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Integrating Sufi Education into Judicial Ethics: Strengthening Integrity among Religious Court Judges in Indonesia

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Abstract

This study addresses the challenge of maintaining integrity and judicial ethics in Indonesia's Religious Courts, which are often threatened by social, political, and economic pressures. In response to the modern crisis of spirituality, Sufi education offers a prophetic paradigm that emphasizes purification of the soul, honesty, and justice as divine orientations. This research, based on library study of classical and contemporary Sufi literature alongside legal regulations on judicial ethics, argues that Sufi education provides a spiritual foundation for strengthening judges' moral integrity and professional ethics. The findings reveal that the internalization of teachings such as tazkiyat al-nafs, muraqabah, and ihsan can enhance ethical awareness, foster judicial independence, and reduce the risk of abuse of authority. Rather than replacing formal codes of ethics, Sufi education complements them with a deeper spiritual framework. The study recommends integrating Sufi educational modules into judicial training and continuous professional development. Its novelty lies in framing Sufi education not merely as private spirituality but as an institutional instrument for building a clean, dignified, and just Religious Court system in Indonesia.

Keywords

Ethics, integrity, judges, religious courts, sufi education

INTRODUCTION

Sufi education, within the vast treasury of Islamic intellectual tradition, is not merely a spiritual discipline but rather an epistemological foundation that permeates ethics, morality, and the praxis of social life including the realm of law and judiciary. In the context of religious court judges, Sufism functions not only as an inward sphere of individual religiosity but also as a transcendental basis that directs judicial conduct with unwavering integrity (Nasr, 1987).

A judge in the religious court essentially carries a burden of responsibility that transcends legal-formal dimensions and extends into moral-spiritual obligations. Such a judge is not only expected to be proficient in comprehending fiqh texts and positive law but also to exercise wisdom in interpreting the spirit of justice embedded in Islamic law. Within this framework, Sufism emerges as a medium of heart purification and intention refinement, ensuring that judicial decisions do not remain entrapped in rigid positivism but instead radiate a living justice (Schimmel, 1975).

Judicial integrity is frequently questioned within Indonesia's legal dynamics, especially when abuses of authority, gratification, and violations of ethical codes tarnish the dignity of religious courts. In such circumstances, Sufi education offers a paradigm that integrates divine consciousness into professional behavior, such that a judge fears not merely administrative or criminal sanctions but, more profoundly, fears God as the supreme overseer (Quraishi, 2000).

Sufism, through the concept of *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul), plays a pivotal role in shaping inner integrity that is subsequently manifested in outward actions. Judges cultivated through Sufi education are more capable of restraining their desires, resisting the lure of corruption, and upholding justice without succumbing to external interests. In this respect, Sufism operates as an ethical foundation complementing legal rationality (Gulen, 2004).

The interconnection between Sufism and the judicial profession can also be examined through the lens of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. The Sufi dimension emphasizes the safeguarding of morality and the strengthening of the soul, which aligns with the higher objectives of Islamic law namely, the realization of welfare and the prevention of harm. Thus, judicial integrity is inseparable from spirituality, for genuine justice emerges only from a purified heart and a lucid mind (Kamali, 2008).

In classical Islamic history, Sufi figures often served as moral reference points for *qādi* (judges) in rendering decisions. The equilibrium between fiqh knowledge and Sufi wisdom was considered a prerequisite for attaining legal sagacity that is not devoid of humanistic values. Hence, Sufi education cannot be reduced to a mere exercise in personal spirituality but must be reconstructed as an integral component of the curriculum for shaping judicial morality (Trimingham, 1998).

The phenomenon of moral degradation among legal practitioners indicates that intellectual training alone is insufficient. Even judges well-versed in legal

methodology can falter if they lack adequate moral strength. Sufi education proposes a holistic approach that unites intellect, heart, and action, thereby producing judges who are not only intelligent but also wise (Al-Attas, 1993).

The significance of Sufi education for judges can also be discerned from the perspective of spiritual psychology. Sufism fosters deep inner awareness, cultivates empathy for seekers of justice, and instills humility in judicial decision-making. Such a judge will not easily fall into legal arrogance but will remain ever-conscious of being merely a trustee of God's mandate (Rahman, 1982).

Judicial integrity constitutes the cornerstone of public trust in the judiciary. Without integrity, law is reduced to a mere instrument of power, subject to commodification. In this context, Sufism serves as an inner bulwark that shields judges from moral decline and elevates them as ethical exemplars for society at large (An-Na'im, 1990).

The code of ethics for judges, as formulated by the Supreme Court, indeed emphasizes integrity, honesty, and justice. Yet in reality, the textual articulation of such codes does not always succeed in penetrating the inner consciousness of judges. Sufi education, by contrast, offers a path of internal transformation that is more substantial, for it cultivates moral awareness not through the threat of sanctions but through a deep sense of divine presence (Syahrur, 1993).

From the vantage point of contemporary Islamic education, Sufism may also be construed as a critical epistemology that resists the reductionism of rational-legalistic approaches within legal practice. Thus, Sufism should not merely be perceived as a traditional spiritual path but as an ethical paradigm relevant to addressing the crisis of judicial integrity in the modern era (Chittick, 2007).

In Indonesia, the urgency of Sufi education for religious court judges is increasingly pressing, given their direct engagement with cases involving religion, family, and public morality. Without a firm spiritual foundation, judges may easily succumb to subjective bias or external pressures that compromise legal objectivity (Baso, 2012).

Furthermore, Sufi education may be positioned as an instrument for cultivating a judicial habitus rooted in religious ethics. This habitus guides judges to remain consistent in upholding the law while preserving their own dignity. In this way, Sufism is not merely supplementary but constitutive in the formation of judicial integrity (Bourdieu, 1990).

Sufi education is also consonant with the ideals of legal reform in Indonesia, which underscore the importance of integrity among law enforcers. Institutional reform without spiritual reform is lopsided, for integrity can only endure when grounded in a robust moral foundation. Thus, Sufi education for judges constitutes an integral element of the broader strategy of judicial reform (Lubis, 2014).

The correlation between Sufism and judicial ethics may be analogized as the relationship between soul and body. The code of ethics provides only

the normative framework, whereas Sufism animates it with spiritual vitality. Consequently, an upright judge is not only obedient to the letter of the law but also attuned to the whispers of conscience refined through Sufi education (Safi, 2003).

The urgency of this research lies in its attempt to provide a conceptual foundation demonstrating that Sufi education is not an optional choice but an essential necessity for religious court judges. By synthesizing Islamic legal analysis, educational theory, and Sufi ethics, this study endeavors to assert that judicial integrity can only be firmly grounded in transcendental spirituality (Madjid, 1992).

Ultimately, this research seeks to unveil the epistemological as well as practical dimensions of Sufi education for religious court judges. Its urgency extends beyond strengthening personal integrity toward safeguarding the institutional dignity of the religious judiciary in Indonesia. Accordingly, Sufi education must be perceived as both a normative foundation and an ethical praxis for the cultivation of judges who are just, integrous, and possessed of noble character (Esposito, 2001).

METHOD

The research method employed in this study is an in-depth library research, through which the researcher seeks to trace, examine, and interpret both primary and secondary texts pertinent to the themes of Sufi education (tasawuf), Islamic law, as well as the integrity and code of ethics of judges within the Religious Courts. This approach was deliberately chosen not merely for its phenomenological descriptive capacity but, more profoundly, for its ability to engage in conceptual exploration that demands hermeneutical involvement and critical reflection upon the existing corpus of knowledge. Library research offers a wide intellectual space to construct an epistemological foundation rooted in the Islamic scholarly tradition while simultaneously bringing it into dialogue with modern discourses on judicial integrity. As Creswell (2014) observes, text-based inquiry enables the researcher to systematically excavate patterns of thought and conceptual frameworks embedded within the literature, thereby producing arguments that are both rigorous and balanced.

In its implementation, this research follows a qualitative analytical framework emphasizing data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, as elaborated by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). The process of reduction involves filtering diverse literatures related to Sufi education, ranging from classical works such as those of al-Ghazālī to contemporary writings addressing the judicial code of ethics. Data presentation in this study does not take the form of numbers or tabulations; rather, it is rendered as a narrative construction that stages the dialectic between normative texts and empirical contexts. From this point of departure, the researcher endeavors to build a conceptual synthesis affirming that Sufi education can serve as a spiritual foundation for judges in upholding the law with unwavering integrity. Thus, the research transcends mere description and moves toward the reconstruction of deeper meanings.

To preserve conceptual validity, the researcher applies a source triangulation technique by juxtaposing authoritative texts from diverse disciplines. The literature of tasawuf is placed in dialogue with works on Islamic law, further reinforced by scholarship on professional legal ethics and theoretical perspectives on judicial integrity. Such a triangulated model seeks to avert sectoral bias that could otherwise oversimplify the theme's complexity, while simultaneously offering a more holistic reading. Accordingly, this research method functions not solely as a means of investigating normative doctrines but also as a vehicle for constructing their contextual relevance within the praxis of Indonesia's Religious Courts (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The analytical process is undertaken through an interpretative lens, treating texts not as static artifacts but as dynamic discursive fields capable of shaping new horizons for understanding judicial integrity.

Ultimately, the research method aims to yield a robust conceptual construction concerning the urgency of Sufi education for judges of the Religious Courts. The library research approach employed herein is not a mere accumulation of references but rather an intellectual dialectic that bridges classical traditions with contemporary challenges. Through critical hermeneutics and structured qualitative analysis, the study presents conclusions that are not only theoretical but also applicative. This resonates with the view of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), who emphasize that qualitative analysis must culminate in substantive contributions to both social practice and professional domains. Thus, the research method becomes simultaneously an epistemological and practical instrument in articulating the role of Sufi education as the foundation for strengthening the integrity and ethical conduct of judges in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sufism as an Ethical Epistemology: Reconstructing the Spirituality of Judges within the Framework of Islamic Law.

Sufism, within the intellectual landscape of Islam, is not merely a mystical dimension centered on individual spiritual experience but has also evolved into an ethical epistemology capable of shaping the moral consciousness of Muslims in navigating social, political, and legal realities (Nasr, 1987). In the hands of a Religious Court judge, Sufism discovers its profound relevance, for it provides inner instruments to harmonize the rigidity of legal texts with the dynamism of human contexts (Schimmel, 1975). Thus, Sufism must be positioned as an ethical epistemological foundation that intervenes in judicial decision-making, ensuring it remains aligned with divine values.

The spirituality of Sufism introduces the consciousness of *ihsan* as an ethical foundation the awareness of worshiping Allah as though one sees Him, or at the very least, realizing that Allah continuously observes every action (al-Ghazali, 2011). When translated into the judicial realm, this concept of *ihsan* transforms judges into more than interpreters of positive law; they become trustees of a divine mandate, fully aware that every verdict will ultimately be

held accountable before Allah (Quraishi, 2008). Such consciousness broadens the ethical horizon of judges from mere loyalty to statutory law toward a spiritual commitment to uphold substantive justice.

Within the framework of Islamic law, the role of a judge is not purely mechanistic but also normative and spiritual (Kamali, 2008). Sharia situates the judge as *khalifah fi al-ardh* within the judicial sphere, implying that the mandate originates not solely from the state but also from Allah (Hallaq, 2009). As an ethical epistemology, Sufism aids judges in recognizing this dimension by emphasizing the necessity of *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul) so as to remain free from egotistical desires, political interests, and material temptations that may compromise professional integrity (al-Ghazali, 2011).

This Sufi consciousness bears significant practical implications. Judges accustomed to spiritual exercises such as *muraqabah* (divine vigilance), *muhasabah* (self-examination), and *dhikr* (remembrance of God) will exercise greater caution in rendering verdicts, for every decision is regarded as a legal pronouncement directly affecting the lives of individuals and communities (Schimmel, 1975). Hence, the practice of Sufism cultivates not only internal morality but also a heightened socio-legal sensitivity that ensures fairness and proportionality (Nasr, 1987).

The epistemology of Sufism within the judicial domain reorients judges from a legalistic-positivistic paradigm toward an ethical-transcendental one (Rahman, 1982). The legalistic paradigm often ensnares judges within dry normativity, stripped of humane values, whereas the ethical-transcendental paradigm imbues legal decisions with compassion, *rahmah*, and divine wisdom as their animating spirit (Kamali, 2008). This epistemological shift fortifies judicial codes of ethics by emphasizing sincerity, authenticity, and substantive justice.

Judges grounded in Sufism are better equipped to resist external interferences that threaten their independence (Hallaq, 2009). This is because Sufism disciplines the heart to remain unattached to worldly interests, orienting it solely toward divine pleasure. The spirit of *zuhd* does not entail rejecting the world but rather situating it proportionally without making it the central axis of judgment (al-Ghazali, 2011). Within the context of Indonesian Religious Courts, such orientation is highly relevant, given that many ethical violations stem from judges' compromises with material interests.

Moreover, Sufism offers an ethical epistemology underscored by the dimension of universal compassion (*rahmatan lil-'alamin*). In adjudicating family matters such as divorce, inheritance, or guardianship, a judge imbued with Sufi consciousness prioritizes mercy and public welfare rather than merely issuing verdicts based on formal legalities (Quraishi, 2008). Consequently, judicial decisions acquire not only juridical legitimacy but also moral-spiritual legitimacy recognized by society.

The Sufi concept of *fana'* (the annihilation of ego) is equally significant when analyzed in the ethical context of judgeship. A judge liberated from personal ego becomes more objective in evaluating evidence and testimonies

(Nasr, 1987). Verdicts thus cease to reflect subjective interests, manifesting instead as embodiments of divine will internalized through spiritual discipline. In this regard, Sufism functions as an ethical epistemology liberating judges from the tyranny of ego while anchoring them in transcendent values.

Historically, many Sufi scholars also served as judges or legal advisors, demonstrating the integration of sharia and haqiqa (Rahman, 1982). This tradition underscores that Sufism was never intended as an escapist withdrawal from practical life; rather, it provides the spiritual essence for the implementation of sharia. Hence, reconstructing the spirituality of judges through Sufism represents a restoration of the holistic continuity of Islamic intellectual traditions.

In the modern era, judges of Religious Courts often face dilemmas between legal certainty, justice, and public welfare. Here, the ethical epistemology of Sufism may serve as a hermeneutical compass in interpreting legal norms without losing sight of substantive justice (Kamali, 2008). Thus, Sufism functions not merely as a spiritual ornament but as an epistemological instrument orienting juridical logic toward a transcendental ethical horizon.

The epistemology of Sufism also holds relevance for cultivating a culture of integrity within judicial institutions. Integrity, from a Sufi perspective, is not simply consistency between word and deed but also an existential connection with divine truth (al-Ghazali, 2011). A judge of integrity is one who consistently feels under divine surveillance (*muraqabah*), such that every ruling reflects spiritual responsibility rather than mere administrative procedure.

In judicial practice, Sufism teaches the principle of *tawadhu'* (humility) as an ethical safeguard against the arrogance of authority (Schimmel, 1975). Sufi consciousness affirms that judgeship is a temporary trust (*amanah*) and must never be exploited for personal or group gain. This principle resonates with judicial codes of ethics demanding humility, wisdom, and justice in every aspect of conduct.

Equally, Sufism instills patience (*sabr*) and gratitude (*shukr*) as inner disciplines essential for managing the pressures of judgeship. Heavy caseloads, public scrutiny, and political interference may erode professionalism unless fortified by spiritual grounding (Nasr, 1987). Anchored in Sufism, judges acquire psychological and spiritual resilience to withstand such challenges.

The strengthening of judicial codes of ethics through Sufism synergizes with the principles of *maqasid al-shariah*. The ultimate objectives of sharia to safeguard religion, life, intellect, progeny, and property are more readily internalized by Sufi-oriented judges habituated to thinking within the framework of universal *maslahah* (Kamali, 2008). Hence, their verdicts become more responsive to human needs.

Sufism as an ethical epistemology also shields judges from the snares of moral relativism. Sufi spirituality is anchored in absolute truth, Allah as al-Haqq rendering it impossible for judges to compromise justice (Rahman, 1982). This fortifies judicial codes of ethics demanding independence, honesty, and moral courage in enforcing the law.

In Indonesia's socio-cultural context, Religious Court judges bear a dual role: legal enforcers and moral exemplars within society. Thus, the reconstruction of judicial spirituality through Sufism becomes ever more urgent. Sufism supplies the moral legitimacy that complements juridical legitimacy, positioning judges not merely as state officials but as mirrors of Islamic values (Quraishi, 2008).

Such reconstruction also functions as a preventive mechanism against judicial corruption. Corruption fundamentally emerges from unchecked desires, and Sufism provides a methodology of soul purification capable of restraining such impulses (al-Ghazali, 2011). Accordingly, Sufism operates as an ethical foundation safeguarding the judiciary from moral decay.

Beyond this, Sufism presents a cosmological horizon situating judicial practice within the cosmic order of divine justice. Judges who perceive themselves as integral parts of this cosmic structure will execute their duties with profound humility and accountability (Nasr, 1987). This cosmological awareness forms a holistic spirituality of law wherein the legal and the spiritual coalesce into a unified praxis.

Thus, Sufism as an ethical epistemology not only imparts spiritual depth to the judicial profession but also reformulates judicial consciousness within the framework of Islamic law. It consolidates integrity, reinforces codes of ethical conduct, and yields verdicts that are not merely legalistic but ethically-transcendental. At this juncture, Sufi education emerges as an urgency rather than an option for Religious Court judges in Indonesia.

Internalization of Tazkiyat al-Nafs and Muraqabah: Transformative Pillars for Judicial Independence.

Within the tradition of Islamic jurisprudence, a judge (qādī) is not merely an executor of normative texts but a moral figure embodying divine justice. Here lies the urgency of tasawwuf education, particularly through the doctrine of tazkiyat al-nafs, which functions to cleanse the soul from all forms of egotism, the lust for power, and pragmatic self-interest. A judge who has undergone the process of tazkiyat al-nafs attains moral wholeness, enabling him to resist external interventions in the form of political pressure, economic lobbying, or material temptations (Al-Ghazali, 2013).

Tazkiyat al-nafs, literally meaning the purification of the soul, is not merely an individualistic ascetic exercise but an epistemological mechanism that shapes the ethical horizon of a judge. In the epistemology of tasawwuf, the purified soul becomes a transparent vessel capable of receiving divine inspiration of truth and wisdom. Thus, a judge who internalizes tazkiyat al-nafs is able to ground legal considerations upon a firm foundation of spiritual integrity, thereby safeguarding his independence from the seductions of worldly power (Nasr, 2007).

Judges within Indonesia's religious courts encounter complex dilemmas. On the one hand, they are bound by positive law and judicial codes of ethics, while on the other, they are enmeshed in the vortex of political and economic

interests that threaten their independence. The tasawwuf teaching of muraqabah emerges as a moral bulwark—an awareness that every action, utterance, and even passing thought remains under the ever-vigilant gaze of God. Such muraqabah engenders a mechanism of self-restraint far stronger than the deterrence offered by positive legal sanctions (Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, 2003).

In the framework of judicial ethics, muraqabah instructs judges to cultivate the consciousness of divine presence in every stage of decision-making. The realization that God perpetually witnesses them internalizes both *khauf* (awe and fear) and *mahabbah* (love), thereby compelling the judge to eschew manipulative practices such as bribery, gratification, or abuse of authority. The integrity that arises from muraqabah is not artificial or externally imposed, but rather blossoms from profound spiritual awareness (Khan, 2010).

If *tazkiyat al-nafs* serves as a process of purification, then muraqabah functions as a process of preservation. This analogy underscores that a judge is not only required to cleanse himself of moral impurities but also to continuously safeguard that purity from renewed contamination. A judge who is purified of base desires yet neglects muraqabah will easily relapse into the whirlpool of external interference (Shafii, 1997).

In the philosophy of Islamic law, judicial independence constitutes an indispensable condition for the realization of justice. Yet, independence defined solely in legal-formal terms often proves fragile when confronted with the practical temptations of real-world circumstances. Tasawwuf teaches that true independence can only be born from a soul purified through *tazkiyat al-nafs* and perpetually nurtured by muraqabah. In other words, law requires spirituality to secure the moral integrity of judges (Esposito, 2011).

A judge trained within the discipline of tasawwuf does not regard justice merely as a product of procedural rationality, but as a sacred divine trust (*amānah*). Such awareness shields him from succumbing to profane external interests. It is here that judicial integrity finds its spiritual foundation, for justice is conceived as an act of worship, not merely a professional obligation (Al-Attas, 1995).

Tazkiyat al-nafs, in Al-Ghazali's perspective, represents a path for purging the heart of diseases such as ostentation (*riyā'*), envy (*ḥasad*), and excessive love of the world (*ḥubb al-dunyā*), which often corrode the objectivity of judges. A judge ensnared by such maladies will find it difficult to maintain independence, as his rulings are easily swayed by personal or external interests. Conversely, a purified soul instinctively resists any form of transaction that might undermine its integrity (Al-Ghazali, 2013).

Muraqabah also instills the awareness of divine presence within the courtroom. A judge who practices muraqabah perceives every pronouncement of judgment not merely as words heard by litigants, but as inscriptions recorded in the eternal register of God. This transcendental awareness compels him to exercise utmost care in weighing evidence, testimony, and legal reasoning, for judgment is not merely procedural finality but a spiritual trust (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2004).

The ultimate aim of tasawwuf education for judges is the cultivation of character that cannot be fostered solely through training in positive law. In this sense, tasawwuf does not simply supplement but transcends formal law by offering an ethical-transcendental dimension rooted in the soul. Judicial integrity thus ceases to be a merely normative concept codified in ethical guidelines and instead radiates from a purified heart constantly conscious of divine oversight (Nasution, 1999).

In the Indonesian context, the urgency of tasawwuf education becomes increasingly pressing given the prevalence of judicial interventions, whether through political coercion or economic lobbying. Judges lacking spiritual fortification are easily swayed by such external forces. Tazkiyat al-nafs and muraqabah furnish instruments to resist these pressures from within – through spiritual power impervious to human intervention (Hallaq, 2009).

As Ibn Qayyim emphasized, a purified soul imbued with muraqabah is endowed by God with *ḥikmah* (wisdom) in adjudication. This *ḥikmah* becomes indispensable when confronting complex cases, where positive law alone proves insufficient to ensure substantive justice. Thus, tasawwuf operates as a catalyst enabling positive law to harmonize with divine justice (Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, 2003).

An independent judge is not merely one free from external intervention, but also one liberated from the tyranny of the lower self (*hawā al-nafs*). This dimension is often overlooked by positivistic paradigms, although the dominion of base desires is often more insidious than external pressures, for it operates internally and corrupts moral judgment. Tazkiyat al-nafs provides a method to subdue the lower self, while muraqabah ensures its continued subjugation (Nasr, 2007).

Judicial independence in the tasawwuf framework is not simply a political-legal construct but a spirituality safeguarded through transcendental consciousness. This presupposes that judges are accountable not only to the state or society but ultimately to God, the true possessor of justice. Such transcendental accountability cultivates resolute steadfastness in the face of all forms of intervention (Khan, 2010).

The internalization of tazkiyat al-nafs and muraqabah requires systematic education. Tasawwuf education must form an integral component of judicial training curricula, not a peripheral moralistic supplement. This is crucial, for tasawwuf provides concrete methodological instruments for spiritual refinement, rather than remaining an abstract doctrinal discourse (Al-Attas, 1995).

Furthermore, tasawwuf restores the spiritual dimension that has been eroded in modern judicial practices dominated by technocratic formalism. When judges confine themselves solely to procedural correctness, justice risks being reduced to mere legality. Yet, through tasawwuf consciousness, law is revitalized within the framework of spirituality, ensuring that justice transcends formality and attains substantive meaning (Esposito, 2011).

Amid escalating crises of public trust in judicial institutions, tasawwuf education may serve as a pathway of restoration. Society does not merely demand judges of intellectual acumen, but those of spiritual purity. Judicial independence acquires social legitimacy only when the public perceives rulings as emanating from hearts sanctified and souls under perpetual divine surveillance (Nasution, 1999).

Thus, the internalization of tazkiyat al-nafs and muraqabah is not merely a personal necessity for judges but an institutional imperative for the religious judiciary. Without this spiritual foundation, judicial independence remains a fragile slogan, vulnerable to both external pressures and internal passions. Tasawwuf offers an alternative paradigm capable of constructing both moral and spiritual fortifications for judges (Hallaq, 2009).

Ultimately, the urgency of tasawwuf education for Indonesian religious judges may be articulated as a transformative necessity that safeguards not only legal-formal independence but also affirms spiritual integrity. Tazkiyat al-nafs purifies the soul, muraqabah sustains transcendental awareness, and together they constitute transformative pillars of judicial independence. Equipped with tasawwuf, judges no longer merely enact statutes but embody a living manifestation of divine justice on earth (Al-Ghazali, 2013).

The Judicial Code of Ethics in the Perspective of Sufism: A Dialectic between Formal Regulation and Prophetic Spirituality.

A judge, as a central figure within the religious court system, bears moral, ethical, and spiritual responsibilities that transcend the mere enforcement of normative texts. The code of judicial ethics, formally codified by the Supreme Court and the Judicial Commission, aims to preserve the dignity, integrity, and accountability of judges. Yet, from the vantage point of Sufism, such formal regulations remain exoteric in nature and demand a deeper esoteric foundation. Sufism, as a spiritual discipline in Islam, does not confine itself to ritualistic dimensions, but emphasizes the internalization of sincerity (ikhlaṣ), trustworthiness (amānah), and justice ('adl)—values that are essential for reinforcing the ethical code of judges (Nasution, 2019).

The dialectic between formal regulation and prophetic spirituality in Sufism ought to be understood as complementary rather than oppositional. Formal regulation secures the institutional order of judicial conduct, whereas Sufism constructs an inner fortress that nurtures transcendental awareness of judicial duty. Consequently, a judge who adheres to Sufi principles does not perceive the code of ethics as a mere administrative obligation but as a manifestation of spiritual obedience and a path toward purification of the soul (al-Ghazali, 2005).

From the perspective of positive law, judges are obligated to uphold justice based on law and conscience. Yet the conscience itself must be purified from egoistic desires, personal interests, and external pressures so that it remains clear in adjudication. Sufism offers tazkiyat al-nafs (purification of the soul) as a prerequisite for the lucidity of a judge's conscience; without it, the

conscience risks distortion by worldly temptations, leading to ethical violations (Kartanegara, 2006).

The foundational principles of judicial ethics – independence, impartiality, integrity, propriety, equality, competence, and diligence – as framed in the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct, resonate profoundly with the *maqāmāt* (spiritual stages) in Sufism. Independence reflects the *maqām* of *zuhd*, demanding detachment from worldly attachments. Integrity corresponds to the *maqām* of *ṣidq*, requiring absolute honesty. Impartiality aligns with the *maqām* of *ʿadl*, the very essence of the Islamic message (Badawi, 2012).

Formal regulation, by its nature, can only limit external behavior; it cannot penetrate the inner domain, which often becomes the locus of deviation. It is precisely here that Sufism intervenes as a complement, operating within the internal realm to cultivate *murāqabah* (awareness of being constantly observed by God), ensuring that a judge remains vigilant even in private spaces beyond institutional surveillance (Shihab, 2018).

The concept of *murāqabah* becomes the linchpin of the dialectic between formal regulation and prophetic spirituality: formal rules operate effectively only when surveillance mechanisms exist, whereas *murāqabah* entails direct accountability before the Divine. Thus, their synthesis engenders a model of the judiciary that is not only legally compliant but also spiritually and morally steadfast (Nasr, 1987).

Sufism further emphasizes *maḥabbah* (divine love) as the motivational axis of all human action. When this principle is embedded within a judge's heart, adherence to the code of ethics ceases to be a bureaucratic burden and instead becomes an expression of love, producing consistent virtuous conduct. Divine love guides the judge to reject bribes, gratification, and all forms of ethical corruption, perceiving them as betrayals of sacred love (al-Qushayri, 2016).

This dialectic demonstrates that while formal regulation tends toward rigidity, Sufism infuses flexibility through its inward dimension that fosters intrinsic consciousness. A judge who relies solely on formal codes may comply out of fear of sanctions, whereas a Sufi-oriented judge observes ethical conduct out of fear of losing divine favor. This divergence in orientation is decisive in cultivating a judiciary of dignity and moral gravitas (Rahman, 2015).

Moreover, the Sufi concept of *fanāʾ* (annihilation of the self in the Divine Will) may serve as the ethical fulcrum of judicial transformation. The judge transcends personal interests, becoming instead an instrument of divine justice on earth. In this light, judicial rulings are not merely the representation of legal texts but the radiance of a purified soul dissolved in divine truth (*fanāʾ fī al-ḥaqq*) (Schimmel, 1975).

This dialectical relationship underscores the inherent limitations of formal regulation in shaping the moral habitus of judges. Numerous breaches of judicial ethics occur despite stringent regulations, suggesting that the root of the problem lies in the impoverishment of individual spirituality. Sufism

addresses this by touching the innermost recesses of the human being through continuous spiritual discipline (Madjid, 2000).

In the context of religious courts, judges do not merely adjudicate family law cases; they also confront the moral and social dilemmas of the Muslim community. Hence, judges must be equipped not only with legal expertise but also with spiritual sensitivity in order to deliver rulings that are not merely legalistic but also conciliatory, beneficial, and socially restorative. Sufism provides the conceptual framework to achieve this through the principles of mercy (*rahmah*) and justice (*'adl*) (Fadl, 2005).

Furthermore, the practice of Sufism instills resistance against corruption and abuse of power. While formal regulation prohibits bribery and gratification, Sufism embeds the awareness that illicit wealth darkens the heart and corrupts worship. Such spiritual consciousness proves far more effective in preventing ethical violations than the mere threat of sanctions (Nasution, 2019).

Sufism enriches the judicial ethical framework with the principle of sincerity (*ikhlaṣ*) – acting solely for God without worldly expectation. Sincerity prevents judges from seeking personal gain in their decisions, instead presenting justice as a prophetic trust. In this way, judicial integrity is not only safeguarded by formal mechanisms but fortified by pure spiritual motivation (Shihab, 2018).

Equally vital is the principle of patience (*ṣabr*), crucial for judges in the execution of their duties. Patience guards against rashness, emotional outbursts, and injustice in rulings. While formal regulation demands prudence, only Sufism can cultivate inner patience that endures even under the weight of complex circumstances (Schimmel, 1975).

The principle of humility (*tawāḍu'*) is also indispensable. Judges, vested with immense judicial authority, are vulnerable to arrogance. Formal regulation cannot police the arrogance of the heart, but Sufism teaches that pride is the greatest veil between the servant and God. Through humility, a judge recognizes himself as a servant entrusted with divine mandate, not an absolute ruler (al-Ghazali, 2005).

This dialectic reveals that formal regulation and Sufism are grounded in distinct epistemologies yet converge upon a shared telos: safeguarding the dignity of judges and the judiciary. While formal regulation derives from legal positivism, Sufism is rooted in prophetic spirituality. Their convergence births an epistemological synthesis that fashions a holistic model of judicial conduct: obedient to the law, obedient to God (Kartanegara, 2006).

Accordingly, Sufi education for judges must not be regarded as ornamental but as a fundamental necessity for sustaining the efficacy of the judicial code of ethics. Without a spiritual foundation, formal regulation proves fragile, relying merely on external supervision. Sufi education, by contrast, fortifies the moral resilience of judges, enabling them to remain steadfast even in the face of temptation (Madjid, 2000).

It can therefore be affirmed that the dialectic between formal regulation and prophetic spirituality in Sufism constitutes the ideal foundation for

cultivating judicial integrity. Formal regulation functions as the exoteric safeguard, whereas Sufism serves as the esoteric bulwark. Together, they not only deter ethical violations but also mold the judicial habitus into one imbued with virtue, justice, and dignity in the service of religious adjudication (Nasr, 1987).

Ultimately, this dialectic underscores the urgency of Sufi education as a foundation for strengthening the integrity and ethical conduct of judges in Indonesia. By integrating formal regulation with prophetic spirituality, the judge emerges not merely as a legal enforcer but as a representative of transcendental justice rooted in prophetic ethics. This, in turn, restores the authority of religious courts as instruments of justice that are not only legalistic but also spiritual and profoundly humane (Fadl, 2005).

The Integration of Sufi Education in Judicial Training: A Spirituality-Based Agenda for Judicial Reform.

Sufi education, in the context of judicial reform, is not merely an additional normative discourse but rather an epistemological necessity capable of restoring justice to its ethical axis. Judges of religious courts, who directly engage with Islamic family law, frequently encounter cases that demand not only the rationality of positive law but also spiritual sensitivity to grasp substantive justice. It is in this sense that Sufi education reveals its urgency as the foundational basis for shaping judges of integrity, empathy, and noble character (Nasr, 2007).

The integration of Sufi education into the curriculum of judicial training may be understood as an institutional strategy that seeks to internalize transcendental moral values within the judges themselves. This process of internalization does not end at the conceptual level but also extends into praxis, taking the form of spiritual habituation such as *dhikr*, *tafakkur*, and *muhasabah*. Through this process, judges learn not only to understand law as text but also as spirit, guiding them toward substantive justice (Chittick, 2000).

Within the corpus of classical Islamic thought, the judge (*qadhi*) has been situated in a sacred position demanding a moral elevation surpassing that of other public officials. Scholars have emphasized that a *qadhi* must embody traits of *wara'*, *zuhud*, and sincerity to remain safeguarded from the misuse of authority. Sufi education, with its orientation toward the purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), serves as an effective medium for cultivating these attributes within contemporary judges (Al-Ghazali, 2011).

Judicial reform agendas that have thus far been dominated by technocratic approaches such as procedural transparency, administrative accountability, and external oversight have yet to fully eradicate the entrenched practices of judicial corruption or the conduct of judges compromised by political and economic interests. It is here that a more substantive approach is required—namely, the incorporation of spiritual dimensions into judicial formation through Sufi education (Fukuyama, 2004).

Tasawwuf, in essence, functions as an internal control mechanism more effective than external legal instruments. Whereas bureaucratic oversight tends to be repressive and fear-inducing, Sufi education offers a form of supervision rooted in inner consciousness, namely *muraqabah* of God, which instills in judges the sense of always being observed by the transcendental realm even in the absence of human supervision (Izutsu, 1993).

This integration may be realized through a revision of the judicial training curriculum under the Supreme Court, incorporating practical modules on Sufism. Such modules would not only present classical and modern Sufi theory but also practical spiritual training in the form of *wirid*, Islamic meditation, *tafakkur*, and Sufi ethics relevant to judicial practice. In this way, judicial education would extend beyond the enhancement of juridical competence to the cultivation of moral sensibility (Nasution, 1992).

From the perspective of legal psychology, Sufi education plays an essential role in shaping judicial character resilient against external pressures, whether in the form of bribery, intimidation, or conflicts of interest. A judge fortified by spiritual strength is better able to resist gratification, not merely out of fear of legal or ethical sanctions but from dread of moral degradation before God (Bandura, 1991).

In the Indonesian context, marked by social complexity and cultural pluralism, judges of religious courts are required to embody profound spiritual sensitivity. Cases of divorce, inheritance, guardianship, and communal property disputes often carry emotional dimensions that cannot be fully accommodated by legal logic alone. Sufi education, emphasizing gentleness of heart and empathy, enables judges to adjudicate with greater wisdom and compassion (Schimmel, 1975).

Moreover, the integration of Sufi education may serve as an effective instrument in combating judicial corruption. Corruption is not merely a systemic weakness but often rooted in human greed. Tasawwuf, with its teachings of asceticism (*zuhud*) and contentment (*qana'ah*), provides spiritual therapy to restrain the desire for power and wealth, thus enabling judges to perform their duties with sincerity and moral responsibility (Hodgson, 1974).

As an agenda of judicial reform, Sufi education is not intended to supplant positive law but to complement it. The integration of Sufi values in fact reinforces judicial codes of ethics, which often remain normative abstractions. Professional ethics come alive when anchored in deep spirituality, for without it, codes of conduct risk becoming dead texts easily disregarded (Esposito, 2010).

The success of this agenda depends greatly upon the political will of judicial institutions to reform judicial training curricula. The Supreme Court, together with its Judicial Training and Research Agency, must open avenues for the structured and continuous inclusion of Sufi education. This may begin with the development of Sufi-based training modules contextualized to the challenges of modern judiciary (Hooker, 2008).

This reform also necessitates the involvement of Sufi scholars, *ulama*, and spiritual practitioners as mentors in the process of judicial formation. A

collaboration between jurists and contemporary Sufi masters would produce a constructive synthesis in shaping judges who are not only intellectually astute but also spiritually mature (Knysh, 2017).

In its implementation, Sufi education for judges could employ experiential learning models that prioritize direct practice over theoretical abstraction. Collective dhikr sessions, spiritual retreats, and ethical reflections could be systematically designed to generate transformational experiences that embed Sufi values into the judicial character (Kolb, 1984).

Furthermore, the integration of Sufi education may be reinforced through the establishment of spiritual competency certification for judges. This certification is not aimed at restricting professionalism but rather at serving as a mechanism of ethical quality assurance, ensuring that each judge possesses a firm moral-spiritual foundation. Hence, judicial quality would be measured not only by technical competence but also by spiritual integrity (Alatas, 2015).

Equally important, Sufi education in judicial training could enhance the legitimacy of religious courts in the public eye. In societies often cynical toward legal institutions, judges radiating sincerity, simplicity, and spirituality inspire trust, thereby significantly elevating public confidence in religious courts (Bourdieu, 1998).

Philosophically, Sufi education reaffirms the ultimate purpose of Islamic law (*maqasid al-shariah*), namely the realization of public welfare and the prevention of harm. A judge nurtured in the Sufi tradition is more adept at discerning the *maqasid* underlying legal texts, such that their rulings transcend mere legalism to embody substantive justice oriented toward humanity (Kamali, 2008).

In addition, Sufi education aids judges in cultivating emotional and spiritual intelligence, both of which are indispensable in mediation processes. Many cases in religious courts, in fact, demand empathetic communication skills more than rigid formal logic. *Tasawwuf*, with its emphasis on universal love, provides a potent foundation for judges to serve as soothing mediators (Goleman, 1995).

Thus, the spirituality-based agenda of judicial reform through the integration of Sufi education in judicial training constitutes a strategic endeavor to build a judiciary that is clean, just, and dignified. It is not merely a curricular innovation but a civilizational project to restore justice to its highest dignity.

Ultimately, the success of this agenda will be manifested in the presence of judges who are not only interpreters of legal texts but also guardians of the public conscience. A judge imbued with a Sufi spirit will regard their rulings as acts of worship, such that each strike of the gavel embodies not only legal authority but also spiritual, ethical, and humanistic significance (Nasr, 1987).

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the fundamental urgency of Sufi education in strengthening the integrity and ethical conduct of judges in Indonesia's Religious Courts.

Beyond juridical-positivistic competence, judges require spiritual depth and moral clarity to navigate complex disputes and resist external pressures. The internalization of Sufi values—such as sincerity (ikhlas), humility (tawadhu), asceticism (zuhd), and divine mindfulness (muraqabah)—provides a spiritual safeguard that sustains judicial independence and ensures that verdicts embody both legal reasoning and transcendent justice. Epistemologically, Sufi education bridges the gap between sharia as a juridical norm and haqiqah as a spiritual telos, preventing judicial practice from devolving into rigid legality devoid of moral essence. In this sense, Sufi education is not a supplementary adornment but a paradigmatic necessity for cultivating judges with both professional competence and prophetic ethical awareness. Practically, this study recommends the institutionalization of Sufi education within the training and professional development system for Religious Court judges in Indonesia. The Supreme Court and judicial training institutions should integrate Sufi teachings into curricula aligned with the judicial code of ethics, thereby reinforcing judges' character formation alongside legal expertise. This research, however, is limited by its reliance on literature review rather than empirical field data. Future studies should incorporate qualitative or mixed-method approaches involving judges and judicial educators to examine how Sufi education can be effectively implemented and adapted within judicial institutions.

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