



## The Values of Sufism as Foundation of Tolerance and Brotherhood in Multicultural Society

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### ABSTRACT

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This article examines the values of Sufism as the foundation of tolerance and brotherhood in a multicultural society. Sufism, or Sufism, is a spiritual dimension of Islam that emphasizes the purification of the soul through love, humility, and simplicity. In the context of a diverse society, Sufism promotes the values of universal love, sincerity, and ihsan as an important basis for building tolerance and social cohesion. These values form a dialogical attitude that respects differences as common wealth, in accordance with the principle of multiculturalism that prioritizes diversity. This study aims to identify and analyze the role of Sufism values in building social harmony in a pluralistic society. The research method used is a library approach, through the analysis of various written sources, such as books and scientific journals, to understand the concept of Sufism values and their application in a social context. The results of the analysis show that Sufism not only functions as an individual spiritual practice, but also as an effective social tool to promote peace, universal brotherhood, and acceptance of diversity. In conclusion, Sufism makes a significant contribution in strengthening tolerance and appreciation for cultural diversity, creating sustainable harmony within society.

**Keywords:** *Sufism, Tolerance, Brotherhood, Multicultural, Love.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Multicultural societies consisting of various ethnicities, religions, and cultures often face challenges in maintaining social harmony. Differences in identity often trigger conflicts that stem from misunderstandings, stereotypes, and lack of openness between individuals. This condition highlights the importance of an approach that can increase tolerance and strengthen social brotherhood. One relevant approach is Sufism, a spiritual dimension in Islam that emphasizes purification of the soul (*tazkiyatun nafs*) and a direct relationship with God. Unlike the ritualistic approach that is external, Sufism focuses on the internal aspect, encouraging the practice of love, patience, and humility that have the potential to create harmonious social interactions. These Sufism values also promote openness and appreciation of differences as shared wealth.

Several studies have shown that Sufism values, such as love, sincerity, patience, and humility, can play an important role in building good social relationships regardless of background. Research conducted by Amy Aprilianty Aulia Rahma, for example, shows that Sufism defines tolerance not only in the external aspect but also in the inner dimension of humans, which includes human brotherhood, universal love, and sincere respect for diversity. (Amy Aprilianty Aulia Rahma, 2022). Another study by Sriyono Fauzi et al. emphasized that a deep understanding of the differences in the concept of divinity, tolerance, and respect for pluralism are the main factors in building a peaceful global society. (Fauzi, Arsinta and Nugrahini, 2024).

This study aims to explore the role of Sufism values as a foundation for tolerance and brotherhood in a multicultural society. In this study, the main focus is directed at three core issues related to the role of Sufism in a multicultural society. First, this study aims to understand the extent to which Sufism values are able to contribute to building an attitude of tolerance amidst diversity. In this context, Sufism is seen not only as a spiritual practice, but also as a moral foundation that can foster respect and acceptance of differences. Second, this study explores how Sufism can pave the way for cross-cultural dialogue and understanding. Sufism that emphasizes love and patience has the potential to strengthen relationships between individuals and groups with diverse cultural backgrounds, thus creating space for mutual understanding and recognition. Third, this study examines the role of Sufism in creating universal brotherhood. The principles of Sufism, such as sincerity, humility, and *ihsan*, are believed to be able to build brotherhood that transcends ethnic and religious boundaries, thereby strengthening social cohesion and strengthening peace in a pluralistic society. Top of Form

This study is expected to provide new contributions to the literature on Sufism, by showing that this spiritual practice is not only beneficial for personal development, but also as a social foundation that encourages harmony and universal brotherhood. The expected outcome of this study is the creation of a deeper understanding of the importance of Sufism in managing diversity and reducing the potential for conflict in society. This study is also expected to be a reference for efforts to develop Sufism-based tolerance and multiculturalism education, as well as provide practical contributions for policy makers in formulating social training strategies that respect differences.

Through the theoretical framework of Multiculturalism and Pluralism, this study is based on the understanding that Sufism is in line with the principles of openness, respect, and acceptance of diversity. In addition, this study will compare the values of Sufism with the principles of multiculturalism that view diversity as a shared strength. This study is expected to provide new contributions to Sufism literature by showing that this spiritual practice has broad social benefits in managing diversity and reducing the potential for conflict. The results of this study are also expected to be a reference for efforts to develop Sufism-based tolerance and multiculturalism education, as well as support policies in social strategy research that respects differences.

## **METHOD**

This research method uses a library approach, focusing on collecting and analyzing written sources to understand the concept of Sufism values as the Foundation of Tolerance and Brotherhood in a Multicultural Society.

The first step is to determine the topic and objectives, then the author collects relevant library sources, such as books and journal articles to obtain the latest information from previous research results. The author also explores academic databases and reliable sources on the internet to find related documents and case studies.

After collecting sources, the author analyzes and synthesizes the information by categorizing the data according to relevant themes. The author looks for patterns and relationships between concepts that emerge from the sources, then draws conclusions. The article is structured clearly, including an introduction, discussion, and conclusion, using logical academic language so that the arguments can be easily understood.

As a final step, the author reflects on the research process and the results obtained, assesses the relevance of the selected sources, and revises the article based on peer feedback to improve the quality of the writing.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Understanding Sufism, Tolerance and Multiculturalism**

Sufism, or Sufism, was unknown during the time of the Prophet Muhammad and Khulafaur Rasyidin. This term began to appear in the 3rd century AH, when Abu Hasyim al-Kufi first used the title "al-Sufi." According to the view expressed by Nicholson and quoted by several experts, before Abu Hasyim, there were already practices of asceticism, *tawakkal*, and *mahabbah*, but without mentioning the term Sufism. (Amy Aprilianty Aulia Rahma, 2022).

There are various views on the origin of the word "tasawuf." Some experts say that "suffah" refers to the companions who lived in the Prophet's Mosque and lived a simple life. In addition, the word "shaf" is interpreted as a row of people who are closest to Allah, while "shafa" describes the effort to maintain purity of heart. The term "shufanah" is taken from a type of wood that can survive in the desert, a symbol of the resilience of the teachings of tasawuf in a society that is influenced by materialism. In Greek, "theosophy" means divine knowledge, the emphasis of the spiritual dimension in tasawuf. Finally, "shuf," which means wool, describes how simple the clothes worn by the sufis were (Amy Aprilianty Aulia Rahma, 2022).

Of the various theories of the origin of the word "Sufi," the view that the term comes from the word shuf, meaning wool, seems to be more acceptable. This view is closely related to the background of the emergence of Sufis in Islamic history, especially as a reaction to the luxurious and hedonistic lifestyle of the ruling class at that time. In an effort to avoid luxury and ostentation, the ascetics chose to live simply and wear clothes made of coarse wool, which symbolized humility and simplicity. Coarse wool (shuf) is also believed to be the special clothing of Sufis, who adopted a lifestyle similar to that of the prophets and pious people before them. Wearing this woolen clothing by Sufis signifies their commitment to avoiding humility, strengthening humility, and drawing closer to God, as did the Prophet Muhammad and the scholars of the Salaf. (Nuraini and Marhayati, 2019).

Sufism, or Sufism, is a spiritual dimension of Islam that focuses on a direct relationship with God through a mystical approach and deep reflection. Sufism places more emphasis on the search for spiritual meaning and purification of the soul (tazkiyatun nafs), rather than merely performing rituals of worship. Sufis emphasize a personal relationship with God, prioritizing values such as love, patience, and kindness over all forms of worldly materialism. In Sufism, the inner aspect is valued more than the outer aspect, which influences how Sufis view the world and their interactions with others.

According to Mahmud, as explained by Yiyin Isgandi, Sufism is a cleansing of the heart that is achieved through mujahadah efforts, namely seriousness in getting closer to Allah consistently. To begin the path of Sufism, one needs: (1) special inner readiness, (2) choosing a valid murshid teacher, and (3) determination in mujahadah approved by the teacher. Sufism moderation includes three pillars: knowledge, mujahadah, and worship. Knowledge provides the basis of sharia, mujahadah connects to social reality, and worship reflects complete devotion to Allah. If implemented consistently, Sufism becomes a constructive path for a harmonious and prosperous life (Yiyin Isgandi, 2015).

Meanwhile, Ibrahim Basyuni in Ardiyani mentioned that there are forty definitions of Sufism from Sufi figures who lived in the third century Hijriah (200-334 H), which are divided into three levels: al-Bidayah, al-Mujahadah, and al-Mazaqah. In the level of al-Bidayah, Abu al-Husain al-Nuri (d. 295 H) stated that Sufis are people who are free from mental illness and the influence of lust, and are included in a high degree of truth. In the level of al-Mujahadah, Sufism is defined as adorning oneself with good deeds, where Abu Muhammad al-Jariri emphasizes the importance of noble morals, and al-Nury emphasizes that Sufism is more than just knowledge or writing, but morals that are in line with the morals of Allah. Meanwhile, the level of al-Mazaqah explains total submission to the will of Allah, which involves longing and intuition, so that a more intimate relationship is created between humans and Allah. Abud Husain al-Muzyu and Al-Junaid describe Sufism as complete submission to al-Haq, while Al-Hallaj emphasizes that Sufism is the unity of substance, with the main focus on Sufi behavior as a reflection of noble morals. (Hadarah, 2020).

The term "tolerance" comes from the English word tolerance and the Latin word tolerance, which means accepting or forgiving differences, expressing gentleness, compassion, and understanding. In Arabic, this word is known as tasamuh or tasahul, which includes the meaning of generosity, patience, and openness in dealing with differences. In Indonesia, the term "kerukunan" is understood as harmony in living together with unity of heart, where all parties agree to avoid disputes. This concept contains the meaning of peace and ideal social harmony in society. (Ghazali, 2016).

Tolerance means an attitude of respecting, accepting, and understanding diversity in society. This includes respect for differences in views, beliefs, or behavior of others, and

providing freedom of space without judging or restricting. A tolerant attitude is demonstrated by openness to accepting differences, the ability to understand the unique conditions of each individual, and making fair and kind statements towards others, regardless of differences in religious background, ethnicity, or social group. (Permana and Riyani, 2023).

According to Muhammad Maftuh Basyuni as conveyed by Muhayyan Ifkar, tolerance is an important foundation for harmony between humans which is dynamic and must continue to be maintained and preserved. Harmonious life among various religions reflects values such as mutual understanding, respect for justice in practicing religion, and solidarity in society, nation, and state. Tolerance is closely related to harmony, which shows attitudes and actions not to differentiate between different groups. For example, religious tolerance occurs when the majority of society gives space and recognition to adherents of minority religions. (Ifkar and Mawardi, 2022).

Multiculturalism is a concept that recognizes and values cultural diversity in a society, where different ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural groups live side by side. It emphasizes the importance of respecting the right of individuals to maintain their cultural identities while participating in the wider society. In a multicultural society, differences are seen as enriching social life, rather than as obstacles, and promote social cohesion and cross-cultural understanding.

Multiculturalism is based on the concept of culture functioning as a guideline for human life. This concept recognizes and appreciates differences, both individually and culturally, and describes society as a diverse whole, like a mosaic consisting of various small cultures. The term "multicultural" began to be known in the 1960s along with the civil rights movement that opposed the assimilation policy towards minority groups. Will Kymlicka argues that multiculturalism includes recognition and justice for the rights of ethnic minorities, both in the context of individuals and communities in expressing their culture (Salim and Aprison, 2024).

Multiculturalism is the recognition and appreciation of cultural diversity that coexists in one environment, where these differences actually enrich each other. According to Suryadinata, multiculturalism is not only a practical political strategy but also a way of looking at life. In the context of Indonesia, which consists of various ethnicities, religions, and cultures, understanding multiculturalism is very important to maintain togetherness. This concept is parallel to "Bhineka Tunggal Ika," the national motto that reflects unity in diversity, the result of a long historical process that recognizes and appreciates the richness of customs in each region. (Fadli, 2022).

Based on the description above, it can be understood that Sufism is a spiritual dimension of Islam that focuses on the purification of the soul (tazkiyatun nafs) and a direct relationship with Allah through love, patience, and simplicity. It emphasizes the inner aspect, noble morals, and harmonious social relationships as a reflection of true spirituality. Tolerance is an attitude of appreciating, understanding, and accepting diversity with an open heart in order to create peaceful and just social harmony in society. While multiculturalism is the diversity of cultures, religions, and ethnicities in society. This condition emphasizes the importance of respecting differences and encouraging social cohesion through mutual understanding across cultures, making differences a shared wealth.

### **Sufism Values for Building Tolerance**

Sufism teaches the values of moderation, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence. This teaching is rooted in a metaphysical understanding that emphasizes the unity of all things, where differences and divisions are considered illusions. In Sufism, the meaning of tolerance goes beyond the exoteric and reaches deeper esoteric dimensions. Concepts such as human brotherhood, cosmic love, divine love, forgiveness, and the culture of forgiveness show that despite differences in principles and rules, the main goal remains the same, namely to worship and obey God. This tolerance is based on the acceptance of every individual regardless of nationality, religion, or tribe. Sufis believe that all beings are united in the search for divine love. (Amy Aprilianty Aulia Rahma, 2022).

Tariq Ramadan explained that in a multicultural society, pluralism must be the foundation for creating a peaceful and harmonious life. According to him, pluralism and

inclusivity need to be considered in religious practices. He rejected the narrow view that limits religion to a single interpretation, and emphasized the importance of respecting and recognizing diversity in religious understanding. Inclusivity in religion must include various individual perspectives, and differences in religious interpretation should not be ignored, but rather recognized as an important part of cohesion. (Saumantri, 2023).

Nasaruddin Umar said that tolerance does not mean agreeing or considering all different views to be correct, but rather respecting the basic rights of every person to express their opinion. According to him, differences in views, values, or beliefs should not be a reason for hostility or hostility. On the contrary, this diversity is an opportunity to develop an attitude of mutual respect and acceptance of diversity and plurality in society. (Fuady, Rofiah and Ningsih, 2021).

The love embedded in the heart of a Sufi has extraordinary power to change bad traits such as arrogance and hatred. For them, love is not just a moral guide, but the core of their spiritual journey. This love creates a gentle attitude and openness of heart, eliminating the space for negative traits. Sufis are willing to face great challenges, even death, like Al-Hallaj who was sentenced to death for spreading the teachings of hulul, showing the highest sacrifice for the divine love they feel. (Muzairi, 2018).

Such a concept of love, understood to depict the strong relevance between Sufism and multiculturalism, because values such as love, can be the basis for creating harmony amidst cultural and religious diversity. The principles of Sufism emphasize universal brotherhood, where differences in identity or belief are seen as part of God's creation that must be respected. With a focus on cleansing the heart and the common good, Sufism offers an inclusive approach that not only accepts, but also embraces diversity as a form of God's grace.

Multiculturalism in the modern era often faces challenges in accepting diversity, with ethnic, religious, or cultural differences sometimes triggering conflict. Sufism offers a spiritual approach that emphasizes love, tolerance, and dialogue as effective ways to overcome these differences. With its teachings, Sufism can be an important tool in building a more harmonious multicultural ethic, encouraging peaceful and harmonious community life, and viewing diversity as a wealth that needs to be appreciated.

Thus, Sufism, or Sufism, is a spiritual practice in Islam that focuses on the purification of the soul and a deeper connection with God through love, patience, and kindness, prioritizing the inner aspect over materialism. Sufism plays a significant role in building tolerance, especially in multicultural societies, with its emphasis on inclusive values such as love and humility. This attitude promotes peace, acceptance, and respect for cultural and religious diversity, thereby creating harmony and overcoming differences-based conflicts in modern society.

Sufi spiritual practices carried out in moderation do not lead to the rejection of the world, but rather to the growth of awareness of divine values in every aspect of life. Sufism offers a solution to extreme interpretations that can appear passive or rejecting the world. In addition, it also allows for the development of harmonious relationships between individuals and society, encouraging tolerance and mutual understanding among different beliefs and cultures. Moderate Sufism thus contributes to peace and social cohesion. (Mustang, 2024).

Sufism offers values that are closely related to the attitude of tolerance in social life, especially in the context of a multicultural society. One of the core values in Sufism is *tawadhu'* (humility), which teaches Sufis to guarantee ego, respect others, and not feel superior, regardless of background. This humble attitude encourages openness and acceptance of various differences, both in terms of beliefs, culture, customs, and lifestyle, so that a peaceful and inclusive life is created.

Sufism teaches values such as sincerity, simplicity, love, and especially tolerance, which play a role in forming a moderate attitude in religion. Through this approach, Sufism encourages peace, brotherhood, and respect for differences, so that it can create harmony in a diverse society. In dealing with extremism and radicalism that often arise from a rigid understanding of religion, Sufism with its focus on inclusivity and tolerance becomes an important tool to strengthen the moderation of the people and maintain social harmony. (Mujahideen, 2024).

Sufism is an effort to spread Islamic teachings in a way that encourages individuals

and society to respect each other and live in harmony according to Islamic values in everyday life. The teachings of Sufism cover various aspects of life such as economics, social, culture, law, politics, science, and technology. Through Sufism, creating a safe and prosperous environment by developing the spiritual inspiration of individuals and society. This approach emphasizes a spiritual relationship with Allah to achieve inner peace for each individual. (Waskito, 2021).

One important aspect in maintaining good relations between humans is to emulate the traits that bring peace and through a loving heart approach. According to Tuan Guru Batak as stated by Muallim Lubis, in the modern era, Sufism spirituality has a significant role in strengthening spiritual awareness, as well as encouraging tolerance and harmony. Sufism can be a means of spreading more inclusive Islamic teachings, where the values of tolerance and coexistence are conveyed through social media, encouraging openness and harmony. (Lubis, 2024).

Based on the above description, it can be understood that Sufism makes a significant contribution in building tolerance through core values such as humility, sincerity, and love. These values encourage individuals to respect each other and be open to differences, creating space for dialogue and acceptance in a pluralistic society. By prioritizing the principle of peaceful coexistence, Sufism is able to form an inclusive and harmonious environment. This approach also faces the challenge of extremism by emphasizing the importance of moderation, thereby strengthening social cohesion and interfaith harmony.

One of the main values in Sufism is mahabbah (love). Sufis believe that love is the core of their relationship with God and fellow human beings. In Sufism, this love is universal and does not see differences. This sincere love gives birth to compassion for all creatures without distinction of religion, race, or culture. In a multicultural society, this kind of love instills an attitude of tolerance, because someone who loves others will find it easier to accept differences and strive to live in peace together. Love in Sufism is understood as divine love that transcends worldly love, with God as the center of existence. Divine love is a transformational force that changes a person's heart and soul, bringing them closer to the Creator. Sufis see this love as the main motivation in worship and spiritual pursuits, which helps to release the ego and attachment to the world. Sufi figures such as Imam Al-Ghazali, Jalaludin Rumi, and Rabi'ah Al-Adawiyah define love based on their experience of closeness to Allah SWT, often expressed through poetry. Rumi views love as a force that can provide peace of mind, change bad into good, and be a light in the midst of darkness. Love, for Rumi, is a source of serenity, hope, and physical fitness and zest for life. (Prathama and Mahadwistha, 2024).

Sufism also teaches the principle of ihsan, which means doing good deeds in every action, not only to fellow Muslims, but also to all humanity. A Sufi emphasizes the importance of maintaining a balance between vertical relationships with Allah and horizontal relationships with others. Ihsan is an important element in creating harmonious and peaceful cross-cultural relationships. A person who practices ihsan will always try to benefit others, regardless of their background.

The practice of Sufism has an impact on individuals, acting as a personal and social guide in character formation. Personal guidance aims to direct oneself to behave in accordance with character values, while social guidance invites society to do good in community life. Character values that can be developed through Sufism training include religiousness, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, nationalism, love of the homeland, appreciation of achievement, friendly/communicative attitude, love of peace, love of reading, environmental concern, social concern, and responsibility. The values contained in the practice of Sufism play a role in the formation of the character of modern society and include aspects of the heart, soul, personality, morals, behavior, personality, nature, nature, temperament, and character. These character values can be instilled through the teachings of Sufism. (Zubaedi and Utomo, 2021).

The values mentioned above naturally encourage the creation of an attitude of tolerance in society. When a person upholds humility, universal love, and kindness, they tend to be more open to differences and express friendliness to all. In an increasingly open era, such an attitude is essential to building harmony in a diverse society. Through its spiritual

values, Sufism provides a strong foundation for cultivating an attitude of tolerance and inclusivity in a multicultural community.

### **Sufism as a Path to Intercultural Dialogue and Understanding**

The diversity of tribes, nations, religions, and cultures forms a multicultural society throughout the world. For example, Indonesia has a natural cultural wealth; Since ancient times, when it was still known as the Dutch East Indies, Indonesia has consisted of various tribes, ethnicities, and cultures. The name Indonesia itself comes from the word "indo", which means mixed, and "nesia", which means country, reflecting a diverse nation but united because of the same fate and ideals. However, it is difficult to determine the exact number of ethnic groups in Indonesia. In 1930, the Dutch East Indies colonial government recorded ethnic data in Volkstelling, but since the 1970 census, ethnic data has no longer been included, so population growth information per ethnic group is incomplete. Even so, research data from 1974 by Pagkakaisa recorded the composition of the population based on ethnicity, such as the Javanese tribe which reached 45.8%, Sundanese 14.1%, and various other tribes. Until now, experts are still debating the classification of ethnic groups in Indonesia.(Iqbal, 2023).

Recognition of the existence of various groups with different identities including ethnicity, religion, and culture is the essence of pluralism. This concept reflects a true bond of mutual support in diversity. In the context of Sufism, pluralism indicates acceptance and appreciation of differences, which supports intercultural dialogue. Tolerance of various ethnicities and beliefs in society is an integral part of pluralism, which creates institutions that include equality both locally and globally. Pluralism also maintains equality, strengthens the sense of brotherhood, and encourages cooperation for the common good, so that every individual has equal rights and obligations, including minority groups who can participate in society just like the majority group.(Sari and Dozan, 2021).

Religious pluralism is a social fact that must be faced in modern society. The beginning of the idea of religious pluralism is embedded in diversity, which gives rise to various views in religions. These differences in views are caused by the context of the teachings and cultural traditions of each religion. According to John Hick, this phenomenon is the core of the significance of religion. There are two main factors that influence the idea of religious pluralism. Internal factors include differences in fundamental beliefs between religions, especially in the fields of faith, history, and the concept of religious superiority. External factors include socio-political aspects such as democracy, nationalism, and human rights (HAM) which are the basis of the state and nation system, as well as globalization that supports pluralism. In addition, academic studies in the spectrum of contemporary religions also enrich this theory of pluralism. In countries like Indonesia, democracy, nationalism, and human rights are the main foundations for the development of religious pluralism, with the principle of sovereignty that sides with the people(Hendri Marduki, 2016).

Sufism has a strong potential to foster cross-cultural dialogue, especially in the modern era when differences often lead to conflict. Throughout Islamic history, many Sufi figures have acted as intermediaries between communities with diverse backgrounds. The values of Sufism, which emphasize love and acceptance of all human beings, make Sufi figures inclusive and do not limit themselves to a particular group. Sufis often act as peacemakers, who prioritize dialogue in resolving setbacks.

According to Bagir as stated by Muhammad Rafi'i, Sufism is an effective solution to foster human relations with Allah. Sufism emphasizes efforts to strengthen and maintain this relationship, in contrast to radicalism which often prioritizes exclusive views. Sufism, on the other hand, focuses on love, peace, and inclusivity. This is very relevant amidst increasing conservatism, radicalism, and intolerance. Islam and peace are not just historical records that happen by chance. Values such as love, peace, respect, and inclusivity are characters that need to be present in society to eliminate discriminatory and exclusive views in dealing with various problems. Broad understanding, diverse perspectives, and an open approach allow for in-depth problem solving based on a strong foundation. The spirit of Islam in openness to knowledge can be an inspiration for Muslims to continue to encourage inclusivity in dealing with problems through dialogue(Rafi and Taufani, 2021).

According to Sufism, intercultural dialogue is not just verbal communication, but rather a process of deep understanding. Sufism considers it important to see the "essence" behind everything, including cultural differences. Sufis teach to view humans as creatures of God who have the same soul, even though they differ in culture or beliefs. With this view, Sufism teaches that dialogue does not only function to resolve differences, but also to strengthen a sense of brotherhood amidst diversity.

Imam al-Ghazali as one of the figures of Sufism, emphasized the importance of a balanced and rational understanding of religion, and rejected extremism and fanaticism. This reflects the concept of religious moderation which is widely accepted and recognized globally. His thoughts are very relevant in the context of multiculturalism, as he advocates values such as tolerance, compassion, and peace, which are important for fostering harmonious relations between different religious and cultural communities in a diverse society.(Irmawati and Mardiana, 2024).

Thus, Sufism provides a solid spiritual foundation for intercultural dialogue. The principles of openness, love, and the search for deeper meaning contained in Sufism make it an effective tool for bridging cultural diversity. Amidst tensions between groups, the dialogical approach in Sufism creates space for understanding, tolerance, and brotherhood amidst diversity.

### **Sufism and the Effort to Build Universal Brotherhood**

The Sufis believe that life that originates from the depths of the inner self is manifested on the surface in various forms. In this world, humans are considered the most perfect manifestation, because through the process of evolution, humans can realize the unity of this reality, even in the midst of the existence of external existence. However, in order to achieve this goal, which is the only reason for his existence in the world, humans need to unite themselves with others. Therefore, the Sufis understand the importance of universal unity among humans, breaking away from the limitations of nationality, race, and religion. They unite in a brotherhood that transcends differences of status, class, belief, race, nation, or religion, and builds a universal brotherhood.(Nuruddin, 2014).

Sufism, from the perspective of moral Sufism, forms a strong moral framework for developing noble character by instilling respect for God, fellow humans, and oneself. Through a continuous process of introspection and self-purification, Sufism helps a person cleanse the soul of bad qualities (takhalli) and replace them with noble qualities (tahalli). This effort has the potential to organize a better life, because every step towards admirable qualities guides a person to the true, deep nature of purpose. More than just personal guidance, Sufism teaches universal brotherhood. With concepts such as mahabbah (love) and al-ukhuwwah al-basyariyah (human brotherhood), Sufism encourages attitudes of tolerance and compassion across differences, including religion, ethnicity, language and social status. The teachings of Sufism function as a source of norms, motivation and ideals of life that not only nourish individuals but also strengthen human bonds, building a society that respects and respects each other.(Nur and Iqbal Irham, 2023).

Universal brotherhood is a human bond based on the primordial equality of every human being, seen as an "essential part" of the "self of God". Inayat Khan argues that brotherhood is not a concept that can be formally learned or taught. Rather, it is a trend that emerges from the heart, in tune with the right melody.(Nuruddin, 2014).

Sufism teaches that universal brotherhood is one of the main goals of human life. In Sufism, the concept of "ukhuwah insaniyah" (human brotherhood) emphasizes that every human being, regardless of their origin or beliefs, is a brother in creation. Allah created humans in various tribes, nations, and languages, so that they can know each other and work together, not to be hostile to each other. In a multicultural context, Sufism teaches that differences should be celebrated as a manifestation of Allah's love that created diversity in this world.

This concept can be seen in the application of the values of ukhuwah (brotherhood) in religious moderation in the Medina Charter which reflects togetherness, namely: ta'ruf, tafahum, takaful, and ta'awun(Hassannusi, 2022).

1. *Introduction*(knowing each other), the first step to unity which refers to QS. Al-Hujurat /49:13:

لَلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ إِذَا دَخَلُوا قَرْيَةً فَامْتَحِنُوا عَلَيْهَا إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَلْعَلَمِينَ

Translation:

O people, indeed We have created you from a man and a woman. Then, We made you into nations and tribes so that you might know each other. Indeed, the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the one who is most pious. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Compliant.

2. *Understanding*(understanding each other), namely respecting differences and strengthening brotherhood between people, according to QS. Ar-Rum/30:22) regarding the signs of Allah's greatness in the diversity of languages and skin colors.

وَمِن آيَاتِهِ خَلْقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالرَّأْسِ وَخِلَافَ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَأَلْوَانِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَلْعَلَمِينَ

Translation:

Among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the differences in your languages and colors. Indeed in this are signs for a people who have knowledge.

3. *Insurance*(giving each other guarantees) to create harmony, as recommended in QS. An-Nahl/16:90 to act justly and do good, even towards those who have different beliefs.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَوْفُوا بِالْعُقُوبِ إِنَّكُمْ كُنتُمْ لَعَلَمًا لِّمَن دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهَا مِنَ النَّاسِ وَكُنتُمْ لَهَا عِلْمًا لِّمَن دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهَا مِنَ النَّاسِ وَإِذْ تَتَذَكَّرُونَ

Translation:

Indeed, Allah commands to act fairly, do good deeds, and provide assistance to relatives. He (also) forbids evil, evil and hostility. He taught you a lesson so that you will always remember.

4. *Ta'awun*(helping each other) for the common good, supported by QS. Al-Mumlanahanah/60:8, which teaches us to be kind to those who are not hostile or repel us.

لَا يَنْهَىٰ هَٰلِكٌ عَنِ الدِّينِ لَمَّا يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِنْ دِينِكُمْ أَلَمْ تَدْرُوهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ هَٰلِكًا يُدبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

Translation:

Allah does not forbid you to do good and be fair to those who do not fight you in matters of religion and do not expel you from your hometown. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly.

These values reflect rahmatan lil 'alamin (blessing for the universe) and are the main principles in maintaining harmony in national and state life, especially in the context of religious and cultural diversity. This concept emphasizes universal compassion and justice that support unity, allowing differences in beliefs to coexist peacefully and harmoniously. The implementation of the values of rahmatan lil 'alamin is seen in the efforts of society and government to encourage tolerance, mutual respect, and avoid potential religious-based conflicts, so that social stability and security can be maintained. By understanding rahmatan lil 'alamin as a moral foundation, society is expected to be able to live a balanced life between maintaining religious identity and prioritizing common interests for welfare.

To build universal brotherhood, Sufism teaches an inclusive attitude towards all humanity. Sufism does not teach fanaticism or exclusivity, but rather accepts differences with compassion and openness. Sufis see everyone as a creature who is equally seeking God, even though they may use different paths. With this view, Sufism is able to erode sectarian attitudes and create space for cooperation and unity amidst differences.

In practice, many Sufi figures have become role models in building brotherhood

among humanity. They are known not only for their piety, but also for their role in uniting diverse communities. Sufis do not view race, religion, or culture as limitations in building brotherhood, but as part of the life experience that fosters human interaction.

In closing, Sufism offers a broad and deep perspective for building universal brotherhood in a diverse world. With its approach of love, humility, and openness, Sufism encourages us to see the common humanity behind every difference. These values are especially relevant amidst the increasing social and cultural challenges facing global society today, making Sufism a spiritual path to greater harmony.

### **The Potential of Sufism in Overcoming Social Challenges Arising from Cultural Differences**

Creating a peaceful atmosphere and reducing misunderstandings in the perspective of intercultural communication is very important. Successful communication occurs when both parties can understand the message conveyed in a similar way. On the other hand, poor communication can cause conflict if the meaning of the cultural or religious message conveyed is different. To prevent this, it is important to respect the cultural and religious differences of others.

Some strategic steps to deal with these differences include: first, respecting differences by learning the values held by other groups to increase tolerance and create an inclusive environment; second, communicating well in a polite, open, and respectful manner; third, increasing education to deepen understanding of cultural and religious differences, thereby reducing conflict; fourth, avoiding discrimination by respecting human rights and avoiding actions that harm certain groups; and fifth, achieving cooperation between groups to reduce differences and build mutually beneficial relationships.(Thahir, 2023).

According to Wora, as stated by Sidqi, modernism, although it brings progress, has actually damaged the balance of nature and the order of life. The view that humans are the center of consciousness has had a negative impact on the environment, causing the destruction of harmony in the relationship between humans and other creations. Sidqi also put forward Walters' view that modernity creates a need for a strong moral foundation, which cannot be met by physics. To restore moral order, humans need a power that goes beyond reality. Walters suggests returning to traditional science and personal experience to find meaning. Mysticism is also considered capable of overcoming the impacts of modernity in the form of cynicism and immorality, because it offers an organic view that sees everything as a manifestation of "The Divine", different from the mechanistic view that is limited to the material world.(Sidqi, 2015).

When a person has strong faith, they can make decisions based on religious teachings, which leads to new values and culture. Modern society, with its tendency towards individualism, requires a deeper search for balance in life, which is based on existentialist teachings, longing for a simpler life. In this context, the teachings of Sufism, which emphasize a deep spiritual connection with God and introspection to avoid worldliness, become relevant. The worldview of Sufism, which is not only individual, but also has implications for solving social problems, is increasingly important in facing the modern world that is divided and individualistic.(Nur and Iqbal Irham, 2023).

Sayyid Husein Nashr, a prominent modern thinker, emphasized the importance of reintroducing spiritual values in Islam to counter the detrimental effects of modernity. He believed that the loss of spirituality in contemporary society has led to moral decline, with Islam often reduced to legalistic and formalistic practices, neglecting its esoteric and inner dimensions. Nashr argued that the spiritual aspects of Islam, especially Sufism, should be revived as an alternative to this crisis. According to Komaruddin Hidayat, Sufism should be promoted to address the spiritual confusion of humanity, to educate both Muslims and non-Muslims, especially in the West, about the inner dimensions of Islam. This would reaffirm that Sufism is the heart of Islam, and without it, other aspects of Islam would be dry and lifeless. Sufism, or Sufism, serves as a spiritual path to attaining a higher spiritual reality in Islam. It is not about renouncing the world but about achieving inner liberation while actively engaging in life. This path combines active living with contemplation, in line with Islam's holistic approach to integrating material and spiritual life. Through Sufism, individuals can

experience spiritual fulfillment while remaining active participants in the world.(Wanto, 2014).

Based on the above explanation, it can be understood that, to face the challenges of intercultural communication and increasingly complex social differences in the modern world, an inclusive and respectful approach is needed. This can be achieved through steps such as appreciating cultural differences, communicating well, improving education to understand differences, avoiding discrimination, and building cooperation between groups. On the other hand, the teachings of Sufism, which emphasizes the inner relationship with God and introspection, can provide spiritual guidance to overcome the crisis of values and morals due to the impact of modernity. This helps society to find a balance between spiritual and material life, and provides a solution to the spiritual confusion that arises in an increasingly individualistic and divided world.

## CONCLUSION

Sufism as one of the spiritual branches of Islam offers relevant and significant values in facing the challenges of multiculturalism in the modern world. Sufism does not only focus on developing vertical relationships between humans and Allah, but also pays attention to horizontal relationships between fellow humans. Values such as *tawadhu'* (humility), *mahabbah* (love), and *ihsan* (goodness) in Sufism teach acceptance, unconditional love, and respect for diversity.

Sufism in a multicultural society acts as a bridge to strengthen relationships between different individuals and groups. This teaching teaches respect for cultural, religious and ethnic diversity, and views these differences as a wealth that needs to be preserved. Sufism emphasizes deep dialogue, full of love and acceptance, to create a stronger and more harmonious universal brotherhood.

Sufism, with its values, has the potential to be a spiritual solution to reduce tensions resulting from conflicts of difference, creating a more inclusive, peaceful and tolerant environment in a diverse society.

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