

# ***Tasawwuf: An Impetus to Islamic Revivalism in the Malay World***

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**ABSTRACT:** *This working paper is a preliminary study to reveal the involvement of the Sufis in the spread of Islam, and the development of Islamic civilization in the Malay world. The study also looks at the decline in the teaching of tasawwuf and the practice of the various established Sufi orders in the region and the rest of the Muslim world today. The conduct of this study is historical in its approach. It also looks at the imperative need for the teaching of tasawwuf to be revived as to ensure that the Islamic civilization in the Malay world with all its splendour be preserved in totality, and without its authenticity being diluted. It is here presented that the endeavour would not be a futile exercise because the science of tasawwuf and the practice of the various Sufi orders appear to have a deep historical root in the Malay world. The theme of this paper is a call for the restoration of primal Islam, the worship of Allah SWT based on correct aqidah, and within the parameter of the Shari'a of Islam. And with this, the Muslims may acquire the needed spiritual strength as a defence against the continued onslaught of neo-colonialism and the uncertainties of globalisation.*

**KEY WORDS:** *the Sufis, teaching of tasawwuf, Islamic civilization, globalisation, Malay world, and the restoration of primal Islam.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Shaykh Uthman Dam Fodio (1754-1817), in his book *Handbook on Islam* (1996) in presenting the three dimensions of the *Deen* of Islam, defines *Ihsan* as the science of *tasawwuf*, concerning the inward aspects of the *Deen*. Referring to Islam, he defined it as the science of *fiqh*, concerning the outward aspects of the *Deen*, and *Iman* being the science of *tawhid*, concerning the beliefs comprising the foundations of the *Deen* (Dam Fodio, 1996).

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It is the primal teaching of Islam, which had been passed on from one generation to another generation, complete and perfect, and its necessary knowledge comprises *tawhid*, *fiqh*, and *tasawwuf*. That is to say the doctrine of Unity, the obligations of worship – prayer, fasting, *zakat*, and *haji*, and the science of the self which will lead to the necessary Islamic transformation of character desired by the Messenger for his people (may Allah bless him and give him peace). In regard to this matter, Shaykh Abdul Qadir al-Murabit said as follows:

Islam is not and can never be, by definition, in crisis or need of revisionist change, Islam, *Kitab wa Sunna*, is immutable in all places until the end of time. It is itself a critique and balance-principle against which all human ventures must be measured and themselves revised and changed (Shaykh Abdul Qadir al-Murabit, 1995).

Ibn al-'Ashir, in his book *Al-Murshid al-Mu'in*, says that it is obligatory for the people of the Book and the Sunna (*Ahl-Sunna wal-Jama'ah*) to acquire knowledge in the doctrine of 'Ash'ari, the jurisprudence of any one of the four *imams* and in the *tasawwuf* of al-Junayd al-Baghdadi (in Ibn Khathir al-Hafiz, 1987). According to Abu Nasr Sirrajul-Din al-Tusi (1960), in his *Al-Luma*, the term of *tasawwuf* was introduced around the second Anno Hijrah. This tremendous book discusses Islamic spiritualism in great depth, and at the same time reminding us that the transmission of its knowledge is not intellectual but experiential. Shaykh al-Alawi, referred to by Martin Ling as the Muslim saint of the twentieth century, in his book *Knowledge of God: A Sufic Commentary on al-Murshid al-Mu'in of Ibn al-'Ashir* (1995), in the context of the nobility of the knowledge of the Sufis above other knowledges said:

Know that this knowledge is the best of knowledges and the most generous when understood and no one denies it except the one who is deprived of its blessing. You can do without all knowledges after a certain time except this knowledge, which by obligation you cannot do without at any time (Shaykh al-Alawi, 1995).

Through being initiated into the *tarekat*, a *murid* under the guidance of a living and teaching *shaykh*, may acquire this knowledge by keeping company of the *shaykh* and the company of his *fuqara*. This phenomenon has attracted the interests of many researchers from the West and the East to study it from all its facets.

The involvement of the *Sufis* in the spread of the message of Islam in the Malay world had, according to a number of scholars, been both intensive and extensive (Syed Mohd Naguib al-Attas, 1963; Arnold, 1984; and Van

Bruinessen, 1994). The spiritual education undertaken by the *Sufis* through the methodology of their individual orders served greatly to the emergence of civilization in Aceh of Sumatera, Buton of Sulawesi, and other areas in the Malay world (Hadji Mohd Said, 1966; and Ricklefs, 1992). Indeed, it was through the teaching of *tasawwuf* by the *shuyukh* of the various *tarekats* that the Islamic society in the Malay world drew its strength and its invincibility from the onslaught of the enemies of Islam.

However lately, especially during the last half-century, *tasawwuf* and the *sufi* orders have been deemed to be a phenomenon extraneous to Islam and have their origin not from the teachings of Islam but as mystical teachings derived from other sources. Because of that, this working paper will trace the historical thinking on why this had happened. This study also takes a look at the imperative need and the importance of reviving the teaching of *tasawwuf* and its practice with all its ramifications as defence against the continued onslaught of neo-colonialism and the negative aspects of globalisation.

### **THE HISTORY OF *SUFIS* TRADITION IN THE MALAY WORLD**

When Hulagu Khan destroyed Islamic Baghdad, and literally razed it to the ground together with all its trimmings, the hitherto center of knowledge on science and technology moved to the West through Spain and Cyprus. Under ordinary circumstances, no one would ever thought after the devastation that Islam would re-emerge as a civilization force as it was once before (Hassan Ibrahim Hassan, 1986). However, little did any one knew that the East by engaging itself in the inner project (the science and technology of spiritualism), as against the preoccupation of the West entirely in their outer project, had transformed the East to become the bastion for spiritual awakening. The speed at which Islam made its presence in every nook and corner of the world within less than a century of its emergence has puzzled the West even to this day.

The majority in the West, especially today, do not accept even the possibility of inner illumination and strength. Today, their Western mentors have already influenced some in the East, and as such they are not as spiritually strong as their forefathers before them. As long as the Muslims did not neglect the imperative need for inner project, not relying entirely on their outer project for real strength, they remained mighty and majestic.

The practice of *tasawwuf* and *sufi tarekat* is the only known way to arrive at gnostic knowledge. The *tarekat* unites the *shari'a* and the *hakikat*, the way to arrive at the knowledge of Allah SWT (*Subhanu Wa Ta'ala*). The way of the *sufis* is the way to *ma'arifatullah*. Abu Bakar Aceh (1996) appears to

have similar view. In other words, the Muslims were strong whenever their religious education included the spiritual education as acquired through the teaching of *tasawwuf* and the discipline of the *sufi tarekat*.

The coming of Islam to the Malay world had, in fact, filled up a spiritual vacuum. The Malay society in the era before Islam, for example, had received only fragments Hinduism without its religious mysticism. The influence of the Hindu teaching was confined only among the nobilities and the upper echelons of the Malay society, without impinging on its lower strata (Syed Mohd Naguib al-Attas, 1990). Such being the situation, Islam – when it arrived in the Malay world – was welcome almost without resistance because the spiritual aspect of its teachings known as *tasawwuf* provided the need for spiritualism, and found itself well-suited to the psyche of the Malays who appeared to have the extraordinary potential to receive it in its totality.

The arrival and the spread of Islam in the Malay world had been researched and documented by renown local as well as foreign historians. They all agreed that the contribution and participation of the *sufis* in the initial period and afterwards were far from insignificant. The multi-faceted teaching technique of the *sufis* served tremendously as one of the *wadah* for Islam to take root in this region.

Among the many Malay *sufi* scholars and *shuyukh* that figured as prominent landmarks in the Malay world, and most known among scholars, were definitely masters in the science of *tasawwuf* such as Hamzah Fansuri, Shamsuddin al-Sumaterani, Nuruddin al-Raniry, Abdul Rauf al-Singkil al-Fansuri, Abdul Samad al-Palimbani, Daud al-Fattani, Imam Nawawi al-Bantani, Yusuf al-Makassari, Mohd Nafis al-Banjari, Tuk Kenali, Tuk Pulau Manis, and others. They were not only prolific in their contribution to Islamic scholarship as evidenced by their masterly works preserved in books as well as manuscripts to this day as national treasures, but they were known to be also active in society as *muftis*, advisers to Sultans, *mujahideens* engaged in fighting against the colonialists, and as *murabitun* defending against intruders ever looking for opportunities to destroy the *Deen* of Islam by founding *madrasahs*, *zawiyahs*, and managing *awkafs* and leading *jihads* against the *kafirun* etc. Their contributions were so stunning and overwhelming as to impress Western colonials, and as an example, Stamford Raffles in his writings – as those compiled by Martin Van Bruinessen (1994) – said “The Islamic priests are usually seen as most active every time there is a revolution” (Bruinessen, 1994).

Historical notes on Malay civilization have shown that Malay society in the Malay world had been acquainted with, and learnt, *tasawwuf* as

soon as they embraced Islam through the *kitab* such as *Bahr al-Lahut* (the Sea of God's Appearance), which was introduced by its author Shaykh Abdullah Arif, while preaching Islam in North Sumatera in 1117 AD (Arnold, 1984). This book, by the Shaykh Abdullah Arif, discusses the doctrine of *Nur Muhammad* in detail. In Aceh, according to Hadji Mohd Said (1966), *tasawwuf* books such as *Saif al-Qati'* (the Sword that Cuts), written by Shaykh Abu al-Khair Ibn Hajar, were also taught in those days.

*Sejarah Melayu* (Shellebear, 1967) cited that Sultan Mansur Syah studied the book on *tasawwuf*, i.e. *Al-Durr al-Manzum* (the Arranged Pearls) under the guidance of Maulana Abu Bakar, and not *Dar al-Mazlum* (the House of Cruelty) as quoted by Syed Mohd Naguib al-Attas (1966b). This book deals with the question of essence, attributes, and actions of Allah SWT.

Shafie Abu Bakar (1994) had stated that the book *Ma'lumat* was in fact the *Al-Luma'* written by Abu Nasr Sirrajul-Din al-Tusi which was one of the books of *tasawwuf* studied by Sultan Mahmud Syah under Maulana Yusof.

Besides this, the intellectual polemic among the *ulama* as a result of Nuruddin al-Raniry's criticism on some works of Hamzah al-Fansuri started a crisis in Aceh during the first half of the seventeenth century. Nuruddin al-Raniry at that time held a position of eminence at the court of Sultan Iskandar Thani. The core aspect of the criticism attack was in regard to the ontological relationship between Allah and beings. Syed Mohd Naguib al-Attas, in his book entitled *A Commentary on the Hujjat al-Siddiq of Nuruddin al-Raniry* (1966a), wrote as follows:

He lived at a time of religious confusion similar to that which we encounter today – a religious confusion characterized by ignorance productive of various sorts of extremist tendencies and deviations from the truth. But, unlike the scholars of today, he succeeded in separating the false from the true, in distinguishing the real from the illusory, the genuine from the counterfeit, for he was a man gifted with wisdom and adorned with authentic knowledge (Syed Mohd Naguib al-Attas, 1966a).

Abdul Rauf al-Fansuri was asked to resolve the problem of *weltanschauung* of God, universe and *insan al-kamil*; and this event is most revealing indeed since it shows the depth and the peak of the understanding of *tasawwuf* among the masters in the field, and thus the level at which the science was taught during that epoch. There were also various other writings by prominent *sufis* such as the like of Abdul Karim al-Jili, Ibn 'Arabi, Al-Ghazali, and others which were seriously studied throughout the Malay world.

Syed Mohd Naguib al-Attas (1963) had recorded various *tarekat* movements such as: Qadiriyyah, Naqsabandiah, Ahmadiyyah, Shattariyyah,

Rifa'iyyah, Khalwatiyyah, Chistiyyah, Shadiliyyah, Samaniyah, and others that had strong following throughout the Malay world.

Suffice it to say that this indeed is an impeccable record as evidence to show that the acceptance of the spiritual teachings of Islam by all levels of the Malay society as soon as they first embraced Islam did not encounter any resistance whatsoever. In fact, the study and the practice of *tasawwuf* had been an integral part of the total package of the *Deen* of Islam that was inherited by the people of the Malay world from the *Sufis* who in the main came from Arabistan, who taught them Islam in its totality without addition or subtraction, a primal Islam, and indeed that was the Islam which they accepted. The people then were strong and majestic because they took up their *Deen* from authentic sources, and without doubt they were the people of the Book and the *Sunna*.

### **THE FALSE CRITIQUE ON *TASAWWUF* BY WESTERN ORIENTALISTS**

The orientation of the Malay world towards the West was no doubt an indication of the success of the overall policies of the imperial powers in their respective colonies. Even though, after the Second World War (1939-1945), most of the colonies were released from the yoke of colonialism, however, their independence had been far from total. Within the neo-colonialism that was immediately put in place lies the hidden *kuffar* agenda for the destruction of Islam. By virtue of a well-thought-out strategy and methodology, their philosophy, worldview, values, and most of their entire social, political, and economic systems remain intact.

To aggravate an already pathetic situation, the set of people who took over the rein of power from the colonial masters had only a limited knowledge of Islam, because the learned in the *Deen* had either been killed or alienated during the years when they had absolute command of the situation in the colonies. These people, who had been entrusted with the political responsibility of running the country, had no idea that the *Deen* of Islam had within its teaching the knowledge, if acquired, provided the condition necessary to be really strong and independent. It goes without saying that with the intellectual onslaught coming from the West and the confusion created by certain groups within the *ummah* with their new brands of Islam converging together in intention to destroy the *aqidah* of the people in the first instance and the other tenets of Islam at the same time, the handful of what remained of the learned could do nothing very much.

To a certain extent, Sidi Gazalba (1973) shared the point of view that the Muslims lost their vitality and independence mainly due to the

encroachment of Western modernism into the body politic of the *ummah*. Nowadays, it would be an exception to the rule to come across a Muslim who would really believe that primal Islam could be the only force to overcome *kuffar* in all its manifestations. Those, from the Malay world who went to study in Europe or America and elsewhere, because of the education system which had been based on Western model, were already Westernized in their thinking could not possibly escape from getting deeper into the trap.

Orientalists, the like of Reynold A. Nicholson (1951 and 1975), E.G. Browne (1951), and the writings of Ingaz Goldziher as compiled by J.S. Trimingham (1949), have caused untold damage to Islamic sufism by their insidious innuendoes about *tasawwuf* not being Islamic, but an assimilation of Greek, Persian, Hindu, Buddhist, and other non-Islamic philosophy. The Orientalists could have their reasons for creating lies about the *Deen*, but what a degrading state of affair that the Muslims themselves unthinkingly, parroting the views of the orientalists.

A number of so-called Islamic scholars (undoubtedly having been influenced by Orientalist thinking) were ever willing, as to out perform their mentors, to issue *fatwa* that the past *Sufi* scholars were *kafir*. Malays in Malaysia nowadays have such a phobia even to mention or hear the word *tarekat* or *tasawwuf*, for they have been had by the Orientalist point of view.

This view certainly differs from that propagated by such a profound scholar as Abd al-Wahhab bin Ali al-Sha'rani (1954) who wrote that *tasawwuf* was a kind of knowledge emanating from the heart, understood as the faculty of knowledge by the *Sufis*, of *aulia*, friends of Allah SWT after their hearts have undergone a process of purification and have become polished, and thus transformed would have the capability to receive knowledge from the source. In most cases, this could only be achieved by a prolong and persistent practice of the *Sufis* rituals, authentically based on the Book and the *Sunna*, strictly speaking under the guidance of a living and teaching *shaykh*, whom in the technical language of the *Sufis* called a *murshid*. With the sincerity of intention fortified by *dhikir*, *fikir*, and strong himma the *murid* would achieve his goal, *ma'rifatullah*. The journey begins with the knowledge of Allah SWT and ends with the knowledge of Allah. Shaykh al-Akbar (1996), in *the Makkan Revelations*, said "If you engage upon travel you will arrive, and may Allah, praise to Him, guide you and us!".

Syed Mohd Naguib al-Attas had also rebutted the Orientalists in regard to their mischievous innuendoes in his book entitled *Some Aspects of Sufism as Understood and Practiced among the Malays* (1963) in which he explained to the effect that *tasawwuf* was pure Islamic teaching that dealt

with the spiritual aspects of the *Deen* and no facet of the teaching had been contaminated by ideas borrowed from Neo-Platonism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, or other non-Islamic sources.

That the Malays have been conscientiously alienated from the basis of their own tradition have led them to have a wrong perception of *tasawwuf*, and thus they have deprived themselves of the means of accessibility to the faculty of knowledge. In the realm of reason too, they are not well – equipped because the institutions of higher learning in the Malay world have not given sufficient attention to the study of philosophy. In other words, the situation conducive to intellectual development has not been present.

The Muslims in the East have obviously been affected by the critique of Ibn Rushd on Al-Ghazzali's book *The Incoherence of Philosophers*, whereas the *Sufi* practitioners in the West have no phobia for philosophy. Without a sufficient working knowledge of philosophy, it would be most difficult to understand the world today, and thus to gain a clearer insight into how *kuffar* forces have succeeded to become dominant in the world (Asadullah A. Yate, 1999). The Malay world, like the rest of the Muslim world, has been exposed to the *kuffar* wicked intention, and together with their surrogates within the *ummah*, at least during the last hundred years, the enemies of Islam have worked overtly though subtly to cause both the intellectual and the spiritual degradation of the Muslims. The Malay Muslims, like the rest of their religious comrades all over the world, have become subservient and easily attracted to *kuffar* worldliness.

Zakaria Stapa (1999) appears to subscribe to the view that the problem being faced by the Malays in particular and the Muslims all over the world in general is a problem of weak *aqidah* and a fading *iman*. This, he says, is manifested in their behavior of blatantly not strictly observing the legal parameter of the *Shari'a* of Islam. He considers the problem of weak *aqidah* as the main contributing factor for their loss of glory and excellence for he believes that without these qualities they have also lost the political hegemony and leadership among nations. The viewpoint, as expressed by Zakaria Stapa (1999), suggests that the Muslim community in Malaysia ought to look for a suitable remedy as cure to their dire predicament in order to regain the prowess and the capability to face the coming challenges of the twenty-first century.

It is the thrust of the argument of this paper that *tasawwuf* and the practice of the *Sufi* tarekat may indeed be the remedy to revive the spiritual health of individual Muslims. Among the *Sufis*, the *shuyukh* of *tarekats*, are regarded as the specialists who can provide the cure for spiritual illness.



Strategically speaking, however, Asadullah A. Yate, in his book *Ibn Rushd, the Mujtahid of Europe: His Programme for the Revitalisation of the Deen with Special Reference to Trade, Usury, and Markets* (1999), wrote that the great act of spiritual *jihād* in our time is no longer the inner purification of the heart but the purification of the outer manifest arena of our everyday lives. He also said that as Shaykh Dr. Abdalqadir as-Sufi has made clear on numerous occasions, it is of no benefit to aspire to spiritual purity if the very place one is standing in swilling in filth.

Asadullah A. Yate is the *murid* of Shaykh Dr. Abdalqadir as-Sufi, the founder of the *Murabitun Da'awa* World Movement, a contemporary *Sufi* movement having members from all over the world. The *Murabitun* programme is today the first postmodern platform that unites all Muslims and it is aimed to the direct establishment of Islam today. The dominance of modern *kuffar* is in the socio-political-economic realm, especially in the sphere of economics; and as a counterforce, the main putsch of the *Murabitun Da'awa* is the return of the *Khalifate* and the restoration of fiscal Islam, and thus the political imperative today for the *ummah* is to work for the return of the Islamic bi-metallic currency, the gold dinar and the silver dirham, which as a political tool, is more devastating than any nuclear bomb to cause total destruction to the *kuffar* usurious international monetary system.

### **THE RELEVANCE OF *TASAWWUF* AND THE *TAREKAT* PRACTICE**

It has been demonstrated that there are numerous evidence in history indicating that the spiritual teaching of *tasawwuf* and the discipline of the *Sufi tarekat* had provided, in the past, a strong Islam to the people in the Malay world, but the present generation appears to be ignorant of the matter. In fact presently, the majority of the Muslims in Malaysia have the wrong conception that *tasawwuf* and *tarekat* are not part of the integral teaching of the *Deen* of Islam, and that they are based on borrowed ideas from sources other than Islam. By neglecting and alienating themselves from the most vital teaching of the *Deen* of Islam, they could only, if at all, have acquired a truncated Islam. The Qur'anic teaching is clear in that the *Deen* has to be taken altogether, whole and in its totality. It is suspected that they might have been misled by ignorant teachers or by people who professed new brands of Islam not strictly based on the *Kitab* and the *Sunna*. Having distanced themselves from the realm of the spirits, they have become strangers to their own reality.

The crisis in the present era is a warning signal that the same sort of crisis, or something more serious, may resurface in the future. The crisis

that is being confronted by the Muslims in Malaysia seems likely to be a consequence of the onslaught of Western thinking and culture, because similar malady appears to surface all over the Muslim world, where the countries within its ambit were, at one time or other, colonies of the various European powers. Zakaria Stapa (1999), quoting from Marvin Perry's writing, stated as follows:

Our cultural crisis today is a consequence of the consolidation of views of life inherited from the time of the Renaissance, and the failure to replace them with another set of views as a frame of reference. We are now grappling in a sea of uncertainty in bewilderment without the know-how to drop anchor in order to stop the ship (Zakaria Stapa, 1999).

The point of view, as expressed by Marvin Perry, is also subscribed by a number of scholars as cited by Mohd Kamal Hassan as follows:

John Foster Dulles, in his book *War or Peace*, and also T.S. Elliot are of the view that the modern period is a period that is regressing by moving backwards. Dr. Alexs Carrel also espoused this same view in his book *Man the Unknown*. Paul Tillah, a modern theologian, expressed his view in his book *The Courage to Be* that modern man is suffering from a disease called "meaninglessness" (Mohd Kamal Hassan, 1976).

The above does indicate that a few among the thinkers in the West are also conscious of the vast devastation that has been perpetrated in the name of modern civilization, which is characterized as being entirely Western in its origination and orientation. A similar fate will befall the Muslim community in Malaysia, if the wholesale existing copying pattern from the West in almost every facet of life continues without any attempt at filtering in the process. Zakaria Stapa (1999) is of the opinion that the Muslim community in Malaysia has not changed a wee bit as dumping ground for every sort of cultural Western garbage, which in quality and reality, is no longer acceptable even by the people in their own society.

What need to be done is that the Muslims, especially in Malaysia, should take a pause to think and rethink how they could live in glory and splendour with the strength and the vitality as their forefathers in the past when the teaching of *tasawwuf* and the practice of *tarekats* had not yet been subject to the prejudices and the ridicule as referred to in this study. In the Malay world, the Portuguese were already in Malacca and the Spaniards in the Philippines, but unlike the Dutch, the English, the French and the Americans after them, they arrived to proselytize for the glory of the Church, forcing their way in order to open the door to provide salvation among the heathens. As a record of the success of the Spaniards, the great

majority of the people of the Philippines are Roman Catholic today. Even in the Philippines, the people in the islands to the south like their brothers in the Malay archipelago and the Indonesian islands kept their Islam to this day. If the situation then were like the present, the people of the Malay world would be Christian today, if not the whole, at least the majority.

What saved the situation? It is not at all absurd to affirm here that the Muslims then upheld their Islam whole, complete, and in its totality. They fought in the way of Allah SWT and defended their religion, land, and honour. Surely, the easy way out was to succumb to the invaders. The evidence for this case is no other than the records of history, and the books and the manuscripts on every science of the *Deen* kept in national libraries throughout the Malay world, and other libraries overseas. The Orientalists took every opportunity to study them, and used the materials to mislead the Muslims. From this study, it can be deduced that they have been very successful indeed, particularly among the younger generation of Muslims. In order to regain the strength and the vitality, and as a defence technique, and protection from future onslaught coming from known and unknown directions the Muslims ought to develop interest in *Sufism*, and to begin with, to study the books written by Malay *Sufi* masters on the science during the previous two or three centuries ago.

There is nothing really new about the globalization phenomenon. In every epoch, man has the experience of globalization of one kind or other. But then the process is referred to under different names. According to M. Waters (1995), there are three possibilities of globalization: (1) Globalization has started since there has been history and civilization; (2) Globalization is a current phenomenon emerging following the expansion of modernism and capitalism; and (3) Globalization is a process that has links with other social phenomena such as industrialism, modernism, and capitalism.

Hanafi Dollah (2000) is of the opinion that globalization phenomenon in this era is different from that of the past. Therefore, the actual meaning of globalization should be looked into and scrutinized in order to arrive at its real meaning, both manifest and hidden.

*Kamus Dewan* (1989) defines "global" etymologically as "about the world overall, in its entirety, in general". A number of Western scholars, like R. Robertson (1992), define globalization as a shrinking world phenomenon indicating an inclination towards awareness of how the world has become one entirety without borders. Meanwhile, Meluhan and Quctin Flore have broadened the concept of universality to become "the world as one village" (in Waters, 1995).

The above indicates that each epoch and each civilization have gone through some kind of globalization. The difference is only in terms of place, time, science, and technology. The future is a continuum of the present. What can be seen is that the wholesale assimilation of atheistic Western civilization by Islamic nations such as Malaysia is in no small measure being the impact of globalization, which has caused imaginable and non-imaginable disaster to the nation, not only now but likely also in the future.

Therefore, the Islamic society, especially in Malaysia, should look back to seek the example from their past how to regain its glory and vitality by returning to the Islamic practice which in its totality has shown to provide the necessary spiritual prowess, especially through the practice of *tasawwuf*. They should be given access to the understanding of the knowledge of *tasawwuf* and *tarekat* of the pure and authentic variety, and not any of those pseudo ones.

*Tasawwuf* does not have in its teaching any suggestion that Muslims should have their focus entirely on the life after death by ignoring altogether their life in this world, but to live in this world fully aware of its vicissitudes and uncertainties, and to face them squarely, and guided by the life balance-principle which is Islam. Besides that, *tasawwuf* promotes a consciousness in the mind of a Muslim that he/she is ceaselessly being observed; and this will take him/her ultimately to the love of Allah SWT and His *Rasul* (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), more than everything else – his/her life, wife, business, property, and everything else. This is the nature of the cure awaiting every Muslim if he/she took up the journey on the *Sufi* path, leading to a life not on his/her own terms, but a life that has been destined for him/her. By the mercy of Allah SWT, the methodology of the *Sufis* is the way to free the Muslims from nihilism of the *kuffar*, a life beset with conflicts, self-destruction, and disaster. The blessings of Allah SWT may then begin to pour on the Muslims like torrential rain for a change.

## CONCLUSION

After having had just a mere glimpse of the science of *tasawwuf*, and a brief look at the history of the experience of its teaching and practice among the Muslims in the Malay world, and at the same time, acquiring some knowledge of the behaviour of the so-called Muslims who reject it by their complete acceptance of the writings of the Orientalists, it would not be too difficult to see the relevance of *tasawwuf* to the Malays in particular and the Muslims in general. *Tasawwuf* serves to complete the *Deen* of every individual Muslim. Embracing a wholesome Islam, the Muslims will recover

their lost prowess to deal with the challenges cited above, as examples, on their own terms. In-depth research on the science has been done adequately by scholars acquainted with the subject. What need be done now is more digging of its secrets for the benefits of all Muslims. This exercise will eventually lead finally to the recovery and the reaffirmation of the blessed *Sunna of Rasulullah SAW (Salallahu 'Alaihi Wassalam)* to become a blueprint to a life where the *shari'at* and the *hakikat* are united.

The crisis that Muslims are now facing is more devastating and far reaching than any of the previous ones. The problem of deviation from the correct part had begun as early as the time of the Righteous *Khalifs*. Three of the *Khalifs* died, killed by assassins. The splinter groups continue to exist since then until today. But today *kuffar*, with the enormous support of the deviationists groups, are in the forefront to destroy Islam, and their atheistic philosophy, way of life and world view, and above all their socio-political-economic system are being ardently defended by the Muslims throughout the world, especially by the so-called Muslim governments. It is interesting to note that the fall of the Islamic *Khalifate* in Istanbul, Turkey, was not by ordinary warfare, not a single gun was fired, but it was spearheaded by the *kuffar* bankers. The accounts of the research on the events leading to the final victory of the bankers and their cohorts may be read in the two latest books of Shaykh Abdul Qadir al-Murabit entitled *Technique of the Coup De Banque and the Return of the Khalifate as Can be Deduced* (1996), the presentation of this study has the important purpose of exposing the weakness, among the Muslims, in their practice of Islam, essentially due to their acceptance of an impaired *aqidah*, at the same time as they reject *Sufism*. *Tawhid* without *Rasulallah* is not Islamic but Jewish monotheism. In regard to this observation, Shaykh Abdul Qadir al-Murabit, in his book *the Root Islamic Education* (1995), said as follows:

In this split, we would designate those who uphold the first *shahada* and lose the second, *muwahidun*. And we confirm "*La tawhid bi-duni'r-rasul*", no *tawhid* without the Messenger, for, without him we could not know of *tawhid*. It is the correct *tawhid* that leads us to the second *shahada*. The *muwahidun* want a *tawhid*, simple. Thus, they declare their thesis with a *Kitab at-Tawhid* in every case. Historically, we find they end up opposing the *Shari'a* itself, and denying love of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace (Shaykh Abdul Qadir al-Murabit, 1995).

In order to resolve this upheaval the Muslims without exception have to embrace primal Islam, complete and perfect, the way of Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). Given the need to restore *tasawwuf* and *tarekat* as sciences of importance within Islamic sciences

with particular reference to Malaysia, the following few suggestions are presented for consideration:

*First*, traditionally, the practice of *tarekats* did not come under the jurisdiction of any Islamic governance, even though it was not unusual for *shuyukh* of *tarekats* to serve the various Sultans in the Malay world and a number of Sultans were involved in *tarekat* practice in one way or other, it may be necessary, considering the prevailing circumstances of Malaysia, that a government body comprising of *Shuyukh* from genuine *tarekats* be formed to regulate their operation.

*Second*, this body should act to oversee and shortlist the *tarekats* that may be allowed to practice after having taken into account their suitability, against a set of criteria, to participate in the spiritual development of society. It may also be required to disseminate information to correct the misunderstanding of *tasawwuf* among the people.

*Third*, spiritual education through the *Sufi* methodology should also include the study of philosophy, and its availability should be open to all levels of people within the Islamic society. *Sufis* centres should be opened all over the nation so that the required spiritual development will reach the whole spectrum of the society

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