

SUFI HEALING IN THE TRADITION OF TRADITIONAL AND MODERN MEDICINE

Ahmad Pebri

Universitas Islam Negeri Antasari, Banjarmasin, Indonesia
pebrihamad@gmail.com

Muhammad Rusydi

Universitas Islam Negeri Antasari, Banjarmasin, Indonesia
muhammadrusydi@uin-antasari.ac.id

Abstract

The integration of traditional and modern medicine has become a growing concern in the field of healthcare, particularly in the context of healing that involves psychological and spiritual aspects. One traditional approach that has gained attention is Sufi Healing, a method of treatment based on the practices and values of Sufism. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of Sufi Healing and its potential for integration with modern medical approaches. The research employs a literature review method by collecting data from scientific journals, books, online articles, and other credible sources. Sufi Healing is an alternative therapy that has been known since the rise of Islam and Sufism, and is now increasingly studied in the fields of transpersonal psychology and psychoneuroimmunology. This approach emphasizes the connection between spiritual awareness and physical health, demonstrating the interrelation between mind, body, and soul in the healing process.

Keywords: *Modern; Sufi Healing; Traditional; Treasure of Medicine*

Introduction

Health is one of the fundamental aspects of human life that continues to develop alongside advances in science and technology. Since ancient times, various healing methods have been practiced within societies, both traditional approaches and those based on

modern medical science. One healing method that remains widely practiced today is *Sufi Healing*, a form of spiritually based therapy rooted in the teachings of Islamic mysticism (*tasawuf*).

Essentially, every human being desires a life that is healthy, calm, peaceful, and happy, although such aspirations are not always fully realized. Islam, as a religion, pays profound attention to human existence; therefore, it presents a clear and comprehensive concept of healthy living, including fundamental questions about the nature and purpose of life itself (Fuadi Husin, 2014).

Islam regulates all aspects of human life in order to foster prosperity on earth and to attain happiness in both this world and the hereafter. One essential prerequisite for such happiness is physical health, which enables individuals to perform acts of worship more effectively. Islam places great emphasis on both physical and spiritual health, regarding it as the second greatest blessing after faith. As a complete and holistic religion, Islam establishes principles for maintaining bodily balance, including practices such as cleanliness and the regular observance of ritual purification (*wudu* and *ghusl*) as part of daily life for Muslims (Fuadi Husin, 2014).

Sufi Healing, or Sufi-based therapy, represents a healing approach that integrates spiritual and psychological dimensions within the healing process. In the Indonesian context, where spiritual traditions and herbal medicine have long been integral to cultural life, Sufi Healing offers a distinctive perspective on understanding health and illness. This approach does not focus solely on physical symptoms but also addresses spiritual dimensions believed to influence overall well-being.

Sufi Healing emphasizes balance between the body, the soul, and one's relationship with God. Within Sufi tradition, illness is not understood merely as a physical disorder but also as an imbalance in the inner and spiritual dimensions of the self. Consequently, healing is pursued not only through medical means but also through spiritual

practices such as *dhikr*, prayer, sound therapy, meditation, and the use of Qur'anic verses as healing media (Shihab, 2021).

Rooted in the teachings of *tasawuf*, Sufi Healing underscores the importance of the human relationship with God and the search for meaning in life. In practice, it involves various techniques such as meditation, *dhikr*, and prayer, which are believed to help individuals attain inner calm and balance. Research indicates that these practices can reduce stress, improve mental health, and even accelerate physical recovery. A study conducted by Nurhayati demonstrates that Sufi meditation practices can enhance the quality of life of patients with chronic illnesses by reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety (Nurhayati, 2020).

In Indonesia, Sufi Healing has deep cultural roots within Muslim communities. Various Sufi orders (*tarekat*), such as the Naqshbandiyya, Qadiriyya, and Shattariyya, have long practiced spiritually based healing methods. The use of prayers, *ruqyah* water, and specific devotional practices for healing illnesses constitutes an inseparable part of Islamic medical traditions in the archipelago. Public trust in the effectiveness of Sufi Healing indicates that this method continues to hold an important place within traditional healthcare systems (Wahid, 2022).

Meanwhile, modern medicine based on scientific knowledge has developed rapidly. Advances in pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, and clinical medicine have enabled the development of increasingly effective and evidence-based treatments. However, despite these advances, many individuals feel that conventional medical treatment does not fully address the spiritual and emotional dimensions of healing. This limitation has led many people to seek holistic approaches that integrate medical treatment with traditional healing methods, including Sufi Healing.

The integration of traditional and modern medicine has become an increasingly significant topic in contemporary healthcare discourse. Several studies have examined Sufi Healing to assess its

effectiveness in supporting patient recovery, particularly in addressing illnesses related to psychological and spiritual disturbances. Through such research, it is hoped that a deeper understanding can be achieved regarding the role of Sufi Healing in healthcare and its potential integration with modern medical approaches.

The integration of traditional medicine and modern medical practices has become an increasingly important discourse in contemporary healthcare. The rapid development of modern medicine, while successful in improving recovery rates for various physical illnesses, still leaves a gap in addressing the psychological, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of human beings. In contrast, traditional healing systems rooted in local wisdom and spiritual values offer a more holistic approach, viewing humans as an integrated unity of body, mind, and spirit. Within this context, efforts to integrate these two approaches have become increasingly relevant and strategic.

A number of studies have begun to examine Sufi Healing as a form of complementary therapy with the potential to support patients' healing processes, particularly in addressing illnesses related to psychological disorders, psychosomatic conditions, and spiritual crises. Sufi Healing, which emphasizes spiritual practices such as dhikr, prayer, meditation, and the purification of the self, is understood not merely as a religious ritual but also as a psychospiritual intervention capable of fostering inner tranquility, reducing stress, and strengthening patients' mental resilience. This more balanced inner state has been shown, in various studies in health psychology and psychoneuroimmunology, to contribute positively to physical healing processes.

Through this research, it is expected that a more comprehensive understanding can be gained regarding the position and contribution of Sufi Healing within the healthcare system, both as a legacy of Islamic traditional medicine and as a therapeutic approach relevant to the needs of modern society. Furthermore, this study aims to open a constructive dialogue between Sufi-based

approaches and modern medical practice, so that they are not positioned in opposition but rather seen as complementary. Thus, the integration of Sufi Healing and modern medicine holds the potential to give rise to a more holistic, humane, and spiritually sensitive model of healthcare delivery.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using a literature review method. Data were collected from peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and credible online sources relevant to the themes of Sufi Healing, traditional medicine, and psychospiritual approaches. The literature was selected based on criteria of topical relevance, academic credibility of the sources, and alignment with the research focus. The collected data were analyzed using content analysis through critical reading to identify and synthesize key concepts and themes related to Sufi Healing in the context of traditional and modern medical practices. This method is considered appropriate as it enables a systematic and in-depth conceptual exploration of religious phenomena and spiritually based healing practices.

Results and Discussion

A Glimpse into Sufi Healing

Sufi Healing is a healing approach rooted in the Islamic mystical tradition (*tasawwuf*). It integrates elements of spirituality, psychology, and traditional medicine, and has recently begun to gain recognition within modern medical approaches as a complementary therapy. Sufi Healing does not focus solely on physical recovery but also addresses the emotional (*nafsiyyah*) and spiritual (*ruhiyyah*) dimensions of human beings. Its practices include *dhikr* (remembrance of God), prayer, meditation (*muraqabah*), and purification of the soul (*taṣkiyat al-nafs*), which are believed to balance bodily energy and strengthen the immune system through inner

tranquility. Within traditional medical contexts, Sufi Healing is often combined with herbal remedies, *ruqyah*, and prophetic therapies such as cupping (*bijamah*) and *habbatussauda*.

Along with the advancement of medical science, holistic approaches such as Sufi Healing have increasingly been considered as complementary therapies. Disciplines such as psychoneuroimmunology and transpersonal psychology demonstrate that an individual's mental and spiritual conditions significantly influence the physical healing process. Therefore, the integration of Sufi-based traditional healing with modern medical approaches presents a promising opportunity to develop a more comprehensive and humane healthcare system.

The term *Sufi Healing* consists of two words: *Sufi* and *healing*. The term *sufi* refers to an individual who strives, or assists others, to establish a direct relationship with God. The word *healing*, derived from the English verb *heal*, carries several meanings: first, to make whole or complete, to restore health, or to be free from disease; second, to bring something to an end or resolution, such as reconciling interpersonal or group conflicts and restoring broken relationships; third, to be free from negative traits, to cleanse, and to purify; and fourth, as an effect produced by a remedy or treatment (O'riordan, 2002).

Sufi Healing is an alternative therapeutic model for physical and psychological healing that employs Sufi practices and values as means of treatment or prevention (Shah, 2002). This form of therapy has long been known within society since the emergence of Islam and Sufism. However, only in recent times have scholars begun to frame it within scientific discourse by situating it in the field of psychology, particularly transpersonal psychology, where consciousness constitutes a central area of study. In medical science, a related concept is known as psychoneuroimmunology, which posits a close relationship between the mind and the body (Syukur, 2012). This

perspective suggests that the origin of illness often lies within the mind itself (Chishti, 1985).

James Allen, in his work *As a Man Thinketh*, asserts that a diseased mind manifests a diseased body. Individuals who live in constant fear of illness are likely to develop illness itself. Anxiety spreads throughout the body, rendering it more susceptible to disease. Likewise, impure thoughts, even if not physically enacted, can severely damage the nervous system (Allen, 2008). Consequently, the remedy lies in healing consciousness, as therapeutic intervention penetrates beyond the material body into the core of the mind (Chopra, 1989).

For Sufis, healing represents one form of self-actualization in fulfilling the principle of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (mercy to all creation). In channeling healing energy, Sufis are not bound by a single system or methodology, as the technical aspects of healing emerge from each individual's unique spiritual experiences in the process of self-discovery. Healing often occurs spontaneously and without deliberate intention (Sulaiman, 2015). From the Sufi perspective, Sufi Healing begins at the initial stage (*al-bidāyah*) of the spiritual path, involving phases such as *takballi* (emptying oneself of negative traits), *tahalli* (adorning oneself with virtuous qualities), and *tajalli* (spiritual illumination), followed by *riyāḍah* and *mujāḥadah* through the stations (*maqāmāt*) and states (*aḥwāl*), culminating in the final stage (*nihāyah*). This culmination is described by Sufis as *wuṣūl*, *iḥsān*, or *fana'*. Those who attain this spiritual rank are referred to as *ahl al-ʿirfān*. Nevertheless, for ordinary individuals, Sufi Healing can be practiced through accessible means similar to those employed by Sufis, such as *dhikr*, prayer, recitation of *ṣalawat*, and listening to spiritual music. (Syukur, 2012)

These practices are believed to significantly support the healing process, provided they are conducted under the guidance of a therapist. Exercises employed in Sufi Healing aim to establish a stable, balanced, and integrated energy field across multiple levels of existence, thereby facilitating bodily equilibrium. The foundation of

healing lies in the source of life located within the heart and in spiritual connectivity. (O’riordan, 2002)

From the Sufi viewpoint, a person’s character and moral disposition depend on the type of soul that dominates within them. If animalistic desires prevail, one’s behavior will reflect such tendencies. Conversely, if the human soul prevails, one’s behavior will embody humane qualities. In addressing psychological problems, Sufism teaches the pursuit of a happy life, which necessitates health in both physical and spiritual dimensions. A truly happy life prevents inner conflict, as the resulting happiness eliminates intrusive and destructive inner thoughts altogether. (Waslah, 2017)

Practices in Sufi Healing, such as *dhikr*, spiritual meditation, prayer, and self-awareness exercises, play a significant role in supporting the process of healing, particularly when they are implemented in a structured manner and under the guidance of a competent therapist or spiritual mentor. Such guidance is essential to ensure that spiritual practices are not merely performed ritualistically, but are directed in a reflective and therapeutic way, thereby generating constructive psychological and spiritual effects for individuals undergoing the healing process. In this context, Sufi Healing is not positioned as a purely spontaneous practice, but rather as a conscious process that involves inner discipline and the deepening of awareness (O’Riordan, 2002).

The exercises employed in Sufi Healing are generally aimed at cultivating stability and balance within the inner energetic field, which in Sufi terminology is often understood as the harmonization of *qalb*, *nafs*, and *ruh*. This balance is believed to enable the body and soul to exist in a harmonious state, thereby minimizing physiological responses to stress and illness. O’Riordan (2002) emphasizes that the foundation of healing in the Sufi approach lies in activating the source of life located in the heart as the center of human spiritual consciousness, as well as in establishing a transcendental connection between the human being and God. This spiritual connection

functions as a source of inner tranquility, which directly contributes to emotional stability and physical well-being.

From the perspective of *tasawwuf*, an individual's psychological condition and behavior are strongly influenced by the type of *nafs* that is dominant within the self. When the *nafs al-hayawaniyyah* (animalistic ego) prevails, individuals tend to exhibit impulsive and aggressive behaviors and are more susceptible to inner conflicts, which in turn may trigger psychological and psychosomatic disorders. Conversely, when the *nafs al-insaniyyah*, or the rational-spiritual self, becomes dominant, behavior tends to be more controlled, ethical, and constructive, thereby supporting the development of mental health and inner balance. This perspective indicates that healing in *tasawwuf* cannot be separated from the continuous process of moral cultivation and self-regulation (Waslah, 2017).

To address human psychological problems, *tasawwuf* offers the concept of a happy life as a fundamental foundation of mental and spiritual health. Happiness in the Sufi perspective is not understood as the fulfillment of momentary pleasures, but rather as a stable inner state characterized by tranquility and harmony with divine values. A happy life requires holistic well-being, encompassing both physical and inner dimensions, since disturbances in one dimension will inevitably affect the other. Waslah (2017) emphasizes that individuals who attain inner happiness tend to be free from prolonged internal conflicts, as negative and destructive thoughts are gradually reduced through spiritual awareness and mature self-management.

Thus, Sufi Healing can be understood as a therapeutic approach that is not merely oriented toward the elimination of symptoms, but also toward inner transformation and the formation of spiritually and psychologically healthy personalities. This approach affirms that genuine healing originates from internal balance and human connectedness with the transcendental source of life, making it highly relevant to be developed as a complementary therapy within

modern health systems that increasingly emphasize holistic approaches.

Sufi Healing in Traditional and Modern Treasures.

According to Amin Syukur, *Sufi healing* has emerged as a contemporary trend as a response to the condition of modern society, which has reached a point of saturation with various material-oriented patterns of life (Syukur, 2012). The term *Sufi healing* itself consists of two words: *Sufi* and *healing*. The word *Sufi*, as explained in the previous chapter, refers both to a person (*ism fā'il*) who continuously longs for closeness to and “arrival” (*wuṣūl*) at Allah, and to an activity or practice (*ism maṣḍar*) of spiritual discipline undertaken by an individual who seeks proximity to and union with God through the path of *sulūk*. Meanwhile, *healing* derives from the word *heal*, which means recovery or restoration.

In English dictionaries, the term *heal* carries several meanings: restoring a condition to wholeness and perfection, recovering health, being free from disease, and bringing matters to resolution or conclusion, such as in cases of interpersonal or group conflict, often with strong implications of restoring friendship, reconciliation, settlement, or mending broken relationships. In addition, *heal* also refers to liberation from negative traits, freedom from evil, cleansing, purification, and healing of the soul.

The concept of *Sufi healing* as healing performed by a Sufi has, in fact, existed since the earliest stages of the Sufi path, namely when practitioners enter the initial phase of *sulūk*. This initial stage of Sufism (*al-bidāyah*) begins with the practice of *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul), which consists of three stages: *takhalli* (emptying the soul of blameworthy traits), *tahalli* (adorning the soul with noble qualities), and *tajalli* (discovering what is sought and actualizing it in daily practice as virtuous character). This process is then followed by *mujāḥadah* and *riyāḍah* through the stages of *maqāmāt* and *aḥwāl*. After completing this initial phase, the seeker enters the final stage of the

spiritual journey (*nihāyah*). This final stage represents the culmination of the first stage, namely the “arrival” (*wuṣūl*) of the Sufi to Allah. This state is commonly expressed by Sufis using terms such as *ma‘rifah*, *iḥsān*, *fanā’* and *baqā’*, *mushāhadah*, and others. Those who attain this stage are referred to as *ahl al-‘irfān* (al-Najar, 2004).

According to Sadiq M. Alam, *Sufi healing* refers to the healing of a person’s illness carried out by a Sufi in response to a call to serve humanity and a sense of moral responsibility toward human suffering as a reflection of obedience to Allah. The fundamental principle of *Sufi healing* is the Sufi’s awareness that, in essence, the only true Healer is God Himself, while the Sufi who performs therapeutic practices and treats patients merely functions as a mediator (Alam, 2025).

Spiritual healing within Sufism (*Sufi healing*) is generally conducted by integrating the operation of sacred power (divine power, primarily accessed through prayer), herbal remedies, natural treatments derived from ancient wisdom, and other healing methods practiced by the Prophet Muhammad. Spiritual healing as practiced by Sufis typically combines the following elements:

1. **Faith**, understood not in the theological-dogmatic sense of classical kalām, but as heart-centered faith and intuitive knowledge acquired through deep engagement in Sufi practice.
2. **Sincerity**, a quality connected to the inner longing and moral calling toward humanity, characterized by actions guided by conscience rather than the expectation of material reward.
3. **Continuous self-reflection (*muḥāsabah*)**, or ongoing introspection.

Sufi healing offers a form of therapy that provides relief and guidance for Muslims, as it encompasses healing practices rooted in Islamic principles. There are three meanings commonly associated with the concept of healing. First, healing signifies complete and holistic recovery. Second, it refers to a condition in which the body is free from illness, both external and internal. Third, it denotes freedom from all forms of moral and spiritual corruption. Thus, Sufi healing

implies well-being in all dimensions of human life, including physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects. Healing, in this sense, is the realization of one's intrinsic wholeness.

There are many illnesses in the world that can generally be treated through modern medical science. However, there remain numerous conditions that cannot yet be fully cured by physicians, particularly those related to psychological and emotional disturbances, which may manifest as physical illness. Unstable mental states, feelings of inner pressure, guilt, or the sense of being haunted by sin can give rise to psychosomatic diseases that affect the body (Hasan, 2001).

Moinuddin Chisty further elaborates on the concepts of illness and health within the Sufi framework. According to him, before defining health and sickness, one must first understand the human being holistically or existentially. It is impossible to determine whether one is healthy or ill without comprehending the existential criteria of being human. By analogy, how can one assemble a puzzle without knowing the complete image it represents? Therefore, understanding illness and health is essentially paradigmatic. Experiencing pain does not necessarily indicate disease. Conditions such as influenza, fever, diarrhea, and other bodily discomforts may in fact be regarded as "companions," as they represent natural processes through which the body's metabolism eliminates toxins and harmful substances. Consequently, pain should not always be perceived as an enemy; it may instead signify a natural bodily mechanism aimed at cleansing, purifying, and restoring balance to bodily functions (Chisty, 1991).

The history of healing systems and medical practices is as old as humanity itself. Practically speaking, there are at least three major forms of healing: modern medicine, traditional healing (such as herbal medicine, cupping, bloodletting, and similar practices), and spiritual healing. Spiritual healing is a universal form of therapy practiced across various religious traditions. In this regard, Prophetic medicine

(*al-Tibb al-Nabawi*) can be categorized as a form of spiritual healing, and Sufi healing constitutes an integral part of Prophetic medicine (Kurniawan, 2014).

Healing practices within the Islamic tradition today take diverse forms and designations. Prophetic medicine (*al-Tibb al-Nabawi*) began to receive serious scholarly attention and systematic discussion in the fourteenth century, particularly through the works of Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah and al-Surramarri. Their writings emerged partly in response to debates concerning the legitimacy of traditional medical practices derived from various sources, including Greek medicine as represented by Hippocrates and Galen, Persian traditions, Unani medicine, and Indian healing systems. During this period, certain theologians, and even some Sufi figures such as al-Ghazali in the twelfth century, expressed reservations or rejection toward non-Prophetic forms of medicine (Kurniawan, 2014).

As with other cultural domains that were later Islamized, Prophetic medicine found balanced development in the hands of numerous Muslim scholars and scientists, including Ibn Sina, al-Jurjani, Ibn al-Qayyim, al-Razi, and al-Surramarri. Consequently, Prophetic medicine as developed in the centuries following the Prophet's lifetime cannot be separated from influences originating in other traditions, including indigenous Arab practices. Ibn Sina's *al-Shifa'* and *al-Qanun fi al-Tibb* are themselves deeply influenced by Greek scholars such as Hippocrates and Galen, as well as by Indian medical traditions. For instance, in explaining leech therapy for detoxification, Ibn Sina explicitly acknowledges its origin in the Indian medical tradition of Charaka, though in many other cases he does not cite his sources. Similar patterns can be observed in the works of other Muslim scholars, such as al-Razi and al-Jurjani in *Zakhirai Khwarazmshahi*, which shows clear influence from Ayurveda, particularly in surgical procedures, though the sources are not always explicitly mentioned.

The influence of external medical traditions became especially evident during the translation movement under the Umayyad (661–750) and Abbasid (750–1258) caliphates. During the reigns of caliphs such as al-Mansur, Harun al-Rashid, and al-Ma'mun, extensive translation of Greek and Roman medical works was undertaken through state-sponsored institutions such as Bayt al-Hikmah (House of Wisdom) (Siddiqui, 1959). At that time, Hunayn ibn Ishaq, along with his son and nephew, Ishaq and Hubaysh, translated numerous Greek-Roman medical texts, including Hippocrates' *Aphorisms* and Galen's *De Differentiis Februm* and *De Typis Februm*, in addition to works from other disciplines (Siddiqui, 1959).

As a result, the Unani medical system practiced by Indo-Muslim communities in contemporary India represents an adapted form of traditional Indian medicine that has been shaped by Islamic thought. By the thirteenth century, Unani medicine had evolved into a system that integrated Ayurvedic concepts, Greek philosophical traditions, and Islamic principles. In this broader sense, Seema argues that Unani in India today functions not merely as a medical system but also as a way of life. This is because, after its interaction with Islam, Unani developed beyond therapeutic practice into a moral framework and a holistic system for balancing human life (Siddiqui, 1959).

A similar dynamic applies to Sufi healing. As an integral component of Prophetic medicine (*al-Tibb al-Nabawi*), Sufi healing emphasizes not only physical health but also spiritual, moral, and psychological well-being, thereby addressing the human condition in a comprehensive and holistic manner.

For Sufis, healing is not a form of knowledge, personal skill, inner power, or even an end in itself, but rather an act of fulfilling the *Amr Allah* (the command of God). The Sufi's struggle to internalize a process of inner transformation until reaching the station of *Wahdah* (Unity) is met by divine response, through which God bestows upon the Sufi another mechanism, namely *supranatural causality*. Through

this divine endowment, the Sufi attains the station of *Jam'iyah* (Universality), whereby their existence in the world becomes beneficial not only to themselves but also to others.

In addition to arising from spiritual experience, Sufi methods of physical healing are also derived from the Qur'an and from the traditions and practices of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). At minimum, Sufis employ four elements in their approach to illness: remembrance and supplication (*dhikr* and *du'a*), herbal medicine, disciplined spiritual exercises, and the use of specific therapeutic means.

Dhikr and supplication may be performed through prayer (*salat*), a specific practice that integrates bodily movement with the recitation of Qur'anic verses and supplications, performed five times daily. The ultimate purpose of prayer and fasting is to attain closeness to God, while simultaneously providing spiritual nourishment and harmonizing physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual life when practiced properly. In addition, Sufis employ specific forms of *dhikr*, litanies (*wird*), and supplications for healing purposes. *Dhikr*, commonly translated as "remembrance of the Divine," is practiced as a method for healing both mental and physical illness. This is achieved through the repetition of sacred verses or divine attributes, either individually or collectively, typically under the guidance of a Sufi master. Beyond *dhikr*, patients are often instructed to engage in particular spiritual disciplines, including practices associated with *suluk*, such as repentance (*tawbah*), ascetic restraint (*zuhd*), patience (*sabr*), trust in God (*tawakkul*), and gratitude (*shukr*).

Traditional remedies, including herbal medicine and various therapies such as water therapy and aromatherapy, are also sometimes utilized by Sufis depending on the condition of the patient. Moreover, Sufis may combine divine names and Qur'anic verses with supplication in specific and complex methods. These formulations may be written on paper, bone, or skin, known as *wisq*, and then placed in water to be consumed by the patient, buried in the ground, or

carried by the patient. The formulations may also be recited aloud or silently, or applied through other means. Such methods are employed not only to heal physical and mental illnesses but also to address familial, financial, and social problems. These practices are understood to operate through divine angelic power for constructive purposes and are clearly distinguished from voodoo, black magic, or sorcery, which are believed to draw upon jinn or malevolent spirits and may be used for destructive ends.

In contemporary Western medicine, healing is typically approached by introducing external substances into the body with the expectation of suppressing symptoms or eliminating bodily processes, such as administering aspirin to relieve headaches or medications to inhibit diarrhea. According to Moinuddin Chisty, however, the human body inherently possesses an intrinsic wisdom that enables it to heal itself. In reality, no food, medicine, substance, or procedure directly heals the human body; rather, these interventions merely assist the body as catalysts that accelerate its own self-healing processes. For example, when a finger is cut, it is not the bandage, alcohol, or iodine that heals the wound, but the skin itself performing the remarkable task of restoring its integrity (Chisty, 1991).

When people think about illness, most tend to equate disease with the sensation of pain or discomfort in the body. In fact, such sensations function as signals of imbalance or dysfunction within the body. Chills, fever, sore throat, muscle pain, severe headache, coughing, weakness, and general discomfort during influenza are signals that RNA viruses from the Orthomyxoviridae family are affecting bodily functions. In some cases, bodily pain does not result from external attacks, such as viral infection, but rather from mental and psychological conditions. Persistent headaches, for instance, may be caused by psychological stress. Thus, mental states and patterns of thought significantly influence bodily activity and imbalance, even when no clinical abnormalities are detected through medical diagnosis. This comprehensive approach, addressing both physical

and psychological dimensions, is known as holistic healing, within which Sufi healing firmly resides (Kurniawan, 2014).

Therefore, the growing interest and serious engagement in the development of Sufi healing have the potential to benefit and complement contemporary medical practice. Unfortunately, many of the methods and principles of Sufi healing have been neglected in further development, despite the fact that this form of healing has been successfully practiced for thousands of years, particularly within Sufi orders (*turuq*). According to the Naqshbandi Order, Sufi healing has three primary objectives:

1. Sufi healing processes rejuvenate the body's vital energy and strengthen it through specific points distributed throughout the body.
2. These spiritual techniques generate directed neuropsychological effects.
3. They activate the central nervous system, which stimulates endocrine functions to reduce pain, heal diseases originating in affected internal organs, and restore overall bodily balance (Kabbani, 2025).

Similar to practices in modern medicine, Sufi healing as taught by Hisyam Kabbani also employs disease diagnosis through **Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)**, which utilizes energy and atomic alignment within the body to produce images and information regarding bodily conditions and potential illnesses. In addition to MRI, Sufis involved in the healing process commonly use a more advanced diagnostic method known as **High Sense Perception (HSP)**. HSP is often referred to as the "inner eye," as it represents a diagnostic mode that perceives and assesses conditions beyond the normal range of the five senses.

Nevertheless, HSP cannot be regarded as mere imagination. Rather, it reflects the dynamic nature of the fluid world, interacting with spiritual energy fields that surround and permeate all living beings. This energy sustains, nurtures, and gives life. Human beings

sense one another through this energy because they are part of it, and it is part of them. Through HSP, the pathophysiology of pain and illness becomes directly perceptible. However, this technique cannot be performed by untrained individuals. HSP is attained only by those who have reached a high level of spiritual realization, having achieved a comprehensive state of existential awareness (*wujud*). Such a state cannot be attained arbitrarily; one of the limited paths toward it is sustained meditation practice.

The Sufi Healing approach can also be analyzed through the frameworks of **Islamic psychology** and **transpersonal psychology**, as developed by figures such as Ibrahim Jaffe and Robert Frager. Ibrahim Jaffe views psychological and psychosomatic illnesses as manifestations of human disconnection from their innate spiritual nature (*fitrah*) (Jaffe, 2010). In his analysis, disorders such as anxiety, depression, and inner tension are not merely understood as mental dysfunctions, but as signals of disharmony among the dimensions of *nafs*, *qalb*, and *ruh*. Consequently, Sufi practices such as *dhikr*, prayer, and awareness of divine presence (*hudhur*) are positioned as psychological interventions aimed at restoring inner balance rather than merely alleviating symptoms (Jaffe, 2010; Badri, 2013).

Meanwhile, Robert Frager, through his Sufi psychology approach, emphasizes that genuine healing requires a transformation of consciousness (Frager, 1999). In his analysis, Frager regards Sufi practices such as *tazkiyat al-nafs*, *muhasabah*, and self-awareness training as forms of psychospiritual therapy that operate at the deepest layers of human personality. Illness, from this perspective, often originates from the dominance of the ego (*nafs al-ammarah*), which generates inner conflict, prolonged stress, and emotional disturbances. By softening the ego through spiritual discipline, individuals experience a reduction in psychological tension that positively affects both physical and mental conditions (Frager, 1999; Frager & Fadiman, 2005).

Such psychological analyses demonstrate that Sufi Healing does not operate solely within ritualistic or symbolic domains, but also

involves psychological mechanisms that can be scientifically understood. The integration of Sufi practices with modern medical treatment, within the framework of Islamic psychology, enables a healing process that simultaneously engages cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions (Haque, 2004). Accordingly, Sufi Healing can be understood as a **holistic therapeutic approach** that aligns with contemporary psychological principles, particularly in addressing disorders rooted in crises of meaning and inner imbalance.

Within the context of modern health psychology, the Sufi Healing approach may be understood as a form of **spiritual coping** and **meaning-based healing**, namely psychological mechanisms that assist individuals in managing stress, suffering, and illness through profound spiritual meaning-making (Pargament, 1997). This approach is consistent with contemporary psychological findings that affirm the significant role of meaning, belief systems, and spiritual practices in enhancing psychological resilience, adherence to medical treatment, and overall quality of life, particularly in cases of chronic illness and psychosomatic disorders (Koenig, 2012).

Conclusion

Based on the discussion presented above, it can be concluded that Sufi Healing is a healing approach that emerges from the integration of the spiritual dimension of Islamic *tasawwuf* and holistic human healing practices. Etymologically, the term *Sufi Healing* is composed of two main concepts, namely *sufi* and *healing*. The term *sufi* refers to individuals who follow a spiritual path to attain closeness to God, while simultaneously guiding others to establish an existential connection with the Divine reality. Meanwhile, the term *healing*, derived from the English word *heal*, has a broad meaning that is not limited to physical recovery, but also encompasses processes of inner purification, conflict reconciliation, and the restoration of human wholeness in both physical and spiritual dimensions (O’riordan, 2002). Thus, from its very foundation, Sufi Healing cannot be

understood narrowly as a mere medical technique, but rather as a process of restoring the totality of human existence.

In practice, Sufi Healing represents a healing approach that integrates Islamic spiritual values with traditional healing methods rooted in religious wisdom. Practices such as *dhikr*, prayer, meditation (*muraqabah*), and *tazkiyat al-nafs* serve as the primary means for reestablishing balance in the human psyche, emotions, and spiritual awareness. This approach views illness not merely as a biological disorder, but also as a manifestation of inner imbalance and human disconnection from the spiritual dimension. Within Muslim societies, including in Indonesia, Sufi Healing has long existed as part of religious and cultural traditions, although it has not yet been fully examined in a systematic manner within modern academic frameworks.

Along with the development of contemporary medical science, particularly in the fields of psychoneuroimmunology and transpersonal psychology, holistic approaches such as Sufi Healing have begun to gain scientific legitimacy as complementary therapies. Psychoneuroimmunology demonstrates the reciprocal relationship between the mind, emotions, the nervous system, and the immune system, emphasizing that mental and spiritual conditions play a significant role in the process of physical healing. Meanwhile, transpersonal psychology positions consciousness and spiritual experience as essential dimensions of overall human health. Within this framework, Sufi Healing can be understood as a therapeutic model that operates at the deepest level of consciousness, thereby having the potential to prevent or reduce illnesses that originate from psychological stress and inner conflict (Syukur, 2012).

Therefore, the integration of Sufi-based healing practices with modern medical approaches represents a strategic opportunity to develop a more comprehensive, humane, and context-sensitive healthcare system. Sufi Healing functions not only as a spiritual heritage of Islam, but also as an alternative source for the

development of healing models that integrate scientific knowledge, cultural traditions, and religious values. Through an inclusive and interdisciplinary approach, Sufi Healing has the potential to make a meaningful contribution to modern healthcare, particularly in addressing crises of meaning, psychosomatic disorders, and the growing need for forms of healing that engage the deepest dimensions of human existence.

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