

# Psychic Experiences In Sufism And Modern Era

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## Abstract

There is always a spiritual element to everything we do as humans, even when we are healthy and when we are ill. Spirituality is no longer only a religious or mystic concept; it is now universally accepted as an important aspect in overall health and well-being. In recent years, neuroscience has been used to study spirituality. As a result, this area of investigation has been explored since it appears to have considerable potentiality of both understanding mental disease and expanding treatment techniques. As a prominent Islamic spiritual tradition, Sufism is influenced by Christianity and Hinduism among other major global religions. Many people, both Muslim and non-Muslim, have benefited greatly from its impact on their spiritual health. It has been centuries since Sufism has been preached. There have been many important Sufis throughout Islamic history, but it wasn't until the mediaeval period that Sufism reached its greatest height and culminated in the development of many Sufi communities and its major proponents that it was truly at its peak. Spiritual realization is the purpose of Sufism; the soul is considered as a conduit through which this interaction occurs. " Those who adhere to Sufism believe that God is not only the source of all things, but also the only source of significance in life. To comprehend religious experience and how it impacts one's mental health, this might be an important relationship.

**Keywords:** Sufism, Psychoanalysis, mental health.

## I. Introduction

For as long as there have been humans, there has also been a universal curiosity about discovering who we are, what we're doing here, and where we fit in the grand scheme of things. The solutions have not been found, but we have made progress in comprehending ourselves by observing the natural world. Existing for a long time and providing solutions to "unresolved doubts," spirituality has been associated with many different religions and non-religious groups. Recent years have witnessed an upsurge in interest in spiritual topics and developments in

neuroscience provide an opportunity to comprehend it from a more scientific point of view and to put it in appropriate context. Spirituality is an important element of the lives of the vast majority of people across the globe. affects one's state of mind and knowledge of the causes, classifications, and treatments of mental illness. Mental health professionals, it seems, would do well to be educated on the ways in which spirituality influences patients' mental health, both when they are healthy and when they are ill. An introduction to Sufism, an Islamic mystical tradition, its impact on its adherents'

mental health, and how it interacts with conventional psychotherapy in terms of diagnosis and treatment will be provided in this presentation.

### 1.1 The need-to-know Sufism

The collection of information and principles is what mostly determines people's consciousness and behaviour. Science has a lot of facts, and ideologies like humanism and existentialism, which are both religious and nonreligious, are where ethics first emerged (Fulford 2013). Many religious systems that give the majority of people a numerical system and hence have an effect on their wellbeing emphasize spirituality as an essential component. In recognition of this, the World Health Organization designated spiritual well-being as one of the most crucial health considerations at the 37th World Health Assembly in 1984. This decision was made in accordance with social and cultural norms. (Basu 1995). Many medical institutions in the West currently include spiritual instruction in their curricula. Fehring and others (1987). Spirituality appears to have a significant impact on mental health because both of these operate in the same region of the brain, or what some could refer to as the mind or soul. According to research cited by Braam et al. (1997), there are both beneficial and negative impacts of spiritual and religious beliefs and practices on the physical and mental health of those who follow them. is a fast-expanding branch of spirituality that needs to be comprehended in light of how it affects its adherents' mental health as well as how it might interact with mental health care facilities.

Sufism provides an opportunity, from a philosophical standpoint, to comprehend the origin of religious knowledge in general and Islamic knowledge (revelation) in particular. In Sufi culture, it is claimed that Sufis could have the same experience as the source of religious knowledge in the form of the Quran's (the Islamic holy book) revelation to Muhammad (the Prophet

of Islam). The investigation of these Sufi experiences that share the phenomenological and prophetic foundations of revelation affords an opportunity for the scientific investigation of theological sources (Koenig, et al.,1998). From day-to-day clinical practise to research, the study of theological sources, their experiences, and their consequences is a vital component of mental health-related science and places mental health science students in an advantageous position to investigate Sufi experiences.

### 1.2 Sufism: The essence

The primary goal of the Sufis is to have a spiritual relationship with God, which is founded on the knowledge (ilm) revealed through the Qur'an and the practise of Islam (amal). W. C. Chittick (2010). The Sufi philosophy has been based on God's conception and the nature of association with Him from its inception. In describing the idea of God as infinite, everlasting, immutable, creator, almighty, merciful, and the reason for all existence, the early Sufis steadfastly adhered to the Quran. With the development of Sufi philosophy, the idea of God shifted from being the creator of all things to being the sole source of reality. With the concept of wahdat-ul-wujood, this ideology was abandoned. (Smith,1995).

According to Sufism, the soul can be used to have a direct dialogue with the divine. The Sufis believe that the heart (qalb), the spirit (ruh), and the conscience (sirr) that can know God were all created before any human existence. Many Sufis see the gentleman as symbolic of "the secret temple of God himself, in which everyone knows and does not know." Reference: (Nizamie et al., 2013). According to Sufism, the qalb (heart) is the seat of the divine and the doorway to enlightenment. It is a source of great joy for Sufis that God has revealed, "I, who do not enter into all the heavens and the earth, enter into the heart of the loyal believer." The Masaq (covenant) as it is mentioned in the Qur'an: "And (remember) when your Lord saved from the children of

Adam, from the threats of their descendants, and testified to them (saying): Am I not your Lord?" Absolutely, they reply. We testify. That was so you wouldn't have to remark, "Look!," on Easter. The words "by this we could not" constitute the basis of Sufi philosophy and its emphasis on unity with God. [16,27] According to the Sufis, there is a lower soul (nafs) that stands between the enlightened soul and God. To get back to the truth, you have to transform your nafs from nafs-e ammara (lustful soul; compare Id) to nafs-e lawwama (remorseful soul; compare ego) to nafs-e mutmaenna (peaceful soul; compare super-ego) (Smith,1995).

In Sufism, the Prophet Muhammad pbuh is seen as a remote figure. It is widely held that Muhammad is the only person capable of bringing about spiritual enlightenment, also known as the ascent of the higher soul to association with God. Muhammad's words, "the first thing Allah created was my light, which came from His light and came from the majesty of His magnificence," provide the foundation for this belief among the Sufis. According to Sufis, one can only reach enlightenment by following the Way (tareeqa) and preparing one's inner self for it (Dehlvi, 2010).

#### 1.4 Tareeqa: The Sufi way

Muhammad pbuh defined faith (iman) as "to acknowledge with the heart, to voice with the tongue, and to act with the limbs" in a tradition that is transmitted to him. The three pillars of faith—sharia (act with the limbs), tareeqa (voice with the mouth), and haqeeqa—are thought to correspond to the three facets of Sufi philosophy (acknowledge with the heart). Sufis adhere to the sharia while travelling (tareeqa) to God's presence (haqeeqa). Three stages have been identified as constituting the Sufi tareeqa: the maqamat (stage of stations), the ahwal (stage of states), and the stage of achievement (tamkin). The first level, which is attained via self-mortification, reflects the traveler's (Salik's)

desire for his lord (mujahida). To get to the last station of the first stage, love (mohabba), salikis are required to travel through the stations of repentance (tawba), piety (zuhd), faith in God (tawwakul), poverty (faqr), recollection of God (zikr), patience (sabr), thankfulness (shukr), and contentment (rida). The states (ahwal), which take place during or right after the first stage, are thought to be the consequence of supernatural favours (tajalli) flowing from God. As a matter of religion, the ahwal are wholly reliant on God's favour and cannot be coerced by the Sufi. At the conclusion of the quest, the Sufi is intended to obtain the gnosis (marifa), the knowledge of God, and unite with Him in the last stage of achievement (tamkin). Before achieving eternal existence in his God (baqa), the Sufi is expected to first destroy himself in his mentor (fana-fi-shaykh), then in Muhammad (fana-fi-rasul), and ultimately in God (fana-fi-allah) (Smith, 1995).

#### 1.5 Psychic experiences in Sufism - Different perspectives

In all civilizations and religions, there is a commonality of spiritual or psychological experiences. Although there are no research specifically on Sufism, surveys have shown that between 20% and 45% of people experience mood swings on a regular basis; the frequency varies according on factors including time of day, gender, and religion. Bhugra (2002) It is astonishing how much we have in common while having different acts, ideologies, and cultural contexts for them. Regardless of background, a complex cognitive experience known as a magical experience takes place in the mental, visual, and emotional realms. The magical encounters, which are based in part on the narratives of some Sufis, are brief, frequently fleeting, indescribable, unbroken, involve close ties with a singular individual, pass through time, place, and person, and sound like a profound sense of happiness. (1934 Iqbal; 1995 M Smith).

Historically, mystical experiences were thought to be the consequence of heavenly experience, demon possession, or even insanity. The descriptions have varied according to the political and religious spheres of the day, and have been influenced by the complainant's social class, the content of the experience corresponding to existing political and religious norms, gender, and so on. They have been translated to promote or undermine a particular political ideology, and have even been used to appeal to insanity. Mansur al Hallaj and Bayazid Bastami, two great Sufis who declare they wish to feel weird, must be told here. Both were outstanding Sufis who were labelled heretics and put to death for their defiance (Lipsedge, 2018).

Psychic experiences are more supernatural in nature, and Sufis believe that this is the source of ultimate knowledge (marifa or gnosis). Philosophical and scientific ideas have questioned the likelihood that such knowledge may produce knowledge. Kant refused to speculate on whether it may conceivably end up as an exit outside of human experience, which is why its context is so illogical. Sufi thinkers have contended that such an experience could simply be an extension of ordinary human experience. Sufi philosopher Fakhruddin Iraqi hypothesised that these events could occur at distinct periods in space (divine time and space) due to shifts in human perception (Iqbal, 1934). The subjection of this experience, contrary to the traditional objective of natural science, has been the biggest impediment to the study of psychological knowledge.

Sufi concepts may resemble "attitudes" like deception and hallucinations (audible, physical, etc.), according to phenomenological theory. On the basis of these parallels, it has been questioned whether information was provided and whether these events were spiritual. It has been stated that psychosis and the fundamental idea that all psychological phenomena are aberrant serve as

the foundation for all kinds of enigmatic experiences, and as a result, religious beliefs. It has been demonstrated that psychological occurrences (false thoughts and deceptions) are frequent in everyday life and during spiritual experiences, which are definitely not part of nature. All attitudes, it has been suggested, are abnormal, and abnormalities need to be redefined (Josephson, 2008) Given this, it would seem important to examine the spiritual experience outside of the context of illness.

### 1.6 Sufism and psychotherapy

Unfortunately, mental health experts have paid little attention to the fact that spiritual and religious beliefs are an important method for a great number of individuals to cope with stress. Religion and spirituality have been infused into the therapeutic process with promising results in recent years. (Lew, et al., 2022). Decriminalizing suicide attempt in the 21st century: a critical assessment of suicide statistics in nations that criminalise suicide (Singh, et al., 2022). Spirituality has been included into psychotherapy processes as a means of enhancing a current medical practise - spirituality. Transpersonal psychotherapy refers to advanced psychotherapy or the creation of new procedures with spirituality as their foundation. Despite the fact that Sufi ideas and practises have been included into transpersonal psychotherapy, there is no literature on the incorporation of these beliefs and practises into mental health treatment approaches.

Superior Spiritual Psychological Treatments Focusing on current concerns, additional psychological therapies are essentially psychological therapies that involve human beliefs, particularly spiritual beliefs. The therapist utilises the individual's spiritual beliefs and practises, such as meditation and prayer, in the treatment process, but he has never attempted to undermine his own convictions or those of the

patient. The treatment consists of 10 to 16 sessions, each lasting 45 to 70 minutes and occurring once each week. In controlled trials, the treatment has demonstrated efficacy by lowering recurrence and recurrence in the treatment group (Singh, et al., 2022) Sufi themes of patience (sabr), trust in God (tawwakul), contentment (rida), and God as always forgiving may have a profound effect on changing misunderstanding strategies, and when combined with Sufi practises of remembrance of the god (zikr) and gratitude (shukr), may provide the framework for additional spiritual psychological treatment of Sufi believers.

Psychotherapy that is transpersonal psychotherapy is based on the notion that humans are spiritual creatures, which is why transpersonal psychotherapy's goals include key spiritual-related traits (Subandi, et al., 2022). In transpersonal psychiatry, the therapist's function has evolved from that of a spiritual guide to that of a "spiritual stranger." The healer does not build any spiritual ideology and is a client who decides on the spiritual substance of the treatment (Knysh, 2022). Sufism in Russia: From Ideology to Scholarship and Back Again *Der Islam*, vol. 99(1), pp. 187-231. Transpersonal psychotherapy incorporates a variety of spiritual disciplines such as Sufism, yoga, qigong, and aikodo. Transpersonal psychotherapy has been utilised to address persistent anxiety, spiritual issues, mental illnesses, and substance misuse difficulties. Transpersonal psychotherapy can serve as a foundation for discussions about psychiatric services with traditional healers, and given the magnitude of the population seeking traditional healers, this can have a considerable impact on community health (Kanwal, et al., 2022).

### **1.7 Sufism and mental health care services**

In many developing nations, the great majority of people with mental illness either receive or seek assistance from spiritual healers. People's

religion systems foster a spiritually based concept of mental illness, and mental health care services in many rural communities are virtually nonexistent. This is evidenced by the enormous number of mentally sick persons who seek treatment at the holy shrines (dargah) of the Sufi saints. The Erwadi (India) fire in the shrine of Saint Shaheed Valiyullah, which resulted in the deaths of 28 mentally ill people, should serve as a sobering reminder of the price of ignoring the incorporation of people's religious beliefs into mental health services. Khan and Sharan (2022). Incorporating spiritual / Sufi artefacts into mental health treatment services necessitates a two-step procedure:

Inclusion of psychiatrists/Sufis in the mental health care delivery system, which may involve basic training in the diagnosis of mental illness and, when needed, proper referral.

Incorporating spiritual / Sufi beliefs and practises into a treatment process can enhance the utilisation of mental health care by a population with a stronger spiritual orientation.

Individual and organisational effort is necessary for the incorporation of spiritual ideas and practises into the mental health treatment delivery system. Spiritual issues must be brought to the attention of persons receiving training in mental health care. The focus of training should be on comprehending spirituality as an intrinsic aspect of a person seeking assistance and comprehending people's beliefs in the practise field. (Subandi, et al (2022).

Inclusion of psychiatrists and Sufis in the mental health care delivery system, which may involve basic training in mental illness diagnosis and appropriate referral as needed.

Incorporating spiritual / Sufi ideas and practises into a therapeutic process has the potential to improve the usage of mental health services by a more spiritually inclined population.

The word psychiatry is associated with psyche or soul healing. In an ironic twist, the link between psychiatrists and religion/spirituality has deteriorated. Psychoanalysis has had a significant impact on relationships; Freud believed in the religion of disease (neuroticism) and agreed with the notions of nature. (2006) (Lerner). The adversarial relationships that resulted from such views lasted until the end of the twentieth century, paving the stage for the twenty-first century to appear ignorant to mental care. According to some, the clash between psychology and religion/spirituality is a logical extension of the fundamental conflict between science and religion/spirituality. The incorporation of a medical model into a psychiatrist has resulted in its association with empirical science founded on awareness as a form of knowing. Religion, on the other hand, is founded on "revealed" information. Sufi experience, as previously discussed in this work, explores prophetic moments of revelation and may provide a tool to investigate religion "scientifically." As a result, Sufism can provide as a vital link between psychiatrists and religion.

From a medical point of view, psychology is concerned with aspects of human life, governed by scientific facts and religious values (Fulford, 2013). Psychiatry by considering both aspects of human life can develop into a discipline with a more complete understanding of human behavior that can contribute to the understanding and treatment of mental illness. Therefore, Psychiatry needs to avoid apathy and actively participate in religious research both from a philosophical and medical point of view.

### **Clinical encounter**

Sufism has recently grown in both eastern and western countries, much like other spiritual movements. Sufi practises, or beliefs in this context, are an essential component of the worldview of a sizable and expanding population both within and outside of the Islamic world.

More of these people will use mental health services as a result of the persistent rise in mental health issues in recent years (World Health Organization, 2001). Interactions between Sufi-inclined individuals and mental health services lead to issues that demand attention on many different levels.

Mental health providers' perspectives on patients' belief systems: Self-healing There is proof that mental health professionals help patients by taking their spiritual needs into account (Josephson, 2008). Unfortunately, even among those in the mental-health field, there are a lot of myths regarding religion and spirituality. According to a recent study (Fulford, 2013), 45% of mental health experts believe that religion can contribute to mental health issues. Studies reveal both beneficial and negative effects of spiritual and religious beliefs and practises on people's physical and mental well-being, providing conflicting evidence for this at the moment (Foskett, et al., 2004) It's interesting to note that study has indicated that humans' physical and mental health. The level of medical satisfaction of religious individuals fluctuates according to the physician's religion; inferiority to unbelievers (Bhugra, 2001). (Bhugra, 2001).

Instilling in professionals a more purposeful attitude that clearly involves keeping their beliefs and religious practises out of the clinical setting is an important component of current training in health and mental health. As (D'souza, et al., 1997) noted, whether intentionally or unintentionally, this consideration has diverted from keeping our religious and spiritual patients' beliefs and needs out of the medical field, failing the very purpose of health care - a healthy person - to be. Since many Sufis are likely to use mental health services in growing localities, it is important for mental health professionals to make an effort to understand these people's beliefs and practises. The fact that mental health professionals do not compel or impose their

religious or spiritual beliefs on their patients should be noted.

**Sufi doctrines and methods:** Historical research However, a thorough examination of a mentally ill patient may not always include a review of their spiritual practises and beliefs. This is perplexing, especially in the Orient where Sufi spirituality and practises are deeply ingrained in the local culture. The psychological medical model utilised by mental health professionals and a lack of training, interest, time, and discomfort with the topic are the main causes of this neglect (Fehring, et al., 1987).

Spirituality, including Sufism, is more than just a collection of beliefs and practises; it seeks answers to some of the most important questions of human life and death, which take on added significance during illness. Religious and spiritual beliefs, not surprisingly, reduce the risk of suicide in mentally ill patients (Foskett, 2004). As a result, religious and spiritual examination, including Sufi beliefs, should be used in the screening of people with mental illnesses in order to establish a patient-centered management system that takes advantage of each patient's spiritual strengths as well (Cox, 1997).

Sufi beliefs and practises should be examined individually for each patient. Unless Sufi's concern contributes to the crisis, the test may be postponed for a critically ill patient. As always, a cursory examination should be followed by careful consideration. A variety of short-term testing methods for general spiritual evaluation have been proposed, which can aid in diagnosing patients before moving on to more in-depth testing (Cox, 1997; Fulford, 2013). The four air areas recommended by any psychiatry. Testing appears to be a good starting point, but it must be modified to test Sufi beliefs and practises. Preliminary testing should include the following:

**Faith:** What role does faith play in everyday life? Sufism's beliefs and practises are being followed

by an increasing number of people from religious backgrounds other than Islam, so a mixture of beliefs and practises is to be expected.

**Influence:** What is the impact of faith on life, both past and present? Sufi self-harm practises can, without influencing the belief system, result in significant changes in real life, which must be properly understood.

Are you a member of any religious or spiritual community? Almost every Sufi believer is of one race or another (the clan), and their beliefs and practises may differ greatly. A genetic test can help you understand someone else's perspective on health and illness.

**Address:** Spiritual needs to be considered? A Sufi teacher to whom a given person holds an oath of allegiance (bay'a) may need to be included in a medical program in order to meet spiritual needs.

An in-depth discussion, from a clinical and psychiatric perspective, may follow this depending on the patient's needs as expressed during the examination (Giordano, 2006; Fulford, 2013).

### **Diagnostic considerations**

Sufi practises and beliefs can have a significant impact on one's mental health and general wellbeing. Benefits may include giving life meaning, improving quality of life, improving physical and mental health, and hastening the recovery from mental illness. However, these attitudes and behaviours sometimes result in severe harm and may be linked to mental illness or even the symptoms of psychopathology.

The fourth text revision of the Nosology Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-TR) offers two-dimensional insides and outsides for those with and without mental illness. In some cases, V-code is assigned to religious and spiritual issues, which may have a clinical focus. As an alternative, under the

DSM-IV-multiaxial TR's diagnostic programme, axis IV identifies psychological and environmental factors that may affect the diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis of mental disorders (axis I and II), where spiritual and religious issues do not meet the V code's upper limit. Conversion to a new religion (including sectarianism), rejection of a previous religion or loss of faith, strengthening of beliefs and practises, guilt, unexplained experiences, near-death encounters, and responses to chronic illness are examples of religious and spiritual problems. (Koenig, 2020; et al.)

Sufi experiences and emotional events that stand out Sufi experiences are diverse, encompassing thought, vision, and feeling. For two reasons, many of these encounters will never result in clinical care: These experiences are deeply rooted in the spirituo-cultural context into which a person is born, and there is little that can be done to prevent them. Much of the clinical care experience can be classified based on phenomenological factors. Tradition determines the content of the experience, which may or may not affect the diagnosis; it is a method of experience that distinguishes both and may result in a diagnosis. Separating the form and content of the experience should prevent the past from being misinterpreted as religious madness (Hathaway, et al., 2022). However, for phenomenological reasons (form), events such as psychological symptoms (delusions and hallucinations) occur during unreasonable spiritual experiences. The separation of these experiences raises concerns about the legitimacy of the concepts of mental illness and spiritual experience on the one hand. It is not surprising, then, that extremist views on the nature of such events have been debated - they classify all of these as either mental or spiritual, depending on one's inclination. A balanced perspective suggests that the difference between these experiences is likely to be based on your well-being (spiritual things are generally encouraging), a natural environment (spiritual

experiences are less severe), a decline in performance (spiritual experiences are rarely ineffective), and, as explored by (Jackson, et al., 2022). One Health should be the future of psychiatry. Environmental Health Reviews Discuss how the experience in question is founded on human values and beliefs. Again, because diversity has value, it varies across cultures and is questionable.

## Conclusion

In many developing nations, the vast majority of those suffering from mental illness seek out or receive spiritual healers' assistance. The causes are found in people's belief systems, which encourage a spiritually oriented definition of mental illness and almost nonexistent mental health care services in many rural areas. This is demonstrated by the large number of mentally ill people who seek treatment at the sacred shrines (dargah) of the Sufi saints. A two-step procedure is necessary to integrate spiritual / Sufi items into mental health care services:

the integration of psychiatrists and Sufis into the delivery system of mental health care, which may include fundamental instruction in the diagnosis of mental illness and necessary referrals.

Including spiritual and Sufi practices and beliefs in therapy may encourage more spiritually astute people to seek out mental health care.

Both organizational and individual effort are needed for the integration of spiritual beliefs and practises into the delivery of mental health care. It is necessary to raise awareness of those who are receiving training in spiritual and mental health issues. Understanding spirituality as a crucial component of someone seeking help and thoroughly comprehending people's beliefs in the area of practice should be the main foci of training.

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