

Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization (JITC)

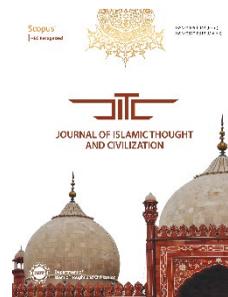
Volume 14 Issue 1, Spring 2024

ISSN(P): 2075-0943 ISSN(E): 2520-0313

Homepage: <https://journals.umt.edu.pk/index.php/JITC>



Article QR



Title: Sufism Revisited: A Comprehensive Analysis of Emha Ainun Najib’s Philosophical Contributions to Modern Society

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.141.21>

History: Received: December 08, 2023, Revised: March 26, 2024, Accepted: March 26, 2024,
Published: June 14, 2024

Citation: Robingatun, Robingatun, Fidia Astuti, and Abdul Wasik. “Sufism Revisited: A Comprehensive Analysis of Emha Ainun Najib’s Philosophical Contributions to Modern Society.” *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 14, no. 1 (2024): 352–371. <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.141.21>

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Conflict of Interest: Author(s) declared no conflict of interest



A publication of

Department of Islamic Thought and Civilization, School of Social Science and Humanities
University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan

Sufism Revisited: A Comprehensive Analysis of Emha Ainun Najib's Philosophical Contributions to Modern Society

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Abstract

This research explores the significant impact of modern Sufi teachings spearheaded by Emha Ainun Najib, or Cak Nun, on the members of Jamaah Maiyah in Indonesia. As a charismatic Muslim intellectual, Cak Nun introduces the concept of *Tasawuf* into the reality of modern life, emphasizing human values, tolerance, and local cultural heritage. The research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method, involving in-depth interviews with members and key figures of Jamaah Maiyah, as well as participatory observation of religious practices in various community activities, such as Pandang Bulan, Bang-bang Wetan, Kediri, and Kenduri Cinta, held in 2023 in East Java, Indonesia. The findings highlight the positive reception of modern Sufi concepts by Jamaah Maiyah, connected to positive changes in religious practices and daily outlooks. The social and cultural impact manifests in attitudes of tolerance, social concern, and awareness of human values. Cak Nun's teachings encourage members to engage in personal introspection and achieve a balance between the worldly pursuits and the spiritual endeavors. This research not only demonstrates the relevance of *Tasawuf* in the modern era but also identifies its contribution in shaping the character and perspectives of religious communities. These findings provide a profound understanding and insights into how modern Sufi teachings can act as a positive force in fostering positive attitudes and values in the contemporary society.

Keywords: *Jamaah Maiyah*, modern sufism, socio-cultural impact, spiritual practices

Introduction

Globalization and the advancement in communication technology have complex implications for the role of Sufism in contemporary society. On one hand, easy access to global information enriches the spiritual understanding of Sufi followers and encourages cultural exchange.¹ Virtual communities also thrive through social media. However, on the other hand, there are risks of spiritual decadence arising from the digital lifestyle, difficulties in maintaining local traditions, and conflicts of values with global secular influences. Therefore, Sufi communities need to maintain a balance

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¹Tommaso Previato, "Pre-Modern Globalization and Islamic Networks under Mongol Rule: Some Preliminary Considerations on the Spreading of Sufi Knowledge in Gansu-Qinghai," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 36, no. 2 (2016): 235-66, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2016.1186427>.

between leveraging global opportunities and preserving the essence of fundamental spiritual values.² The teachings of Sufism, as an integral part of the intellectual heritage of Islam, is currently facing several challenges in the context of a modern society influenced by rational-scientific thinking, the spread of secularism, and the rise of religious extremism.³ In an effort to adapt Sufi teachings to the rapidly changing dynamics of contemporary society,⁴ Muslim thinkers have developed several new variants, such as neo-Sufism, hybrid-Sufism, and urban-Sufism, in response to these contemporary challenges.⁵ Through these conceptual innovations, a bridge can be formed between traditional teachings and the demands of modern society. Thus, the development of Sufism in the context of globalization not only reflects adaptation to the changing times but also creates space for exploring Islamic values within a contemporary framework.

Sufism, as a movement encompassing various schools and practices throughout Islamic history, is currently facing significant challenges in the modern era.⁶ Recent research has identified three main categories related to Sufism in this era. First, the concept of Neo-Sufism, which highlights the substantial relevance of Sufism in guiding the Muslim community through the complexities of modern society, providing a crucial basis for achieving balance, wisdom, and true well-being.⁷ Second, discussions on Hybrid-Sufism offer profound insights into the role of Sufism in responding to modern societal challenges from various perspectives, including philosophical, practical, and cultural aspects.⁸ Lastly, urban-Sufism refers to a contemporary approach to Sufism that incorporates traditional practices within urban environments and the dynamics of the modern world.⁹ Amidst the

²Itzhak Weismann, *Sufism in the Age of Globalization, The Cambridge Companion to Sufism* (England: Cambridge University Press, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315027388>.

³Erik S Ohlander, *Early Sufi Rituals, Beliefs, and Hermeneutics* (England: Cambridge University Press, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCO9781139087599.005>.

⁴Carl Ernst, *Sufism: An Introduction to the Mystical Tradition of Islam* (Shambhala Publications, 2010); S. Rofi, B Prasetya, and B A Setiawan, "Pendidikan Karakter Dengan Pendekatan Tasawuf Modern Hamka Dan Transformatif Kontemporer [Character Education Through Modern Sufi and Contemporary Transformative Approaches by Hamka]," *Intiqad: Jurnal Agama Dan Pendidikan Islam* 11, no. 2 (2019): 396-414.

⁵Abdul Kadir Riyadi et al., "Sufism and the Contention of Value in the Public Space," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam* 12, no. 2 (2022): 255-79, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2022.12.2.255-279>.

⁶Carl Morris, "'Look into the Book of Life': Muslim Musicians, Sufism and Postmodern Spirituality in Britain," *Sage Journals* 63, no. 3 (2016): 2, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/003776861665233>.

⁷Amir Maliki Abitolkha, "Seyyed Hossein Nasr's Teaching on Sufism and Its Relevance to Modern Society," *Jurnal Theologia* 32, no. 1 (2021): 1-22, <https://doi.org/10.21580/teo.2021.32.1.8069>; Fathor Rahim and Hasnan Bachtiar, "Hamka's Neo-Sufism in the Context Modern Society," *Journal of Social Studies* 19, no. 1 (2023): 1-14, <https://doi.org/10.21831/jss.v19i1>.

⁸Salim Farrar, "Shariah-Based Sufism In The Modern Era: A Look at The Work of Shaykh Abdullah Bin Bayyah," *Malaysian Journal of Syariah and Law* 10, no. 2 (2022): 49-60, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.33102/mjssl.vol10no2.404>.

⁹Arif Zamhari, "Socio-Structural Innovations in Indonesia's Urban Sufism: The Case Study of the Majelis Dzikir and Shalawat Nurul Mustafa," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 7, no. 1 (2013): 119-44, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2013.7.1.119-144>; Inayatul Ulya, "Urban Sufism: Religiosity and Identity Construction of Urban Muslim Community," *Hikmatuna: Journal for Integrative Islamic Studies* 5, no. 1 (2019): 157; Farid Mustofa, "Urban Sufism: The New Spirituality of Urban Communities in Indonesia," *Jurnal Filsafat* 22, no. 3 (2012): 218-26, <https://jurnal.ugm.ac.id/wisdom/article/view/3096/9327>.

hustle and bustle of modern life, the understanding of the spiritual values of Sufism offers relevant solutions for individuals seeking inner peace.¹⁰ Sufism also plays a role in creating a balance between materialistic aspects and spiritual needs in the midst of a busy urban life. Moreover, in multicultural urban environments, Sufism can contribute as a social adhesive, promoting tolerance and cross-religious understanding.¹¹ This research not only reflects efforts to comprehend the diversity of Sufism in the modern era but also makes a significant contribution to academic literature by opening the door to in-depth analyses regarding the role, adaptation, and serving as a foundation for understanding the role of Sufism in facing the challenges of the present time.

The influence of Sufism in modern society is reflected through its dissemination via the internet, which has become a primary tool in expanding its impact.¹² Xavier highlights the continued relevance of the teachings of Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207-1273) through art, music, and the practice of spinning meditation.¹³ Similar phenomena can be observed in the discourse of “traditional” Sufism implicit in contemporary European art,¹⁴ including in modern literary context.¹⁵ In line with this, Previato emphasizes the importance of revitalizing studies on the role of Sufism in shaping modern society.¹⁶ Additionally, the modern urban society faces several challenges in religious social movements,¹⁷ including Nativist movements, Millennial/millennarian movements, Messianic movements, Nostalgia, sectarianism, and Revivalist movements.¹⁸

This research aims to fill the gap in existing literature by analyzing the perspectives of urban modern society towards Sufism and its practices, such as meditation, introspection, and the pursuit of inner purity.¹⁹ Additionally, the study seeks to explore whether there have been significant changes in the practices of Sufi teachings and their impact on life in the modern era. The research focuses on the figure of Emha Ainun Najib, or Cak Nun, renowned as a charismatic leader in Indonesia and known for his modern Sufi thoughts.²⁰ Cak Nun is an intriguing subject of study due to his distinctive

¹⁰Farrar, “Shariah-Based Sufism In The Modern Era: A Look at The Work of Shaykh Abdullah Bin Bayyah.”

¹¹Abitolkha, “Seyyed Hossein Nasr’s Teaching on Sufism and Its Relevance to Modern Society.”

¹²Francesco Piraino, “Between Real and Virtual Communities: Sufism in Western Societies and the Naqshbandi Haqqani Case,” *Social Compass* 63, no. 1 (2016): 93-108, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0037768615606619>.

¹³Merin Shobhana Xavier, *The Dervishes of the North: Rumi, Whirling, and the Making of Sufism in Canada* (Kanada: University of Toronto Press, 2023).

¹⁴Sara Kuehn, “Contemporary Art and Sufi Aesthetics in European Contexts,” *Religions* 14, no. 2 (2023): 196, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3390/re14020196>.

¹⁵Ziad Elmarsafy, *Sufism in the Contemporary Arabic Novel* (United Kingdom: Edinburgh University Press, 2014).

¹⁶Previato, “Pre-Modern Globalization and Islamic Networks under Mongol Rule: Some Preliminary Considerations on the Spreading of Sufi Knowledge in Gansu-Qinghai,” 235-66.

¹⁷Ulya, “Urban Sufism: Religiosity and Identity Construction of Urban Muslim Community.”

¹⁸Sumarno, Agus Trilaksana, and Aminuddin Kasdi, “Social Religious Movement in Java 19th - 20Th Century,” *Journal of Physics: Conference Series* 953 (2018), <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:158452886>.

¹⁹S. M. Amin, *Ilmu Tasawuf, Amzah*, 2022; S H Nasr, *The Garden of Truth: The Vision and Promise of Sufism, Islam’s Mystical Tradition* (HarperOne, 2007), 157.

²⁰Sekar Ayu Aryani, “Healthy-Minded Religious Phenomenon in Shalawatan: A Study on the Three Majelis Shalawat in Java,” *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 7, no. 1 (2017): 1-30, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v7i1.1-30>; Ahmad Hanafi, “Pemikiran Tasawuf Menurut Emha Ainun Nadjib [Sufism Perspectives According to Emha Ainun Nadjib]” (IAIN

approach in delivering Sufi teachings, a mystical dimension of Islam.²¹ This study is expected to make a significant contribution to deepening the understanding of the complexity of Sufi adaptation in the context of an increasingly diversified urban society. This research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the concepts, practices, and impact of Sufism in the midst of a dynamic modern urban community.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Sufism

In Islamic science discourse, Sufism has become the focus of attention for several researchers.²² Negin Yavari identifies Sufism as the mystical dimension of Islam that primarily emphasizes the spiritual and inner aspects of Islamic religious practices.²³ This concept, according to Al-Ghazali, implies sincerity to God and good interaction with fellow human beings.²⁴ Beyond that, Sufism encompasses efforts to improve oneself, achieve harmony with God, and attain love, understanding, and unity with the Creator. For followers of Sufism, known as Sufis, it is considered a path to get closer to God and attain love, understanding, and unity with Him.²⁵

Sufism involves various practices and concepts that depict the mystical dimension within Islam. First, there is the practice of *Zikr* (dhikr), which involves reflecting on Allah by contemplating His names or attributes. Second, *Tazkiyat al-Nafs* (self-purification) refers to the process of purifying oneself from negative traits such as hatred, greed, and arrogance, and replacing them with positive traits like love, simplicity, and compassion. Third, *Suluk* (spiritual journey) marks the spiritual journey as a step towards a deeper understanding of Allah, often a lengthy and demanding journey. Fourth, *Tawakkal* (trust in Allah) which signifies complete trust in Allah in every aspect of life, by abandoning dependence on worldly matters. Fifth, *Istiqama* (Firmness) which denotes steadfastness in adhering to religious teachings and facing trials and tests. Sixth, following a Sufi Master describes the practice of many Sufis following a spiritual guide deemed to possess a profound understanding of Sufism, guiding them in their spiritual journey.²⁶

Ponorogo, 2019); T Hermansyah, and K Rizky, "Emha Ainun Najib and Sufism Communication: Congregation of Maiyah Kenduri Cinta as Case Study," *Jurnal Ilmiah Syi'ar* 22, no. 1 (2022): 56-69; M Hofman, "Emha Ainun Najib and the Modernity of Javanese Sufism," *Asian Studies Review* 41, no. 2 (2017): 253-270.

²¹Lukis Alam et al., "The Indonesian Journal of the Social Sciences The Rise of the Urban Piety Movement: Jamaah Maiyah as an Urban Spiritualism and Emerging Religiosity in the Public Sphere," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun: The Indonesian Journal of the Social Sciences* 10, no. 3 (2022): 747-64.

²²Muhammad Ainun Najib, "Epistemologi Tasawuf Modern Hamka [Modern Sufi Epistemology by Hamka]," *Jurnal Dinamika Penelitian: Media Komunikasi Sosial Keagamaan* 18, no. 2 (2018): 303-24; Faiz Fauzi, "Eksistensi Tuhan Dalam Tasawuf Emha Ainun Nadjib [The Existence of God in the Sufism of Emha Ainun Nadjib]," *Refleksi Jurnal Filsafat Dan Pemikiran Islam* 18, no. 1 (2018): 61-76.

²³Negin Yavari, "Sufis and Their Opponents in the Persianate World," *Iranian Studies* 55, no. 2 (2021): 299-304.

²⁴Al-Ghozali, *Ihya Ulumuddin Jilid V*, trans. Moh Zuhri (Semarang: VC. Asy-Syifa, 1994).

²⁵Didin Komarudin, "Konsep Tasawuf Modern Dalam Pemikiran Nasaruddin Umar [Modern Sufism Concepts in the Thought of Nasaruddin Umar]," *Syifa Al-Qulub* 3, no. 2 (2019): 96-111; Najib, "Epistemologi Tasawuf Modern Hamka [Modern Sufi Epistemology by Hamka]."

²⁶M Smith, "Contemporary Sufism in the West: The Politics of Sufism," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 16, no. 3 (2005): 299-325; Ernst, *Sufism: An Introduction to the Mystical Tradition of Islam*;

Tasawuf has been a subject of debate among scholars. Some consider that Sufism plays a key role in developing the concept of Tawhid, opening space for intellectual and cultural discussions on Islamic monotheism for centuries. Moreover, Sufism serves as a platform to explore the diversity of creatures such as the sun, moon, mountains, trees, and animals, giving rise to concepts like *fana*, ' *baqa*', *ittihād*, *Hulul*, *Wihdat* al-Manifest, and Nur Muhammad.²⁷ Sufism strengthens its validity by making valuable contributions to Islamic literature through spiritual enlightenment.²⁸ Concepts like *ma'rifah*, *tazkiyat al-nafs*, and dhikr in Sufism introduce a profound dimension to the understanding of Islam. The influence of Sufism on the 18th and 19th-century reformist movements is reflected in efforts to purify Islamic teachings and emphasize moral values. In response to the changing times, Sufism also influences the formation of new Sufi orders that are more adaptive to the needs of modern society.²⁹ However, there are still differing opinions on Sufism to this day. The first perspective views Sufi practices as eccentric or anti-mainstream, resulting in isolation, imprisonment, torture, and even death, casting doubt on the validity of specific Sufi concepts and practices.³⁰ The second perspective sees Sufism as a response that can provide solutions to the challenges faced by humanity.³¹ Sufism plays a key role in the modern era by providing a spiritual foundation to address societal changes. The teachings of Sufism, emphasizing self-reflection and a deep connection with God, offer relevant guidance in facing modern materialistic pressures.³² By offering an inner perspective, Sufism can guide individuals through the dynamics of modern life.³³

2.2. Modernity

Modernization theory views modernity as a result of socioeconomic and political changes, with a particular emphasis on factors such as economic growth, urbanization, and education as the main drivers towards modernity.³⁴ However, criticisms of this theory highlight excessive determinism and a lack of consideration for cultural diversity. Some scholars, such as Ernst³⁵ dan Hernawan,³⁶ have described modernity as a condition or stage of development in human history that involves significant changes towards more modern and rapidly evolving social, political, economic, and cultural forms.

Durkheim explored a profound comparison between the bonds of a segmented society (mechanical solidarity) and the bonds in a functionally differentiated society (organic solidarity).³⁷ Durkheim's perspective suggested that the transition from mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity

Komarudin, "Konsep Tasawuf Modern Dalam Pemikiran Nasaruddin Umar [Modern Sufism Concepts in the Thought of Nasaruddin Umar]."

²⁷Abdurrahman Mihcioglu, "Wright, Zachary Valentine. On the Path of the Prophet: Shaykh Ahmad Tijani and the Tariqa Muhammadiyya," *Kadim*, no. 1 (2021): 153–57.

²⁸Farrar, "Shariah-Based Sufism In The Modern Era: A Look at The Work of Shaykh Abdullah Bin Bayyah," 49-60.

²⁹Elmarsafy, *Sufism in the Contemporary Arabic Novel*, 15.

³⁰Mihcioglu, "Wright, Zachary Valentine. On the Path of the Prophet: Shaykh Ahmad Tijani and the Tariqa Muhammadiyya," 153-57.

³¹Muhtar Solihin, and Munir, "The Concept of Sufi Psychotherapy," *Journal of Engineering and Applied Sciences* 12, no. 10 (2017): 2584-91, <https://doi.org/10.3923/jeasci.2017.2584.2591>.

³²Elmarsafy, *Sufism in the Contemporary Arabic Novel*, 15.

³³Ernst, *Sufism: An Introduction to the Mystical Tradition of Islam*, X.

³⁴Najib, "Epistemologi Tasawuf Modern Hamka [Modern Sufi Epistemology by Hamka]," 14.

³⁵Ernst, *Sufism: An Introduction to the Mystical Tradition of Islam*, 12.

³⁶Wawan Hernawan, Usep Dedi Rostandi, and Didin Komarudin, "Maintaining Moderate Islam in West Java: The Perspectives of Five Islam Mass Organizations Concerning Intolerance Cases," *Madania: Jurnal Kajian Keislaman* 23, no. 1 (July 2019): 1-10, <https://doi.org/10.29300/madania.v23i1.1933>.

³⁷Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society* (New York: The Free Press, 1964), 45.

is a common feature in the process of modernization. His argument indicates that this shift replaces patterns of collective self-identification with more individualistic patterns, reflecting a fundamental change in social dynamics during the period of modernization.³⁸ When examining modernization theory from various critical perspectives, differences and weaknesses emerge that provide a basis for a more balanced viewpoint. Criticisms often highlight assumptions that modernization follows a one-way path without considering cultural diversity and historical contexts.³⁹ A more balanced perspective must acknowledge the benefits of innovation and development brought about by modernization while understanding the social disparities it produces. It is also crucial to consider environmental impacts and sustainability, aspects often overlooked in this theory.⁴⁰ Integrating critiques shapes a holistic view, enabling the development of inclusive and sustainable policies.

In the context of modernity, the thoughts of two prominent Moroccan philosophers, Mohammed Abed al-Jabri and Taha Abdurrahman, emphasize the role of Sufism as a core element in the vision of modern Islamic rationality.⁴¹ Fazlur Rahman⁴² advocates for the social-moral reconstruction of the Muslim community based on the normative principles of the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*, taking the Prophet and the righteous predecessors (*salaf as-Sholihin*) as guides, and maintaining a balanced attitude in Islam. Despite facing challenges in modern society, the history of Sufi teachings demonstrates a significant contribution to shaping social, cultural, and religious aspects in Islamic communities.⁴³

2.3. Religious Tradition in Urban Society

Tradition is an integral aspect of community life that is often resistant to change.⁴⁴ In Ferdinand Tönnies' perspective, tradition in urban society is based on contact, agreement, rationality, individualism, and interests.⁴⁵ Generally, tradition is defined as a normative framework in society that encompasses institutions as its forms. Institutions are divided into two types: secondary institutions and primary institutions. Secondary institutions, such as politics, government, economics, and markets, are rational and involve conflicts emphasizing legality, while primary institutions, such as family, kinship, religion, friendship, and companionship, are more fundamental and personal.⁴⁶ Louis Wirth connects his views on anonymity and alienation in urban society with challenges in

³⁸Stephen Ross, *Modernism, Theory, and Responsible Reading* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350185845>; Ronald Inglehart and Wayne E. Baker, "Modernization, Cultural Change, and the Persistence of Traditional Values," *American Sociological Review* 65, no. 1 (February 2000): 19, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2657288>.

³⁹Komarudin, "Konsep Tasawuf Modern Dalam Pemikiran Nasaruddin Umar [Modern Sufism Concepts in the Thought of Nasaruddin Umar]," 96-111.

⁴⁰Farrar, "Shariah-Based Sufism In The Modern Era: A Look at The Work of Shaykh Abdullah Bin Bayyah," 49-60.

⁴¹Mohamed Wajdi Ben Hammed, "(Dis)Enchanting Modernity: Sufism and its Temporality in the Thought of Mohammed Abed Al-Jabri and Taha Abdurrahman," *The Journal of North African Studies* 26, no. 3 (2021): 552-71, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2019.1697241>.

⁴²Fazlur Rahman, *Islam: History of Thought and Civilization*, trans. M. Irsyad Rafsadic (Bandung: Mizan, 2017), 21.

⁴³Morris, "'Look into the Book of Life': Muslim Musicians, Sufism and Postmodern Spirituality in Britain," 12.

⁴⁴Jalaluddin, *Psikologi Agama: Memahami Perilaku Dengan Mengaplikasikan Prinsip - Prinsip Psikologi [Psychology of Religion (Understanding Behavior by Applying Psychological Principles)]* (Depok: Rajawali Pers, 2015), 41.

⁴⁵Alvin Y So, and Suwarsono, *Perubahan Sosial Dan Pembangunan [Social Change and Development]* (Jakarta: Pustaka LP3ES, 1994), 67.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 34.

practicing religion and maintaining social bonds, especially in the context of primary institutions, amid the dynamics of urban life.⁴⁷

The patterns of urban life, analyzed through the lens of modernization theory, reflect Talcott Parsons' views on social systems and structures in modern society. This theory portrays modernization as a triangle that links structural changes, involving institutional differentiation, and shifts in individual attitudes towards progressive thought patterns. Functional specialization is also an integral part of this process. Urban society, socially, tends to be individualistic, materialistic, hedonistic, and emphasizes rationality, which also influences perspectives on religion.⁴⁸ In the works of Eka Kurniawan, characters reflect the social polemics of urban life, including urbanization, criminality, poverty, social inequality, informal professions, apathy, and materialism.⁴⁹ This analysis provides deep insights into the complex dynamics involving structural aspects and values in the context of modernizing urban society.

In the diversity of urban life, three main groups can be identified. Firstly, there are those who reject anything deemed inconsistent with Islamic principles, exemplified by religious diversity conflicts in urban communities involving competition for the use of public spaces, particularly places of worship. The construction of churches, mosques, or synagogues can trigger controversy and tension among competing religious groups vying for worship spaces or public areas.⁵⁰ Secondly, there are groups that accept urban life with its various lifestyles and cultures, even though they ultimately face difficult choices between rejecting non-religious cultures or accepting them. And thirdly, there are groups that openly embrace and follow every cultural trend, considering it an inseparable part of urban life.⁵¹ This issue reflects the challenges in maintaining religious diversity in urban environments.

3. Research Methodology

This research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method.⁵² The research focuses on prominent figures and active members of Jamaah Maiyah in East Java who regularly participate in forums such as Pandang Bulan, Bang-bang Wetan, Kediri'an, and Kenduri Cinta, held every month. Jamaah Maiyah, in this context, refers to those who attend religious gatherings and/or activities involving Cak Nun, characterized by a deep understanding of cultural values and active participation in artistic activities. They also possess an understanding of Sufi teachings, engage in critical discussions, and participate in social and humanitarian activities. Key values emphasized within the Jamaah Maiyah community include diversity, tolerance, and openness, creating an identity that not only focuses on the spiritual aspect but is also actively involved in supporting diversity and cultural

⁴⁷Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," *The American Journal of Sociology*, 44, no. 1 (1938): 1-24.

⁴⁸Ahmad Anas, *Paradigma Dakwah Kontemporer [Contemporary Preaching Paradigm]* (Semarang: Pustaka Rizki Putra, 2006), 65.

⁴⁹Yulianeta Yulianeta, and Meistika Intan Utami, "The Life Potrait of Urban Society within O, the Novel by Eka Kurniawan," in *Proceedings of the Second Conference on Language, Literature, Education, and Culture (ICOLLITE 2018)*, vol. 257 (2019), 368-71, <https://doi.org/10.2991/icollite-18.2019.81>.

⁵⁰A.m Muzayin, H Hasan, and S Suhadi, "Pluralism in Emha Ainun Nadjib's Maiyah Lectures," *Madaniyah* 9, no. 2 (2019): 170-183.

⁵¹Irzum Farihah, "Religious Guidance for Urban Communities," *Konseling Religi: Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling Islam* 5, no. 1 (2014): 171-86.

⁵²Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif Dan R and D [Quantitative, Qualitative, and R and D Research Methods]* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2009), 87.

creativity.⁵³ The research is conducted in East Java, Indonesia, in the year 2023, aligned with the presence of informants and the venue for the forums. Data collection involves observing Jamaah Maiyah activities, conducting interviews with Jamaah members and prominent figures, and documenting video recordings of Jamaah Maiyah gatherings. Triangulation of data sources is used to ensure data validity by comparing information from primary subjects (prominent figures and forum members) and secondary subjects (individuals outside the forum). Triangulation of methods is also employed by combining interview results, observations, and documentation.

The data analysis encompasses several stages including, data collection, data reduction, data interpretation, data analysis, and drawing conclusions. This analysis aims to provide a deeper understanding, more accurate information, and support from concrete data as well as careful interpretation of findings from various sources. Thus, this research aims to make a significant scholarly contribution through the use of detailed methods and comprehensive analysis of Jamaah Maiyah and their active participation in forum activities.

4. Results

Cak Nun, a renowned literary figure, poet, and a Muslim thinker,⁵⁴ embodies an effort to maintain the relevance of Sufi teachings in the context of the modern world. He achieves this by integrating traditional aspects of Sufism with humanistic values, tolerance, and local culture. This provides an opportunity for more people to experience the spiritual and ethical benefits offered by Sufism. Cak Nun emerges as a figure deeply immersed in the richness of tradition yet adept in making Sufism a source of relevant and inclusive inspiration in everyday life. Through his unique approach, he opens up opportunities for the broader community to access and understand the values of Sufism without losing the substance of its teachings. This expands the positive impact of Sufism in the modern context, creating opportunities for individuals to develop spiritual and ethical dimensions in their lives.⁵

4.1. Concept of Sufism by Cak Nun

The concept of Sufism is defined as a journey towards closeness to God, attaining love, understanding, and unity with Him.⁵⁵ In the context of the Jamaah Maiyah, Sufism is not merely related to religious rituals but emphasizes the purification of the soul and a profound understanding of faith. Some members of Jamaah Maiyah state that Cak Nun's spirituality concept places more emphasis on inner cleanliness and tranquility of the soul.⁵⁶ The practice of Sufism involves *Dhikr* (Remembrance), *Tazkiyat al-Nafs* (Self-Purification), *Sulūk* (Spiritual Ascent), *Tawakkal* (Trust in Allah), *Istiqama* (Firmness), and following a Sufi Guide,⁵⁷ with some of the practices focusing on the inner dimension and separating outward and inward practices. Sufism is considered a mystical

⁵³Muzayin, Hasan, and Suhadi, "Pluralism in Emha Ainun Nadjib's Maiyah Lectures," 170-183.

⁵⁴Ibid., 170-183.

⁵⁵Najib, "Epistemologi Tasawuf Modern Hamka [Modern Sufi Epistemology by Hamka]"; Komarudin, "Konsep Tasawuf Modern Dalam Pemikiran Nasaruddin Umar [Modern Sufism Concepts in the Thought of Nasaruddin Umar]."

⁵⁶Farhan Abdillah, interview June 20, 2023.

⁵⁷Smith, "Contemporary Sufism in the West: The Politics of Sufism," 299-325; Ernst, *Sufism: An Introduction to the Mystical Tradition of Islam*, 12; Hernawan, Rostandi, and Komarudin, "Maintaining Moderate Islam in West Java: The Perspectives of Five Islam Mass Organizations Concerning Intolerance Cases," 1-10.

and spiritual dimension of Islam, while Sharia is interpreted as Islamic law derived from the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*.⁵⁸

The understanding of Sufism held by Jamaah Maiyah differs from the commonly strict concept that requires total adherence to a Sufi guide.⁵⁹ In the perspective of Jamaah Maiyah, there is no specific guru that must be exclusively followed; members of Jamaah Maiyah are empowered to seek knowledge and enlightenment anywhere, anytime, and from anyone. A reinterpreted understanding of the hadith, “*Al-Ulama Waratsatul Anbiya*: The Scholars are the heirs of the Prophets,” emphasizes that the beloved of Allah, who acquire knowledge and enlightenment through struggle and *mujahadah*, are not limited to formal Islamic religious scholars. In this context, enlightenment is attained through effort and struggle that involves aspects of spirituality, not just a formal understanding of religion.

Regarding the pursuit of knowledge through a teacher, Jamaah Maiyah emphasizes the need to undergo this process with awareness and critical thinking. They acknowledge that understanding the truth gained through enlightenment, struggle, and *mujahadah* is not an easy task and requires profound comprehension. Therefore, in seeking knowledge through a teacher, Jamaah Maiyah teaches the importance of awareness and criticism, ensuring that the learning process does not become a dependency without a deep understanding.

There exists a divergence in the interpretation of Sufism, where extreme views consider it as an innovation in Islam, leading to resistance and misunderstanding among urban communities influenced by secularization.⁶⁰ However, in the context of Jamaah Maiyah, the approach to Sufism is implemented in a simple and easily acceptable manner. This approach has a positive impact by attracting various segments of society to join Jamaah Maiyah, including officials, educators, students, farmers, fishermen, and others. In Jamaah Maiyah, engaging in Sufism is interpreted as a process of self-refinement,⁶¹ integrating Sufism and Islam without separation, transcending formal religious meanings and the teachings of faith and worship. This concept brings about a life experience that goes beyond formal interpretations as doctrines or guidelines, involving a life of rebirth that leads to a total reconstruction of inherited religious traditions.⁶² The actualization of Sufism in Jamaah Maiyah creates a deeper dimension of religious experience, breaking down formal boundaries and leading to a more holistic understanding of religious principles.

⁵⁸Supriyadi Ahmad, “Harmonizing The Clash of Sufism And Sharia in Al Ghazali’s Thought,” *Teosofia: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Mysticism* 7, no. 2 (2020): 137-50; Seraj Ahmad Habibi, Said Ghulam Mohammad Hashmi, and Mohammad Nazir Rohani, “Some Criticisms of Sufism and Their Answers,” *Randwick International of Education and Linguistics Science Journal* 4, no. 1 (2023): 135-41.

⁵⁹Ernst, *Sufism: An Introduction to the Mystical Tradition of Islam*, 12; Hernawan, Rostandi, and Komarudin, “Maintaining Moderate Islam in West Java: The Perspectives of Five Islam Mass Organizations Concerning Intolerance Cases,” 1-10.

⁶⁰A. R. Mukhametdinova and M A Polischuk, “The Place of The Family in The Value System of Modern Urban Youth,” *Вестник Удмуртского Университета. Социология. Политология. Международные Отношения [Bulletin of Udmurt University. Sociology. Political Science. International Relations]*, (2022): 42-52.

⁶¹Muhammad Nursamad Kamba, *Kids Zaman Now Menemukan Kembali Islam [Kids Nowadays Rediscovering Islam]*, 1st ed. (Tangerang Selatan: Pustaka IIMaN, 2018), 88.

⁶²Rony K. Pratama, “Jamaah Maiyah Dan Otoritas Religius [Maiyah Congregation and Religious Authorities],” *Caknun.com*, 2021, <https://www.caknun.com/2021/jamaah-maiyah-dan-otoritas-religius/>.

Engaging in Sufism within Maiyah means being Islamic, and being Islamic involves embodying ethical conduct, not merely making moral statements. This emphasizes the essence of Islamic teachings as a guide to goodness and divinity, distinguishing it from the understanding of faith rules and worship in its time and generally today. The Prophet's message restores the essence of religion to goodness, fostering self-transformation through the unity of love. Although monotheism is often seen as a theological concept of the oneness of God, in this context, monotheism signifies unity or the unification of love. Religious teachings, as revealed by Prophet Muhammad, emphasize sincerity and the unity of love as a path to goodness.

This perspective reflects life values such as honesty, generosity, and empathy. Cak Nun advocates for moral integrity and concern for others as the embodiment of these values. The approach of balancing between the worldly life and the hereafter is a central aspect of Cak Nun's Sufi thinking. "Cak Nun often reminds me of the importance of living life with interconnectedness and compassion towards others. According to Emha's perspective, one should navigate this life with balance, not solely focusing on the worldly or the hereafter but with awareness of both."⁶³

Cak Nun teaches the importance of living life with responsibility towards worldly tasks while maintaining awareness of the hereafter. This creates a concept of a healthy balance between worldly affairs and spiritual matters, providing a solution for the modern era. "Emha's thoughts offer concrete solutions on how to practice Sufism in an increasingly modern and complex world. Emha's thinking provides me with the space to interpret his teachings according to my personal experiences."⁶⁴

The personal experience, mentioned by a member of Jamaah Maiyah, indicates that the flexibility in interpreting Cak Nun's Sufi concepts allows each individual to interpret the teachings according to their personal experiences, thus enabling the creation of Sufi solutions that are suitable for the modern era.

4.2. Teaching of Cak Nun's Sufism

Sufism, as a mystical dimension of Islam, emphasizes spiritual practices and the pursuit of Allah's love, distinguishing it from other Islamic practices.⁶⁵ In Sufism, spiritual experience takes center stage, something not always prioritized in conventional Islam (Mushtaq et al., 2019). Although the members of Jamaah Maiyah view being Islamic as being Sufi, there are similar practices such as dhikr performed by Sufi orders; Cak Nun's⁶⁶ approach to dhikr emphasizes it as a form of worship not confined to specific situations. Dhikr can be done while working, walking, or resting, as long as it is accompanied by awareness of Allah and neglect of everything else. This aligns with dhikr practices in traditional Sufi concepts.⁶⁷ This practice reflects continuity with the tradition of Sufi practices, reinforcing harmony with the spiritual legacy of earlier Sufi figures.

⁶³Farhan Abdillah, interview June 20, 2023

⁶⁴Iwan Hadi, interview June 27, 2023

⁶⁵Arif Ridha, "Telaah Konsep Tasawuf Syaikh Yusuf Khatar Muhammad Dalam Kitab Maudhu'ah Yusufiyah Fi Bayani Al Adilati as Sufiyah [Study of the Sufism Concept of Sheikh Yusuf Khatar Muhammad in the Book of Maudhu'ah Yusufiyah Fi Bayani Al Adilati as Sufiyah]," *Al-Jadwa: Jurnal Studi Islam* 1, no. 1 (2021): 89-101.

⁶⁶*Even God Fasts* (Jakarta: Kompas, 2012).

⁶⁷Herdian Kertayasa Alfyan Syach Rini Novianti Yusuf Asep Supriatna, "Peran Tarekat Sufi Serta Relevansinya Terhadap Pendidikan Islam Modern [The Role of Sufi Orders and Their Relevance to Modern Islamic Education]," *Edukatif: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan* 3, no. 2 (2021); Warsito Warsito, and Muhammad Zainuddin, "Gerakan Kesalehan Kelompok Sufi Sar Juba Rescue Tarekat Syadziliyyah Di Surakarta [Sar Juba Sufi Group's Pious Movement to Rescue the Syadziliyyah

The relevance of Cak Nun's Sufi practices in modern life offers a framework that aligns with the challenges and realities of contemporary existence. *Firstly*, the teachings of simplicity and self-awareness provide guidance for leading a meaningful life amidst the dynamics of evolving society and technology. *Secondly*, the teachings of inter-religious tolerance serve as a guide for navigating a society characterized by diversity. *Lastly*, the teachings of love and compassion, practiced by members of Jamaah Maiyah, enable them to integrate these principles into the fast-paced and hectic environment they find themselves in. They are adept at designing practical ways to experience the presence of Allah in their everyday routines.

Firstly, the Sufi practice of 'simplicity in spirituality' taught by Cak Nun serves not only as a guide in religious practices but also as a means of liberating oneself from the pressures of consumerism and materialistic competition in everyday life. A respondent's statement reflects this, "In the modern context, 'simplicity in spirituality taught by Cak Nun' teaches me to liberate myself from consumer pressures and materialistic competition. I strive to live simply, for example, by reducing my carbon footprint, and focusing on ecological goodness."⁶⁸ Another respondent says, "The Sufi thoughts of Emha Ainun Najib are highly relevant to the modern life I face. Concepts such as love and simplicity provide a framework for leading a meaningful life amidst the pressures and anxieties of the modern world. I adapt these by designing ways to live a simple and meaningful life, even in the context of a busy urban environment."⁶⁹

The practice of applying the concept of 'self-awareness' in Cak Nun's Sufism has motivated members of Jamaah Maiyah to reflect more on their actions and intentions, including the practice of *Tazkiyat al-Nafs* (Self-Purification) within the context of simplicity. This teaching proves itself as an innovative solution relevant to the challenges faced by modern urban society, such as environmental degradation pressures, dynamics of the digital economy, and the impacts of modernization and secularization. Simplicity in the Sufi practices of Jamaah Maiyah not only teaches living a simpler life, reducing excessive consumption, and contributing to environmental sustainability but also provides reinforcement for addressing emerging needs and issues in the evolving dynamics of society.

Secondly, the practice of religious tolerance and pluralism becomes increasingly relevant in a multicultural society undergoing globalization. Sufi practices, particularly in the implementation of 'inter-religious tolerance' taught by Cak Nun, have a significant impact in modern, multicultural societies. A member of Jamaah Maiyah expressed, "The concept of 'inter-religious tolerance' taught by Emha Ainun Najib is highly relevant in our multicultural society. I implement this by being more open to diverse beliefs and cultures, making inter-religious dialogue an integral part of my life."⁷⁰

An open-minded attitude and engagement in inter-religious dialogue are increasingly crucial in addressing the complexities of modern society. Inter-religious dialogue plays an important role in fostering respect, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence among different religious groups. In a pluralistic and multi-religious society, where religious conflicts often occur, inter-religious dialogue becomes key to nurturing harmonious relationships. Sufi teachings explore the dimension of love as a central aspect in the search for *ma'rifah* or spiritual perfection. One of the prominent Sufi figures, Rabi'ah Al Adawiyah, connects the path of love for Allah with the concept of *mahabbatullah*, serving

Tarekat in Surakarta].” *Wahana Akademika: Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Sosial* 10, no. 1 (2023): 29-46, <https://doi.org/10.21580/wa.v10i1.14534>.

⁶⁸Nikamtul Maslahah, interview July 7, 2023

⁶⁹Muhammad Saiful Ansori, interview July 3, 2023

⁷⁰Muhammad Saiful Ansori, interview June 15, 2023.

as a source of inspiration to achieve *ma'rifah*.⁷¹ According to her, love for God carries a profound meaning that permeates human existence, serving as the primary driver towards spiritual perfection.

Finally, Sufi teachings, encompassing the central theme of love, gain profound meaning through the perspectives of eminent Sufi figures like Rabi'ah Al Adawiyah. In the context of modern Sufism, the understanding of love is not only viewed as a state of the soul or an inner potential but as a catalyst in pursuing spiritual perfection or *ma'rifah*. The concept of *mahabbatullah*, associated with the path of love for Allah, serves as an inspirational source that adds a profound dimension to the spiritual experience.⁷²

Love, in Cak Nun's interpretation of Sufism, is identified as an inner state inherent in the human soul. It is not merely a potential but an inner situation involving a space, energy, or frequency that exists within a person. Uniquely, love can develop without the need for social expression, creating a substantial internal experience. A member of Jamaah Maiyah stated, "When I talk about 'compassion' in the modern context, it carries a deeper meaning. I see it as an opportunity to engage in social actions and take tangible steps to help others. This is how we adapt modern Sufi thinking to shape a more caring society."⁷³

Meanwhile, "loving" in the context of Cak Nun's Sufism is explained as a social decision or behavior involving actions towards others. As an externalization of the inner state of love, the act of loving can manifest in various social forms, including humanitarian care, shared pleasures, tolerance, empathy, and participation. It is important to note that the act of loving does not always require exclusive feelings of love but can stem from social values or spiritual foundations.⁷⁴

Ilahiyah love, a love originating from God, becomes a crucial aspect in the understanding of modern Sufism. This profound experience is described as a presence, as if a figure lies beside you, leading one to the dimensions of magnificence and unity with God. This existential enhancement provides a broader perspective on the meaning and purpose of life, distancing oneself from the pressures of everyday life.

Overall, Cak Nun's understanding of Sufism regarding love creates a distinction between the inner state of love as a potential within and the actual act of loving as a social manifestation. By emphasizing humanitarian and spiritual aspects, this concept encourages individuals to make love the primary driver in performing socially beneficial actions, providing depth in the context of modern society.

From the entirety of Cak Nun's Sufi teachings, it can be concluded that the concepts taught do not introduce anything new to Islam but rather emphasize the presence of God in every action. This perspective triggers a significant shift in the outlook on religious practices such as prayer, remembrance, fasting, and others, where members of Jamaah Maiyah now see them as opportunities for spiritual growth and closeness to God, rather than mere religious routines. By emphasizing the presence of God in every action, Cak Nun's Sufism adds a deeper dimension to religious practices. These practices are not merely formal efforts to fulfill religious obligations but serve as a means for personal growth and spiritual closeness. This creates a deeper understanding of the values of

⁷¹Yusrul Muhajirin, and Achmad Khudori Soleh, "Rabi'ah Al-Adawiyah's Sufism Toward the Culmination of Spirituality in the Perspective of Irfani Epistemology," *Islamic Review: Jurnal Riset Dan Kajian Keislaman* 12, no. 2 (2023): 135-146.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Farhan Abdillah, interview June 20, 2023.

⁷⁴Emha Ainun Nadjib, "Mempelajari Cinta Dan Belajar Mencintai [Studying Love and Learning to Love]," Caknun.com, 2016, <https://www.caknun.com/2016/mempelajari-cinta-dan-belajar-mencintai/>.

spirituality in daily life, positively impacting the spiritual journey of Jamaah Maiyah members and their overall perception of Islam.

4.3. Impact of Cak Nun's Sufism

The research findings indicate that the Sufi concepts applied within Jamaah Maiyah are enthusiastically embraced by its members. They believe that these concepts can stimulate a deeper understanding of religion and spirituality, while also helping them lead a more meaningful life in accordance with the demands of the modern era. For example, the application of the concept of "simplicity in spirituality" can be interpreted as an understanding that living a simple life is a way to draw closer to God. "In Jamaah Maiyah, I often refer to the thoughts of Emha Ainun Najib on 'simplicity in spirituality.' I interpret it in a way that I don't need to possess a lot of wealth or engage in complicated practices to achieve closeness to God. This allows me to focus on the essence of my religious beliefs."⁷⁵

The expression of one Jamaah Maiyah member states that they often refer to Cak Nun's thoughts on simplicity in spirituality. For them, it means there's no need to possess a lot of wealth or engage in complicated practices to achieve closeness to God. This interpretation allows them to focus on the essence of their religious beliefs without getting entangled in material things. Therefore, the applied Sufi concept in Jamaah Maiyah provides a framework of understanding and religious practices that offer flexibility and relevance in facing the dynamics of modern society.

Moreover, the research findings also indicate that Cak Nun's Sufi concepts have had a positive impact on the religious ritual approach of Jamaah Maiyah members. One respondent stated that the understanding of Sufi concepts has changed the way they approach religious rituals. For them, worship is not only related to physical actions but also involves the presence of the heart and emotions in worship. "Since I started understanding the modern Sufi concepts of Emha Ainun Najib, there has been a change in how I approach my religious rituals. I better comprehend that worship is not just about physical actions but also about the presence of the heart and emotions in worship."⁷⁶

Investigating Cak Nun's Sufi teachings within Jamaah Maiyah not only carries spiritual implications but also creates significant social and cultural impacts within the community and even in the broader society. Changes in norms and values embraced by this group, as well as alterations in how they interact with their surroundings, become crucial highlights. For example, the concept of "self-awareness" promoted by Emha Ainun Najib has tangible effects on how members of Jamaah Maiyah perceive and understand themselves. A respondent stated that this understanding has transformed their self-perception. Now, they reflect more on their actions and intentions, strive to become better individuals, and become more aware of the impact of their deeds on others.⁷⁷ In other words, this Sufi concept provides a foundation for spiritual growth and self-introspection.

Socially, there has been a significant change in how individuals interact with and perceive others. The concept of "*allahu akbar*" recognized and practiced by Jamaah Maiyah diminishes worldly differences such as positions, wealth, and glory. An interview with a member of Jamaah Maiyah, reflects this change by describing that now, views on others are no longer influenced by these material parameters. Each individual is seen as having equal value, and respect and appreciation should be given to all, with the understanding that what is truly needed is Allah, not humans. The expression "If you want to be a king, be good to people. If you want equality, then don't expect it from people"⁷⁸ reinforces the idea that fundamentally, all individuals in Jamaah Maiyah can be

⁷⁵Farhan Abdillah, interview June 20, 2023

⁷⁶Iwan Hadi, interview June 27, 2023

⁷⁷Iwan Hadi, interview June 27, 2023

⁷⁸Mahfudhotin, interview August 10, 2023

considered equal in the eyes of Allah, regardless of worldly factors. This awareness of equality strengthens the perspective that all actions and intentions should be done with sincere intentions toward God, not with expectations of recognition or special treatment from humans.

Furthermore, the influence of Cak Nun's Sufism within Jamaah Maiyah permeates the culture of urban society, often characterized by contacts, agreements, rationality, individualism, and interests.⁷⁹ The positive impact of these Sufi teachings is strongly felt, particularly in reshaping the paradigms of its members regarding the concept of simplicity. Cak Nun's Sufi teachings, emphasizing simplicity in spirituality, have a positive effect on the attitudes and behaviors of Jamaah Maiyah members within modern urban society. An interview with one member reflects a shift in mindset and consumption habits. In this context, "simplicity in spirituality" is not just a concept but a teaching that transforms lifestyles. A member states, "In the modern context, 'simplicity in spirituality' teaches me to liberate myself from consumer pressures and materialistic competition. I strive to live simply, reduce my carbon footprint, and focus on ecological goodness."⁸⁰

This expression reflects a paradigm shift from materialistic competition towards a simpler, more sustainable lifestyle, and an ecological-focused orientation. The concept of "simplicity in spirituality" from Cak Nun's Sufism alters perceptions about competition in urban society. It's no longer just about competing in material terms but rather about competing in goodness, closeness to God, and efforts to help others while maintaining the sustainability of the Earth. Thus, these Sufi teachings permeate urban culture by shifting the focus from materialistic competition to competition in spiritual values and goodness.

The application of the value of compassion in the concept of 'cinta kasih' emphasized by Cak Nun's Sufism has brought about changes in how members of Jamaah Maiyah interact with others. This transformation is manifested in a more active involvement in social activities, charity, and philanthropy as tangible expressions of the value of compassion. Thus, their spiritual practices reflect a significant impact of Cak Nun's Sufi thoughts on real-life actions. A member expresses, "The modern Sufi concept of 'cinta kasih' by Emha Ainun Najib influences how I interact with others. I now engage more often in social activities and philanthropy. This is a spiritual practice for me because I believe that compassion is a true form of worship."⁸¹

This expression reflects a noticeable change in behavior after embracing Sufi teachings, particularly in applying the value of compassion. The impact of compassion can also be understood as an extension of the teachings of simplicity. When one lives in simplicity, without greed, there arises an ease in sharing and respecting each other without caste differences. Jamaah Maiyah becomes a tangible example where they engage together in activities without considering social status, portraying a community liberated from hierarchy and superiority.

5. Discussion

The teachings of Sufism by Emha Ainun Najib, a figure known as Cak Nun, as reflected in research, showcase a unique integration between the mystical dimensions of Islam and the realities of modern life.⁸² Cak Nun's thoughts bring forth the perspective that Sufism is not only relevant but

⁷⁹Alvin Y So, and Suwarsono, *Perubahan Sosial Dan Pembangunan [Social Change and Development]*.

⁸⁰Nikamtul Maslahah, interview July 7, 2023

⁸¹Nikamtul Maslahah, interview July 7, 2023.

⁸²Hanafi, "Pemikiran Tasawuf Menurut Emha Ainun Nadjib [Sufism Perspectives According to Emha Ainun Nadjib]," 56; Aryani, "Healthy-Minded Religious Phenomenon in Shalawatan: A Study on the Three Majelis Shalawat in Java," 12; Hermansyah and Rizky, "Emha Ainun Najib and Sufism Communication: Congregation of Maiyah Kenduri Cinta as Case Study," 34.

can also provide concrete solutions to the challenges posed by the complexities of modern society. His modern Sufi concept emphasizes the importance of developing deeper spiritual connections, personal introspection, and maintaining a balance between worldly affairs and the afterlife. The flexibility in interpreting the concept of modern Sufism creates space for individuals to connect these teachings with their own life experiences. The acceptance and interpretation of modern Sufi concepts by members of Jamaah Maiyah reflect a spiritual need in the midst of a complex modern society.⁸³ The flexibility in interpreting modern Sufi concepts reinforces the notion of positive modernization, indicating that these teachings can accommodate various personal experiences and life contexts.

Despite receiving appreciation, Cak Nun's teachings of Sufism have encountered criticism. Some critiques argue that his approach exhibits excessive openness and simplification of Sufi teachings, expressing reservations about its inclusivity in the religious diversity of Indonesia.⁸⁴ Cak Nun's support for art and creativity is also considered controversial as it is deemed to potentially diminish the seriousness of the spiritual dimensions of Sufism. The varied responses to Cak Nun's unique approach in Indonesian society illustrate the complexities and challenges associated with embracing diverse interpretations in the context of the modernization of Sufism.

In the context of reflecting on the modernization of Sufism, Cak Nun's thoughts can be considered as a positive modernization effort within the Sufi tradition.⁸⁵ Through his concept of modern Sufism, Cak Nun creates space for more contextual interpretations, preserving core values without completely rejecting tradition. This aligns with the theory of modernization, which encompasses positive transformations to maintain the relevance of values in a changing context.⁸⁶

Furthermore, the social and cultural impact of Cak Nun's Sufi teachings can be observed in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of Jamaah Maiyah members.⁸⁷ His modern Sufi thoughts have a positive impact on fostering tolerance, social awareness, and a sense of humanity's values.⁸⁸ The concept of simplicity in Cak Nun's Sufism creates an impact on the lifestyle and consumption patterns of Jamaah Maiyah members, connecting it with modernization theory that encompasses changes in the structure and values of urban society. Thus, Cak Nun's Sufi teachings reinforce the concept of Neo-Sufism, bringing Sufi teachings into a more modern language and context. The sustainability of simple and flexible concepts becomes a key element in conveying Sufi values in the reality of modern urban society.

6. Conclusion

In this research, the teachings of Sufism introduced by Emha Ainun Najib, or Cak Nun, particularly through his concept of modern Sufism, highlight the importance of balancing worldly affairs and the afterlife, personal introspection, and humanistic values. This concept provides a strong foundation for Jamaah Maiyah members to deepen their religious experiences more profoundly. The

⁸³Hofman, "Emha Ainun Najib and the Modernity of Javanese Sufism," 253-270.

⁸⁴Muzayin, Hasan, and Suhadi, "Pluralism in Emha Ainun Nadjib's Maiyah Lectures," 170-183.

⁸⁵Aryani, "Healthy-Minded Religious Phenomenon in Shalawatan: A Study on the Three Majelis Shalawat in Java," 1-30.

⁸⁶Inglehart and Baker, "Modernization, Cultural Change, and the Persistence of Traditional Values," 19.

⁸⁷Andi Winata As'ari, "Living Hadis Oral, Lisan Dan Tulisan Jamaah Maiyah, Emha Ainun Najib Dan Gamelan Kiai Kanjeng [The Living Hadith: Oral, Oral, and Written Traditions of the Jamaah Maiyah, Emha Ainun Najib, and Gamelang Kyai Kanjeng]," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Keislaman* 7, no. 2 (2018): 188-207.

⁸⁸Alam et al., "The Indonesian Journal of the Social Sciences The Rise of the Urban Piety Movement: Jamaah Maiyah as an Urban Spiritualism and Emerging Religiosity in the Public Sphere," 747-64.

applied teachings not only follow the footsteps of previous Sufi doctrines but also emphasize simplicity, self-awareness, inter-religious tolerance, and the teachings of love and compassion. The impact of these teachings is evident in the transformation of the Jamaah, who feel more connected to their religion and spirituality. Furthermore, these teachings assist them in leading more meaningful lives, changing social dynamics by promoting ease of sharing and mutual respect regardless of caste differences.

The research findings indicate that Cak Nun's concept of modern Sufism has a significant impact in bridging the gap between Sufi tradition and the realities of modern life. The enthusiastic acceptance of this Sufi concept reflects society's need for a spiritual dimension in facing the complexities of the times. In the context of Sufi modernization, Cak Nun's thoughts can be considered a form of positive modernization that preserves core values without entirely rejecting traditional heritage. This approach aligns with the theory of modernization, advocating positive transformations to maintain the relevance of values in an ever-evolving context.

Thus, it can be concluded that Cak Nun's modern Sufi teachings not only make a significant contribution to the understanding of spirituality but also offer concrete solutions to the challenges of modernity. This positions Sufism as a relevant and inclusive dimension of Islam in an ever-evolving society.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

The data associated with this study will be provided by the corresponding author upon request.

Funding Details

This research did not receive grant from any funding source or agency.

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