif from Shiraz, established an independent tasawwuf school that merged Persian ascetic traditions and speculative mysticism of the Baghdad school, adding some elements of the newly emerging theology of al-Ash'ari (Knysh, 2000).

Khurasan, situated in the Persian region, has long been a breeding ground for influential figures in various disciplines of Islamic civilization. Many significant figures born in this region became experts in both religious and non-religious fields, including Tasawwuf. Despite being located to the east of the central Islamic civilization and bordering Central Asia, the geographical position of Khurasan did not deter Muslim scholars from venturing westward toward the core of Islamic civilization to pursue learning.

Although Tasawwuf originated in the Western regions, it flourished and spread widely in the Khurasan region. Many Sufi figures or Sufi scholars who were born later became central figures in the field of Sufism. The birth of Persian Sufi poets and scholars as eminent as Imam al-Ghazali

(۱۱۱۱) also originated from Persia or Khurasan, and their works were later widely read by Muslims throughout the Islamic world.

One renowned figure from the Khurasan School is Ibrahim bin Adham (around 790), initially a prince. Similar to Buddha Gautama, he abandoned his royal life to dedicate himself entirely to the spiritual path. Like the early Sufis of Mesopotamia, Ibrahim was a Zahid, focusing on a life of simplicity, rejecting the material world, and placing all reliance on God. He became the most famous prototype of a Sufi known for his asceticism. Junayd even referred to him as the "key to esoteric knowledge." Ibrahim not only spoke about the renunciation (*tark*) of the world but also the renunciation of renunciation (*tark-i tark*), ultimately leading to indifference towards the world (Nasr, 2007).

Ibrahim is praised for his classification of asceticism, known as *zuhud*. This classification, introduced by him, became highly common and popular after the ninth century. He divided asceticism into three categories: a. rejection of the worldly, b. rejection of wealth because of successfully rejecting the world, and c. a stage where a zahid regards the world as so worthless that they become completely indifferent to it (Schimmel, 1975). He acquired this knowledge through journeys to various places and interactions with his Christian ascetic companions. Ibrahim admitted to gaining much actual knowledge about God from his Christian companions, which deepened his understanding of Allah (Arberry, 1950).

A younger contemporary of Ibrahim bin Adham from Khurasan, who was also renowned for his asceticism, was Fudhayl bin Iyadh (803). He was a saint from Khurasan, well-known for his asceticism. Initially, he gained fame as a notorious highway robber operating in the cities of Abiward and Sarakhs. One day, while visiting his beloved, he overheard someone reciting verses from the Quran. From that moment, he abandoned his life as a highway robber and devoted himself entirely to studying the hadiths of the Prophet.

Ibrahim bin Adham's student continued the ascetic tradition of Khurasan, Shaiq al-Balkhi (810). According to several authors, he was the first person to define faith in Allah (*tawakkul*) as a mystical state (*hal*) (Arberry, 1950:38). His student then carried on his teachings, Hatim al-Asamm (851), and Hatim's student, Abu Turab al-Nakhshabi (859) (Knysh, 2000).

In several aspects, Syaqiq resembles Ibrahim bin Adham, especially in terms of his meticulousness (*wara*) and his reliance on God (*tawakkul*), which often took on extreme forms. Furthermore, in Syaqiq's perspective, efforts to safeguard one's life are tantamount to doubting God's generosity and capability to provide for His creatures. It is not surprising that Syaqiq is often depicted as one of the earliest proponents, if not the originator, of *tawakkul*—a doctrine that advocates complete trust in God and the utmost disregard or minimal engagement in profitable endeavors. Syaqiq seems to embrace a strict version of *tawakkul*, which was later rejected by some more moderate Sufis (Knysh, 2000).

Another figure from Persia or Khurasan is Abdullah bin Mubarak from Merv (797), whom some Sufis claim to be the author of a book on asceticism (*Kitab al-Zuhud*) that has endured (Arberry, 1950). *Kitab al-Zuhud* is a compilation of hadiths and teachings on righteousness, carefully selected to emphasize the attitude of renouncing the world by the Prophet, his family, companions, and the Prophet's successors. Similar to the collections of Zaida bin Qudama, Waki bin al-Jarrah (812), and Asad bin Musa (827), this work contains hundreds of pearls of wisdom, moral teachings, and ethics that form the foundation of subsequent Sufi traditions (Knysh, 2000).

If in Baghdad there was al-Hallaj, who uttered theophanic words or declarations of divine unity (*shahada*) that led to his punishment by the authorities, in Khurasan there was Abu Yazid al-Bustami (874), a great saint of the Khurasan School. Unlike al-Hallaj, the local rulers did not punish him due to his ecstatic utterances. Some of his famous ecstatic statements include "Holiness is for me" or "There is no one in this cloak except Allah" (Nasr, 2007).

Abu Yazid al-Bustami left an indelible legacy in the Sufi tradition. He was the first to speak about his own spiritual ascent (*mi'raj*), akin to the form of the Prophet Muhammad's Night Journey (*Isra' Mi'raj*). Bayazid left behind many bold statements, such as:

Immediately after I attained His Oneness, I transformed into a bird with the body of Unity and wings of Eternity. I continued to glide through the atmosphere of Attributes for ten years until I reached space millions of times larger. I kept flying until I arrived at the field of Eternity, where I beheld the Tree of Unity. There, I saw and I understood that everything was mere illusion (Schimmel, 1975, p. 41).

In discussing the Khurasan School, we cannot overlook Sahl al-Tustari and his group, even though he did not originate from that region. Tustari emphasized the significance of *walayah* (spiritual authority) and the esoteric meanings of the Quran. His writings on these topics are crucial in the long tradition of Sufi interpretation of the Quran. His disciple, Hakim Tirmidhi from Khurasan, authored several works on Sufism but is primarily known for "Khatm al-Wilayah" (The Seal of Sanctity), which is considered one of the earliest and most significant texts in this regard. Nasr explains that Tirmidhi was one of the first Sufis to discuss doctrinal *tasawwuf* (*Irfan*), which later became central to the teachings of Ibn Arabi. Tirmidhi also developed a theory about the invisible hierarchy consisting of Kutub or Poles (al-Qutb), Helpers (al-Ghawts), and other types of hierarchy elements that assist in maintaining the spiritual activities of humanity on Earth throughout time (Nasr, 2007).

In Khurasan, there was a movement called Malamatiyah, a group that concealed their righteousness and showcased their own faults or self-censure publicly. The Malamatiyah intentionally bore the world's reproach by engaging in inappropriate and even unlawful actions, yet they maintained the purity of their hearts and wholeheartedly loved God (Schimmel, 1975).

Furthermore, as Trimingham noted, the Malamati were willing to be perceived as lowly by others so that they could disappear with God. They worked for themselves, disappearing into God while attending to worldly affairs. They did not display their spiritual path, nor were they diligent in attending gatherings of remembrance (*majelis dzikir*). They did not wear distinctive Sufi attire and did not have a specific spiritual guide or sheikh, even though they were open to guidance. Suhrawardi recounted, as quoted by Trimingham, "Now in Khurasan, there was a group of Malamati with several sheikhs ready to guide them with rules and nurture them to understand their spiritual progress. We saw it ourselves in Iraq, people who joined this Malamati movement, but it was not visible in this name because the name did not exist in the languages of Iraqi society" (Suhrawardi, 1998; Trimingham, 1973).

The founders of Malamatiyyah prohibited their followers from engaging in public activities such as preaching, displaying their piety, and making donations. For this purpose, Malamatiyyah proponents advised their followers to conceal their inner spiritual conditions and work with their own sweat. Simultaneously, they disliked begging, a practice widely adopted by the Karamiyah and other ascetics. At the same time, the founders of Malamatiyyah recommended that their followers make anonymous donations to the poor, aiming to cultivate intense asceticism. This was done to safeguard their movement's progress from admirers and avoid falling into hypocrisy (Karamustafa, 1994).

The pessimistic attitude of the Malamatiyyah is believed to have arisen from their frustration with the decline of social, political, and religious civilization in Khurasan, replaced by the dominance of Arab Muslims. Abu Uthman al-Hiri (911), the founder of this school of thought, is believed to have incorporated Sufi doctrines from Zoroastrian and Hindu teachings regarding pessimism (Hilal, 2002). It is not surprising, therefore, that the attitudes of the Sufis in Khurasan tended to be exaggerated and deviant in understanding the essence of divinity, as the complex Persian authority had long been deeply rooted in Khurasan society even before the arrival of Islam.

One prominent figure from this group, Hamdun al-Qasar, stated, "*Al-Malamat Tark al-Salamat*" (Censure is the abandonment of well-being). If someone deliberately forsakes their well-being, prepares themselves to endure misfortune, rejects pleasures, and breaks the bonds of

friendship, hoping for the grandeur of God to be granted to them, the more they distance themselves from the public, the more they become one with God. Therefore, the practitioners of the Path of Censure are indifferent to well-being, which is the aspiration of the people of this world, because their primary goal is to unite with God (*wahdani*) (Al-Hujwiri, 2015).

Al-Hujwiri, as cited in *Kashf al-Mahjub*, criticized the Malamatiyah. According to him, those who sought censure only intended to show off, and showing off was hypocrisy. Those who intentionally flaunted themselves to gain popularity were hypocrites, whereas the Malamatiyah did so to be rejected by people. Their focus was on human affairs, whereas the Sufis, on the contrary, never thought about people. When their hearts were detached from such matters, they no longer cared about censure or praise and always moved freely (Al-Hujwiri, 2015).

CONCLUSION

The emergence of Sufism was a political response following the end of the Khulafaur Rasyidin regime. Muslim rulers who were captivated by worldly matters were deemed unsuccessful as successors to the Prophet, so the right path for Muslims was considered to follow the ascetic path of the Prophet. Hasan al-Bashri exemplified this in responding to the Umayyad contestation through his ascetic attitude. The development of Sufism also relied on the contemporary conditions and the diverse issues faced by communities in a particular region. Each region had its unique characteristics in the Sufi tradition, resulting in various figures, doctrines, or teachings from this tradition. The Baghdad school of thought is known for its "awareness," in contrast to the Khurasan school, which was renowned for its "intoxication" or state of "unawareness." The differences in Sufism between these two cities are believed to have been influenced by distinct socio-political contexts. Baghdad, at that time, was the center of the Islamic empire, resulting in a more constrained Sufi environment compared to the greater freedom of Khurasan in practicing Sufism. The distinctive characteristics of Sufism in both Baghdad and Khurasan did not imply complete influence from other religions or specific national traditions. The major factor driving the dynamism of Sufism in these two regions was the result of ideas formulated by Sufis based on life experiences correlated with Islamic principles. Alternatively, it might have been influenced by the impact of the religious and cultural touchpoints of foreign nations that they adopted, deeming them coherent with the orientation towards divinity and Islam.

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