

Darul Irfan Research Journal

A Journal on Sufism

ISSN: 2710-3595 | Volume: 3 Issue: 1 | 2023



Darul Irfan Research Institute (DIRI)

www.diri.org.bd

Darul Irfan Research Institute (DIRI)

Darul Irfan Research Journal

A Journal on Sufism

ISSN: 2710-3595 | Volume: 3 Issue: 1 | 2023



Darul Irfan Research Institute (DIRI)

- 📍 6/G, Zakir Hossain Society,
Road # 04, South Khulshi,
Chattogram-4225, Bangladesh.
- 📍 Gausia Ahmadiya Manjil,
Maizbhandar Darbar Sharif
Fatikchari, Chattogram,
Bangladesh.

☎ +88 01850 678 899
✉ tasauf.darulirfan@gmail.com
🌐 www.diri.org.bd

Darul Irfan Research Journal

A Journal on Sufism

ISSN: 2710-3595 | Volume: 3 Issue: 1 | 2023

© Darul Irfan Research Institute (DIRI)

Price (BDT) : 300.00

US\$: 5.00

Disclaimer:

Darul Irfan Research Journal is a double blind peer-reviewed journal. The editorial board is not responsible for views expressed by the contributors.

Darul Irfan
Research Journal
A Journal on Sufism

Editor

Shajada Syed Irfanul Hoque

Nayeb Sajjadah Nasheen
Maizbhandar Darbar Sharif, Chattogram, Bangladesh
Managing Trustee
Darul Irfan Research Institute (DIRI)

Executive Editor

Kazi Md. Siful Aspea

Assistant Professor and Head
Department of English
Chittagong Independent University, Bangladesh

Editorial Member

KM Saiful Islam Khan, PhD

Professor
Department of Persian Language and Literature
University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

Asif Mahbub Karim, PhD

Dean, Binary Graduate School
Binary University of Management and Entrepreneurship
Malaysia

Mohammad Shekh Sadi, PhD

Associate Professor, Department of Bangla
University of Chittagong, Bangladesh

Editorial Assistant

Mejbaul Alam Bhuiyn

Lecturer, Department of Management, Nanupur Laila Kabir Degree College
Research Fellow, Darul Irfan Research Institute (DIRI)

Muhammad Ali Asgor

Lecturer, Department of Islamic Studies, Dilowara Jahan Memorial College
Research Fellow, Darul Irfan Research Institute (DIRI)

Contents

Editorial	07
Between Hearing (<i>samâ'</i>) and Perceiving (<i>wajd</i>): neuropsychological considerations for the study of the healing potential of the Mevlevi <i>Samâ'</i>	09
<i>Giselle Guilhon Antunes Camargo, PhD</i>	
Impact of the Sufism of Bengal on Baul Songs of Haor Region	19
<i>Safi Ullah</i>	
The Role of <i>Salat</i> as the Means of Spiritual and Social Ascension: Syed Delawor Hossain Maizbhandari's Point of View	52
<i>Mejbaul Alam Bhuiyan</i> <i>Muhammad Ali Asgor</i>	
<i>Zikr</i>, an Antidote to Mental Stress: A Study from the Islamic Perspective	92
<i>Mohammad Abdur Rahman</i>	
Mental Well-being of the True Practitioners of <i>Usul-e-Sab'a</i> in Light of Carol Ryff's Psychological Model: A Case Study on Maizbhandari Community	121
<i>Md. Rabiul Hossen</i> <i>Suborno Barua</i> <i>Sheikh Mostafa</i>	
Submission Guideline	155

Editorial

We are very pleased to see that the 3rd volume of *Darul Irfan Research Journal* is finally being published on a very special occasion named *Akheri Chahar Shombah* marking the recovery of the Prophet (ﷺ) from illness on the last Wednesday of the month of *Safar* in 11 *Hijri*. In this volume we try to give space to researchers on Sufi ideology of self-purification Sufi method of remembrance and Sufi music along with traditional Bengali Baul music.

As we always state that Darul Irfan Research Institute (DIRI) has put its mark on academic arena very recently but from the very beginning of its journey it has successfully been striving to offer a global platform for the academics and researchers on Sufism. DIRI is also trying to provide a transformative space to the scholars and young researchers to create and disseminate knowledge on Sufism, interfaith dialogue and communal harmony.

We are very grateful to all the members of editorial board and honorable reviewers for their cooperation and support to the publication of this 3rd volume of *Darul Irfan Research Journal*. We would like to thank the contributors of this volume of the journal.

We feel honored and blessed by the guidance and graceful support from our reverend incumbent *Pir* (Sajjadah Nasheen) of Maizbhandar Darbar Sharif, Syed Emdadul Hoque Maizbhandari without whose patronizing this volume could not have been published.

Eventually we welcome your advice on any kind of our inadvertent mistake.

Shajada Syed Irfanul Hoque

Nayeb Sajjadah Nasheen

Maizbhandar Darbar Sharif

Chattogram, Bangladesh

&

Managing Trustee

Darul Irfan Research Institute (DIRI)

**Between Hearing (*samâ'*) and Perceiving (*wajd*):
neuropsychological considerations for the study of the healing
potential of the Mevlevi *Samâ'***

Giselle Guilhon Antunes Camargo, PhD¹

Abstract

In the field of Dance Anthropology, the concept of 'ecstatic dance' has been used generically to refer to African, Afro-Brazilian, Middle Eastern and Shaman dances. Researchers as Jennings (1995), Baxman (1990), Gore (1995) and Camargo (1996) have begun to employ the concept more specifically, but very little is known about how these dances are induced. As a dance anthropologist, I turned to other fields of analysis – such as Neuropsychology and Ethnomusicology – in order to obtain hypotheses that could illuminate my understanding of the trance induction process (including its healing potential) in Mevlevi Samâ'. In Samâ', the main repetitive and trance-inducing action seems to be the spinning dance itself, a Sufi method of dynamic meditation that aims to awaken the subtle organs of perception (lataif), opening the individual's consciousness to its greatest potential. According to ethnomusicologist Gilbert Rouget (1985), the relationship between samâ' (hearing) and wajd (perceiving) is so close that the word samâ' could mean 'trance state': "Know that samâ' [...] brings to fruit a state in the heart that is called perception or trance (wajd)". On the realities of 'trance' and 'hearing', Al-Ghazzali wrote: "wajd is the expression for what is found (yujadu) through hearing (samâ')".

Keywords

Ecstatic Dance. Trance ritual. Sufi dance. Whirling Dervishes. *Samâ'*.

In Anthropology of Dance or Ethnochoreology, the analytical category 'ecstatic dance' encompasses a wide range of psycho-physical practices whose common feature is to produce certain altered states of consciousness in their performers/participants.

¹ Professor, Dance College (FADAN) and Postgraduate Program in Arts, Universidade Federal do Pará, Brazil.

Those dances are often associated with African and Afro-Brazilian trance-dances, Middle Eastern dances, and Central Asian Shamanism. Researchers such as Jennings (1995), who have examined the healing potential of ecstatic dances from the participants point of views; Baxman (1990), who studied the hypnotic dances of the twenties; Gore (1995), who investigated the role of rhythm in trance; and Camargo (2006), who related the repetitive spinning action with the activation of subtle centers of perception started to begun to employ the concept more specifically, but very little is known about how these dances are induced.

Because of this need, anthropologists are impelled to turn to other fields of analysis, such as Neuropsychology and Ethnomusicology, in order to obtain hypotheses about why certain rituals induce participants to trance:

Ethnographers have returned from the field with intriguing reports of the unusual behavior of ritual participants. These reports, although far from agreement in their classification, interpretation or observational rigor, point to the impact of standardized and repetitive actions on the human nervous system (Lex 117).

In Mevlevi *Samâ'*, as we will see further, the main repetitive and trance-inducing action seems to be the spinning dance itself, a Sufi method of dynamic meditation that aims to search for intuitive knowledge through the awakening of 'special faculties' or subtle organs of perceptions (*lataif*)², analogous to the Hindu *chakras*. Dance is part of the set of meditative techniques used in Sufism in order to suspend the disciple's conditioned thought and emotion, opening consciousness to its greatest potential.

² *Lataif* corresponds, in Arabic, to the plural of *latifa*: incipient organ of spiritual perception; place of purity; lighting location; center where *baraka* (divine grace, spiritual influence, impalpable beauty) is subtly manifested. The name *lataif* also designates the process that begins with the awakening and activation of subtleties, passing through the refinement of perception and, finally, the dissipation of conditioned thinking or automatic thinking. Properly activated, these subtle organs, according to Sufi mystics, develop in the person qualities such as goodness, softness, gift and delicacy. The brilliance of these subtleties is called *tadjali*.

The word *samâ'* means, properly 'hearing' or 'listening', referring to one of the divine names or attributes revealed in the Quran (*ya-samî*, the one who hears everything). Although, for many scholars of Sufism, the *Samâ'* only designates the entirety of the dancing ceremony of the Mevlevi dervishes or Whirling Dervishes, Sufi masters prior to Rûmî described it with emphasis on its original meaning, that is, as a ritual that essentially consists of listening to the Quran, poetry or a specific type of music.

This ritual, as described by the Sufi master Al-Ghazzali (1059-1111) in his *Kitb adab al-Samâ' y wa al-wajd* ('*The Book of correct uses of Hearing and Perception*'), consisted of collective ceremony of dervishes made of prayer, poetry, music and dance. Its proposal was communion with the Divine through perception/trance (*wajd*).

Thus, concluded the ethnomusicologist Gilbert Rouget (1985) in his chapter 'Music and Trance among the Arabs', the relationship between *samâ'* (hearing) and *wajd* (perception/trance) is so close that the word *samâ'* could mean 'trance state': "*Know that samâ' [...] makes fruitful a state in the heart that is called perception/trance (wajd)*" (Rouget 256).

Still, according to Rouget, if we took the meaning of the word to the extreme, we could also say that *Samâ'* means 'music', since it comes from the root *s.m.a.* (listening, hearing), denoting, in a first and general sense, the act of listening or hearing, without any reference to any particular acoustic phenomenon. However, in traditional Sufi texts, the verb 'listen' is always associated with an implicit object, "*which is either poetry, the Koran, or music, though a particular kind of music only*" (Rouget 256).

Would be this the reason why Al-Ghazzali did not use the Arabic word *musiqi* (derived from Greek) to refer to the Sufi practice in question? According to Rouget, the reasons can be enumerated as follow: first, the word *musiqi* denoted the rules or art of music, but not music itself, as a product of art, in the concrete sense; second, because *musiqi* referred more to the musical composition's rules than to the listener of the music, and it was, precisely, the listener who interested him, not the musician. And the third reason for not using the word *musiqi* was because it did not connote any moral value, as its rules are applied to all types of music, and not that performed for spiritual purposes.

From Al-Ghazzali's point of view, which seems to be, essentially, to find a moral justification for *Samâ'*, 'lawful music' (as opposed to 'profane music') would be that which accompanies, for example, a recitation of mystical poetry or that which follows after reading the Quran (*taghbir*).

This music should be played with permitted musical instruments, that is, instruments that are not associated with reprehensible³ musical practices. And yet, his 'audition' would demand, from both, listeners and performers, feelings and thoughts that were high enough:

It is permissible to hear only what a person hears when he/she, himself/herself, is in a certain state of inner purity. It is not just what is sung or played that counts; it is also the listener's disposition. Listened with a pure heart, music becomes lawful, just as it ceases to be lawful if listened to in a lascivious state of mind. This delimitation of the repertoire (Quran and poetry, accompanied by song) [...] is precisely what is appropriate for the word *samâ'* (Rouget 257).

This conceptual pattern of reality to which the word *samâ'* corresponds is not, according to Rouget, comparable to any other, much less that of the word 'music', as we conceive it in the West. In this way, he concludes, the range of options for 'hearing' (*samâ'*) is, in the Sufi context, restricted to poetry, the Quran and 'lawful music', and these three elements combined, for the simple reason that they constitute a particular sound.

Thus, this category of sounds (the objects of 'hearing') is not constituted only by the intrinsic qualities of its three components; the fact that it is heard also gives it meanings, since its existence is only confirmed insofar as it is perceived by the ear, and insofar as it affects listening.

Let's, therefore, to move on to the relationship between *samâ'* ('hearing') and *wajd* (encounter/perception/trance). Speaking about

³ This exclusion of some musical instruments – with the exception of the drum (*kudum*) and the flute (*ney*) – was the way that some Sufis found to protect *Samâ'* from possible accusations of heresy, arising from Islamic orthodoxy. It is known, however, that before, after and during the time of Al-Ghazzali, other instruments were also used, such as the lute, *rebab*, *ud*, *tambur*, *kanun* and *kemençe*.

the reality of ‘trance’ for Sufis and the reality of ‘hearing’ for the soul, Al-Ghazzali wrote: “*wajd* is the expression for what is found (*yujadu*) through hearing (*samâ*)”. The word comes from the root *w.j.d.* and also designates, as the word *samâ*, one of the 99 divine attributes found in the Quran – *ya wajid* (the one who finds).

According to the Al-Ghazzali’s ‘right uses’ (*adab*), one should not abandon oneself in the ‘trance’, unless that state was really strong. On the contrary, during the ‘trance’ the person should try to dominate it: “So don’t think that the person who throws himself/herself on the ground, agitated, is more perfect than that which remains without agitation. Often the most perfect trance is that of one who has remained serene” (Rouget 260).

Once this state of ‘trance’ has been achieved, it is externalized through dance, which is nothing other than the translation of music into action. In this way, the person who participates in the *Samâ*’ (we are talking about the *Samâ*’ of the 11th century) listens to music, but does not perform it, either as a musician (performer) neither as a ‘*musicater*’ (performer and listener, at the same time), except, perhaps, when they clap their hands. Conversely, the musicians – singers or instrumentalists – are there only to provide the music, and not to actually participate in the *Samâ*’, in the sense that they are not seeking any divine contact, that is, they are not seeking the encounter/trance (*wajd*).

Unlike the classical *Samâ*’, which can be reconstructed through the writings of Al-Ghazzali and his brother Ahmad, the *Samâ*’ of the Mevlevi (‘Dancing Dervishes’) is characterized by the fact that dance is not the result of ‘trance’, but rather its cause.

In classical *Samâ*’ it is the ‘trance’ that prompts the participants to dance, while in Mevlevi *Samâ*’ occurs the opposite. Just like the classical *Samâ*’, the Mevlevi *Samâ*’ begins with a session devoted to prayers and invocations, followed by listening to music (usually a flute), which the adepts listen to while seated, without any mention of bodily movement. At a given moment, between the silence of the flute and the first beat of the drum, they get up, starting a walk around the environment. This is accompanied by a concert of various instruments. After three circumambulations (*devri-veledi*), the dervishes remove their cloaks and begin to spin.

There are four cycles of tours, also accompanied by four musical sessions, with different rhythms.

In line with the conclusions of Gilbert Rouget, when comparing the classical *Samâ'* with the Mevlevi *Samâ'*, I hypothesize that the main repetitive action that leads to 'trance', in the latter, is the spinning dance itself:

[...] they don't wait to go into trance and then start spinning, in other words, dancing. On the contrary, it is the motion dance spin itself that "leads them to ecstasy, or, as I prefer to say, to trance". This trance is, however, the result of the adepts' own action. Regarding his entrance into trance, the adept is already active. He is the protagonist, through his dance, of his own entrance into trance. The subject's intention is involved in a way not found in classical *Samâ'*, in which the adept simply suffers, first, the effects of the music to reach trance, expressing it through the movements of his dance (Rouget 286).

As we have seen, in the current *Samâ'*, dance seems to be the main conductor of meditation (which does not mean that cannot have induction), while in the classical *Samâ'*, the induction was clearly through music, since the dervishes only began to spin after they were already in a meditative state, induced by the rhythm of the music. Regarding rhythm, as a trance-inducing factor, we can consider Gore's hypothesis:

Musical rhythmic themes operate as a language. And it is when the rhythm comes into total conformity with his speech, when submission to its order becomes absolute, that, paradoxically, the dancing subject can [...] anchor himself in the mesh [...] of the symbolic unconscious, to enter into a trance or possession (Gore, 1995).

Through this quick comparison, we arrive at the fundamental difference between the two types of 'trance': while the 'trance' of classical *Samâ'* is "induced" by music, the second is 'led' by dance. Let's see what Rouget says about the two modalities:

'Induced' trance means that the subject is 'musicated', in other words ['tranced'] by music provided by others than himself, and that his dance is first and foremost the effect

and not the cause of his trance; ‘conducted trance’ means that the subject engenders his own action as a ‘musicant’(Rouget 288).

Sensory overload resulting from the action of inductors and/or conductors of altered states of consciousness should be considered a key factor for understanding the ‘trance’. Here we refer to the work of Lex and Ornstein (Lex 125), in the field of Neuropsychology, who offer explanations about the effects of ‘trance’ on the hemispheres of the brain. According to them, practices that stimulate the senses enhance the activity of the right hemisphere of the brain, which results in a change in the state of consciousness.

This is very evident in *Samâ*, in which ‘selective hypervigilance’ (concentration with which the person blocks out everything that is outside his focus of attention) –provoked by the action of musical rhythm and the repetition of highly complex movement patterns – bombards the person with a variety of sensory activities that are more attributable to right hemisphere responses, such as ‘spatial and tonal perception’ and ‘pattern recognition’(Lex 125). Let's see how this definition resonates with Simpson's description of the ‘trance’ of a contemporary whirling dervish:

The person is engaged in listening to music and prayer, and feeling the rise of body temperature induced by the ritual's heavy clothes and intense activity. In addition, the person has to perform the spin by focusing on the thumb of the left hand, concentrating on the patterned rhythmic movements of the legs, and maintaining awareness of the other spinners in space (Simpson, 1997).

Seen from the perspective of their relationship with dance and music, both – the ‘trance’ described above (Mevlevi) and the one described by Al-Ghazzali – can be considered, according to Rouget’s classification, ‘ritualized trances’ (differentiating themselves from the non-ritualized’) – ‘religious’ (as opposed to ‘profane’). Its relation, which is of ‘communion’, oscillates between the ‘possessive trance’ (‘involuntary trance’ in which spirits or gods visit the world of men) and the ‘shamanic trance’ (‘voluntary trance’ in which man visits the world of the spirits). So,

somewhere between possession and shamanism, the relationship of ‘communion’ with the Divine occurs:

He experiences the situation as an abrupt encounter – the true meaning of the word *wajd* – a revelation, an enlightenment. Therefore, the emotional aspect of the process, a very striking aspect because this encounter takes place imbued with passion, since the love of God, which inspires desire and search, is always more or less impregnated with eroticism – sublimated or not, nothing changes (Rouget 296-297).

It is important to note, however, that in the context of traditional esoteric philosophies, where we place *Samâ*’ and, by extension, Sufism, the recent discovery of right hemisphere activation in intuitive cognition should not reduce the mental aspects of esoteric knowledge to functioning on the right side of the brain, because knowing that these processes occur in the right hemisphere does not mean knowing how the brain works (Ornstein 34-35). It is necessary, rather, to study the ‘trigger mechanism(s)’ that induce these processes in their particular contexts.

But, if we studied only these ‘trigger mechanisms’ – such as, for example, the repetitive action of dance – we would continue to reinforce scientific reductionism, which assumes that man can be studied from outside and that knowledge and consciousness can be fully reflected in words and actions.

This view is the result of Western ‘rationalism’, a scientific paradigm that believes in the sequential procedures of analysis, explanation and verification (activities associated with the left side of the brain), as opposed to the supposedly ‘incomprehensible’ disciplines and theories of the East, based on a complementary way of thinking of consciousness, which Western rationalism erroneously calls ‘irrationalism’, but which is actually what might be called ‘intuitive thinking’, processed in the right side of the brain and expressed in insights, creative inspiration, or in the form of a comprehensive awareness of the relationships between ideas and objects. The way each one operates, according to Ornstein, is explained in different ways:

The logical way of thinking operates sequentially, arriving at a truth inferentially, proceeding logically from one element to another. Intuition operates simultaneously, it concerns the set

of relationships between elements, which receive their meaning from the totality of the holistic context (Ornstein 26).

The predominance of the logical way of thinking, typical of Western culture, generated what Ornstein calls ‘cultural hemianopia [blindness]’, a disorder of perception that causes us to develop only half of our abilities to recognize external reality. This same disorder resulted in the Cartesian view of being, which divided into distinct parts what for holistic thinkers is an integrated totality: body, mind and spirit – the Salt, Mercury and Sulfur of Paracelsus.

Works Cited

- Baxman, Inge. 'Dream dancing or a journey of discovery beneath the surface of culture'. In: *Ballet International* 5, 1990.
- Camargo, Giselle Guilhon Antunes. *Mukabele: ritual dervixe*. Florianópolis, Insular, 2010.
- Gore, Georgiana. 'The Beat Goes on: Danse et Tribalisme dans la Culture Rave.' In: *Nouvelles de Danse, Contredanse*, 1998.
- Gore, Georgiana. 'Rhythm, representation and ritual: The rave and the religious cult.' In: *Proceedings of the Fifth Study of Dance Conference. Border Tensions, Dance and Discourse*, University of Surrey, 1995.
- Jennings, Sue. *Theatre, ritual, and transformation: the Senoi Temiars*. Routledge, 1995.
- Lex, Barbara. "The neurobiology of ritual trance." In: D'ÁQUILI E. G.; LAUGHLIN, C. D.; MCMANUS, J. (Orgs.) *The spectrum of ritual*, 1979, pp. 117-151.
- Ornstein, Robert E. *The Mind Field: a personal essay*. Cambridge, Malor Books, 1996.
- Rouget, Gilbert. *Music and trance: a theory of the relations between music and possession*. University of Chicago Press, 1985.
- Simpson, Faith. *Trance-dance: an ethnography of dervish whirling*. University of Surrey, 1997.

Impact of the Sufism of Bengal on Baul Songs of Haor Region

Safi Ullah¹

Abstract

Bengal Sufism, a broad term referring to the Sufism that significantly impacts the people of Bengal region, greatly influences the mystic and baul songs of haor region of Bangladesh. Vaishnavism or Tantrism, Buddhist Sahajiyas and Islamic Sufism have influenced the people of Bangladesh including the baul devotees though the emergence of Sufism at the end accelerates the impact. According to Edward C. Dimock, "there is abundant use of Sufi technical terminology in the Baul songs." Dr. Mohammad Akhter Hossain, discussing the spiritual consciousness in folk literature of Bengal, directly claims that baul devotees like Lalon Sain, Hason Raja, Shah Abdul Karim, Jalal Uddin Khan and many others were influenced by Sufism. While reading songs of Rashid Uddin, Ukil Munshi, Hason Raja, Jalal Uddin Khan, Shah Abdul Karim, Deen Sharat, Radharaman and others of haor region, elements of Sufism like appreciation of the Creator and the Prophet, importance of the guidance of pir / Murshid, search for the Supreme soul, love with and separation from the love or spiritual Murshid, sympathy for the outcaste and many issues are found. Haor region baul devotees and their songs, which are quite different from bauls of Kushtia and Nadia region, will be analyzed in the light of the Sufism of Bengal (Bengal Sufism). Moreover, some features of Maizbhandari songs, another type of mystic song sung in Chattogram region, resemble with those of baul songs. Both sects have received mystic songs as a medium of devotion and echoed the identical ideas of appreciation of Allah (^{Subhanahu}Ḥaṭa'la), the Prophet and saints or pir in songs. This paper attempts to identify the most influential Sufis or Pirs and their influences on baul devotees of haor regions, discuss the characteristics of Bengal Sufism that are found in baul songs and finally shed light on the shared elements of Sufism in Maizbhandari and baul songs.

Key words

Bengal Sufism, Baul Songs, Maizbhandari, Spirituality, Supreme Soul, Worshipping God

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sheikh Hasina University, Netrakona

Acknowledgement: This paper is a part of the research project titled ‘Wetland Metaphors in Baul Songs of Haor Regions: Interpretation and Beyond’ funded by Sheikh Hasina University, Netrokona.

Introduction

Sufism refers to the mystical dimension of Islam, which, moving away from its rigid doctrinal form, emphasizes self-realization, love, submission, and intense personal devotion as the means of approaching the Almighty (Khan and Talukdar 9). Bengal Sufism indicates a branch of Sufi ideology preached in Bengal that has a great impact on the people of this region. Historically, the people of this land experienced the ideologies of Vaishnavism, Buddhist Sahajiyas, and Islamic Sufism, but the emergence of Sufism at the end accelerated the impact on people’s lives. Specifically, in their songs the mystic poets and baul devotees of Bangladeshi wetland have expressed how greatly they are influenced by the Bengal Sufis, and their baul songs about the Creator, the Prophet, and *Pir* or *Murshid*. They use Sufi terminology to convey their message, which includes the way to achieve the satisfaction of the Almighty and to seek His mercy, in addition to the search for the supreme soul, the body as a microcosm of the universe, both spiritual and physical love, as well as separation, which are at the center of Bauls’ endeavors. Edward C. Dimok comments that “there is abundant use of Sufi technical terminology in the Baul songs” (Karim 282). Dr. Mohammad Akhter Hossain elucidates the spiritual consciousness in folk literature of Bengal and thereby claims that baul devotees like Lalon Sain, Hason Raja, Shah Abdul Karim, Jalal Uddin Khan, and many others were influenced by Sufism.

In addition, a significant resemblance is found between baul songs and Maizbhandari songs, another kind of folk literature and an important literary heritage of Bangladesh. These songs are mainly composed and sung in the Chottogram region. Baul devotees and followers of Maizbhandar have simultaneously received songs

as a medium of devotion and echoed the identical ideas of appreciation of Allah (^{Subhanahu} ~~OaTaTa~~), the Prophet, and saints or *pirs* in songs. Another concern of this paper is to compare the impact of Sufism in both kinds of songs.

Previous research mainly focused on the history and development of Sufi ideology in Bengal, but none of it examined its direct impact on baul songs. This study aims to identify the most inspiring religious masters. The qualitative method is applied to collect data for this research where it is available. Research papers, books, newspaper articles, and online materials have been thoroughly studied, and baul songs of the Haor region have been critically read to sort out the features of Sufism. A few translations of baul songs have been found, and, in most cases, the songs or parts of the songs have been roughly translated solely for the purpose of research.

However, this paper plans to recognize the most influential Sufis or Pirs and their influences on baul devotees of the Haor region, sort out the characteristics of Bengal Sufism that are found in baul songs, and finally compare how the elements of Sufism are treated in Maizbhandari and baul songs.

Literature Review

Bengal Sufism and baul songs of Haor-region are not new terms in academic discussion. Many studies have been conducted on them. Edward C. Dimock focuses on the use of Sufi terminology in Baul songs and comments, “That there was considerable interaction between the Sufis and the Bauls is undeniable” (Karim 282). Muhammad Ismail discusses various traits, orders, and saints of Sufism who had a great impact on the lives of people in Bengal in his PhD thesis titled “Development of Sufism in Bengal.” The dissertation includes the origin and development of Sufism in Islam and the early history of Sufism in Bengal. He discusses the Sufi-saints who came to Bengal from the thirteenth to the twentieth

centuries. Ismail describes the impact of Sufism in Bengal in a separate chapter (Ismail 2). He defines bauls of Bengal and writes, “Bauls of Bengal form a great community. Bauls are a group of people, some of whom are quite stoic and indifferent to the world and some of whom are worldly than stoic. The former ones are called *Udasin* and the late one are called *Grihi*. Different groups of Bauls hold different opinions with regard to the originator of their community. The Bauls are found both among the Muslims and among the Hindus. The originators of the Muslim Bauls are called *faqirs* and those of Hindus are called Gurus.” (201-2)

James Fadiman and Robert Frager wrote *Essential Sufism*, which deals with the many faces of Sufism and how life, love, and an open heart are dealt with in Sufism (Fadiman 2). Anne-Helene Trottier describes the fakirs of Bengal. Trottier writes,

“Ever since Islam came to Bengal in the 13th century (and probably earlier, through individual Muslims’ interaction with local bearers of other traditions), it has participated, via a merging of Sufi inputs with vernacular strands of Vaishnavism (Vishnusim), Tantrism, and local folk cuts, in a very rich blend of religious beliefs and practices in the lower strata of society” (Trottier 148).

Imtiaz Ahmed publishes “Sufi & Sufism: A Closer Look at the Journey of Sufis to Bangladesh,” which sheds light on the birth of the Sufis, the arrival and the ordering of the Sufis in Bangladesh, the formation of the state, and the consolidation of Sufism. This paper broadly concentrates on “a lasting impact on the lives of the people.” This paper also interprets Sufis and their order, or tariqa (Ahmed 1). Ahmed illustrates,

The first Sufis who had arrived in modern-day Bangladesh, whether Shah Sultan Kamaruddin Rummy from Baghdad (1053 AD) or Maulana Asharfuiddin Tawwamah from Bukhara (1282 AD), who settled in Netrokona and Nayaranganj, respectively, were able to impress the locals with their freshness of thought and message of universal love (10).

A Hidden Treasure is a collection of the writings and stories of mystic poets, scholars, and saints. This book deals with female Sufi-saints (Helmski 19). Additionally, there is evidence of female Bauls in the Haor region who share the same Sufism-inspired beliefs. Tahmid Zami writes in ‘Vernacular Sufism’ that

The Sufi poets produced a variety of texts, including translated romances, didactic poems, religious instructions, cosmological expositions, prophetic genealogies, Yogic manuals, and so on. Literature produced by Bengali Muslim authors is not invariably Sufi literature, but the distinction between the Sufi and the non-Sufi, the religious and secular, was not clear-cut in medieval texts. Literary culture among Bengali Muslims was closely tied to the relationship between spiritual master and disciple (Zami 337).

To explain the term Bengali Sufi, he writes, “The term that Bengali Sufi authors mostly used to refer to their spiritual culture was *marifat*, or theophany that involved a certain direct experience of divinity” (337).

In ‘The Contributions of Sufism in Promoting Religious Harmony in Bangladesh’, Masud, Abdullah and Amin write

Sufism has played a vital role in promoting religious harmony in Bangladesh. The Sufis penetrated a new spirit of tolerance, brotherhood, equality, and universal love in this country, so that the masses accepted Islam while Hinduism was deeply affected, as seen in reforming brahmin society. All people irrespective of caste, creed, race, sex, and religion loved the Sufis (Al Masud et al. 118).

They also mentioned the history of Bengali Sufism. While discussing the influences, major sub-topics include the noble characteristics of Sufis, their role in establishing a welfare state, spreading teachings for both Muslims and non-Muslims, participation in humanitarian activities, respect for non-Muslims, open-hearted approaches, and their influence on communal harmony (111). The study by Khan and Talukdar sheds light on the

emergence and growth of Sufism in India's Bengal and Assam regions. "...whether Sufism and its ideals can become useful in promulgating a culture of peace and tolerance in an increasingly polarized and divided society (Khan and Talukdar 9).

William C. Chittick writes in *Sufism: A Beginner's Guide* about the Sufi path, the Sufi tradition, name and reality, self-help, the remembrance of God, the way of love, the never-ending dance, images of beatitude, the fall of Adam, and the paradox of the veil. Zami and Ash-Shams write, "The long transition in Bengal Sufism: Onto-Theological Debates and Colonial Margins." In 'The Sufi Sheikhs and their socio-cultural roles in the Islamization of Bengal during the Mughal Period (1526–1858)', Halim writes,

One of the most observable influences of Islam on the Indian subcontinent, especially in today's Bangladesh, is the spiritual and humane teaching of Sufism during the medieval period (Halim 175).

In Bangla *Lokosongite Adhyatmik Chetona* Dr. Mohammad Akhtar Hossain identifies Sufism as the best religious cult that ensures the freedom of human beings. In the first chapter, he discusses the *Oli-Awliya*, or spiritual masters of Bengal. He added that, since the triumph of Ikhtiaruddin Muhammod Bin Bokhtiar Khilji in 1204 BC, the Turkish reign began in Bengal. Since then, *Oli-Darvishes* had started to preach Islam in Bengal. Many devotees came from different areas of Arab, Persian, Bokhara, Turkey, Yemen, Iran, Iraq etc. Hossain writes,

People of Sufi community are known as *Pir*, *Fakir*, and *Darvish* in this country. There are roughly four names for those who want to keep the Sadhana secret. For instance, 1. *Awl* or *Awliya*, *Pir* or first-class devotee. 2. *Baul*, "b + Awl A journey towards the first one. 3. *Sain*, symbol of superiority or God-ness. The word *sain* came from Swami, the husband. 4. *Darvish*. Sufi-saints spend their early lives in rigorous austerities (Hossain 15).

The second chapter of *Bangladesher Baul: Somaj, Sahityo and Sangit*, written by Doctor Anwarul Karim, is entitled “Baul: A mundane spiritual pursuit.” He writes, “They are spiritualists despite being materialistic, so we have termed their philosophy worldly spiritualist ideology” (Karim 261). Haq shows “the influence of the enlightened Sufis who devoted their major efforts to developing the spiritual dimensions of the Bengali minds” (Haq). As Muslim leaders could free marginalized and oppressed people, Sufism, or the light of Islam, became very popular among all people. Another issue is that, due to the duration of the reign and the engagement of all people, the culture was accepted by the people. Sufism had a significant influence on Baul devotees as well. They spread the fragrance of Islam through their songs. The blend of Vaisnavism and Sahajiya in Sufism cannot be denied. As a result, Sufism has an impact on people and their lives.

Miazbhandari is a popular Sufi sect in Bangladesh, primarily in Chattogram. Syed Ahmad Ullah (1826–1906) founded this Sufi sect in Bengal in the early nineteenth century. The tomb of Hazrat Syed Ahmad Ullah is located in the Chittagong region of present-day Bangladesh, at Maizbhandar Darbar Sharif (Matin 34). Sarwar Alam, an international Sufi scholar, expressed his opinion in his article, which names Sufi Pluralism in Bangladesh: The Case of the Maizbhandariyya Tariqa:

The Maizbhandariyya Sufi Order's aims and objectives are as follows: (1) attaining nearness to the Almighty by abandoning mundane self-interests; (2) establishing universal ideals of religious equality by minimizing religious conflicts in the world; (3) motivating humankind toward a true and just life; (4) encouraging humane attributes; (5) ensuring mundane and spiritual well-being; (6) attaining God through love; and (7) establishing personal and social peace (Alam 34).

The aforementioned goals have been reflected in the last nearly 150 years with the publication of approximately 10,000 Maizbhandari songs. Peter J. Bertocci expressed his opinion in his article, named “A Sufi Movement in Modern Bangladesh.”

Over more than a century since its inception, the Maizbhandari movement is said to have produced hundreds of published songs, representing to the ears of the initiated a distinctive lyrical tradition within the genre of indigenous Bengali religious music as a whole” (Bertocci 62). Moreover, he also added Native instruments like the *ektara*, *dutara*, and *dhol*, which are also used in Maizbhandari songs, like Baul songs (61).

In short, the above-discussed review of literature upholds the history of emergence and development of Sufism in Bengal. The Sufi-saints, who came to Bengal at different times, have been conversed with, though the spiritual masters, who dwelt in remote parts of Bengal and hence directly influenced the Baul devotees, did not get equal academic attention. Even the bauls of Bangladesh were separately discussed in different books, but the research gap is that none of them tries to find out the specific influences of the *pirs* upon baul devotees or the search for mystic songs written by them. No research has yet been conducted on the shared elements of Sufism in Maizbhandari and Baul songs, which is another research gap.

Research Questions

This study is conducted to search for the answers to the following research questions:

1. Who are the most influential Sufis or *Pirs*, and what are their influences on Baul devotees in Haor regions?
2. What characteristics of Bengali Sufism are found in baul songs?
3. What are the shared elements of Sufism in Maizbhandari and Baul songs?

Discussion

To define the impact of Bengali Sufism on haor-region baul songs, a list of *pirs* and saints who came to Bengal to preach Islam and Sufism is required. The most significant concern of the paper is to prepare an overall list of *pirs* and to discuss the contribution of spiritual gurus who explicitly enchanted the Baul devotees, which is reflected in their songs. Then, prominent characteristics of Sufism will be discussed, which will be sorted out in baul songs. The final part will compare baul songs with Maizbhandari songs, as there are many similar contents between them. Detailed discussions of these findings are as follows:

Identification of the Sufis or *Pirs* and their Influences on Baul Devotees of Haor regions:

Bangladesh, previously known as Bengal, is greatly influenced by Sufism. The journey of Sufism started in the 8th century though it was hastened after the Turkish conquer in Bangla. Maulana Obaidul Haq author of *Bangladeser Pir Awliyagan* has given the following four names of early Sufi-saints of Bengal who propagated Islam in Bengal before the Turkish conquest: 1. Hazrat Shaikh Abbas Bin Hamza Nishipuri (d. A.D. 900), 2. Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad Bin Muhammad (d. A.D. 952), 3. Hazrat Shaykh Ismail Bin Najd Nishipuri (d. A.D. 975), 4. Shaykh Ibrahim Turki of Murshidabad (d. A.D. 1169)” (Ismail 35).

Ismail discusses many Sufi-saints who came from the earliest to the 20th century. Most noted of them are Shah Muhammad Sultan Rumi (Madanpur in the Netrokona subdivision of Mymensing), Shah Makhдум (Dargahpara, Rajshahi), Shah Jalal, Shah Paran and many others. He also focuses on different orders of Sufism: for instance, the Suhrawardi order, the Chisti order, the Qalandari order, the Madari order, the Ahmadi order, the Sattariya order, the Naqshbandi order and the Qadiri order. These orders defined and

designed the traits of Sufism in Greater Bangla to a great extent. Emdadul Haq writes,

The earliest record of Sufism in Bengal goes back to 11th century AD in connection with the continuation of Sufism in northern India. Shah Sultan Rumi was the first Sufi to come to Bengal, when he came to Mymensingh in 1053 AD. Subsequently, Baba Adam Shah Shahid came to Dhaka in 1119 AD and Shayekh Jalaluddin Tabrizi, more popularly known as Hazrat Shah Jalal, arrived in Sylhet in 1225 AD. The list of names is a lengthy one (Haq).

He mentions the time from 1200 to 1500 AD as the Golden Age of Sufism in Bengal. According to Hossain, in the eighth century, ancient Arabians founded their colony in Chattogram. Chattogram is regarded as the land of *twelve Awliyas*. Most prominent of them are Sultan Bayejid Bostami (R.), Sheikh Farid, Bodor Shah or Bodor *Awliya* or *Pir* Bodor, Kotolpir or *Pir* Kotol, Shah Muhsin *Awliya*, Shahpir, Shahumor, Shah Badol, Shah Chand and Shah Jayed; though these *Awliyas* did not come to Chattogram at a time (19). Dr. Hossain writes,

Not only Chittagong but also the entire part of Bangladesh was enlightened with the light of Marifat of Shah Bodor. The impact was immense among poets and litterateurs. In regards of the preach, spread and Sufi devotion in Bangladesh, the contribution of Hazrat Shah Jalal (R) and Hazrat Shah Poran (R) of Sylhet region is worth-mentioning. Being inspired with their religious ideals, devotional music was developed in this country. Fakir Lalon Shah, Poet Pagla Kanai, Shah Abdul Karim, Dewan Hason Raja, Jalal Uddin Khan enriched this stream to a great extent (Hossain 20).

Hossain directly asserts the influence of Sufism upon greatest mystic poets of Bangladesh. To focus on the ideals of Sufism which attracted people's attraction, he adds,

The secular culture of Bengal is characterized by its richness, harmony, spiritual philosophy and universality. Mystical pursuits and music associated with folk life add a different dimension to this culture. In this spiritual climate, Lalon Shah (1774-1890), Radharaman (1834-1916), Hason Raja (1855-1922) and Jalal Khan (1894-1972) are saints and artists with a combination of aesthetics and art (44).

Historically, the Turkish conquer hastens and paves the way of the arrival of Sufi-saints. But even before their arrival, many saints came to this subcontinent and had direct influence upon the life of people. In 11th century, Shah Sultan Kamaruddin Rumi (R) came to Greater Mymensingh, specifically in Madanpur, Netrokona Sadar, Netrokona. He is considered the first Sufi who came to Bengal and spread the light of Islam and Sufism. Then Shah Jalal, Shah Poran, Shah Makhdom, and many other saints came to Bengal. They had many followers, and even followers of these *Pirs* or Sufis became *pir* and preach Islam. Noted information is that the area, enlightened by Shah Sultan Kamaruddin Rumi (R), is blessed with many mystic poets: the list must include Rashid Uddin, Jalal Uddin Khan, Ukil Munshi, Abdul Mazid Talukder, and many others. In their songs, elements of Sufism are vivid.

The concentration of this paper is not only the Sufis who came to Bangla and influenced people but also those Sufi-saints who directly impacted the mystic poets of Bangladeshi wetland. Rashid Uddin is the most prominent mystic poet and the maestro of nearly all bauls in the Haor regions. Rashid Uddin was profoundly impacted by Majjub *Pir*, who appeared in Netrokona in 1909. He originated in Kotiadi, Kishorgonj. Rashid Uddin became a follower of the *pir* and participated in *zikr*. Rashid Uddin abruptly fled his home after the loss of his first child. The pilgrimage to the shrine had a significant impact on Rashid Uddin's spiritual pursuits and Baulattva practice. In 1928, when another baul poet, Jalal Uddin Khan, came to know

about the departure of Rashid Uddin, he tried to find him out (Dayen 15). Md Nurul Islam writes,

In his twenties, he was committed to Majjub Pir, who came from Kotiadi. Basically, Majjub *Pir* is his spiritual guru. From him, he got detailed ideas about mysticism, spirituality, and theories. Thus, through perseverance, he established himself as a baul (90).

Ukil Munshi was another of the greatest mystic poets of the Haor region. Ukil Munshi was a follower of *Pir* Mojaffar Ahmad of Richi village in Habigonj district (Kabir 17, 21; Rahman 69-70; Sarkar 63-64). Being a strict follower of Sufism, he did not even allow anyone to take a single photograph. Astounding information about him is that, despite being a baul poet, he was a very popular Imam of the mosque and was invited to offer the prayer to Almighty Allah (^{Subhanahu} ~~OaTa'la~~) for someone's salvation and peace. It is rare in this region to carry on both religious practice and fascination for music.

Shah Abdul Karim, another greatest baul devotee of Sunamgonj, received his first lesson on music from Koromuddin. Koromuddin, a devotee of music, sang devotional songs by playing *dotara*, a two-string musical instrument. At a time, after being suggested by many people, Karim went to Moula Box, a devotional teacher. Karim became a disciple of Moula Box and stayed a few days with the *pir*. He was a supporter of anti-communism but also drew inspiration from Sufism. After the death of *Pir* Moula Box in 1951, he went to *Pir* Ibrahim Mostan of Shreepur village, Bishwonath Upazila, Sylhet. In-depth theological understanding and explanation of the *pir* inspired Karim to become a disciple. He wrote in a song: "Murshid Moula Box Munshi/ I know him with faith/ I acknowledge Ibrahim Mostan/ as my *pir*" (Das 20).

Jalal Uddin Khan is a very popular and well-known baul poet of Netrokona.

He became a disciple of *Pir* Syed Abdul Quddus of Akurdandi village in Chattogram; Jalal Khan gained

knowledge of the hidden mysteries of the spiritual world by taking bayat to this *murshid*, who was a follower of Sufism. Jalal Uddin Khan dedicated his book, *Visva-Rahasya*, to *murshid* Syed Abdul Quddus (Hossain 49).

In the introductory part of *Jalalgitika Samagra* titled 'Bangla Kabitar Muldhara O Jalal Uddin Khan,' Jatin Sarkar adds,

He became of a follower of *Pir* Syed Abdul Quddus of Akubdandi village in Chittagong. He dedicated his prose book named *Visva-Rahasya* to this *pir*. Jalal's discipleship of this follower of Sufism brought a new dimension in his thinking and hence, his secular religious ideology was accelerated (Part 7).

It should be mentioned that Syed Abdul Quddus was the Caliph of Gausul Azam Syed Ahmad Ullah Maizbhandari. Since the spiritual guru of Jalal Khan was a *khalifa* of Maizbhandari, the influence of Maizbhandari sect cannot be denied upon Jalal Khan, rather he was greatly impacted by these sages and spiritual saints at different times of his life. Rob Newaj Khokon confirms about the *Pir* of Jalal Uddin Khan in his writing. Khokon adds that Jalal Uddin Khan started his primary education in a village madrasa. Maulana Mirash Uddin was his inspiration. Some people believe, Ramkrishna Sadhu was the devotional master of Jalal Uddin Khan. But he took the oath of allegiance with *Pir* Syed Abdul Quddus.

The impact of Sufism is found in the songs of Hason Raja though the explicit name of any *pir* is not found. In the introduction to *Hason Rajar Gan*, Abul Ahsan Chowdhury writes, "Hason Raja (1855-1922) is the most prominent representative of the world of bhab and mystic songs" (7). He adds,

The search for the ultimate man, the favor of the creator, the impermanence of the world-life, the illusion of the world, and the reluctance-inability of the ecstatic man to worship are mainly reflected in his songs (Chowdhury 9).

Chowdhury clarifies whether Hason Raja follows any specific order. He writes,

It is not clear which path he followed. There is no mention of Guru in his Padavali. Some believe that he was a saint of the Chishtiya sect. Although Sufism inspired and influenced his music and philosophy, he may not have been a full believer in this view.... There is no doubt that a mixed Sadhana-philosophy influence was behind his music (11).

Deen Sharat, despite being a Hindu, wrote Eslam Sangeet, Islamic songs. His songs focus on creation, angels, the day of judgement and other things. But who inspired his Islamic ideology is not directly found. Abdul Mazid Talukder is a politically conscious Baul poet who wrote songs on bauldom, Murshidi, Marifoti and many others.

Sanjoy Sarker mentions that *Pirs* were present in different programs where baul songs were sung. He provides a list of residence and Khankah of *Pirs* of Netrokona where bauls met to have gossips and conversations. The list includes the names of the then *Pirs*: *Pir* Asmot Ali Shah of Letirkanda village of Purbodhola Upazila and Niskin Shah of Komolpur village of Mohongonj Upazila (53). He asserts, many bauls got ideas about various theories when they listened to the *Pirs*.

In addition, there are many *Pirs* in the wetland part of Bangladesh who had great influence on many other mystic poets. This study concentrates only on the most prominent mystic poets who are distinguished by their own identity, distinct writing style, and depth of themes.

Characteristics and Impact of Bengal Sufism as Found in Baul Songs of Haor-region

The characteristics of Bengal Sufism will be sorted out for clarification, and simultaneously, examples of these features will be discussed herewith, as these Sufi-influenced baul songs are the

direct harvest of the spread of Sufism. The greatest bauls of the Haor region, like Hason Raja, Rashid Uddin, Jalal Uddin Khan, Ukil Munshi, Shah Abdul Karim, Abdul Mazid Talukdar, Deen Sharat, and many others, are directly and indirectly influenced by Sufism, which has been revealed through their songs.

In *Religion in India: A Historical Introduction*, Fred W. Clothey wrote that

Sufis followed ten basic principles to popularize Islam in India. 1. Repentance was to be done in several stages and included an emptying of self-orientation [...] 10. submission to the Divine will (Clothey 135).

While reading the songs of mystic poets of Bangladeshi wetland, many elements of Sufism are found in their songs; they are appreciation of the Creator and the prophet, importance of the guidance of *pir/murshid*, search for the Supreme soul, love with and separation from the spiritual *murshid* and so on.

The following discussion interprets the major characteristics of Sufism that are found in baul songs written by baul-devotees from haor region.

Appreciation of God, the Omnipotent, Omniscient, Merciful and Kind

Baul devotees of the Haor region have acknowledged the greatness of God and His sovereignty in their songs. His merciful and kind characteristics are also emphasized. Even though it is explicitly and often recognized that God is the ultimate salvation. Dr. Hossain writes in the introduction that “Allah, the Prophet, and the Pir- love for these three entities are the basics of Sufism.” So, the holy place of the creator is prioritized even in mysticism. Rashid Uddin writes,

“To whom will I talk except you, the merciful?
O the kind, the merciful.” (Dayen 88)²

² The quoted extract is author’s own translation from original Bengali text:
“আমি দয়াল গুরু বিনে গো কইব কথা কার সনে॥

Abdul Mazid Talukder discusses the secret presence of God among humans. He writes,

“God is in disguise-
You couldn’t identify Him.
Kader Sobhani
Is in disguise in you.” (Mostafa 99)³

Rashid Uddin was grateful to the merciful God. To express the power of Bismillah, he writes,

“O Mumin, you’ll be benefitted one day if you utter Bismillah
Nineteen letters of Bismillah are a surety from the hell.
In the beginning of the Quran, Alif, Lam and Mim are written.”
(Dayen 70)⁴

Rashid Uddin urges others to utter the greatness of Allah (^{Subhanahu} ^{OaTa’la}) and hence writes, “Read Al Hamdu Lillahe, Rabbil Alamin” (Dayen 70)⁵. The Arabic sentence says, read that all praise goes to Allah, the great Lord.

Hason Raja, a mystic poet of Sunamgonj, spent the later part of his life by praising God and doing religious activities. He claims that the creator has made him a mystic poet. He says,

“Who is it that turned me into a Baul
Who made me a baul?
He who did make me a Baul is my lord.” (Chowdhury 210)

Hason Raja finds Allah (^{Subhanahu} ^{OaTa’la}) inside and outside his self. He writes,

“I see only the Most Merciful inside me
and outside too.” (Chowdhury 210)

দয়াল গো ।”

³ The quoted extract is author’s own translation from original Bengali text:

“গোপনে রইয়াছে খোদা-
তারে চিননি ।
আপে গোপন রইয়াছে-
কাদের সোবহানি ।”

⁴ The quoted extract is author’s own translation from original Bengali text:

“শুনরে মমিন , বিছমিল্লা পড়লে ফল পাইবে একদিন ।
বিছমিল্লার উন্নিশটি হরফ দোযখের জাবিন ।
কোরানেতে প্রথম লেখা আলিফ , লাম আর মীম ।”

⁵ The quoted extract is author’s own translation from original Bengali text:

“আল হামদু লিল্লাহে পড় রাব্বিল আলামীন ।”

Hason believes that to be a lover is to find God. He asserts,

“If you are a lover, you will find God, O mind.
If you are a lover, you will find God.
And if you want to get God-
Increase your relationship with him.” (Raja 181)⁶

Shah Abdul Karim seeks mercy to the Almighty God. He writes,

“The most kind and compassionate you are
Have mercy on me; forgive me
You are the great Lord...
Please keep me under the shadow of your feet
Don’t just throw me away
If you become my own, Karim doesn’t want anything.”
(Haroonuzzaman Shah Abdul Karim 27)

Hason Raja is afraid of the distance between God and him. To eliminate the distance, he urges,

“Don’t stay away from Allah, don’t remember Hason Raja but only Allah
Don’t stay away from Allah.
See nothing in the heart’s eye but Allah
Keep nothing but Allah in mind.” (Raja 135)⁷

Abdul Mazid Talukder announces the greatness of Allah (^{Subhanahu} ^{OaTa’la}) and says that he will leave everything only to utter the name of Allah (^{Subhanahu} ^{OaTa’la}). He writes,

“I’ll be a beggar by the name of Allah

⁶ The quoted extract is author’s own translation from original Bengali text:

“খোদা মিলে প্রেমিক হইলে, রে মন,
খোদা মিলে প্রেমিক হইলে।
আর যদি খোদা ধরতে চাও-
তার সনে পিরিতি বাড়াও।”

⁷ The quoted extract is author’s own translation from original Bengali text:

“আল্লা ছাড়িয়ে থাকিও না, আল্লা বিনে হাছন রাজায় মনে রাখিও না
আল্লা ছাড়িয়ে থাকিও না।
আল্লা বিনে দিলের চক্ষে কিছু দেখিও না।
আল্লা বিনে আর কিছু মনে রাখিও না।”

Leaving the works of the world.
I'll only utter
The name of kind Allah.” (Mostafa 81)⁸

Ukil Munshi writes about the return to God after death. He writes,
“Four bearers will take me
In three-hand house.
Ukil says, if I go to father's house,
I'll never return here.” (Ullah, “Three Baul Songs” 13)

Ullah explains these lines,

In Muslim society, when one dies, he is carried on a bier or Khatli which is carried by four bearers. The house of three feet indicates the grave and the size refers to the grave size of the Muslim. Munshi's direct name is present in the song, but he is speaking in the voice of a woman (Ullah 73).

Shah Abdul Karim addresses Allah (^{Subhanahu}_{OaTa'la}) as the kindest and urges to make him free from the trap of earthly illusion. He writes,

“The helpless cries by addressing you as the kind
O kind, free me
I am trapped in illusion.
You're the lord of the world
You belong to everyone
I pray to you
Let me get you in last time.” (Das 109)⁹

⁸ The quoted extract is author's own translation from original Bengali text:

“আল্লাহর নামে ফকির হব-রে,
ছাড়িয়া দুনিয়ার কাম।
হরদমে লইব কেবল
দয়াল আল্লাজীর নাম।”

⁹ The quoted extract is author's own translation from original Bengali text:

“দয়াল বলে যাকে তোমায় কাঙালে
মুক্ত করে দাও গো দয়াল
বন্দী আছি মায়াজালে॥
তুমি যে হও জগৎস্বামী
তুমি সবার অন্তর্ধামী
এই আবেদন করি আমি
পাই নে অন্তিমকালে।”

Hason Raja cannot leave God, rather he will stay on the feet. He urges to “become one” with God (Chowdhury 219). He writes,

“I cannot leave You my Friend to go anywhere else
I hold on to Your feet, this is my heart’s desire
If I had to leave You, I could not stay alive
I could not leave You for a moment.” (Chowdhury 218-9)

Abdul Mazid Talukder expresses his dependence upon Allah. He writes,

“O kind Allah-
My dependence is upon your holy name.
By which name I should call you
To get your affection.” (Mostafa 75)¹⁰

Hason Raja is helpless in the ocean of life. Hence, he prays to Allah (Subhanahu) to take him to the shore. He writes

“O Allah (Subhanahu), in the ocean of bhava, take me across.
Falling at the depth of river, I call you.
He has no roots in such a bank-less river.
I, an unfortunate, don't know how to swim.” (Raja 137)¹¹

This inability to swim indicates that without the help of God, nobody can lead their life in the earth and afterlife.

Thus, uncountable examples from wetland baul songs can be presented to substantiate where mystic poets promote the greatness of merciful Allah (Subhanahu), who is the ultimate source and inspiration of Sufism, the creator of humans and the world.

Appreciation of the Prophet

¹⁰ The quoted extract is author’s own translation from original Bengali text:

“ওগো দয়াল আল্লা-
তোমার পাক নামে ভরসা আমার ।
আমি কোন নামে ডাকিলে দয়াল
পাবো গো তোমার দিদার ।”

¹¹ The quoted extract is author’s own translation from original Bengali text:

“আল্লা ভব সমুদুরে, তরাইয়া লও মোরে ।
পড়িয়া দরিয়ার পাকে ডাকি হে তোমারে॥
এমন অকূল দরিয়া কূল নাই তার ।
আমি অভাগিয়া আর জানি না সাঁতার ।”

According to the Islamic theology, Prophet Muhammad (^{Peace Be Upon Him.}) is the last prophet and messenger of God who is considered as the ultimate *murshid* or savior or teacher of humanity. Sufis tend to believe that without the advocacy of this prophet, no one can cross the *pulsirat* in the day of judgment and get access to the heaven. The prophet is the ultimate savior of mankind. The prophet is celebrated in many baul songs. Rashid Uddin writes,

“Today in the desert blooms the flower
The bee and the bulbul flew eagerly. (Dayen 72)¹²

Rashid Uddin urges the prophet to help him cross the Pulsirat. He writes,

“Cross me, dear prophet
The bridge of Pulsirat in the dark night of Akhirat
You’re the boatman of all’s boat, the bank in the banklessness
You’re air, you’re ore, you’re the mast.” (Dayen 83)¹³

Ukil Munshi addresses the prophet as the advocate for mankind. He writes,

“You are the king of the world, the guarantor of the Ummah
Khatemun Nabin” (Rahman 82)¹⁴.

Munshi announces that the heart should not make any delay to visit the land of the prophet. He writes, “Oh heart, if you want to go to the domain of the prophet, please come” (Rahman 83)¹⁵.

¹² The quoted extract is author’s own translation from original Bengali text:

“মরুতে আজ ফুটল কুসুম বাজিল ভেরী
ভ্রমর বুলবুল হইয়া আকুল আসিল উড়ি।”

¹³ The quoted extract is author’s own translation from original Bengali text:

“আমায় পার কর রাসুল॥
আখেরাতে আধাঁররাতে ফুলসেরাতের পুল
তুমি সবার নায়ের মাঝি, অকূলেতে কূল
তুমি হাওয়া তুমি বাদাম হও নায়ের মাঙ্কল।”

¹⁴ The quoted extract is author’s own translation from original Bengali text:

“দীন দুনিয়ার বাদশা তুমি, উম্মতের জামিন
খাতেমুন নবীন।”

¹⁵ The quoted extract is author’s own translation from original Bengali text:

“নবীজির খাসমহলে যাবে যদি আয়রে মন।”

Shah Abdul Karim says to “sail the boat carefully” and to keep “the name of Allah (Subhanahu) and the Prophet” in heart while sailing (Das 121)¹⁶. Abdul Mazid Talukder requests that the people strengthen the friendship with the prophet. He writes,

“Increase your affection with the prophet.

To save the followers in the day of judgement

The prophet will often utter- O my followers, My Ummati.”

(Mostafa 77)¹⁷

Talukder cautions people about not forgetting two names:

“Don’t forget two names-

Names of Allah (Subhanahu) and the Prophet.” (Mostafa 95)¹⁸

Thus, baul songs celebrate the dignity of the prophet and through baul songs, devotees seek the help and guidance of the prophet which is one of the basic ideals of Sufism.

Importance of the guidance of *Pir / Murshid*

Pir, Awliya or spiritual teacher plays a great role in Sufism. To get God and the Prophet, *pir* or *murshid* is a must. *Pir* or *Murshid* works as a medium to reach God and the Prophet. Though according to many scholars, the prophet is the ultimate *murshid*, the savior of mankind, after the death of the prophet, *pir* or *awliya* plays a significant role of preaching the light of Islam and Sufism. To get guidance and proper direction in terms of leading their lives in the earth and to get salvation and support to cross the *pulsirat* in the day

¹⁶ The quoted extract is author’s own translation from original Bengali text:

“বাইও সাবধান হইয়া

আল্লা নবীর নাম রে মাঝি ভাই স্মরণ রাখিয়া ।”

¹⁷ The quoted extract is author’s own translation from original Bengali text:

“নবীর সনে বাড়াও পিরিতি ।

রোজ হাসরেতে উম্মত তরাইতে,

নবীজী বলবেন কেবল “উম্মতি” ।”

¹⁸ The quoted extract is author’s own translation from original Bengali text:

“আল্লাহ-নবীর দুইটি নাম-

ভুইলনা, ভুইলনা, ভুইলনা-রে ।”

of judgment, people tend to love *pir* or *murshid*. Shah Abdul Karim expresses his deep faith in the Murshid. He writes,

“Kind Murshid, without you
Who do I have?
Trusting in your name
I swim in the ocean.” (Das 110)¹⁹

Abdul Mazid Talukder writes,

“O kind Murshid-
Anchor your boat at this dock.
By anchoring your boat at this dock-
Kindly take me.” (Mostafa 112)²⁰

Jalal Uddin Khan writes,

“Murshid, my teacher and treasure, how can I get your vision
I am always looking forward to seeing you.” (Sarkar 328)²¹

Jalal Khan writes, “Who is there in your world without Guru?” (Sarkar 330)²². This Guru is none but the *murshid* himself.

Shah Abdul Karim says,

“Would like to go to Murshid’s love-bazar?
If you are to go, don’t delay then
Let’s go in the morning.” (Haroonuzzaman Shah Abdul Karim 35)

¹⁹ The quoted extract is author’s own translation from original Bengali text:

“দয়াল মুর্শিদ, তুমি বিনে
কে আছে আমার
তোমার নামে ভরসা করে
অকূলে দিলাম সাঁতার।”

²⁰ The quoted extract is author’s own translation from original Bengali text:

“দয়াল মুর্শিদ গো-
এই ঘাটে লাগাও তোমার নাও।
এই ঘাটে লাগাইয়া নাও-
আমার লইয়া যাও॥”

²¹ The quoted extract is author’s own translation from original Bengali text:

“মুর্শিদ আমার মৌলা ধন কেমনে পাইব তোমার দরশন
দেখবার আশায় আমি সদায় থাকতে আছি উচাটন।”

²² The quoted extract is author’s own translation from original Bengali text:

“গুরু বিনে আপন কেবা আছেরে তোর সংসারে”

While focusing on the help of spiritual teacher to get relief from turmoil in the Day of Judgment and even on earth from worldly sufferings, Shah Abdul Karim writes, “You’ll reach ashore if you get *murshid*” (Haroonuzzaman Shah Abdul Karim 49). According to him, complete submission towards “*Murshid’s* feet” is the only way of human salvation (49).

Thus, the importance of *murshid*’s guidance is depicted in haor-region baul songs. The *murshid* or Sufi-saint or *pir* occupy a very prestigious position in Sufi ideology.

In addition, not only love for *murshid* is expressed in baul songs but also any kind of apparent separation or distance from the spiritual *murshid* is also discussed in songs. The spiritual teachers are loved by people without any hesitation. But sometimes they experience a kind of distance due to lack of religious practice and depth of faith. Ukil Munshi’s *pir* was *Pir* Mojaffar Ahmad but for some reasons, Munshi had to experience a kind of distance. The *pir* got disturbed with him. In this circumstance, Munshi addresses himself as “unfortunate” and writes,

“O southern wind
O wind
My friend’s house is in the southern part
He has never returned to me for what fault of this unfortunate?
Many people from this and that land come and go.” (Ullah, “Three Baul Songs,” 13)

In this song, apparently Ukil Munshi talks about someone living in the southern part with whom he was in love with but right now, there is no communication between them. It is measured from the house of Ukil Munshi, the house of *Pir* Mojaffar Ahmad will be at the southern part. Munshi cries for the apparent separation from his spiritual *Murshid*. (Ullah “Passivity” 73)

Repenting for Misdeeds and Emptying of Self-orientation

The common nature of religious people influenced by Sufism is that they always repent for their sin and cry for the mercy of Allah.

Hason Raja spent his early days of his life in different fruitless and vain works. Hence, he cries,

“Neither I utter the name of Allah
Nor did the things He suggested

Hason Raja spent his days in fruitless works.” (Raja 126)²³

Thus, repenting for misdeeds is a great sign of Sufism which is found in mystic songs.

Practicing Basic Orders of Islam

Practicing the basic orders of Islam is the fundamental work of Sufism. Baul songs focus on the basic rituals of Islam. *Namaj* or Prayer is the most prominent of them. Hason Raja urges to offer Prayer and says,

“Offer the prayer, offer the prayer, say the prayer, O faithful brother

Offer the prayer attentively and heartily.

Offer the prayer with attention and ultimate dependence

Know that Lord Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{OaTa'la}) is in front of you.” (Raja 213)²⁴

Purity of Heart

Shah Abdul Karim focuses on the purity of heart. Without this purification, no one can get the love of Allah. He writes,

“Learning *elim* does not make you a scholar

If not practiced

If the body and mind are pure

The lamp of faith burns.” (Das 113)²⁵

²³ The quoted extract is author’s own translation from original Bengali text:

“আমি না লইলাম আল্লাজীর না।

না কইলাম তার নাম।

বৃথা কাজে হাছন রাজায় দিন গুয়াইলাম।”

²⁴ The quoted extract is author’s own translation from original Bengali text:

“নমাজ পড় নমাজ পড় ভাই মমিন নমাজ পড়।

এক মনে পড়িও নমাজ চিত্ত করিয়ে দড়॥

কাতর হইয়া নমাজ পড়িও এক মনে।

মাবুদ আল্লা জানিও যে তোমার সামনে॥”

²⁵ The quoted extract is author’s own translation from original Bengali text:

Search for the Supreme soul

Jalal Uddin Khan tries to find out the trace of the Supreme soul or the existence of God. He writes,

“O my Lord
Do I know where you are?
I found no trace of yours while being present
So much of harassment I had to undergo!” (Haroonuzzaman Jalal Uddin Khan 47)

Search for Humanity and Prioritizing Mankind over Religion

There are many religions and beliefs, but at the core, all are humans. Sufism does advocacy for humanity and prioritizes mankind over any kind of religion. Shah Abdul Karim writes,

“Why is the controversy about these
Some are Hindu and some are Muslim
You are human and I am human
All are children of one mother.
The Creator is one
He is not an enemy, rather he belongs to everyone
Birth and death at his will
He is the soul of all souls.” (Das 132)²⁶

Similar message is found from Abdul Mazid Talukder. He writes,

“We will work together

“এলিম শিখলে আলেম হয় না

আমল না হলে।

দেহমন পবিত্র হলে,

ইমানের বাতি জ্বলে।”

²⁶ The quoted extract is author’s own translation from original Bengali text:

“এই সব নিয়ে দ্বন্দ্ব কেন

কেউ হিন্দু কেউ মুসলমান

তুমি মানুষ আমিও মানুষ

সবাই এক মায়ের সন্তান॥

সৃষ্টিকর্তা সবার একজন

শত্রু নয় সে সবার আপন

তার ইচ্ছাতে জন্ম-মরণ

সে যে সবার প্রাণের প্রাণ।”

Both Hindus and Muslims with hand in hand.” (Mostafa 354)²⁷
Jalal Uddin Khan writes,

“Either Hindu or Muslim, or Shakto, Buddhist or Christian
Everyone is equal in the eyes of God in the judgment of sin.”
(Islam 255)²⁸

Komol Shah, another baul poet, writes,

“While thinking about it, everyone is equal- either a Hindu or a
Muslim

When it comes to caste, I see, everyone is equal.” (Islam libid.)²⁹

Thus, human beings are given the highest priority in Sufism, which
is reflected in baul songs.

The heart is commonly regarded as the central organ of the
human body and is believed to house the Divine essence within
individuals. It can be referred to as a microcosm within the larger
microcosm that is the human body. Hans quoted it from an ancient
Maizbhandari song writer, Aliullah

“The Qur'an is inside the heart.

Behold it with your eyes and recite.” (195)

Ramesh Shil announced in his Maizbhandari song,

“Give up the worship of earthen idols and worship man.

Seven continents and eighteen worlds are inside man” (Ramesh
Shil)

Gafur Hali, another well-known Maizbhandari song writer,
expresses his strong belief in the unity of religions in Maizbhandari
philosophy. (220)

²⁷ The quoted extract is author's own translation from original Bengali text:

“এক সাথে কাজ করিবো

মিলে হিন্দু মুসলমান।”

²⁸ The quoted extract is author's own translation from original Bengali text:

“হিন্দু কিবা মুসলমান, শাক্ত বৌদ্ধ খৃষ্টিয়ান

বিধির কাছে সবাই সমান পাপ পুণ্যের বিচারে।”

²⁹ The quoted extract is author's own translation from original Bengali text:

“ভাবতে গেলে সবাই সমান কে হিন্দু কে মুসলমান

জাত বিচারে গেলে পরে ভেবে দেখি সবাই সমান।”

“Unity of religions Kaba, Kashi and Vrindavan are the living places of that man

Gafur says, Recognize and catch that man as long as there is time.”

The Shared Elements of Sufism in Maizbhandari and Baul Songs

Another significant aim of this research is to identify the similarities between Maizbhandari and baul songs. Maizbhandari songs are sung in Chattogram areas of Bangladesh while baul songs are popular in two distinct areas of Bangladesh: Kushtia region and the haor-region. These two regions are far from the tropical land of Chattogram. Despite this geographical distance, there are many similarities between these two different kinds of songs. The initial part of the paper is about Baul devotees and their songs and there is no discussion of the greatest poet of Maizbhandari. Ramesh Shil is one of the early 20th-century’s musicians of Maizbhandari tradition, who composed about 350 Maizbhandari songs praising the tariqa, Syed Ahmad Ullah Maizbhandari, and Syed Golam Rahaman Maizbhandari. The songs of Shil had been published in nine volumes titled *Ashekmala*, *Shantibhandar*, *Muktir Darbar*, *Nure Duniya*, *Jibansathi*, *Satyadarpan*, *Bhandare Maula*, *Manab Bandhu*, and *Eshke Sirajia*. There are many similarities between the songs of Maizbhandari and Baul. The similarities are as follows:

Music and Songs as a Medium of Devotion and Worship

Devotees and disciples of both Maizbhandari and Baul receive music and songs as a medium of devotion and worship. Both Maizbhandari and baul songs deal with the creator, prophet and spiritual masters; consider the prophet as the leader who can save them from the fire of the hell and receive music and songs as a medium of devotion and worship. Rahman writes, “The medium of devotees of mysticism is song” (23). In ‘*Maijbhandari Gan: Bangla Songiter Ekti Byatikrom Dhara*’, the author writes, “Maijbhandari song is a mystical song sung by the followers of Maijbhandari genre.” He adds,

Maijbhandari songs are usually composed in the style of Pir.” Thus, it is clear that both kinds of songs focus on the orders of Islam. Hans asserted that Maijbhandari songs employ a wide range of communicative patterns. The most common of these is a direct address to a Maijbhandari saint or pir. Maijbhandari songs are composed by the bhakta, not by the saint (Harder 191).

Both types of songs deal with the creator, prophet and spiritual masters, also known as *pir* or *murshid*. Both consider the prophet as the leader who can save them from the punishment of the hell.

Anti-communal Concept

Anti-communalism or secularism is patronized in both Maizbhandari and Baul songs. Islam writes, “Bauls are believers of secularism or anti-communalism” (libid.). Many songs focus on that idea. Similarly, Maizbhandari songs also represent secular idea where other beliefs and religions are not hampered. Dr. Iftekhhar Uddin Chowdhury writes in ‘Maijbhandari Dorshon o Osamprodayik Dhormo Chetona’ that “Maijbhandar today is a gathering place for countless devotees, a great pilgrimage site, irrespective of caste and religion. There are many methods of Marifot or spiritual pursuits in Islam. The core of the tariqa followed in Maizbhandar sharif (Soul 264) is love and devotion. So, there is no caste-religion-sectarian distinction here. All who come here are travelers on the path of love and devotion; All are one and all are equal. Maizbhandar is a wonderful synthesis of love and devotion.”

Representation of folk culture

Both types of songs represent folk literary-cultural heritage of Bangladesh. Maizbhandari song is one of the accessories of our Chattogram and native culture. Although the Maizbhandari song was composed in the style of *pir awliya*, its Sufi philosophy and spiritualism have enriched the repertoire of our folk culture above all. Even baul songs are a popular form of folk literature. The theory of the body is unique in India, particularly Bengal. Songs and other

literature expressed it. Human bodies are thought to reflect God. Baul, Vaishnava, and other regional philosophical developments reflect these theories. Because many Maizbhandari song writers are fakirs and folk singers, they have contributed to local body theory. Many Sufis practice specific body movements. Thus, global Sufi orders influence. Example: breathing. Maolana Hadi, a notable Maizbhandari, wrote a song about breathing:

“O mind, chant La Ilaha Illallah in every breathing.” (Awal 33)³⁰

Hans Harder, a world-renowned Maizbhandari research scholar, asserted that “Some of the contents and motifs of sufi literature is still in full sway in Maizbhandari songs and other genres of mystical songs like bāul gān, Hāsan Rājār gān, etc” (Harder 325).

Conclusion

This study shows the emergence, development and impact of Sufism in overall Bengal, simultaneous focus is given on the distinguished *Pirs* or Sufi-saints who directly influenced the mystic poets of Bangladeshi wetland. This research examines different baul songs in the light of Sufism and identifies the characteristics of Sufism. Final section analyzes the similarities between Maizbhandari and baul songs. Both types of songs deal with the devotion and worship of God, prioritizes anti-communalism and represents the heritage of enriched folk culture. These findings of the paper will open scopes for further researches on many other aspects of Sufism, Baul Songs and Maizbhandari songs. Jalal Uddin Khan’s *pir saheb* was Syed Abdul Quddus Yakubdunhi who was the Caliph of Gausul Azam Syed Ahmadullah Maizbhandari, so Jalal Uddin was influenced by the Maizbhandari sect. Devotees of both groups are regarded as religious sects. Further research will pave the way for discovering different windows of thought, philosophy, and devotional actions.

³⁰ The quoted extract is author’s own translation from original Bengali text:

“দমে দমে জপ রে মন লা ইলাহা ইলাল্লাহ।”

Works Cited

- Ahmed, Imtiaz. *Sufis and Sufism: A Closer Look at the Journey of Sufis to Bangladesh*. Singapore, National University of Singapore, Middle East Institute, 2010.
- Al Masud, Abdullah, et al. "The Contributions of Sufism in Promoting Religious Harmony in Bangladesh." *Journal of Usuluddin*, vol. 45, no. 2, 2017, pp. 105–22, <https://doi.org/10.22452/usuluddin.vol45no2.5>.
- Alam, Sarwar. "Sufi Pluralism in Bangladesh: The Case of the Maizbhandariyya Tariqa." *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 34, no. 1, 2010, pp. 28–45, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jsa.2010.0018>
- Awal, Arefin Noman Bin. *An Ethnography on the Maizbhandar: Locating within Cultural, Religious and Political Dimensions*. A Thesis Presented by Arefin Noman Bin Awal ID : 13117004 to the Department of Anthropology in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree with Ho. 2016, https://dspace.bracu.ac.bd/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10361/7903/13117004_Antropology.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1.
- Bertocci, Peter J. "A Sufi Movement in Modern Bangladesh." *Oakland University Journal*, vol. 3, 2001, pp. 52–73
- Chittick, William C. *Sufism: A Beginner's Guide*. Oneworld, 2000.
- Chowdhury, Iftekhhar Uddin. "Maijbhandari Dorshon o Osamprodayik Dhormo Chetona." *The Daily Azadi*, 24 Jan. 2022.
- Chowdhury, Abul Ahsan, editor. *Hason Rajar Gan*. Bornayan, 2008.
- Clothey, Fred W., "Religion in India A Historical Introduction." *Religion in India*, Routledge, 2006, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203967836>.
- Das, Sumonkumar. *Shah Abdul Karim: Jibon o Gan*. Prothoma Prokashan, 2015.
- Dayen, Abu. *Baul Sadhak Rashid Uddin o Tar Gan*. Somachar, 2013.

- Fadiman, James, and Frager, Robert, editors. *Essential Sufism*. Castle Books, 114 Northfield Avenue, Edison, New Jersey 08837, 1997
- Harder, Hans. *Sufism and saint veneration in contemporary Bangladesh: the Majbhandaris of Chittagong*. Routledge, 2011.
- Halim, Wahyuddin. "The Sufi Sheikhs and Their Socio-Cultural Roles in the Islamization of Bengal during the Mughal Period (1526-1858)." *JICSA (Journal of Islamic Civilization in Southeast Asia)*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2018, pp. 175–94, <https://doi.org/10.24252/jicsa.v7i2.7045>.
- Haroonuzzaman. *Jalal Uddin Khan: Selected Songs of Jalal Uddin Khan*. Adorn Publication, 2015.
- Helminski, Camile Adams. *Women of Sufism: A Hidden Treasure*. Shambhala Publications, Inc. Horticultural Hall 300 Massachusetts Avenue Boston, Massachusetts 02115 www.shambhala.com ©2003, <https://www.shambhala.com/>.
- Hossain, Dr. Mohammad Akter. *Bangla Lokosongite Adhyatmik Chetona*. Sochoyoni Publishers, 2018.
- Haq, Emdadul. "Sufi influence in Bengal." *The Daily Star*, 1 August 2013, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/sufi-influence-in-bengal>. Accessed 11 August 2023.
- Hossain, Dr. Mohammad Akhtar. *Banglar Loksongite Adhyatik Chetona*. Suchayani Publishers, 2018.
- Islam, Md. Nurul, editor. *Netrokona Baula Gan*. Joyotee, 2021.
- Ismail, Muhammad. *Development Of Sufism in Bengal*. Aligarh Muslim University Aligarh (India), 1989. <https://www.scribd.com/document/454970529/DevptSufismBengal>.
- Kabir, Mahbub. *Ukil Munshir Gan*. Oitijjhya, 2018.
- Karim, Anwarul. *Bangladesher Baul: Somaj, Sahityo, o Sangit (2nd ed.)*. Kotha Prokash, 2002.

- Karim, Shah Abdul: Selected Songs of Shah Abdul Karim. Adorn Publication, 2013.
- Khan, Nasir Raza, and Talukdar Madhubanti. "The Origin and Development of Sufism in the Regions of Bengal and Assam in India." *Journal Intellectual Sufism Research (JISR)*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2021, pp. 9–21, <https://doi.org/10.52032/jisr.v4i1.107>.
- Matin, Abdul. "Socio-Religious Reform and Sufism in 20 Th Century Bengal: A Study of the Role of *pir* Abu Bakr of Furfura Sharif, India." *South Asian Cultural Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2018, pp. 25–34, <http://www.southasianculturalstudies.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/3.-Matin-Socio-religious-reform-and-Sufism-in-20th-century-Bengal.pdf>
- Mostafa, Md. Golam, editor. *Mazidgiti Samagra*. Srizoni, 2020.
- Rahman, Hamidur. *Netrakonar Baul Kabi*. Ayan Prakashan, 2018.
- Raja, Dewan Mohammad Tasawwar. *Hason Raja Samagra*. Pathak Shamabesh, 2000.
- Sarkar, Jatin, editor. *Jalal Geetika Samagra: Jalal Uddin Khan (2nd ed.)*. Nandita, 2005.
- Sarker, Sanjoy. *Netrakoner Lokosahitya O Sangstriki*. Abishkar, 2018.
- Soul, The. *Seeking The Divine Journey of The Soul*. 2013
- Trottier, Anne-Hélène. "Fakir. La Quête d'un Bâul Musulman." *Archives de Sciences Sociales Des Religions*, no. 116, 2001, pp. 93–156, <https://doi.org/10.4000/assr.1563>.
- Ullah, Safi. "Passivity of Expression and Patriarchal Portrait of Female: A Study on Ukil Munshi's Selected Baul Songs." *Journal of Kolkata Society For Asian Studies*, vol. Volume 7 n, no. April, 2021, p. 75, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/358520446_Passivity_of_Expression_and_Patriarchal_Portrait_of_Female_A_Study_on_Ukil_Munshi's_Selected_Baul_Songs.

- Ullah, Safi. "Three Baul Songs by Ukil Munshi." *The Daily Observer* [Dhaka], 1st ed., 17 April 2021, <https://epaper.observerbd.com/2021/04/17/>. Accessed on August 13, 2023.
- Zami, Tahmid. "Vernacular Sufism (1500-1800 Ce)." <https://www.academia.edu/44968006/Vernacular>.
- Zami, Tahmidal, and Nizam Ash-Shams. "The Long Transition in Bengal Sufism: Onto-Theological Debates and Colonial Margins."

The Role of *Salat* as the Means of Spiritual and Social Ascension: Syed Delawor Hossain Maizbhandari's Point of View

Mejbaul Alam Bhuiyan¹ Muhammad Ali Asgor²

Abstract

The second pillar of Islam is salat. It is the first obligatory act imposed on a person after professing allegiance. The primary purpose of salat is to reawaken the dormant love of Almighty within human hearts. Salat is defined as a kind of worship in which the love of Almighty` is present in an awakened state, despite the fact that people of different religions practice varied forms of worship. Salat is enhanced with the fundamental characteristics that help to prevent the degradation of human character, awaken Almighty's love, and foster consciousness and self-realization, all of which can contribute to the development of religious equality worldwide. It has both exoteric and esoteric aspects. Most people prefer only the external side and do not try to search for the inner side - so the love of Almighty is not awakened in the human mind, and consequently, the degradation of human character is increasing. Religious conflict is on the rise in all corners of the world as a result of failure to comprehend the true meaning of salat. The purpose of this research is to explore how prayer might arouse the love of Almighty in human hearts and bring about social and religious harmony by eradicating disputes between various religions. The study has been evaluated in light of Syed Delawor Hossain Maizbhandari's perspectives. In this case, analytical and descriptive methods were used to conduct the study. The findings and results demonstrate how salat can promote social harmony, equality, and peace among people regardless of caste, creed, or religion in order to create a social and state system based on coexistence in which conflicts between religiously opposing groups won't persist. The study may aid future researchers in expanding their research into the social and spiritual effects of prayer by arousing one's love for Allah (Subhanahu), which may aid in the establishment of a society and a state based on peaceful coexistence.

Keywords

Equality, Love of Almighty, Religion, *Salat*, Syed Delawor Hossain Maizbhandari

¹ Lecturer, Nanupur Laila-Kabir College, Fatikchhari, Chattogram, Bangladesh

² Lecturer, Dilowara Jahan Memorial College, Bakolia, Chattogram, Bangladesh

Introduction

The main foundation of faith in Islam is believing in the oneness of Allah, not associating any party or other deity with him. Faithful Muslims put their complete trust in Allah, submit to him, and rely upon his help and assistance. The following remark of Syed Delowar Hossain about the essence of faith and submission to Almighty which are mentioned in his book entitled *Manob Sobhoyta* is worth mentioning: “The word "Muslim" actually refers to the act of submitting oneself to Allah (Subhanahu Oa Ta’la) and means "one who submits." Since all creatures must abide by the laws and regulations of Allah”³ (Hossain, *manob* 13-14). The other meaning is "one who attains peace." This peace only comes from submission to the Almighty.

In the essay entitled "A Case Study of a Muslim Client: Incorporating Religious Beliefs and Practices," Hamdan (2007) stated his opinion regarding the essence, implication, and originality of sources of divine knowledge that are applicable to all fields of human life and civilizations.

Islam is a religion that covers every aspect of life: spiritual, social, economic, political, and family. It is considered a way of life that does not separate religion from all other spheres. As such, direction can be found for even the smallest detail, in the two main sources of knowledge, the Qur’an and the Hadith. The Qur’an is the holy book of Muslims that was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) in the Arabic language. Of all the revealed books, it is the only holy book that has been preserved in its original form (95).

Numerous interpretations of *Salat* exist. In the context of our study, we will base our review effort on Syed Delawor Hossain

³ The quoted extract is authors’ own translation from original Bengali text: যেহেতু “ইছলাম” আরবী শব্দ, এর আভিধানিক অর্থ “গার্দান নেহাদন বতাতাত” অর্থাৎ আনুগত্য গ্রহণ। যাহা বিশ্ব-নিয়ন্তা আল্লাহর আনুগত্যকে বুঝায়। সৃষ্টি মাত্রই সূক্ষ্মাতিসূক্ষ্ম মহান শক্তি আল্লাহর অনুগত থাকিতে বাধ্য।

Maizbhandari's operational definition, with a focus on the internal aspects of *Salat*, which have been discussed as follows in *Belayot Mutlaka*

“*Ṣalāt*⁴ (صلاة) lexically means to set fire and to encourage. It is to kindle the fire of Divine love concealed in a seeker. The Arabs use the word ‘*iqāma-aqim* (إقامة- أقم الخيمة)’ refers to raise fallen tent. It means to ignite the Divine love and to prepare oneself to achieve that goal.

Therefore, worship that does not ignite Divine love and aspiration is not a proper worship or prayer. Although different religions have various settings, it can be termed as ‘*ṣalāt*-prayer’ wherever the Divine love can be found present and active.

Understanding this concept will surely eliminate religious conflicts. *Wilāyat-e-muṭlaqa-e-aḥmadī* is the best way to eliminate religious conflicts by coordinating among them. Only with its influence, religious conflicts can be eliminated from this world. (Hossain, *Wilayat* 167).

Salat is a Muslim's obligatory prayer. According to Islamic Jurists, every man and woman who has reached puberty is required to offer *salat* five times a day in a prescribed manner and at a specified time. Hossain (2023) asserts, “The Holy Quran orders to perform the prayer with the word ‘*aqimu*’ (أقيموا) or 'establish'. *Salat* also refers to the correct method of the prayer that has been practiced continuously since the time of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him.)” (Hossain, *Wilayat* 230). The main objective of *salat* is to awaken the dormant

⁴ The quoted extract is authors' own translation from original Bengali text:

ছালাত শব্দের আভিধানিক অর্থ আগুনকে প্রজ্জ্বলন ও উদ্দীপন করা। অর্থাৎ খোদা-প্রেমের ধামা চাপা পড়া আগুনকে জাগ্রত করা। সেইরূপ "আকীম" শব্দ বিচ্ছিন্ন ও পতিত খিমা বা তাবুকে বিন্যস্ত করার জন্য আরবেরা ব্যবহার করিয়া থাকে। এখানে ইহার অর্থ খোদার প্রেমাগ্নি জাগ্রত করা এবং তজ্জন্য নিজেকে গুছাইয়া লওয়া-বা- যথাযথ বিন্যস্ত করা বুঝায়। সুতরাং যেই এবাদতে খোদার প্রেম-প্রেরণা জাগ্রিত হয় না তাহা এবাদত বা সুষ্ঠু ছালাত যোগ্য নহে। বিন্যস্ততার দিক দিয়া বিভিন্ন ধর্মের বিভিন্নরূপ হইলেও যেখানে এই খোদা-প্রেম জাগ্রত অবস্থায় পাওয়া যায় তাহাকে ছালাত বলা যাইতে পারে। ইহা বুঝিতে পারিলে ধর্ম বিরোধ মিটিয়া যাইতে বাধ্য।

love of Allah (^{Subhanahu} ٱَاْءَاْءَا) in order to establish union with the Creator. Offering *salat* won't be considered *salat* in the true sense if it doesn't reawaken dormant love. Syed Delawor Hossain asserts that *salat* is regarded as *ibadat-e-mutnafia* (preventative religious rites). According to him, three things should be kept in mind while performing *salat* that are covered in the holy Quran. The first issue is to remember (*zikr*), the second is to become conscious, and the third is to avoid thinking about the outside world. The holy Quran declares, اقيموا الصلوة لذكري (And establish regular prayer for My remembrance) (Al-Quran, 20:14) (The Quran 881). The preceding verse implies that *salat* should be offered to remember Allah. The word '*Aqimu*' in the Holy Quran means to organize. “That is, organize regular prayers for my commemoration”⁵ (Hossain, *belayot* 141). Since *salat* should be offered in such a way that Allah's remembrance is well organized and the remembrance of worldly things is removed.

The second topic covered in the holy Quran is becoming conscious. In this case, the holy Quran declares, ولا تكن من الغافلين (And be not of those who are unheedful) (Al-Quran, 07:205) (The Quran 466). The holy verse implies that when offering *salat*, one should not be unconscious but rather alert. In other words, the *salat* should be functioning with *hujuri qalb* (full attention and concentration). In this regard, the Hadith of Gabriel mentions that “That you worship Allah (^{Subhanahu} ٱَاْءَاْءَا) as if you are seeing Him, for though you don't see Him, He, verily, sees you” (“Hadith of Gabriel”). The third topic is avoiding worldly thoughts, as stated in the holy Quran, “حتي تعلموا ما تقولون” (until ye can understand All that ye say) (Al-Quran, 04:43) (The Quran 223). That is, when reciting the *salat*, one should understand what he is saying. During the *salat*, one should not think about worldly issues. If worldly issues are addressed in *salat*, the purpose of *salat* will be interrupted.

⁵ The quoted extract is authors' own translation from original Bengali text:

অর্থাৎ আমার স্মরণের জন্য নামাজ কায়েম বা বিন্যস্ত কর।

Therefore, when offering *salat*, one should be conscious and alert, and one should understand what one is reciting.

The three points mentioned above are critical for *salat*. If those are not addressed while offering *salat*, spiritual ascension and societal peace will not be possible. Since ancient times, different religions have prayed in different ways, but the goal is the same: to reach the Almighty and achieve spiritual connection. Syed Delawor Hossain examines the theme in *Tasawwuf-e-Islam*, where there is a mention of religious unity.

The true fact is that all different religions are similar in their essence despite their circumstantial differences. Although they apparently differ in their outward appearances, the essence of religion is one and identical, as the ultimate goal of all religions is Creator. Different groups exist in different religions. The existence of various groups in different religions is the will of Allah.⁶ (Hossain, *belayot* 4).

The lack of the three issues mentioned above is so intense that we offer *salat* on a regular basis, but our spiritual ascension remains elusive. On the other hand, the *salat*'s external benefits are also not being realized. If *salat* is offered while addressing the three issues mentioned above, it will result in spiritual and social development. Therefore, the study aims to explore how prayer might arouse the love of Almighty in human hearts and bring about social and religious harmony by eradicating disputes between various religions.

Research Objectives

The study includes following objectives:

⁶ The quoted extract is authors' own translation from original Bengali text: সত্য কথা এই যে, যত রকমের ধর্ম আছে, অবস্থামতে বিভিন্ন হইলেও মূলতঃ অভিন্ন। অভিব্যক্তিতে একটি অপরাটির অনুরূপ না হইলেও ইহা বাহ্যিক, যাহার নাম ধর্ম, এই ধর্মবস্তু অভিন্ন ও এক। যেহেতু সমস্ত ধর্মের লক্ষ্যস্থল খোদা। যদিও বিভিন্ন ধর্মে বিভিন্ন গোষ্ঠী সংশ্লিষ্ট। ইহা আল্লাহর ইচ্ছাশক্তি সন্ভূত।

- To explore how prayer (*salat*) might arouse the love of Almighty in human hearts and bring about social and religious harmony by eradicating disputes between various religions and building a coexisting society.
- To study the writings, speeches, and teachings of Syed Delawor Hossain Maizbhandari on the numerous spiritual and social advantages of *salat*. Look closely at his points of view to comprehend his position.
- To examine Maizbhandari's assertions that *salat* fosters divine connection and spiritual development.
- To investigate his spiritual practices and disciplines in *salat* to demonstrate how they can influence those seeking a deeper level of faith.
- Moreover, find out Hossain's thoughts on *salat*'s ethical and moral principles and how they impact relationships, community involvement, and society, as well as his ideas on how *salat* can improve society.
- To consider Maizbhandari's interpretation of *salat* as a means of integrating spirituality with social responsibility. Holistic spirituality combines personal devotion with compassion and social activism.
- This study examines Syed Delawor Hossain Maizbhandari's view of *salat* (Islamic ritual prayer) as a catalyst for spiritual and social advancement.

Research Questions

A coexisting society in which people respect the customs of others regardless of caste or religion. The human being is the most influential factor among the other factors influencing the social system. If there is no harmony between man's physical, mental, and spiritual consciousness, his actions will be impure; thus, harmony between the body, mind, and soul, and human society's actions are regarded as the primary goal of all religions. Our question is whether

spiritual development, above all, can ensure individual development through continuous social harmony and development. What is Delawor Hossain Maizbhandari's view on this? Despite numerous studies, the philosopher Khademul Fokra Syed Delawor Hossain Maizbhandari's perspective on *salat* has yet to be worked out. So we believe that research on this subject is very important and timely in the current context. This allows us to draw some research questions about the subject.

1. What is the intrinsic inner meaning of *salat*? And does it have universality in achieving the inner purpose of all religions?
2. How does *salat* play a role in the spiritual upliftment of human beings?
3. How does *salat* ensure the progression of society and coexistence?
4. What is the point of view of Syed Delawor Hossain Maizbhandari about *salat* as a catalyst for spiritual and social advancement?

Literature Review

Salat (صلاة) is derived from the word *salyun* (صلي) which means to awaken the hidden fire. “*Salat*, according to *tafseer ibn Arabi*, is the awakening of the love of Allah (Subhanahu) in the mind⁷” (Hossain, *belayot* 142). Some assert that the literal meaning of *salat*, which is derived from the Arabic word '*salwat* (صلوات)', is admiring beauty, saluting, and worshiping a holy entity. Some believe that this word derives from the same root as the word '*sala*,' which means to draw closer and sacrifice to fire. “*Salat* is a ritual prayer of Muslims made five times daily in a standing position alternating with inclinations and prostrations as the worshiper faces toward Mecca” (“*Salat* Definition & Meaning”). *Salat* is extremely important in the Islamic

⁷ The quoted extract is authors' own translation from original Bengali text:

তফসীরে ইবনে আরবীতে আছে খোদার প্রেমায়ি মনে জাগ্রত করার নাম নামাজ বা সালাত।

religion. Imann, or faith, is associated with the inner side of Islam, whereas *salat* is associated with both the inner and outer sides of Islam. *Salat*, as stated in the following Hadith of the Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him.), is the foundation of Islam: “The cornerstone of Islam and its foundation is the Salat, and its umbrella is Jihad (i.e., fighting in the cause of Allah...)” (Al-Fawzan 14).

Salat is an Islamic ritual prayer, has a significant impact on mental health. it is essential in removing an individual's disappointment and bringing mental peace. The holy Quran discusses the two benefits of *salat*. The first is 'satisfaction for the heart' (Ar-Ra'd:28), and the second is a 'source of keeping a person away from wrong behavior' (Al-'Ankabut: 45). In this context, "satisfaction for the heart" is defined as a state of mental peace that frees an individual from worries and depression. Despair and fear are major contributors to the decline of mental health. It has a significant impact in this situation. One who performs *salat* mindfully his “fear (*khaof*) or despair (*yahzagoon*)” vanishes (Ijaz et al. 3).

Sayeed and Prakash (2013) in their paper titled “*The Islamic prayer (Salah>Namaaz) and yoga togetherness in mental health.*” expressed their opinion

Studies have proven that non-Muslim participants merely going through the physical movements of Salah also showed appreciable results from the exercise. Several reports on the application of prayers in psychotherapy illustrate the positive outcome in the individuals exhibiting pathological symptoms such as tension, anxiety, depression and antisocial tendencies (S224).

In recent time Callender et al.(2022) at their research “*Prayers and Mindfulness in Relation to Mental Health among First-Generation Immigrant and Refugee Muslim Women in the USA: An Exploratory Study*” found that

Prayer helps to build community, Prayer promotes wellbeing, Prayer increases faith, and Prayer encourages intentional awareness. The findings demonstrate that prayer involves awareness and has a strong influence on mental health (3638).

In 2012, Amirfakhraei and Alinaghizadeh conducted a study on the mental health effects of *salat* among medical students at Bandar Abbas Azad University of Iran. They studied on two groups of students: those who pray regularly and those who pray only occasionally or not at all. The sample size of the study was 200 students. The study found that students who prayed on a regular basis had higher self-esteem, less depression, and anxiety, resulting in increased mental strength. A similar result was obtained in a study of 500 students conducted in Turkey. According to the findings, approximately 40% of students found happiness and comfort in praying, while “25.8% of students believed that their sins have been washed away and that makes them more calm and contented” (Najam et al. 4).

Salat aids in the development of moral character. It instills qualities such as responsibility and punctuality. It also assists an individual in protecting himself from immorality, unethical behavior, and crime. Immorality, wrongdoing, and crime are the primary contributors to the degradation of character. If the individual offers *salat* with full attention and mindfulness, his filthiness of character will be removed. Character is a valuable asset. If the character is good, then all actions of the person will be good.

Salat has a significant social impact. The main notable social benefits of *salat* are interpersonal interactions. Muslims gather in the mosque to offer *salat*, where they can meet and exchange views and opinions. As a result, by sharing their perspectives, they can solve any social problems or issues. It strengthens people's bonds. In congregational prayers, everyone stands shoulder to shoulder, which promotes equality and equity. The number of social crimes is

soaring daily. Juvenile delinquency, drug addiction, pornography, and “broken families” (Azad 218), which result in out-of-control situations, are a few examples of social crimes. In such circumstances, *salat* can reduce social crimes and foster societal stability and peace. The holy Quran has guaranteed that *salat* keeps one from great sins and evil deeds. One of the ways to prevent social crime is to create social awareness. Muslims gather in the mosque five times a day to pray. As a result, a bridge of unity, heart and love is created between Muslims. In this way they can collectively prevent any social injustice.

Salat is the platform of spiritual progress. It has been mentioned in the holy hadith that prayer is the stair of progress for believers. During prayer, the worshiper has an opportunity to gain the identity of his being. He is able to understand in *salat* at what level he is standing. Along with gaining the identity of the seven levels of *nafs*, he can determine his position. Those who are able to gain self-identity in *salat*, become absorbed in permanent *salat*. They are so engrossed in the love of Almighty that they are not satisfied with praying five times a day. Rather, they are engaged in prayer every moment. “A water bird cannot quench its thirst even if it stays the whole day in water. Likewise, lovers absorbed in the ocean of love are not satisfied with five times prayers; rather, they are always absorbed in prayers or in the remembrance of Allah,”⁸ (Hossain, *belayot* 142-44).

Racism has taken on a lethal form in the United States, Europe, and other countries today. Several recent horrific incidents involving whites and blacks have opened a new chapter in human history. George Floyd, a minority resident of St. Louis Park, America, was killed by white police officer Derek Chauvin,

⁸ The quoted extract is authors’ own translation from original Bengali text: পানি খাওঁতী পাখি যেমন সারাদিন পানিতে থাকিয়াও তাহার জলতৃষ্ণা মিটাইতে পারে না; সেইরূপ এশক বা খোদা প্রেম-বিভোর চিত্ত মানব নির্দিষ্ট ওয়াক্ত মতে নামাজ আদায় করিয়াও তৃপ্ত হয় না বরং তাহারা “সবসময়ই” নামাজে বা খোদা স্মরণে রত থাকে।

sparking outrage and hatred across the country. That news was taken very seriously by internationally recognized newspapers and television channels. It is reported, "In April 2021, former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin, who pressed his knee on Floyd's neck for more than nine minutes, was convicted of murder and manslaughter in Floyd's death" (Choi). However, the United Nations General Assembly affirms that all people are born free, equal, and endowed with basic human rights and "have the potential to contribute constructively to the development and well-being of their societies" ("International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination | United Nations"). In this situation, the Islamic prayer system, or *salat*, can be very helpful in eradicating racism and in creating a society based on *Adle Mutlaq*, or equality of justice.

The important feature of *salat* is that during the congregational prayer there is no distinction between rich, poor, high, low, king, subject, slave, owner, black and white, etc. Dr. Allama Iqbal has very beautifully mentioned this in '*Shekwa wa Jawabe Shikwa*'. He echoes the words in the lines below.

"آگیا عین لڑائی میں اگر وقت نماز۔ قبلہ رو ہو کے زمیں بوس ہوئی قوم حجاز
ایک ہی صف میں کھڑے ہو گئے محمود و ایاز۔ نہ کوئی بندہ رہا اور نہ کوئی بندہ نواز
بندہ و صاحب و محتاج و غنی ایک ہوئے۔ تیری سرکار میں پہنچے تو سبھی ایک
ہوئے" (11-10 Iqbal)⁹

The couplets above depict a beautiful scene of Islamic prayer. *Salat* completely resolves the differences that people create. *Salat* eliminates class discrimination among people and establishes a society and state based on *adle mutlaq*, or equality of justice.

⁹ The following extract is the authors' own translation from the above Urdu text: When it was time for prayer while fighting, the people of Hejaz used to stand facing the Qibla and pray. Sultan Mahmud Gajnabi and his servant Ayaz stood in the same queue. There was no difference between master and servant. The slave and the master, the needy and the rich became one - When they came to the court of Allah (^{Subhanahu} ^{ta} ^{la}), they all became one.

Syed Delowar Hossain Maizbhandari

Syed Delowar Hossain (1893-1982 AD) was the grandson of Khatemul Auliya Ghawth al-Azam Syed Ahmad Ullah (1826-1906 AD), the founder of Maizbhandari Tariqa. Syed Faizul Hoque (1865–1902 AD) was his father, who was the only son of Ghawth al-Azam Maizbhandari Hazrat Mawlana Shah Sufi Syed Ahmad Ullah. At the start of his spiritual journey, Syed Delowar Hossain received his spiritual initiation from Syed Aminul Hoque Wasel, Syed Ahmad Ullah's nephew and deputy. His grandpa, Hazrat Mawlana Syed Ahmad Ullah, re-initiated him when Syed Aminul Hoque Wasel died. At the age of 23, he married Syeda Sajeda Khatun, the daughter of Hazrat Mawlana Syed Golam Rahman (1865–1937 AD), “chronologically the second spiritual figure of the *tariqa*” (Muhiuddin 48), and a nephew and deputy of Syed Ahmad Ullah. He was the father of five sons and six daughters. He initiated and gave *khilafah* (spiritual succession) to his first son, Syed Ziaul Hoque (1928–1988 AD), in 1966, who became renowned for his spiritual feats in his lifetime.

In 1974, he designated his third son, Syed Emdadul Hoque (b. 1936), as the spiritual heir to his *godī* and nominated him to carry out the responsibility as the *Sajjāda nashīn* of Gausia Ahmadiya Manzil. Hazrat Mawlana Syed Delowar Hossain Maizbhandari systematically attempted to analyze and present the basic ideologies and features of the Maizbhandari Tariqa. The number of his published and edited works is 10 (ten). Namely: 1. *Gausul Azam Maizbhandarir (Q) Jiboni O Karamat* (Biography and Miracles of Ghawth al-Azam Maizbhandari) 2. *Belayat-e Mutlaqa* 3. *Gotontontro* (Constitution), 4. *Protibad Lipi* (Protest letter), 5. *Renaissa Juger Ekti Dik* (An aspect of the Renaissance period in the area), 6. *Biswa Manabotay Belayat-er Swaroop* (The form of *Belayot* in World Humanity, 7. *Manab Sobhoyta* (Human civilization), 8. *Milade Nababi and Tawallode Gausia*, 9. *Muslim Achar Dhorma* (Muslim religion's rituals), 10. *Tazkiyaye*

Mokhtachar ba Multotto (Volume 1). All these books are considered the primary source of knowledge and research about Maizbhandari Tariqa. In order to comprehend the philosophical perspective of Syed Delawor Hossain Maizbhandari regarding the concept of *salat*, it is imperative to thoroughly examine the aforementioned literature.

Methodology

The analytical and descriptive methods have been used to conduct the study. A conceptual framework has been drawn in which *salat* is an independent construct with some mediating and dependent constructs. The mediating constructs are ‘awakens divine love’, ‘prevents degradation of character’, ‘awakens self-realizations’, ‘confirms the nature of seeking the creator’, ‘*adle mutlaq* or establishes the equality of justice’, ‘preventing the conflicts between religions in the world’, ‘spiritual excellence or perfected human’, ‘ensuring the social progress’ and the dependent construct is ‘co-existence’. Primary data was gathered from the books of Syed Delawor Hossain Maizbhandari, while secondary data was gathered from books, research journals, daily newspapers, Wikipedia, and online sources. The conceptual framework is attached below.

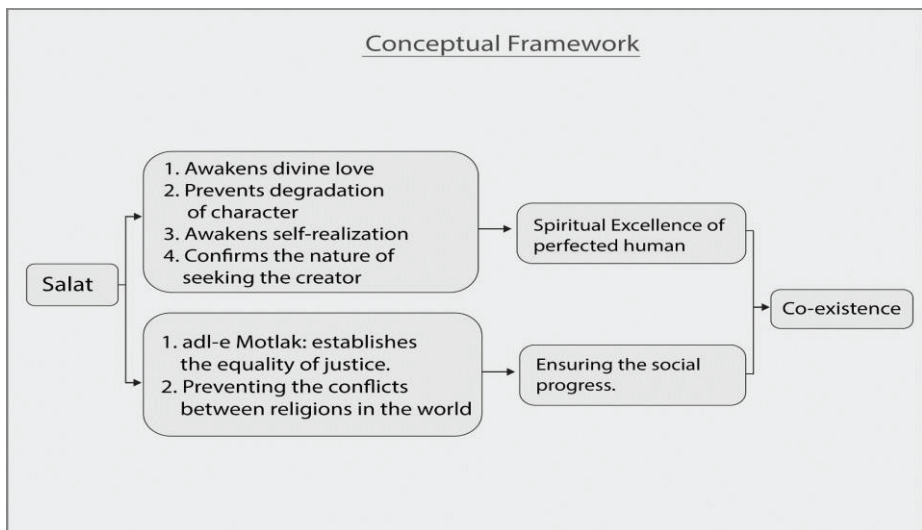


Figure: 1. the figure above depicts the conceptual framework, in which *salat* is an independent construct with mediating and dependent constructs.

In Figure 1. *salat* is an independent construct where ‘awakens divine love’, ‘prevents degradation of character’, ‘awakens self-realizations’, ‘confirms the nature of seeking the Creator’, ‘*adle mutlaq* or establishes the equality of justice’, prevents the conflicts between religions in the world’, ‘spiritual excellence or perfected human’, ‘ensuring social progress’ are mediating constructs, and ‘co-existence’ is the dependent construct. It implies that offering *salat* with full attention and mindfulness can awaken divine love, prevent character degradation, awaken self-realization, confirm the nature of seeking the Creator, establish equality of justice, and prevent conflicts between religions in the world. If these conditions are met, the individual advances to the next phase, which is spiritual excellence or perfected humanity, as well as social progress, which brings coexistence in society and the state.

Findings, Results and Discussions

***Salat* is a Means of Awakening Divine Love**

Divine love is required for any worship to be accepted in the court of Allah. Worships become futile and tasteless if it does not help to awaken Divine love. *Al-Wadud*, which means "loving," is one of Allah's divine names. The importance of Divine love has been emphasized repeatedly in the Quran and Hadith. In this regard, the Prophet (^{Peace Be Upon Him}) says, ‘Whoever possesses three qualities will taste the flavor of true faith: that Almighty and his Prophet are dearer to him than anything else; that a person loves another purely for the sake of Almighty; and that he dislikes returning to the state of disbelief as he would dislike being thrown into the blazing fire’. Divine love is the first and foremost condition mentioned in the above Hadith for the fulfillment of *imaan* (true faith). *Salat* is the key catalyst for arousing love of Allah. The following hadith bears witness to its favor: “My servant draws near to Me by carrying out

obligatory duties and then continues to draw nearer to Me through voluntary acts until I love him" (Hussain 75). Through *salat*, a worshipper can approach Allah, get closer to Him, and form a strong bond with Him. *Salat* is a supplication to and conversation with Allah, and thus requires complete concentration. *Salat* is a very blessed and auspicious ritual. Every word spoken in it is imbued with Allah's majesty and sanctity. There are twelve thousand virtues in *salat*.

In this context of divine love and the ultimate soul, Mawlana Rumi compares the sonic distance between the human soul and the Supreme Soul to the sound of a flute. The flute is constantly weeping in anguish to be returned to its original source as it is taken from the reed bed. The flute's cry is echoed in the lines that follow:

Listen to this flute, how it complains, telling a tale of separation;

‘Ever since I was cut off from my reed bed, all have lamented my bewailing.

I want the breast torn asunder so as to reveal the agony of my yearning.

Everyone who has been separated from its origin longs to be united with it’ (Hussain 75-76).

Similarly, the human soul is constantly yearning for union with the Supreme Soul. And there is only one way to union with Almighty, which is heavenly love. Hence, *salat* is regarded as one of the means of attaining divine love. Sin, immorality, and evil deeds are regarded as impediments to the love of Allah. Indulging in sins destroys man's latent love for Allah. In this case, *salat* is regarded as one of the tools for purging sins. Syed Delawor Hossain Maizbhandari stated in this context that “prayers (*salat*), fasting (*roza*), *Hajj*, *Zakat*, and other practices are effective for abstaining from sins and are regarded as *Ibadat-e-Motnafia*”¹⁰ (Hossain, *belayot* 141). He also asserted that

¹⁰ The quoted extract is authors’ own translation from original Bengali text:

for controlling deterioration in character, *Ibadat-e-Motnafia* (preventative religious rites) is essential. The Holy Quran states, "The prayer (*salat*) prevents human beings from doing wrong, and it saves people from shameful activities." Establish a prayer (*salat*) to remember me"¹¹ (Hossain, *belayot* 141).

***Salat* Prevents Degradation of Character**

Character is a principle of human nature. It is a permanent lighthouse and source of illumination and guidance that warns travelers of potential hazards on the path. Ghazali says, "Morality is a firmly established condition'. An individual needs moral character and a committed mindset in order to be moral. All the qualities that flourish in a person of moral character are "honesty, compassion, justice, courage, gentleness, forgiveness, humility, modesty, generosity, and patience" (Hussain 78). In this case, *salat* plays an important role in preventing the deterioration of character by bringing out the above qualities. *Salat* is effective in flourishing civilizations. Because all the things that are included in *salat* are ablution and purification of clothes. Bad, obscene, and vulgar acts are destructive of civilization and destroyers of character. *Salat* is capable of developing moral character in people and transforming them into civilized and characterful individuals.

In the renowned Sufi book entitled "*Belayote Mutlaka*", Hossain asserted about human basic instincts.

Mawlana Shah Oliullah Dehlowi discussed in his book 'Al Qawlul Jameel' about the reality of nafs-ego and opined that "Discussion about attaining the conditioning of the soul: Goals of all paths lead towards attaining a state of the soul called '*nisbat*'-affiliation. It is an affiliation of peace and connection of light with The Almighty Allah. The essence of

নামাজ, রোজা, হজ্জ, জাকাত ইত্যাদি এবাদাতে মোতনাফিয়া বা পাপকার্য বিরতকারী ইবাদতের পর্যায়ভুক্ত।

¹¹ The quoted extract is authors' own translation from original Bengali text:

আমার স্মরণের জন্য নামাজ কায়েম বা বিন্যস্ত কর।

this is the spiritual conditioning of the (human) reasoning soul to acclimatize to the state of angels or to witness ‘jabarut’ or the higher world¹² (113-114).

Hossain also added that human minds are always scattered, and practicing *salat* can help them concentrate

It is exclusively related with the nature of mind. If the mind keeps roaming distraughtly, it should be brought back to its desired location and be watched over, and should be confined within its vicinity like we do with the animals. As a result the human animalistic instincts will be tamed like cows, buffalos or other animals. This method is for those people whose *nafs* is *ammāra* and whose location is in the apparent world¹⁰ (142).

The inherent virtue of *salat* is the eradication of wrongdoing and obscenity. By saying the prayer, the worshiper is able to bring out the positive traits that are dormant in him. *Salat* is an effective shield against wrongdoing, crime, obscenity, and illegal acts. A person who performs *salat* is constantly aware that Allah (^{Subhanahu} ~~OaTa~~ ^{la}) is observing their good and bad deeds. He cannot do any evil, even while hiding from Allah. He thus improves his character. It is a very effective way to prevent shameless and bad deeds. This prayer is the essence of all worship. A true worshiper is able to remove impurities from his heart by offering five daily prayers. As a result, his character becomes pure and transparent. That is why *salat* is one of the tools of character improvement. And, the person who could not correct his character through prayer and could not stop himself from committing sins, it should be understood that he did not say his prayer accordingly. In this hadith, it has been mentioned that “the

¹² The quoted extract is authors’ own translation from original Bengali text:

নফছ বা মানব সত্ত্বাতে এক স্থিতিশীল অবস্থা সৃষ্টি করা ছুফী সাধনার সমস্ত পন্থার মুখ্য উদ্দেশ্য। এই স্থিতিশীল অবস্থাকে ছুফী পরিভাষামতে নিছবত বা সম্বন্ধ বলা হয়। ইহা নছ বা মানব সত্ত্বার বিশুদ্ধতা ও পবিত্রতা জনিত আয়ত্বাধীন বন্ধু বিশেষ। ইহা দ্বারা খোদা তাঁহার শান্তি ও আলো জগতের সহিত মানবের ধারাবাহিক ও নিকটতম যোগাযোগ সৃষ্টি করে। ইহাতে ফেরেশতা জগত গুণ বিশিষ্ট বা তৎউর্দ্ধ জবরুত জগত অবগতি জনিত হাল বা অবস্থা আয়ত্ব হয়।

prayer of a person which cannot refrain from bad and shameless acts is not a prayer at all”¹³ (Ahmad).

Salat Awakens Self-realization

Self-realization is the process of striving for full potential as fundamental yet attainable, also known as self-actualization. “Self-actualization, in psychology, a concept regarding the process by which an individual reaches his or her full potential” (Sullivan). Kurt Goldstein, a physician specializing in neuroanatomy and psychiatry, pioneered it in the early half of the twentieth century. Self-realization necessitates transcending the constraints of ego consciousness. It assists a person in developing his personality by moving beyond “ego-centric identifications” (Boni 24). Among the Islamic prayers, *salat* is very effective at awakening the worshiper's consciousness. A worshiper must pay complete attention while performing *salat*. He should be aware of and comprehend what he is saying during *salat*. While offering *salat*, he must refrain from worldly thoughts and meditation. He should imagine in his mind that I am observing Allah, even though I am not, but He is. When the procedures outlined above are followed correctly, self-realization will develop in the personality of a worshiper. According to Syed Delawor Hossain,

During the prayer, when an individual searches for his ownself, he can realize his location in the spiritual levels and it becomes easier for him to know whether he is in the stations of ‘*ammara*’ ‘*lawama*’ ‘*mulhama*’ ‘*mutmainna*’, ‘*radia*, ‘*mardia*, or ‘*kamila*’¹⁴ (Hossain, *belayot* 144).

¹³ The quoted extract is authors’ own translation from original Bengali text:

যে লোককে তার নামাজ নির্লজ্জ ও খারাপ কাজ-কর্ম থেকে বিরত রাখতে পারলনা, তার নামাজ নামাজই নহে।

¹⁴ The quoted extract is authors’ own translation from original Bengali text:

এই নামাজ বা উপাসনা অবস্থায় যখন মানব নিজকে বা নিজ সজাগ সত্ত্বাকে তালাস করে তখন বুঝিতে পারে, সে কোন স্তরে আছে। “আম্মারা, লাওয়ামা, মোলহেমা, মোতমাইরা, রাজিয়া, মর্জিয়া বা কামেলা ইত্যাদিতে নিজ পরিচয় লাভ করা তখন সহজ হইয়া পড়ে।

The aforementioned quote alludes to *salat* as a means of self-realization. Self-realization elevates a worshiper to the level of 'Divine witnessing' (*mushahadah*), which refers to perceiving the outward as a reflection of the inward and knowing that the Divine can be seen in both the inner and outer worlds. In this context, Jalal ad-Din Rumi says, "This outward spring and garden are the reflection of the inward garden: the whole of this world is a single nugget, and the inward is the mine" (Boni 159).

Self-realization enables a person to fully experience who they are, aids in realizing their potential as human beings, and helps to create an unbounded space where all conflicts, ambiguity, and worries can find peace and resolution. One of the tools of self-identity is self-realization. According to a Sufi, "he who knows himself knows his Lord." In this context, there is an ancient Greek aphorism that says, "Know thyself". The famous saying of Socrates is that an unexamined life is not worth living. The word "unexamined" in this context refers to unconsciousness and a lack of self-awareness. According to transpersonal psychology, optimal wellbeing of an individual lies in the spiritual and transpersonal level of self-realization. Transpersonal psychology does not concentrate on a single issue. It is said to locate the source of the problem. For example, if a person is depressed, his depression is not prioritized. Instead, it is advised to identify the source of depression and develop "self-awareness" (Boni 5). Remembering the Creator is one way to awaken self-awareness. Also, *salat* is a great way to remember Allah. Therefore, *salat* can be said to play an important role in self-reflection, self-realization, and self-identification.

***Salat* Confirms the Nature of Seeking the Creator**

Salat is one of the means of establishing a relationship with Allah. That is why *salat* is called *mi'raj* (ascension towards and into Heaven) of the believers in the hadith. The following narration by Syed Delawor Hossain Maizbhandari reveals how the ritual system

of *salat* plays a role in achieving spiritual excellence and ensuring the search for Almighty:

1. In the first part of *salat*, i.e. commencing with the *Takbiratul ihram* [the statement of “Allahu Akbar” with the description of the excellence of Allah, raising both hands, the detachment of the family is proclaimed, and then, keeping the hands under the navel, this detachment is fully expressed.
2. It is expressed as moving forward from the animal level to the angelic level during *ruku* (bowing).
3. In the *Kuyud*, or sitting state, in this visible world, he declares himself to be the drive of Almighty's will power, thinking of himself as a stationary material like a mountain.
4. The state of *sjida* (prostration) is considered to be a loyal praiser of the Lord and uttering *tasbeeh* declares complete surrender like an angel.
5. While reciting *tashahhud*, the recitation of *durood*, *salam* in the presence of Allah (Subhanahu) is imitated during *mi'raj* of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him.).
6. In the last part of the *salat*, “it is concluded by *salam*; Which is *Shayer Ma'Allah* (the movement with Allah) after *Shayer Fillah* (the movement towards Allah), and it is wished for peace, liberation, and well-being of the people of the world which is a sign of universal love and affection”¹⁵ (Hossain, *belayot* 144).

Salat is one of the ways to awaken the love of the Almighty. When the worshiper engages in prayer with full attention, he is freed from worldly thoughts and absorbed in Almighty's thoughts. This state of the worshiper has been termed by Syed Delawor Hossain as *shayer fillah* i.e. the movement of the worshiper towards Allah. *Salat* has two aspects, one is external, and the other is spiritual. The

¹⁵ The quoted extract is authors' own translation from original Bengali text: ছালাম দ্বারা ছায়র ফিল্লাহর পর ছায়র মা'আলাহ, জগদ্বাসির শান্তি-মুক্তি ও মঙ্গল কামনা করা হয়; যাহা সার্বজনীন প্রেম প্রীতি ও ভালবাসার নিদর্শন।

external benefit is that it brings cleanliness to the human body and clothes. And the spiritual benefit is that it awakens love for the Creator. And through prayer, the love of Almighty is awakened in his heart, then he finds Almighty. And every moment of a seeker of Almighty counts as a prayer. However, they do not always pray publicly. In this context, the following verse of the Holy Quran is worth mentioning – الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُونَ (Those who remain steadfast to their prayer) (Al-Quran, 44:23). Mawlana Rumi said that “the five times prayer is the prayer that shows the way. Lovers of Almighty are always in prayer”¹⁶ (Hossain, *belayot* 142).

Salat is a way to develop a relationship with Allah, much like the Prophet Hazrat Muhammad's (Peace Be Upon Him.) *mi'raj*. We can face Almighty Allah (Subhanahu) and communicate with Him through prayer. We can get closer to Him and make our spiritual faculties sharpest and most receptive to the truth while performing *salat*. The best synchronization of our body, mind, and soul occurs during *salat*. It makes a man appear to be the most sensible, human, and “almost otherworldly” (Omer). When a worshiper realizes the presence of Almighty in *salat*, he frees his heart from carnal desires, ego and animalistic desires and immerses himself in the meditation of Almighty.

Salat Establishes Adle Motlaq (the equality of justice)

Adle mutlaq or equality of justice “refers to equality in giving rights and in enduring by obligations without discrimination for any reason, either for religion, race or colour”. Islam has placed a strong emphasis on treating everyone fairly. It is both a moral quality and a trait of the human personality. If justice is established everywhere, society and state will be dominated by peace and tranquility. The Prophet's tradition declares its significance as follows: “There are seven categories of people whom Almighty will shelter under His

¹⁶ The quoted extract is authors' own translation from original Bengali text:

পাঁচ ওয়াক্তিয়া নামাজ পথ দেখানো নামাজই বটে। খোদার প্রেমিকগণ সবসময়ে নামাজে রত থাকে।

shade on the Day when there will be no shade except His. (One is) the just leader". In the holy Quran, the Almighty Allah (^{Subhanahu} ^{OaTa'la}) declares, "Almighty commands justice and fair dealing" (Quran 16:90) ("Justice in Islam | Perspective from Quran and Sunnah - Islamic Articles").

Adle mutlaq, or equality of justice, has always been and continues to be very important. There is a lot of abject poverty and inequality in today's modern, prosperous world. According to the UNDP Human Development Report 2004, 1100 million people have a daily income of less than \$1, with 432 million living in South Asia and 323 in Sub-Saharan Africa. South and East Asia are home to "831 million undernourished individuals" (Al-Jarhi & Zarqa 44). If there was equality of justice everywhere, there would be an equal distribution of wealth. As a result, poverty would be reduced and wealth would not be accumulated in any particular individual or group.

The Islamic system of prayer provides a practical illustration of *adle mutlaq*, or equality of justice. The owner and the servant, the king and the subject, the high and the low, the good and the mean, all stand in the same row and offer the prayer while participating in the congregation. In order to establish *adle mutlaq*, or equality of justice, *salat* is crucial. In the modern era, discrimination based on race, class, and wealth has reached extreme levels. In this case, the role of *salat* in preventing caste and class discrimination is undeniable. The importance of *adle mutlaq* is immense in establishing peace and order in society and preventing injustice. Allah (^{Subhanahu} ^{OaTa'la}) continues to govern His entire creation on the basis of *adle* or righteousness. Where there is no error. Allah (^{Subhanahu} ^{OaTa'la}) has insisted on the establishment of *adle mutlaq* in society and the state.

Salat Prevents the Conflicts between Religions in the World

The main causes of religious conflict in the world are lack of tolerance, not being devoted to one's own religion, and the absence of love for Almighty in the prescribed prayers of religion. *Salat* is

the main form of prayer in Islam. Through prayer, a worshiper can develop a loving relationship with his Lord. Similarly, other religions have practices of prayer. The main purpose of every prayer is to attain nearness to the Almighty. When love for the Creator is awakened, absolute tolerance is awakened in people. Absolute tolerance is to behave tolerantly and show tolerance towards the opinions or religious doctrines of others while remaining steadfast in one's own religion or doctrine. The philosopher Voltaire said of absolute tolerance, 'I may disagree with you, but I would give my life to allow you to express it'. Islam has laid great emphasis on toleration. One of the ninety-nine names of Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{Wa Ta'ala}) is *Haleem*; which means tolerant. Freedom of expression is prioritized in Islam, and imposing one's opinion on the opinion of others is prohibited. In this regard, Al-Quran has stated - 'Let there be no compulsion in religion' (Al-Quran, 2:256) (The Quran 115).

Islam (2020) has quoted, "Religious tolerance is the realization of the expression of religious experience in the form of community" (2). According to some studies, tolerance is the primary indicator of religious harmony. The existence of tolerance among various religious communities is essential. Without tolerance, religious harmony cannot be built, and there can be no mutual respect, love, or cooperation between communities. Tolerance is a wonderful and noble concept that is embedded in the teachings of all religions, including Islam. Therefore, Islam has a viewpoint on how to implement tolerance in the face of religious diversity.

In pluralistic societies, religious diversity is common. Islam is in favor of this religious diversity. The Medina Charter is a prime example of this. The Prophet (^{Peace Be} _{upon Him.}) established the Islamic state with the Muslims, pagans, Jews, and Christians who lived in Medina and recognized each nation's security and freedom. The concept of *tawhida adayan*, or religious equality, can be useful in resolving religious conflicts. In this context, Syed Delawor Hossain Maizbhandari stated that

The concept of *tawhid-e-adyan* or religious unity, which is evident from the following verses of the holy Quran.

إن الذين آمنوا والذين هادوا والصابئين من آمن بالله واليوم الآخر
وعمل صالحا فلهم أجرهم عند ربهم ولا خوف عليهم ولا هم يحزنون

Indeed the believers (the Muslims) and those among the Jews, the Christians, and the Sabians who sincerely accept faith in Allah (Subhanahu OaTa'la) and the Last Day* and do good deeds – their reward is with their Lord; and there shall be no fear upon them nor shall they grieve.

Knowledge (*ma'rifa*) and oneness of Allah (Subhanahu OaTa'la) (*tawhid*) are the trust that Allah (Subhanahu OaTa'la) bestowed upon mankind. Accordingly, everyone is entrusted with the oneness of Allah (Subhanahu OaTa'la) and knowledge, regardless of their faith or caste. Not rendering the trust will be considered as a betrayal to Allah. *Tawhid-e-adyan*¹⁷ or the concept of religious equality views that the ethical goals of all religion are analogous and therefore, does not disrespect any religion. It is evident from the essence of the following verses:

أفتؤمنون ببعض الكتاب وتكفرون ببعض فما جزاء من يفعل ذلك منكم إلا
خزي في الحياة الدنيا ويوم القيامة يردون إلى أشد العذاب وما الله بغافل عما
تعملون

17 বেলায়তে মোত্লাকা যে তৌহীদে আদ্য্যানের বা ধর্ম ঐক্যের সমর্থক তাহার প্রমাণ স্বরূপ পবিত্র কোরআন পাকের আয়াতসমূহ নিম্নে উদ্ধৃত করা হইল “যাহারা খোদা বিশ্বাসী এবং যাহারা ইহুদী নাহারা (খৃষ্টান) বা ছাবেয়ীন, যেই হউক না কেন, যদি তাহারা আল্লাহ ও পরকালে বিশ্বাস করে এবং সংকার্য করে তাহার পুরস্কার আল্লাহতায়ালার নিকট রক্ষিত আছে। তাহাদের কোন ভয়ভীতি এবং অনুতাপ নাই।” (ছুরা বাকারা ৬২ আয়াত)
মানব জাতির উপর আল্লাহতায়ালার যে আমানত অর্পণ করিয়াছেন তাহা মায়ারেফাত ও তৌহীদই, সূতরাং ধর্ম-জাতি নির্বিশেষে প্রত্যেকেই এই তৌহীদ ও মায়ারেফাতের আমানতের বোঝা বহনকারী। যদি আদায় না করে আল্লাহতায়ালার আমানতের খেয়ানত হইবে। ধর্মসাম্য-বা-তৌহীদে আদ্য্যানের নিকট যে সর্বধর্মের নৈতিক লক্ষ্যবস্তু এক এবং কোন ধর্ম যে ইহার নিকট হয় নহে ইহার পোষকতায় নিম্ন আয়াতটি দেওয়া হইল।
“তোমরা কি খোদার কোন কেতাবকে বিশ্বাস এবং কোন কেতাবকে অবিশ্বাস কর? তোমাদের মধ্যে এই রকম যাহারা করে বা কর তাহারা সংসারে অপদস্থ এবং কেয়ামতের দিন কঠোর আজাবের দিকে প্রত্যাঘর্ষিত হইবে। আল্লাহ নিশ্চয় তোমরা যাহা করিতেছ তাহার সম্বন্ধে অবগত আছেন।” (ছুরা বাকারা ৮৫ আয়াত)

So do you believe in some of Allah's commands and disbelieve in some? So what is the reward of those who do so, except disgrace in this world? And on the Day of Resurrection they will be assigned to the most grievous punishment; and Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{OaTa'la}) is not unaware of your deeds (Hossain, *belayot* 56).

In summary, although each religion has its own set of rules for praying, the basic goal of prayer remains the same. And that is-coming closer to Almighty. In this regard, Islam (2020) argues, "Every religion must have its own rules in worship. But this difference is not a reason to divide" (Islam 4).

Spiritual excellence

The term "spirituality" is derived from the Latin root *spiritus*, which means "breath," as breath is linked to life. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (1974), the semantic interpretation of spirit is "the life-giving, vital, animating force of human beings and also the vigor, courage, and ardor that infuses life with energy" (Delgado 158). Makkar and Singh (2021) state, "Spirituality is an intrapersonal and metaphysical relationship with a higher power or transcendent force that provides motivation, purpose, and a sense of connectedness with others" (Makkar & Singh 2). Syed Delawor Hossain claims that moral humanity or moral human religion are other names for spirituality. It is not at all constrained by social or national boundaries. By adhering to some rules set forth by the Quran and the Prophet's (^{Peace Be} _{Upon Him.}) tradition, one can achieve spiritual excellence or perfect humanity. *Salat* is the first step towards spiritual excellence, or perfected humanity. Abdul Gaffar et. al, (2021) mentioned that humans are the only creatures capable of manifesting Allah's name and nature, both in the form of the Majesty and Beauty of Allah.(150). A human can communicate with the Supreme Being through *salat*. It is the most effective way to establish a relationship with Allah. The Prophet's (^{Peace Be} _{Upon Him.}) declaration backs it up, as *salat* is the *mi'raj* for believers.

Salat is the most effective way to achieve spiritual excellence. When the following factors are considered, the issue becomes clear:

1. The best quality of human character is humility. This quality is important for spiritual excellence. *Salat* is the best way to demonstrate this humility. When offering *salat*, the worshiper must submit himself to Allah's court with humility and proper etiquette. The holy Quran also praises such believers as successful who are humble while offering *salat*.
2. An essential component of achieving spiritual excellence is self-awareness. A self-aware person is able to gain self-identity. That is why it is mentioned in the holy hadith that whoever knows himself knows his Lord. *Salat* is very important in developing self-awareness. Believers who are self-conscious in prayer are defined as successful in the Holy Qur'an.
3. Self-realization is very important for spiritual excellence. A self-realized person is able to know and understand that this world is transitory. In this world we have come on tour for a while. At the end of the tour, everyone has to reach their respective destinations. And that destination is union with the Almighty. *Salat* can awaken that self-realization. When a worshiper stands in prayer freed from worldly thoughts, the higher thoughts arise in him. Then he considers the closeness of the Almighty as the most important thing.
4. Divine Love is most important for spiritual excellence. No worship is accepted in the court of Allah (Subhanahu Oa'Ta'la) without Divine Love. And prayer is one of the means to awaken that Divine Love. *Salat* is one of the tools for spiritual excellence in the eyes of those who love the Almighty. That is why they are constantly engaged in prayer.
5. Another essential component for spiritual excellence is patience and perseverance. Allah (Subhanahu Oa'Ta'la) is with those who are patient, according to the essence of the Holy Quran. That

is why Allah (^{Subhanahu}_{OaTa'la}) has instructed us to seek his assistance through prayer and patience. The power of patience can be seen in a worshiper when he is standing like a mountain in prayer. He turned away from all associations with the outside world and stepped in front of one Creator.

6. Remembrance of Allah (^{Subhanahu}_{OaTa'la}) is a key component of spiritual excellence. Remembrance of Allah (^{Subhanahu}_{OaTa'la}) brings about tranquility. And the state of mindfulness is more advanced in achieving the proximity of Allah. Therefore, *salat* is one way to remember Allah. Allah (^{Subhanahu}_{OaTa'la}) is praised at every stage of the prayer, from the opening to the closing.
7. A sin-free life is one of the most important factors in achieving spiritual excellence. If a person is used to living a sin-free life, he can have a pure soul. And those who have a pure soul are successful in attaining the proximity of Almighty. And *salat* is a shield to protect from obscenity and immorality. A person who prays frees himself from the taint of sin and accustoms himself to leading a pure life. As a result, he attains spiritual excellence and is able to attain closeness to Allah.
8. Another important adjunct to spiritual excellence is self-criticism, meditation on one's faults. In Sufi terminology, that is called *telowate wajud*. That is to meditate on the previous day's good and bad deeds. When the servant stands in prayer, the image of the good and bad of the previous day floats before his eyes. When an image of a good deed appears, he then thanks Almighty and becomes more motivated by Almighty's love. And when the image of an evil deed appears in front of him, he becomes afraid and repents while in prayer. Thus he proceeds on the path of spiritual excellence.

***Salat* Ensures Social Progress**

The prevention of social crimes is essential for social progress. Otherwise, there will be no social progress. Theft, robbery, murder, larceny, eve-teasing, gambling, adultery, drug addiction, and usury are examples of social crimes. To stop social crimes, Islam has given clear instructions. In order to stop social crimes and prepare for the Hereafter, the Holy Qur'an mentions a number of earthly penalties. The main aspect of fighting social crimes is to make each person a pure human being. *Salat* can be very helpful in this. Because the governing force that can shield a person from obscenity, immorality, and social crimes is found in *salat*. Social progress is defined as the capacity of a society to meet the basic human needs of its citizens, establish the foundations that enable citizens and communities to improve and sustain the quality of their lives, and create the conditions for all individuals to realize their full potential. Social progress is the result of progressively reducing social harm. We might be thinking about a set of moral-structural theories such as fairness, equality, democracy, and self-determination. And we could define progress as institutional reform that improves one or more of these aspects of society.

Social development can be assessed on several moral structural theories. Which has already been mentioned. Those structural theories are fully found in *salat*. One of the most important factors in ensuring social progress is fair dealing. The lack of fair dealing leads to social crimes and the destruction of society's peace. *Salat* has the potential to establish fairness among society's residents. Heritage et al. (2000) confirmed at their paper about the spiritual culture and social progress,

The most important factor of social progress at the present time and for the future must be the humanization of scientific-technical progress, education and other social organizations. As the promotion of social progress requires promoting the development of culture, an important goal in

the administration of culture is the realization of its humanistic or spiritual essence. Therefore, spiritual culture is the most successful and purposeful expression of man and society and the most important factor in social progress (17).

Congregational prayer of Islam is the best example of social progress. In this context, Syed Delowar Hossain Maizbhandari says, "Here upon social progress and spiritual excellence are closely related" (Hossain, 2009, 143). *Salat* also contains other moral structural theories such as equality, democracy, and self-determination. There are no distinctions between low and high, black and white, or poor and rich when offering *salat*. Standing shoulder to shoulder is a powerful indicator of equality. Freedom and freedom of speech are very challenging issues these days. However, Islam's prayer system offers a simple solution to this problem. *Salat* is a shining example of democracy, liberty, and freedom of speech. When everyone lines up to pray in the mosque, no one from the back row can move to the front row. In this case, the person who was first in the front line is more entitled. Even a wealthy person in the back row has no chance unless the front row is empty.

Peaceful Religious Coexistence

In order to have peaceful religious coexistence, tolerance is essential. Tolerance means to put up with, bear, or endure. Abdul Rahman & Khambali (2013) explain

Tolerance is defined as the willingness of an individual to accept others' rights to be different and respecting without being judgmental. Tolerance contributes to the shaping of human rights, pluralism, democracy and law legislation. Tolerance acknowledges that humans are naturally different in terms of appearance, character, behavior and they have the right to live peacefully without interruptions of their rights. Tolerance is an attitude of openness; to listen to different views of others, and functions two-ways; offering one's

view and accepting others, and does not affect the religious beliefs of each other in that shared space (82, 84).

Religious coexistence is possible if tolerance finds space among diverse communities. Religious coexistence is the idea that people of different religions can live together in peace and harmony. The term "coexistence" refers to a situation in which two or more groups of people are able to live side by side, with each group's differences being acknowledged and respected, and any conflicts between the groups being resolved peacefully.

Syed Delawor Hossain refers to *tawhid*, or monotheism, as the fundamental tenet in resolving religious disputes. According to Hossain, if it is possible to bring the entire world under the shadow of *tawhid*, then it is possible to ensure peaceful religious coexistence. If it is not possible to include the entire human race as Muslims, he believes that they must be included at least in *Tawhid*. He also stated that

Ramananda, Ramanuja, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Sri Loknath, Nanak, Kabir, Raja Rammohan Ray, Brahmabadi Chaitanya, and others did not accept Islam while rejecting Hindu Paganism, but accepted Tawhid¹⁸ (Hossain, *belayot* 61).

The prayer system of Islam is a shining example of the recognition of the Oneness of Almighty. It recognizes all religious values. Because one of the basic principles of religion is equality, justice, kindness, compassion, etc. And all those features are beautifully expressed in the Islamic prayer system. *Salat* ensures peaceful religious coexistence for the reasons stated above. Farrokhian et al. (2016) mentioned that the most important religious duty is a summary of Quran and Islam (256), therefore, it consists

¹⁸ The quoted extract is authors' own translation from original Bengali text: রামানন্দ, রামানুজ, স্বামী বিবেকানন্দ, শ্রীশ্রী লোকনাথ, নানক, কবীর, রাজা রামমোহন রায়, ব্রহ্মবাদী চৈতন্য প্রভৃতি, হিন্দু পৌত্তলিকতা হইতে দূরে সরিয়া ইসলাম গ্রহণ না করিলেও তওহীদের স্বীকৃতি দান করিতেছে।

of all religious values and might impact a society's cultural and social sectors. They also add that developing congregational *salat* promotes benevolence and compassion in society, and it is in such a society that political, economic, social, and cultural goals are attained. Thus, clearly, *salat* is the cornerstone of all religious practices. *Salat* promotes spiritual development regardless of its content.

Metaphorical Relationship between *Salat*, *Usul-e-Sab'a* and Spiritual (*Fakiri*) Music

Is there any Metaphorical relationship between *salat*, *usul-e-sab'a*, and spiritual (*Fakiri*) music? By considering the intrinsic objectives of *salat* and *usul-e-sab'a*, we can conclude that there is a close relationship between these two terms. But how? It is mentioned in Hadith-e-Qudsi that half of the *salat* is for the servants of Almighty. In this sense, spiritual progress and social prosperity are deeply related. For instance, in the practice of *salat* first one disassociates oneself from worldly activities by raising two hands above and describing the greatness of Almighty Allah, and then completes this disassociation by closing one's hands which symbolizes *Fana anil khalk*, or self-reliance, metaphorically, that means abandoning earthly aid and seeking refuge only in Allah (^{Subhanahu} ^{QaTa'la}) (Brandt 260). Second, the experience of marching forward from the stage of beasts to the stage of angels via *Ruku* which is a metaphor for *Fana anil hawa*, or avoiding unnecessary things because beasts always do unnecessary things but angels do not. As a result, human nature should resemble that of an angel. Thirdly, to declare sitting as the conveyance of Almighty's willpower, considering oneself still and inanimate like hills and mountains in this mundane world, which is a metaphorical symbol of *Fana Anil Irada*. In Sufi terms, surrendering one's will to the will of Allah (^{Subhanahu} ^{QaTa'la}) is called "*Fana anil Irada*" (Hoque et al. 25). Maizbhandari Tariqa accepts all religions. The founders of the Maizbhandari tariqa Ghawth al-Azam Hazrat Mawlana Shah Sufi Syed Ahmad Ullah,

“developed a fairly elaborate (*sapta paddhati*) methodology” (Bertocci 13). This method is constructed with the seven types of the pursuit method. It is divided into two facets, the three types of *fana* (the annihilation) and “the four types of *mauth* (the death)” (Bhuiyan 144). The basic principle of Maizbhandari tariqa is *Usul-e-sab’a*, which can be practiced by all humankind regardless of caste or creed. So universally, this method can be applied to prevent the degradation of human character, which is the fundamental objective of *salat*.

Hossain (2009) deeply observed the essence of music for increasing devotion of the human mind to the Almighty, and he compared this event to the goal of *salat* because *salat* means the rekindling of the dormant love of the human heart for the Almighty.

The tradition of spiritual music (*sama* ‘) was practiced among the Sufis in the past and as in the present. Such spiritually intoxicated heart enables a wayfarer to easily forget about his surroundings and uplifts in a state of sinless reality, which is the ultimate objective of *salat*. It makes the wayfarer float in the ocean of Divine love and liberates him from the temptations of his own egoistic desires. Whoever experiences the taste of this Divine ocean, has the opportunity to make his impure soul annihilated and transform its reality like an object fallen in a salt lake (becomes salty). His ‘self’ attains the attribute of purity. They Holy Quran said, “Indeed good deeds wipe out the evil deeds¹⁹ (118).

¹⁹ The quoted extract is authors’ own translation from original Bengali text:

এই ফকিরী গান বাজনা ছুফীদের ভিতর পূর্বেও ছিল, বর্তমানেও আছে। এই ভাবপ্রবণ চিত্ত এমন এক বস্তু, যাহা ছালেক বা এই পথের পথিককে নেহায়েত সহজে সবকিছু ভুলাইয়া এক পাপ বিরত অবস্থায় পৌঁছাইয়া দেয় যাহা ছালাত বা নামাজের উদ্দেশ্য। ইহা মনের সমস্ত কামনা-বাসনা ভুলাইয়া খোদা পথচারীকে খোদার প্রেম- সমুদ্রে ডুবাইয়া দেয়। এই প্রেম সমুদ্রের লবণাক্ত আত্মদে আত্মাদিত হইয়া উঠিলে তাহার অপবিত্র হান্তি বা সত্তা বিলুপ্ত হইয়া লবণহ্রদে পতিত বস্তুর মত লবণাক্ত হইতে বাধ্য হয়। তখন সেই ব্যক্তির সত্তা বা নফছ পবিত্র সাব্যস্ত হয়। যেমন কোরআনেঃ- নিশ্চয় “হাছনাত” বা পুণ্য “ছইয়াত” বা পাপকে বিনাশ করে।

In the Eyes of the Visitors

Sunipun Barua, a 40-year-old individual employed in the banking sector, frequently experiences a strong attraction towards Maizbhandar Sharif. Upon my inquiry regarding the motivations underlying his recurrent visits, he responded with a profound emotional state, articulating, "I experience an inexplicable and profound sense of connection in this place." The individual's statement implies that in the spiritual environment of Maizbhandar Sharif, they encounter an indescribable and profound emotion that compels them to revisit the place repeatedly (Barua, Sunipun. Interview. Conducted by Mejbaul Alam Bhuiyan. 2023).

Nirjon Chakma, a student enrolled in the Department of Pali at Chittagong University, originates from the picturesque hilly area of Khiram, Fatikchori. He regularly visits the revered Maizbhandar pilgrimage site. When I inquired about his attitudes towards engaging with music, his response provided valuable insights. The individual expressed that the act of engaging with music enables them to establish a deeply intimate connection with the Divine. According to the individual's statement, they experience a palpable sense of proximity to the Divine, which imbues them with the ability to attain an elevated level of focus. The viewpoint Nirjon offers reveals a particular facet of his spiritual journey. By means of music, the individual explores a means of establishing a connection with the transcendent, wherein harmonies and cadences appear to surpass the physical realm, resonating with a more profound aspect of their existence. The individual's proclivity for spiritual focus and their capacity to achieve inner balance serve to underscore the profound spiritual importance that music holds in their lives. Nirjon Chakma utilises music as a means to establish a deep spiritual connection and achieve a state of tranquil concentration that aligns with his visits to the revered sanctuary of Maizbhandar (Chakma, Nirjon. Interview. Conducted by Mejbaul Alam Bhuiyan. 2023).

I asked Bosirul Alam, Khotib of the ancient historical Maizbhandar Shahi Jame mosque, what he thought about the importance of *salat* in spiritual upliftment and ensuring the advancement of society and coexistence. He responds,

Modern science has improved a lot in today's world. Civilization is progressing, but the main element of civilization is people. If people are not physically, mentally, and spiritually healthy, then this civilization will not sustain itself for long. Therefore, there is a need for coordination between the external and internal worlds. I strongly believe that *Salat* can help to balance our external, internal, and spiritual worlds (Alam, Bosirul. Interview. Conducted by Mejbaul Alam Bhuiyan. 2023).

Miss Kabita, a psychologist, expressed her thoughts based on her practical experience working in various communities.

Salat, Zikir, and forgiveness; Taqdeer belief; patience; and surrender to the Almighty—these actions free men from mental turmoil. Regular attention to religious matters brings peace of mind (Kabita. Interview. Conducted by Mejbaul Alam Bhuiyan. 2023).

Togawa Masahiko, professor at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS), who has visited Maizbhandar sharif on behalf of the 'Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa (ILCAA) for research purposes, met with Syed Irfanul Hoque, who is *Nayeb Sajjāda nashīn* of Gausia Ahmadia manzil at Maizbhandar sharif in September 2023. I interviewed Masahiko Hoque and asked him why he thinks people come to Maizvander Sharif now, and what its contribution to humanity in the world is. In response,

I first visited Maizbhander Sharif 25 years ago, and today, I return. And I was charmed by its communal spirit, secularism, and inclusivity. Maizbhander is a Sufi center, but along with it come Chakmas, Hindus, Buddhists, and people

from different cultures. When I came to Orsh, I saw a combination of people from different cultures that overwhelmed me. In addition to Fatikchori, Raozan, and Hathazari, I visited the Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim communities to further our research objectives. They also come to Maizbhandar in groups and accept other religions easily. There is tolerance among them. There are people from all places. I want to show the world the beauty of humanity's coexistence through our research (Masahiko, Togawa. Interview. Conducted by Mejbaul Alam Bhuiyan. 2023).

Conclusion

What prayer do ye know? Unfortunate! From whose hand did you free your hand? (Hossain, *wilayat* 230). This conversation occurred with Syed Aminul Haq Farhadabdi and Gausul Azam Maizbhandari. Hossain mentions this spiritual experience with Syed Golam Rahman Maizbhandari in his *Belayote Mutlaka* book to illustrate the inner meaning of *salat*²⁰. “Mufti Mawlana Syed Aminul Hoque of Farhadabadi once told me,

On one Friday I came to Hazrat Aqdas. When it was Juma prayer time, I finished my ablution in the pond and came back. Hazrat Mawlana Shah Sufi Syed Golam Rahman (Q.) came before me and took my right hand under his left arm and locked it in his hand. He was absorbed in spiritual intoxication and started pacing and was singing some gazals.

²⁰ ফরহাদাবাদ নিবাসী মুফতী মওলানা সৈয়দ আমিনুল হক ছাহেব (রঃ) একদা আমাকে বলেনঃ

“কোন এক জুম্মাবারে আমি হজরত আকদাছের খেদমতে হাজির হই। নামাজের সময়, সামনের পুকুরে অঙ্কুরিয়া উপরে উঠিয়া আসিলে হজরত মওলানা শাহ্ ছুফী সৈয়দ গোলাম রহমান (কঃ) ছাহেব, আমার সামনে আসিয়া আমার ডান হাত খানা তাঁহার বাম বগলে চাপিয়া হাতের কজা নিজ হাতে আবদ্ধ করিয়া ভাব বিভোর চিত্তে গজল পড়িতে পড়িতে পায়চারী করিতে থাকেন। ওদিকে মসজিদে খোতবা প্রায় শেষ হইয়া আসিতেছে শুনিয়া তাঁহার হাত হইতে নিজ হাত কোন প্রকারে মুক্ত করিয়া নামাজে গিয়া হাজির হইলাম। নামাজ সমাপনের পর পূর্ণঃ হজরত কেবলার খেদমতে হাজির হইলে তিনি আমার উপর চটিয়া যান এবং বলিতে থাকেন, “তুই কি নামাজ জানিস! কাহার হাত হইতে নিজকে মুক্ত করিলি কমবখত!” আমি ভীত হইয়া ক্ষমা চাহিলাম।” মওলানা রুমীর মছনবী মনে পড়িল। অল্পক্ষণ “একলহমা” আউলীয়ার সঙ্গ, শতবর্ষ এবাদত হইতে শ্রেষ্ঠ

I could hear the Friday sermon was about to end. I struggled to free my hand from his grip and attended the prayer. After finishing the prayer, I again attended to Hazrat Qebila. He was angry and started shouting at me, ‘What prayer do ye know? Unfortunate! From whose hand did you free your hand?’ I was scared and asked for forgiveness. I remembered what Mawlana Rumi said, A moment with the friends of Allah (^{Subhanahu} **Ōa’Ta’la**) is better than the hundreds years of selfless obedience (*ibadat*) (Hossain, *wilayat* 230).

The role of *salat* is immense in achieving spiritual excellence and ensuring social progress. *Salat* is not only a religious ritual, but its inner form is more comprehensive, far-reaching and influential than the external form of *salat*. Therefore, Syed Delawor Hussain highlighted the beauty of *salat* as follows, this form of worship is a wonderful gift of Prophet Muhammad Mustafa Ahmad Mojtaba (^{Peace Be} **Ōa’Ta’la** ^{Upon Him.}). Such a perfect universal all-round beautiful system of worship was not practiced before. Its invocation method is also completely universal and melodically meaningful. It is equally cautionary for those seeking salvation (Hossain, *belayat* 144). In today's world, religious conflict has taken a serious shape. Lack of peaceful religious coexistence is clearly observed. Where the fundamentals of religion are peace, harmony, love, kindness and humanity, we see religious strife and discord. And now we can see the penetration of various social crimes in the social system. The youth of our society are losing their religious values and are indulging in various vices. To deal with such a situation, it is necessary to spread the basic education of religion and make everyone aware about it. Religious conflict can be avoided and peaceful coexistence possible if the spiritual development and social development aspects of the Islamic prayer system are properly followed.

Works Cited

- Abdul Rahman, Inur Farhana, And Khadijah Mohd Khambali.
 “Religious Tolerance in Malaysia : Problems and Challenges.” *International Journal of Islamic Thought*, vol. 3, 2013, pp. 81-91.
- Ahmad, Firoz. “চরিত্র গঠনে নামাযের ভূমিকা.” *The Sunrise Today*, 16 February 2018,
<https://www.thesunrisetoday.com/demo2/news/43065>.
- Al-Fawzan, Salih. *The Virtues of Salat*. Translated by Abu Azubayr Shadedd Muhammad, IIN Publications, 2010.
- Ali, Abdullah Yusuf, translator. *The Quran*. King Fahd Holy Quran Printing Complex., 1410 A.H.
- Al-Jarhi, Mabid Ali, and Muhammad Anas Zarqa. “Redistributive Justice in a Developed Economy: An Islamic Perspective.” *Advances In Islamic Economics And Finance*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2007, pp. 43-74.
- Azad, Mohammad Abul Kalam. “Role of Islam in Reducing Social Crimes: Bangladesh Perspective.” *NORTH AMERICAN ACADEMIC RESEARCH (NAAR) JOURNAL*, vol. 4, no. 5, 2021, pp. 215-225. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4768676>.
- Bertocci, Peter J. "A Sufi Movement in Modern Bangladesh." *Oakland Journal Number 3: Fall 2001* (2001).
- Bhuiyan, Mejbaul Alam. “The Role Of A Sufi Leader During The Pandemic For Maizbhandari Sufi Community: A Case Of Syed Emdadul Hoque Maizbhandari, Fatikchari, Bangladesh.” *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, vol. 6, no. 10, 2022, pp. 135-49.
- Boni, LAUREN Julia. *The Sufi journey towards nondual Self-realization*. University of Lethbridge, 2010.

- Brandt, Carmen. "Folklore in Context: Essays in Honor of Shamsuzzaman Khan." *Asian Ethnology*, vol. 70, no. 2, 2011, pp. 259-262.
- Callender, Karisse A., et al. "Prayers and Mindfulness in Relation to Mental Health among First-Generation Immigrant and Refugee Muslim Women in the USA: An Exploratory Study." *Journal of Religion and Health*, vol. 61, no. 5, 2022, pp. 3637-3654.
- Choi, Jiwon. "The murder of George Floyd." *MPR News*, <https://www.mprnews.org/crime-law-and-justice/killing-of-george-floyd>. Accessed 18 February 2023.
- Delgado, Cheryl. "A discussion of the concept of spirituality." *Nursing Science Quarterly*, vol. 18, no. 2, 2005, pp. 157-162. 10.1177/0894318405274828.
- Farrokhian, Mahmoud Reza, et al. "A Reanalysis of Social-Cultural Impacts and Functions of Worship: A Case Study on Salah (Namaz)." *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 7, no. 4, 2016, pp. 249-256. 10.5901/mjss.2016.v7n4s1p249.
- Gaffar, Abdul, et. al. "Self Actualization According to Bediuzaman Said Nursi (1877- 1960) in Risale-I Nur." *Psychology and Education Journal*, vol. 58, no. 2, 2021, pp. 141-53, <https://doi.org/10.17762/pae.v58i2.1064>.
- Heritage, Cultural, et al. *Spiritual Values and Social Progress*. Edited by Said Shermukhamedov and Victoriya Levinskaya, vol. 1, The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy Gibbons Hall B-20 620 Michigan Avenue, NE Washington, D.C. 20064, 2000.
- "Hadith of Gabriel." *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadith_of_Gabriel. Accessed 11 February 2023.

- Hamdan, Aisha. "A Case Study of a Muslim Client: Incorporating Religious Beliefs and Practices." *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2007, pp. 92-100. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1912.2007.tb00052.x>.
- Hoque, Shahjada Syed Irfanul, et al. "Application of Seven Principles Of Maizbhandari Tariqa On Business Ethics For Sme's Sustainability In Fatikchari, Bangladesh." *American International Journal of Business and Management Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2021, pp. 20-33. <https://doi.org/10.46545/ajibms.v3i1.206>.
- Hossain, Syed Delawor. *Belayote Mutlaqa*. Syed Emdadul Hoque Maizbhandari, 2009.
- ... *Manob Sobhoyta*. 6 ed., Chattogram, Maizbhandari Prokashoni, 2012.
- ... *Wilayat-e Mutlaqa*. Translated by Muhammad Muhiuddin, 1st ed., Chattogram, Darul Irfan Research Institute (DIRI), 2023.
- ... *Seven Steps to Spiritual Intelligence*. Kube Publishing Limited, 2015.
- Ijaz, Shahid, et al. "Mindfulness in Salah Prayer and its Association with Mental Health." *Journal of Religion and Health*, vol. 56, no. 6, 2017, pp. 2297-307. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-017-0413-1>.
- "International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination United Nations." *the United Nations*, 21 March 2022, <https://www.un.org/en/observances/end-racism-day>. Accessed 15 February 2023.
- Iqbal, Muhammad. *Shekwa wa Jawabe Shikwa*. Translated by Tamizur Rahman, Bagi Kunjaloy Pathagor, 2008.

- Islam, Muhammad Hifdil. "Tolerance Limitation In Facing Religious Diversity Based On The Teaching Of Islam | Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam." *Rumah Jurnal Institut Pesantren KH. Abdul Chalim*, 7 February 2020, <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v3i1.483>.
- "Justice in Islam | Perspective from Quran and Sunnah – Islamic Articles." *QuranReading.com*, 9 January 2018, <http://www.quranreading.com/blog/justice-in-islam-perspective-from-quran-and-sunnah/>. Accessed 10 March 2023.
- Makkar, Shikha, and Ajay Kumar Singh. "Development of a spirituality measurement scale." *Current Psychology*, vol. 40, no. 3, 2021, pp. 1490-1497. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-018-0081-7>.
- Najam, Khawaja Saad, et al. "Impact of Islamic practices on the mental health of Muslims." *International Dental & Medical Journal of Advanced Research*, vol. 5, 2019, pp. 1-6.
- Omer, Spahic. "Salat: The Believers' Mi'raj." *IslamiCity*, <https://www.islamicity.org/77063/salat-the-believers-miraj/>. Accessed 9 March 2023.
- "Salat Definition & Meaning." *Merriam-Webster*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/salat>. Accessed 19 September 2022.
- Sayeed, Shabbir Ahmed, and Anand Prakash. "The Islamic prayer (Salah>Namaaz) and yoga togetherness in mental health." *Indian journal of psychiatry*, vol. 55, Suppl 2, 2013, p. S224.
- Sullivan, Erin. "Self-actualization | psychology | Britannica." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 10 February 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/science/self-actualization>. Accessed 4 March 2023.
- "Surah Al-Ma'arij." *Quraan Shareef*, <http://www.quraanshareef.org/Surah-Al-Maarij>. Accessed 8 March 2023.

Zikr, an Antidote to Mental Stress: A Study from the Islamic Perspective

Mohammad Abdur Rahman¹

Abstract

Excessive worldly attachment and keenness on mundane pursuits are causing tremendous restlessness of mind which disrupts mental serenity resulting in huge stress on the psyche of individuals. Many are getting exhausted in quest of such a means by which they can get rid of such heavy stress. The ramification of mental stress is also diverse. A number of studies were done in order to get over this issue. Different mentors, religious leaders and spiritual guides recommended varied spiritual or religious meditative practices such as Transcendental meditation, Mindfulness, Yoga, etc. to escape such stress. Zikr or remembrance of Allah (Subhanahu Oa Ta Ta) can be one of the most effective practical antidotes to such psychological pressure. Moreover, Zikr is among the rituals, which has been recommended for the tranquility of mind and soul and as the main pleasing performance to Allah (Subhanahu Oa Ta Ta) both in the holy Qur'an and Prophetic traditions. This study aims to examine from an Islamic perspective to what extent Zikr or Remembrance of Allah (Subhanahu Oa Ta Ta) can play an effective role as a means of mental stress recovery. Analytical and descriptive approaches will be used to assess the collected data. The results from this study demonstrate that among other means, the Zikr of Allah (Subhanahu Oa Ta Ta) is the most useful tool for the relief of mental stress. According to the results, Zikr performance has a substantial positive impact on the improvement of heart health. The findings of this study may persuade people to practise Zikr as a powerful means of relieving emotional and psychological stress. Numerous studies have been conducted in the past to determine the benefits of Zikr or remembrance of Allah (Subhanahu Oa Ta Ta). We believe that our research is not the last and that further investigation to be conducted in the future will make the issue clearer and have a substantial impact on mental health recovery.

Keywords Zikr, Remembrance, Mental Stress, Islamic Perspective, Prophetic Traditions.

¹ Assistant Teacher, Chittagong Government High School, Chattogram, Bangladesh

Introduction

Our physical and spiritual centres are located in the heart. It is essential to maintain our bodily existence. The heart, which is so vital to our physical existence, is also a spiritual treasure and the epicentre of our capacity for spiritual perception. The heart rules over all of the organs, including the mind. The hands start to shake and the heartbeat quickens as a panic episode hits. It is in charge of the work that the human soul does. The spiritual function performed by the heart is higher than its physical function in all respects since it is the human spirit, not the outward appearance that defines who we are as people. The heart, therefore, is equally important for both the body and mind.

This human heart is often burdened with stress, resulting in the psychological feelings of distress and anxiety. Man goes under huge pressure. When the human body responds to this pressure the heart is filled with stress which we also call mental stress. Multifaceted and multidimensional pressure mostly results from worldliness. Again worldliness is the result of extreme attachment to the worldly affluent that is created from lust, greed and desire for its acquirement and procurement, for fulfilling materialistic needs, and thus feelings of tension, worried thoughts, disappointment, etc. are generated within individuals. These stimulators, on the one hand, make men overburdened with stress and on the other hand, individuals became increasingly restless to find ways to getting relieved from this manifold stress. Today, scientists, particularly psychologists, psychiatrists, religious leaders and social workers, face a struggle with this issue. Numerous studies have so far been done in order to get a suitable means of complete relief of this stress but a fitting antidote to such stress seems yet to be discovered. Various methods, including behavioural modification, psychotherapy, behavioural therapy, psychological rehabilitation, and homoeopathy, have all been tried. It might be argued, nonetheless, that no one has entirely been

acknowledged to obtain a complete recovery from promoting symptoms. In this case, outward and inward or spiritual practices of Islam in our daily life may help us, to a great deal, lead a restful and pressure-free life and have a stress-free mind fully contented with utmost divinity.

Specialists like psychiatrists, psychologists, etc. suggest diverse therapies for its cure including practical, natural, historical, cultural or anecdotal remedies. Healthcare providers prescribe different drugs for their treatment along with some follow-ups. Likewise, religious masters and spiritual guides also recommend various contemplative exercises to overcome this stress. These remedial measures though act to a limited degree, a full-pledged curative dose is still in need of search. In that case, among varied thoughtful practices, *Zikr* or remembrance of Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{OaTa'la}) is found to be highly recommended by the Islamic texts as the most advantageous means for the relief of such stress. McCraty and his colleagues introduced the term *physiological coherence* to describe “the degree of order, harmony, and stability in the various rhythmic activities within living systems over any given time period” (McCraty and Shaffer 55). People can raise their cardiac coherence levels by using a set of actions and coherence procedures like *zikr*. *zikr* or remembering Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{OaTa'la}) is the primary way that Muslims express their gratitude to their Lord, Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{OaTa'la}), which has a direct impact on people’s emotional, psychological, and physical well-being and can influence the levels of their heart’s coherence. Again the Qur’an affirms tranquility of the heart which is achieved through the remembrance of Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{OaTa'la}). “Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{OaTa'la}): for, without doubt, in the remembrance of Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{OaTa'la}) do hearts find satisfaction” (Qur’an, 13:28), (Ali). Remembrance components play a vital role in keeping individuals from getting into negative elements that are prone to stress-feeling. Islam’s greatest spiritual potency is its emphasis on remembrance or *zikr*.

In Islam, remembrance is a part of every act of worship. Even the Salat (prayer) spirit, which is the foundational practice of religion, is remembrance (*Zikrullah*). Thus, remembrance of Allah (^{Subhanahu}_{OaTa'la}) encourages people to move away from materialistic views and toward spirituality, restores optimism in humanity and the human heart becomes contented. Not to speak that a pleased and satisfied mind is completely free from any sort of anxiety and stress.

In this paper, we attempt to investigate “*Zikr* (Remembrance of Allah (^{Subhanahu}_{OaTa'la})) from the view of the Holy Qur’an and Prophetic narrations. The Holy Qur’an is the primary research source for all divine, religious, and humanistic themes because it is the divine revelation that provides all constructive counsel. Since the Holy Qur’an is the foundation of all philosophical considerations pertaining to the divine and holy entity, all of its verses are “*Zikr*”.

This study aims to (1) find how Islamic practical and spiritual values and spiritual appreciation can be a means of transforming stressful life into tranquility, (2) investigate how the holy Qur’an and Hadith (Prophetic traditions) strongly spoke of *zikr* as a tool for acquiring mental serenity and tranquility, and (3) identify ‘Remembrance of Allah (^{Subhanahu}_{OaTa'la})’ or *zikr* a comprehensive recovery approach to address mental stress problems.

The study comprises an introduction, a review of the relevant literature, objectives, research questions, a methodology, findings and results, discussions, recommendations, limitations and a conclusion.

Literature review

***Zikr, Zikrullah or Remembrance of Allah* (^{Subhanahu}_{OaTa'la}):** There is no doubt that Allah’s (^{Subhanahu}_{OaTa'la}) beautiful *Zikr* bestows unending bounties and has a majestic luminosity. In numerous verses of the Holy Qur’an, the value of *zikr* is strongly underlined. The amount of Hadith on this topic is obviously far too enormous; it is comparable to the numerous, massive Hadith books like Bukhari,

Muslim, Abu Dawood, etc. Numerous Hadiths on the topic of *zikr* can be found in each of these books.

Literally, *Zikr*, also spelt *Dhikr*, stands for remembrance of Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{OaTa'la}) in mind. Recollect the Holy entity of Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{OaTa'la}) in the heart. The word “remembrance,” which has Arabic roots, is etymologically defined as “to safeguard anything by mentioning or remembering.” It also implies “glory and praise,” which refers to the Qur’an as well as religion, prayer, and praise. The term *zikr* (Remembrance) derives from the word ‘zakara’, ‘yazkuru’, or ‘zikran’. There are several different meanings for this term such as remembering, mentioning, paying attention, telling, guarding, taking lessons, knowing and understanding. And terminologically, “*Dhikr* is to pronounce with the tongue (Zuhri et al. 45). Even though this concept later evolved into “remembering,” recalling something frequently causes the tongue to call it by its common name. Similarly, speaking aloud might help the heart remember more of what is said. The term “*zikr*” appears 280 times in the Qur’an; initially, the U’lama called for it to serve as the Arabic antonym for the word “forget,” but it has since taken on numerous meanings such as “remembering,” as remembering something will compel the tongue to always and repeatedly mention what was said.

Yet, *zikr* does not necessarily mean only oral recitation of some conventional words or sentences like *SubhanAllah*, *Alhamdulillah* and *Allahu Akbar*, etc. rather, it is a set of physical actions too. It encompasses a variety of functions of the tongue and heart. It entails being mindful of Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{OaTa'la}), which involves considering Him and bringing Him up constantly all time and across all spheres of life. In a broader aspect, *zikr* implies any performance by which the divine essence of Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{OaTa'la}) is imagined with the soul or recalled in the heart.

The Qur'an used the word *zikr* both for the sacred scriptures revealed before the Qur'an and the Qur'an itself (Qur'an, 15:9). The entire Qur'an is *zikr* with which Allah (^{Subhanahu} ^{OaTa'la}) is remembered.

Zikr also was used for recitation, understanding and Quranic admonition (Qur'an, 54:17). This is because by the recitation of the Qur'an Allah (^{Subhanahu} ^{OaTa'la})'s remembrance is made and Allah (^{Subhanahu} ^{OaTa'la})'s omnipresence is imagined.

One of the meanings of *zikr* is *Salah* (prayer, Jum'a Prayer) (Qur'an, 62:9). For verily through the performance of *Salah* Allah (^{Subhanahu} ^{OaTa'la}) is solemnly remembered. Thus, *zikr* though has been used in various meanings, it is essentially a practice of "remembering" God by chanting his name repeatedly as Allah (^{Subhanahu} ^{OaTa'la}) says, "Then do ye remember Me; I will remember you. Be grateful to Me and reject not faith" (Qur'an, 2:152). The *zikr* developed into a formula from a simple recitation of the Qur'an and other sacred texts among ascetics and mystics such as '*La'ilaha illa Allah*', (There is no god but Allah), '*Allahu Akbar*', (Allah is the Greatest'), '*al-hamdu lillah*', (Praise be to Allah), '*astaghfirullah*', (I ask Allah's forgiveness), etc. that is repeated aloud or softly, along with a specific stance and breathing pattern.

Mental stress: Mental stress is a form of stress that occurs because of how events in one's external or internal environment are perceived (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). It is almost inevitable that everyone runs into daily stress. Deadlines need to be met, more duties need to be completed than initially appear possible, and limitless outside pressure always presents unexpected challenges. In today's society, mental stress is a major concern because it is either directly or indirectly linked to around 50% of work-related illnesses. Despite having psychological roots, stress has an impact on a number of physiological functions in the body. Current statistics suggest that as much as "One-third of the American population is on antidepressants" (Seaward 38).

In the year 2021, WHO reports that mental or neurological illnesses will have an impact on one in four persons worldwide in the course of their life. On the other hand, “depression affects 264 million people in the world, while around half of all mental health conditions start by age 14, with suicide the second leading cause of death in young people aged 15 to 29” (UN leads call to protect most vulnerable from mental health crisis during and after COVID-19).

An estimated 25% people suffer from mental health disorders worldwide. Almost 7 million suffer from anxiety and depression in Bangladesh”, and “the levels of depression, anxiety, and stress have been reported to be as high as 54.3%, 64.8%, and 59.0%, respectively (Arusha and Biswas 1).

Self-injury, alcoholism, drug abuse, and suicide are just a few of the more prevalent ways that people today deal with stress. Psychological practices like deep meditation, mindfulness, etc. are some lucrative therapies recommended for stress reduction.

Modern theories see stress as a danger to homeostasis, with reactions being somewhat distinct based, among other things, on the precise challenge and the organism’s perception of and seeming ability to deal with the stressor. Stress is a state of pressure, either emotionally or physically. Any circumstance or thinking that gives you cause for frustration, anger, or anxiety can trigger it. However, Stress, from a spiritual perspective, “is a perceived disconnection from our divine source” (Seaward 66).

Mental Stress vs. meditation: A pioneering TM (Transcendental Meditation) practitioner Dr. Herbert Benson did a number of academic studies at Harvard University to investigate the efficacy of meditation. The research showed that “regular meditation tends to lower the resting heart rate and the resting blood pressure, boost immune function, improve sleep quality, and improve several other physiological functions associated with

relaxation” (Seaward 189). Meditation, of course, works in reducing stress but not to the extent of satisfaction. “Meditation is nothing more than clearing the mind of thoughts and feelings that are taking up space and crowding out more important things that really need attention” (Seaward 189). Distancing from irrelevant chitchat and things that do not necessitate more attention is the main theme of meditation. It also associates with breathing functions. It makes one feel relatively light but contentment is another thing that requires something different.

Mental Stress vs. Mindfulness: Mindfulness is a unique type of meditative exercise that involves actively participating in each moment as it occurs while fully aware of your present experience.

Mindfulness, in the opinion of American professor emeritus of medicine and mindfulness specialist Jon Kabat-Zinn, is paying attention in a certain way—on purpose, in the present moment. Mindfulness liberates us from past and future memories and fantasies by bringing the reality of the present moment clearly into focus. One of the early Buddhist commentaries states that mental clarity is the presence of the mind and attentiveness to the present.

Mindfulness meditation can help individuals to begin enjoying life in the present. “It (mindfulness meditation) helps you to slow down and relax; to smell the flowers and enjoy each moment as it comes. As you practice mindfulness, layers of negative thoughts and emotions disappear and you begin to sense a feeling of freedom, peace and joy” (Espirito 17). Through mindfulness when you meditate, you are also working toward achieving a mental state wherein your mind is calm and under control rather than racing with thoughts.

Mindfulness is a skill that enables people to become more aware of their bodily and emotional state without becoming dragged down in self-criticism and self-judgment. “Mindfulness done well allows one to regain control over destructive feelings and even to capture positive memories that can be savoured at a

later date” (Espirito 21). In Mindfulness, one tries to escape the negativity or block out unpleasant thoughts that he experienced in the past and which might influence his future, by focusing only on the present moment and current experiences. It can bring a feeling of joy and freedom for the time being, or one may feel relaxed through the practice of mindfulness. But complete satisfaction and permanent happiness of mind is an utterly different thing that cannot be achieved only by *zikr* or remembrance of Allah (^{Subhanahu} ^{ŌaTa’la}) which the holy Qur’an guarantees.

In other words, mindfulness is an attempt to stay free from stress at present by being forgetful of negative thoughts of the past and their probable ill consequences in future. On the other hand, *zikr* is such a divine means that makes the state of a stress-free mind eternal.

Stress and Spirituality: Stress and spirituality are equal partners in the dance of life when viewed from the perspective of balance. On December 31, 1999, in an interview during the televised millennium celebration Reverend Billy Graham’s cautionary expression was:

I am afraid that people are losing their faith in God and replacing it with a faith in technology that will solve all our problems. They are being led down the wrong path. There must be a change in the human heart (Seaward 69).

Transforming from a motive of fear to love and from a restless to a stress-free heart—these changes are what Graham described as a spiritual awakening (or remembering). Today, there are some expressions that are popularly used: (1) *Spiritual Hunger*, which refers to a search or hunger for truth that cannot be satisfied by one particular traditional religious practice, and (2) *Spiritual Bankruptcy*, a concept which connotes a sense of moral decay, possibly brought on by an emptiness that cannot be satisfied by an abundance of material possessions. (3) *Spiritual Dormancy* which refers to those who, for a variety of reasons, choose not to value

the significance of the spiritual component of health and well-being. These terms, therefore, make the sense that the particular types of a blend of both religious and spiritual practices other than mundane rehabilitations are really required for complete mental rest and gratification. The following statement reveals how immense impact spirituality has on the stress recovery process. Brian Luke states, “We may be wired for stress, but, according to Andrew Newberg, M.D., we are also wired for spirituality (Seaward 26).

Newberg explains, in his book *Why God Won't Go Away*, facts gleaned from brain-imaging data gathered from nuns of the Franciscan order and Tibetan Buddhists who practise thoughtful prayer and meditation, respectively. A SPECT (single photon emission computed tomography) equipment demonstrates how blood flow to the prefrontal cortex interacts with neuronal activity, indicating how humans reports a transcendent or mystical experience. According to Newberg’s findings, the filter of conscious thinking is unplugged when the brain is deprived usual sensory information, and as a result, space and time are realized differently. “Neurotheology,” the study of the neurobiology of spirituality, is a new field of study that has emerged from the clinical hunt for the cerebral “G” spot in the brain. Any form of meditation that fosters the relaxation response appears to heighten these euphoric feelings. Emerging thought leaders in this field of study have unanimously agreed that each person has the brain circuitry necessary to have a mystical experience.

Zikr and Mental stress: Sarwari & Abdul Wahab conducted a study on 20 participants from 10 different countries through the application of a mixed method research design, which included the use of HRV-biofeedback technology and some interviews, in order to assess the likely correlation between *zikr* and heart coherence, intrapersonal communication of Muslim university students from different nationalities. The findings confirm that

Zikr performance had significant positive effects on the increase of heart coherence among the participants, and heart coherence is among the main factors that affect the process of intrapersonal communication within the human body (Sarwari and Abdul Wahab 110).

Brian Luke further states that, the simple fact is that there are countless methods for dealing with stress that honour the timeless knowledge of a strong, vivacious spirit. While some tactics are more focused on taking action, others expressly address mindsets. Some methods concentrate on the mind, while others are concerned with the body, the spirit of the individual, or the emotions. Each method focuses on the aspects of harmony, self-renewal, and balance in life. *Zikr* or remembrance, together with other spiritual activities including remembrance, prayers, supplication and recitation of the Qur'an, that are followed on a regular basis can have a tremendously progressive impact, particularly in the treatment and recovery of mental stress.

This remedial treatment utilizes a spiritual approach using remembrance, prayer, guidance and recitation of the Qur'an, fardhu 'ain, fasting, other circumcision practices, meditation and prayer with teachers (Hadzrullathfi Syed Omar and Mohamad 1073).

This therapeutic approach is founded on the Qur'an and Hadith by integrating the teachings of Sufism. The message of Allah (^{Subhanahu} ^{OaTa'la}) in two respective verses serves as more confirmation of this, (Qur'an, 17:82) and (Qur'an, 10:57). According to the researchers, Islamic "psycho spiritual therapy" refers to a type of psychological and spiritual care that is founded on Islamic teachings and practices and does not contravene Shari'ah rules. "The concept of "therapy" relies on healing, while "psycho" means psychosis. Psychotherapy means "mental healing". While psycho religion in this discussion is intended as a "religious healing", one of the study of the approach is through prayer and *dhikr* as one people method

(way) to get in touch directly with the *khaliq*” (Afrinaldi et al. 203). The aim is to activate one’s own personality, soul, and spirit. The therapy is in accordance with the original character of human creation since it is a treatment given by God Who is the Creator of all beings including people.

Methodology: Balanced data and information from primary sources, such as the Qur’an and Prophetic Traditions have been collected and studied. To comprehend the issues of stress and its recovery recommended in Islam, mainly secondary sources, such as books and journals, magazines, research papers, etc. have been consulted and evaluated using both Analytical and Descriptive methods.

Common patterns have been used in this study. Especially, related information using e-libraries, blogs and websites/internet has been collected and analyzed.

Research Question: This paper tries to find out the answers to the following questions.

1. Why do the Islamic texts place such a high value on spiritual practices for mental rehabilitation?
2. How does *zikr* or Remembrance of Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{Oa’Ta’la}) play an outstanding role as a powerful therapy in healing mental stress?

Research Goal / Aim:

To investigate *zikr*’s potential as a tool for recovering from mental stress.

Discussion: Millions of people are affected by various types of stress disorders. Dealing with such severe stress can be difficult, and we need to find the best treatment to get rid of its debilitating symptoms. Among the traditional treatments including medical rehabilitation, counselling, meditative and mindfulness-based cognitive therapy and spiritual psychotherapy, the *zikr* Approach advocated by Sufi mentors and endorsed by the sources of the

Qur'an and Sunnah is a perfect one for curing the spiritual and psychological condition of the human being apart from the conviction that only Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{ŌaTa'la}) is capable of providing the finest solutions to human issues. This approach essentially emphasizes prevention over treatment, which can be accomplished if a servant truly grasps the idea of devotion and submission to Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{ŌaTa'la}) the Almighty. This healing approach actually bases a real diagnosis of an afflicted more on their spiritual than physiologic makeup. For those who practise it, this therapy is thought to be a stronghold and a means of spiritual upliftment. One is shielded from all types of suspicion and evil so long as one pledges himself to Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{ŌaTa'la}), with His permission.

In the eyes of Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{ŌaTa'la}), *zikr* is one of the cleanest, finest and best practices of His servant. Additionally, as meditation can relieve the human heart and soul, remembrance is essential to the path of approaching Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{ŌaTa'la}) and receiving His pleasure. Therefore, just as the Prophet Muhammad (^{Peace Be} _{Upon Him.}) stated in the following hadith, subjective cleansing and heart purification should be given the same emphasis and importance, “Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body, if it becomes good (reformed), the whole body becomes good, but if it gets spoilt, the whole body gets spoilt, and that is the heart” (Bukhārī, 1997, 83). Therefore, remembrance is the training of purifying the heart, the uncovering of the spiritual veil, reinforcing of faith and piety, abolishing hypocrisy, eradicating passion, suppressing of demonic interference, and so forth. As per Allah's (^{Subhanahu} _{ŌaTa'la}) words, It implies, “(that is) those who believe and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah: for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction” (Qur'an, 13: 28). Once the heart has been cleansed, purified through the remembrance of Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{ŌaTa'la}) the Almighty, it can attain the essence of peace, tranquility, and contentment, and its ailments can easily be eradicated. Because, “mentioning (Allah's name orally) then

accompanied by reminding Allah (in heart) will bring one to peace and tranquility of the soul, and will make all anxiety of the heart disappear” (Zuhri et al. 59). As a result, the practice of remembrance (*Zikr*) is particularly useful in the therapy of mental stress. Keeping your heart and spiritual mind at peace will help you forget about your stress and stop restlessness.

Scientific Journal of PPI-UKM mentions, according to Kusaeri’s citation, Carter and Rasyidi also did study on immigrant Muslim women in the United States. They created a theoretical framework for psychotherapy aimed towards Muslim women with mental illnesses. These methods mix the Western components of style therapy with Islamic teachings and values (prayer, recitation of Al Qur’an, and bearing Sahadah). The power of remembrance for the therapy of mental treatment, which is being endured by many patients, is amply demonstrated by this hypothesis. In the meantime, a study by Kamal and Loewenthal explores how Hindus and Muslims in the UK feel about the occurrence of ‘suicide’. According to their findings, “Muslims generally tend to be stronger morally of considering in addressing suicide (i. e, ‘My religion forbids suicide’) than Hindus” (Afrinaldi et al. 204). The forbidding from suicide, according to Kamal and Loewenthal, is ingrained in the new Muslim generation’s thoughts from an early age. This unequivocally demonstrates to us in our hearts the necessity of the idea of religion in the development of ‘*Ilahiah*’ capacity of human beings, which is frequently referred to as the ‘*Fitrah*’. The opinions of five British women from various religious backgrounds (Muslim, Hindu, white Christian white, black Christian and Jewish) are investigated by Loewenthal and Cinnirella. The study looked at the effectiveness of various treatments for people with mental illness and depression. From all the different types of intervention, prayer is found to be regarded by all religions as being the most effective method for assisting the recovery from mental illness and depression. Furthermore,

Loewenthal and Cinnirella documented the variations in the beliefs of each religion. “Most women Muslim regard that prayer as an effective means of curing depression patients” (Afrinaldi et al. 204)

The above study details confirm that varied religious practices in different faith systems act effectively upon the psyche of the adherents of respective faiths in healing mental stress. And particularly the Muslims’ religious rituals like Salat, regular recitation of the Qur’an, Sahadah (oral testimony of the oneness of Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{ŌaTa’la})), etc. have a stronger impact on the psychology of the Muslims in coping with stress than that of other beliefs. Unquestionably, Salat, reciting the Qur’an, Sahadah, etc. were termed Zikr in the Qur’an and the Prophetic literature.

Besides the verses we mentioned earlier, other verses also characterize Salat as means of *zikr* (Qur’an, 20: 4). The Qur’an itself is *zikr* (Qur’an, 68:51) and (Qur’an, 15:9).

Temptation of Satan (Devil) to Worldliness and Preventing from *Zikr* must be checked for Mental Wellbeing

The desire for more and more gains is the most dominant element amongst other stimulators of worldliness. This type of materialistic contemplation alienates the devotee from his Lord which Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{ŌaTa’la}) warned of (Qur’an, 63:9). This worldliness creates mental restlessness snatching the contentment with what better thing one has. He feels that despite having everything and despite all the attainments, there still exists the discontentment of the unachieved and unfulfilled. Satan is the only one who induces such thoughts. In paradise, there were all arrangements of comforts and luxuries for Adam (A.). Despite this Satan persuaded him to disobey Allah’s command, he became restless and finally, approached the forbidden tree (Qur’an, 2: 35). Elsewhere, another verse (Qur’an, 2: 268) resonates the same. And thus Satan keeps Allah’s servant away from His Zikr that brings about mental tranquility, which Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{ŌaTa’la}) affirms in the verse (Qur’an, 5:

91). This very enemy plays diverse tricks to turn the heart away from the remembrance of Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{OaTa'la}) so that tranquility in mind disappears, according to the verse (Qur'an, 43:36). The more one's heart turns away from remembering Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{OaTa'la}), the more Satan will devour that person's heart. There is no other way to safeguard oneself from this devil than by the remembrance of Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{OaTa'la}). The devilish provocation can therefore be averted only through the *Zikrullah* or the remembrance of Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{OaTa'la}) for filling one's heart with relaxation.

Business and Trade are Something that Keeps Ordinary People away from the Remembrance of Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{OaTa'la})

Business and trade are other elements of worldliness that may make people stay away from Allah's remembrance. The role of business and commerce in the flourishing of world civilization is undeniable. Honest trading is also supported by the Qur'an and prophetic direction. The holy Prophet (^{Peace Be} _{Upon Him}) gave the honest, truthful traders high esteem. He (^{Peace Be} _{Upon Him}) says, "The trustworthy, honest Muslim merchant will be with the martyrs on the Day of Resurrection" (Ibn Majah 225). Honest competition is expected in this case. However, unhealthy competition in trade and business and excessive involvement in them make individuals overburdened and overstressed and consequently keep them away from the remembrance of Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{OaTa'la}). Only Allah-fearing persons who always remember the presence of Him in their minds can escape this temptation. Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{OaTa'la}) reassures this reality in the verse (Qur'an, 24:37).

Nafs, its Varieties, and the Role of the Remembrance of Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{OaTa'la}) in Overcoming its Negative Aspects

According to the Islamic Texts and their exegeses, mental makeup is divided into three categories: *Nafs-e- ammarah* (Qur'an, 12:53), *Nafs-e-lawwamah* (Qur'an, 75:2) and *Nafs-e-mutmainnah* (Qur'an, 89:27). The Arabic term '*Ammarah*' refers to ruling, commanding, frequent commanding, etc. It means the type of mind

that has commanding authority over us. It commands us what to do. According to its desire, wish and appetite, it simply commands us what to do and we listen and follow its dictates accordingly. We cannot help listening to its commands. Because it has sovereignty over us and we are subjugated by it. So the person who is vulnerable to this type of *nafs* responds to its desire and appetite, and does whatever he likes- even if it is sinful- blatantly, remorselessly. When one keeps responding to its lust and desire, at one stage he cannot keep pace with them and gets exhausted halfway through. And thus he becomes restless.

The Arabic term '*Lawwamah*' means incriminating, self-reproaching, self-condemning. So, this is the type of *nafs* that might occasionally cause a person to commit sin, and, at the same time, it incriminates and reproaches itself for it, and then it feels guilty. Eventually, this guilty feeling is meant to grow so strong that the person gives up those sins. Therefore, the clear mark of this is simply that the person who has such a *nafs* that as soon as he sins, he feels guilty, shy, embarrassed and regretted. He wished he could undo it. He wished he had never done it. He may even make the decision right then and there to never do that again. So he is always at war with their *nafs*. Sometimes people commit sin, while other times they are able to refrain from sin.

The Arabic expression '*Mutmainnah*' literally means contented, satisfied, happy, etc. Technically, it makes two senses.

a) The First one is that the person having this type of *nafs* is contented with nothing but the *hukm* or order of Allah (Subhanahu Oa'Ta'la). This individual has been disciplined, trained and shaped in such a way that the only thing that brings it joy and happiness, that gives it relief, that makes it *mutma'in* or contented, is what Allah (Subhanahu Oa'Ta'la) is pleased with, or what Allah (Subhanahu Oa'Ta'la) is satisfied with. Therefore, the satisfaction of his heart lies in what Allah (Subhanahu Oa'Ta'la) is pleased and joyful with.

b) Second sense is that it has reached a state of serenity, peace, contentment and tranquility. And obviously, the serenity here is that it ensures *aman* (safety). *itminan* (relief) from doing sin, from desiring sin, desiring something unlawful or even undue desires. It desires only what is due, just and fair. The sign of a person having this type of *nafs* is that not only does he not sin, but also he no longer desires sin. He no longer longs for anything that Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{OaTa'la}) has deemed undesirable; instead, he only ever desires what Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{OaTa'la}) sees as desirable.

Sufi psychology also agrees with similar types of *nafs*. In particular, renowned Islamic Sufi philosopher Imam Abu Hamid Mohammad al-Gazali spoke of these three types of *nafs* and of similar characteristics.

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), a renowned psychologist recognized in humans the three psychological traits. “The three parts of the mind in his (Freud) model; he (Freud) named the ego, the id and the superego” (Rennison 38). These are also three mental components in his concept. The mind we are all born with, described by Freud as the ‘id’ which is a roiling mass of solely selfish cravings and impulses that attempt to gratify those desires totally and right away. The reasoning portion of the mind—the section that responds to the external setting and allows a person to embrace the “reality principle” and adjust to reality—is named as the ‘ego’. The id gives rise to the ego, which eventually gains dominance over it. The ‘super-ego’ gives each of us our conscience. Our feeling of evil and good frequently demands that we behave in ways that are acceptable to society as a whole rather than to ourselves.

The viewpoints of Ghazali and Freud on the *nafs* are remarkably similar if we compare them. Freud classified psyche into three categories and called them the id, ego, and super ego. It can be denoted that the id referred to *al-nafs al-ammara*, whereas the ego and superego referred to *al-nafs al-lawwama*.

From the above discourse, it is evident that in the first two stages the *nafs* or heart remains restless. This restlessness has reasons too. They are, firstly, lust, greed, desires, appetites for worldliness, being prone to sinfulness and falling into sins and vices, etc. Secondly, repentance, self-condemnation for that desire; for that sinfulness. These two cause mind to get stressed. It's like being content with everything but still feeling like you lack something. At these stages the restless heart keenly seeks restfulness; the stressed mind eagerly waits for complete relief and serenity. At the third or final stage, it becomes contented and stress-free when it gets back to Godliness, i.e. *Zikrullah* or the remembrance of Allah (Subhanahu $\text{O}a\text{Ta}'la$), which the verse (Qur'an, 13: 28) confirms.

The Impact of *Zikr* as Prayer and other Practices, as detailed in Islamic texts, on Relieving Stress

The most important and main two sources of Islamic Shariah are the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith or Prophetic literature. These two texts are affluent with the verses and hadiths that strongly recommend *zikr* or Remembrance of Allah (Subhanahu $\text{O}a\text{Ta}'la$) for the highest benefits in reducing mental strain and achieving tranquility.

The sickness of insatiability known as lust and desire takes complete control over the heart which causes it to lose its refined nature and become unresponsive. *Zikr* or the remembrance of Allah (Subhanahu $\text{O}a\text{Ta}'la$) helps hearts find their calm base by expelling devilish components and negative tendencies like lust and greed from it, and once they have achieved that peace via *zikr*, faith becomes firmly rooted in it, elevating the heart to the highest degree of contentment. And then there comes a time when the heart spontaneously opens up from the inside.

Excessive attachment to worldliness distances our hearts from Godliness. The conversation between Hazrat Abu Bakr (R.) and Hanzala (R.), which had been reported in the hadith, clearly demonstrates how the heart distant from the remembrance of Allah

(^{Subhanahu}_{ŌaTa'la}) constantly takes a turn to worldliness while *zikr* helps it turn back to Godliness again.

...Once their conversation was over, they went to the Allah's Prophet (^{Peace Be}_{Upon Him}) and expressed their worry to him. "By Allah, in whose Hand of Might my life lies, if you were able to preserve the state of mind you have while in my company and remain in a permanent state of Zikr, angels would have held you by the hands, while asleep and when moving about." said Allah's Messenger (^{Peace Be}_{Upon Him}). Hanzala! sometimes it is like this, and sometimes it is like that," He (^{Peace Be}_{Upon Him}) repeated three times (Muslim, 'as-Sahih', 12).

Like worldly attachment, sinfulness also causes the heart to lose serenity and become black-stained. It is also mentioned by Ibn Majah,

Abu Hurayrah (R.) narrated that, Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: "When the believer commits sin, a black spot appears on his heart. If he repents and gives up that sin and seeks forgiveness, his heart will be polished. But if (the sin) increases, (the black spot) increases. That is the Rân that Allah mentions in His Book: "Nay! But on their hearts is the Rân (covering of sins and evil deeds) which they used to earn (Ibn Majah 360-361).

This is how the Prophet (^{Peace Be}_{Upon Him}) crystalizes how the heart has a fluctuating tendency from good to bad and vice-versa. One of the fundamental goals of the Sufi Order is to, as much as possible, convert this restlessness into stability through the refreshment offered by *zikr*; to turn the heart towards the Divinity and stabilize it thereafter.

There are a number of Islamic religious practices that Allah (^{Subhanahu}_{ŌaTa'la}) has commanded the Muslim Ummah to carry out that have the potential to have a massive impact on a person's life. For instance, the practice of remembrance of Allah (^{Subhanahu}_{ŌaTa'la}) (*Zikr*)

brings peace and tranquility (Qur'an, 13: 28), praying (Salah) has been shown to prevent people from doing evil (Qur'an, 29: 45), and supplication (Du'a) brings oneself closer to Allah (^{Subhanahu} ^{OaTa'la}) (Qur'an, 2: 186). Researchers, as per their findings, were of the opinion that religious rituals including *zikir*, Du'a, and *tilawat* or the recitation of the Qur'an may help raising individual self-awareness. The aforementioned viewpoints are consistent with those of Western scholars like Pargament and Hathaway who asserted that spiritual, cognitive, behavioral, and social components of faith are represented by prayer, private activities, faith in God, and guidance from clergy, which are among the religious resources recognized as frequently employed in times of stress.

Prayer is one of the types and parts of *zikr* through which Allah (^{Subhanahu} ^{OaTa'la}) is remembered highly and impressively. The holy Qur'an termed prayer—be it regular or weekly (Jum'a)—as *zikr*. Allah (^{Subhanahu} ^{OaTa'la}) says, “Surely, there is no other god save me, so serve me alone and establish regular prayer for celebrating (remembrance) My glory” (Qur'an, 20:14).

The above verse confirms that Salat is prayed for the remembrance of Allah (^{Subhanahu} ^{OaTa'la}). Again, Salat is urged to be followed by supplementary *zikr* as Allah (^{Subhanahu} ^{OaTa'la}) admonishes,

When you attend (congregational) prayers, proclaim Allah's praises (remember), whether you are standing, sitting, or lying on your side. However, when you are safe from harm, arrange regular prayers. (Qur'an, 4:103).

It is to be noted that the Arabic word used in the verse (Arabic Text) is '*Atmanantum*'. It is a derivative of '*Itminan*' which means mental serenity, mental relief that is attained after the danger is gone or stress is over. The typical *zikr* is instructed at all times, before and after Salat, and definite *zikr* is commanded during the performance of Salat after the heart gets at ease and the danger (of the enemy) is over.

Our faith is put to the highest test more than at any other time when we are under stress. When huge panic seized all on the morning of September 11, 2001, after the four hijacked planes crashed on Twin Towers, individuals of all religions from across the world sooner started to organize prayer (inside and outside the mosques, churches and temples) in an effort to ease the minds and emotions of those left behind to reassemble the fragments of the disaster.

Prayer has a strong link with mental relief in times of stress. Life, according to Brian Luke, makes us feel like we are isolated beings. It is a reality that we are all connected to one another in life. The feeling of separation prevails when under stress. Faith is compared as a symbolic ray of sunshine that pierces through clouds of illusion to reveal our connection to God, a relationship that has always existed and always will exist. The realization of this relation occurs during prayer. Even if prayer doesn't always yield the solutions we are looking for, it does offer a level of comfort that is unmatched elsewhere. "So, in times of stress, we pray. We pray to God—whatever we perceive God to be" (Seaward 201).

Expressing his firm conviction on the role of prayer in the mental healing process, Luke goes on to state that the subject of intercessory prayer has attracted a lot of attention outside the bounds of traditional theology around the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The scientific community has thus researched the therapeutic effects and potential of prayer. "Only a few years ago it would have seemed like heresy in the halls of academia, yet prayer is now accepted as a viable topic of investigation" (Seaward 202).

So, prayer being a unique means of the remembrance of Allah (^{Subhanahu} ^{ŌaTa'la}) indisputably has an incredible impact on mental well-being. "Remembrance (or *Zikr*) is also part of the profound gratitude to God for all the gifts and favors He has given us

doing so. “I turn to You, O Allah, for shelter from anxiety and anguish, weakness and idleness, stinginess and cowardice, the load of debt, and being ruled over by men” (Bukhari 1059). Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) also counselled his Ummah to supplicate to Allah (Subhanahu OaTa’la) in times of stress and anxiety so that He causes them to go away.

That is why Allah (Subhanahu OaTa’la) instructed us to remember Him persistently. He (Subhanahu OaTa’la) commands, “O ye who believe! Celebrate the praises of Allah and do this often; and glorify Him morning and evening.” (Qur’an, 33: 41-42).

A person who remembers Allah (Subhanahu OaTa’la) is promised to be remembered by Allah (Subhanahu OaTa’la) Himself. Allah (Subhanahu OaTa’la) assures in the verse (Qur’an, 2:152). When a person feels that Allah (Subhanahu OaTa’la) by Himself cares for all his affairs he gets mentally free from all stress, agonies, and tension. Even when encountering enemies, Allah (Subhanahu OaTa’la) instructed the warrior to remember Him excessively (Qur’an, 8: 45). This is due to the fact that via the *zikr* of Allah (Subhanahu OaTa’la), the heart remains fearless, firm, and peaceful, which is vitally needed for a fighter to win a battle.

Zikr with a purified heart brings grand success to human beings. Allah (Subhanahu OaTa’la) declares, “But those will prosper who purify themselves. And glorify the name of their Guardian-Lord, and (lift their hearts) in prayer” (Qur’an, 87:14-15). A significant number of hadiths also speak of the virtues of *zikr* in relieving mental stress. An individual feels the presence of Allah (Subhanahu OaTa’la) as long as he is absorbed in *zikr*. When a stressful heart feels the divine presence of Allah (Subhanahu OaTa’la), all sorts of strain disappear. The heart rests in peace. Again, during the moment of *zikr* ‘*Sakeenah*’ or peace and serenity descend with which a stressed person enjoys divine relief.

On the narration of Abu Hurayrah (R.) and Abu Sa’yed (R.), Both provided evidence of hearing Rasulullah (Peace Be Upon Him) say that, “the congregation engaged in remembrance of Allah the Highest is encircled by the angels on all sides, Allah’s favour and ‘*Sakeenah*’

(peace and tranquility) descend upon them, and Allah the Almighty speaks about them, in way of compliments, to His angels” (Muslim 261).

Zikr not only brings restfulness to mind but also removes the barrier-like elements that prevent restfulness from coming into the heart.

Summary: The overall discourse in this study reaches the following summary

- A believer finds peace in the *zikr* of Allah (SWT), and no worldly occurrence can disturb him.
- Human beings when feeling stressed and facing danger or anger should engage in the remembrance of Allah (SWT) so that their hearts might be at ease
- *Zikr* is a kind of worship and one of the sources of comfort.
- *Zikr* as praying and supplication to God reduces confusion and relieves mental stress.
- *Zikr* strengthens faith.
- *Zikr* establishes a connection between the servant and his Lord, Allah (SWT), fosters hope and reliance on Him (SWT), and brings satisfaction in mind thereby.
- Negligence, which stands between wisdom and heart, is removed by the *zikr*.
- In Islamic and *m'arifat* (acquiring Allah's acquaintance) literature, *zikr* is the guiding principle behind all forms of prayer.

Research Outcome and implication: Overindulgence and preference for worldliness and materialistic hunts along with the repeated response to other diverse pressure are causing serious strain on the individuals' psyche. As a result, they are losing psychological order, mental rest and contentment. This stress is affecting seriously not only psychological function but also the

physiologic processes of persons. Finding a way to get rid of this problem is a major concern these days.

In this research study, we examined how *zikr*, the remembrance of Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{ŌaTa'la}), one of the most popular Islamic spiritual practices, affects individuals' psyches that are experiencing huge stress, restlessness, and discontentment. Our findings indicate that this sort of spiritual practice of *zikr* has a strong direct impact on stress recovery. Our result is in line with a number of other results that have already been published about the impact of spiritual practices or religious convictions on people's stress levels in society. There are, however, evidences, too, that show spirituality and religious beliefs having minimal impact on stress, anxiety, or depression. Based on the aforementioned fact, Islam has placed much emphasis on the repetition of *zikr* or Allah's remembrance. Point to be noted that religious beliefs are distinct from employing *zikr* as a form of spiritual intervention. Religious convictions result in wholehearted *zikr*, which, from the perspective of Islam, is accompanied by complete faith in Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{ŌaTa'la}) and, as a result, leads to long-lasting, sustainable tranquility and relief. People with no religious beliefs, however, may have little or no success when adopting spiritual therapy.

This article can thus offer insights into the idea of *zikr* or remembrance of Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{ŌaTa'la}) for the treatment and cure for the psychologically stressed people from an Islamic perspective through spiritual techniques to lowering mental stress while raising community awareness and enhancing knowledge. Additionally, government and private agencies, as well as different Islamic volunteer groups, can take the initiative to put such divine and spiritual treatment approaches into practice within their respective purviews and contexts, providing a soothing shelter for those who are mentally distressed by a variety of stresses and enabling them to live lovely, healthy and better lives.

Conclusion: In brief, we firmly believe that the potency of spirituality in the daily existence of a Muslim individual is the remembrance (*Zikr*) of Allah (Subhanahu). This study finds that *zikr* can aid individuals in overcoming their issues with mental stress. Moreover, it can assist in solving other social issues too. Although each traditional, medical rehabilitation, and meditation centre has a different approach to recovery, many in most parts of the world are experimenting with a similar approach that is based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah. There are stress rehabilitation centres that have stepped into this Islamic Psych spiritual Therapy Approach, either totally or partially, and have a significant positive and sustainable impact on the psychological progress of these ailing individuals. However, further intensive study and procedure modification are required to be made continuously and more incorporated for harvesting far better results. To sum up, remembrance (*Zikrullah*) is the finest technique to recover from long-term stress challenges and may also transform people who once experienced social symptoms into people who can contribute to society and the nation. It is an effort to motivate the community, especially the individuals, to keep up their good efforts and avoid mischief.

Works Cited

- Afrinaldi, et al. "Psycho Religious Theraphy Through Prayers and Dzikir in Islamic Psychology Perspective." *Scientific Journal of PPI-UKM*, 2019, pp. 200-205, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292993132_Psycho_Religious_TherapyThrough_Prayers_and_Dzikir_in_Islamic_Psychology_Perpective. Accessed 11 November 2022.
- Ali, Ahmed Yusuf. "Online Qur'an Translation by Yusuf Ali | Islamic Reference." *Alim.org*, <https://www.alim.org/Qur'an/translation/yusuf-ali/>. Accessed 28 November 2022.
- Arusha, Anowara Rayhan, and Raaj Kishore Biswas. "Prevalence of stress, anxiety and depression due to examination in Bangladeshi youths: A pilot study." 2020, pp. 1-5.
- Bukhari. *as-Sahih*. Vol.3, Dar Ibn Kathir: Beirut, 1987
- Bukhārī, Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl. *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahīh Al-Bukhāri: Arabic-English*. Translated by Muhammad Muhsin Khan, 1997, دار السلام.
- Espirito, R. *Mindfulness: A Practical Guide on How Mindfulness Can Stop Anxiety, Cope with Stress, Improve Mental Health and Find Inner Peace*. 2nd ed., www.awerfirstpublishing.com, 2019.
- Hadzrullathfi Syed Omar, Syed, and Nasir Mohamad. "Remembrance (Zikr) Approach to Treat Drug Addiction Problems." *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, vol. 9, 2019, pp. 1070-1079. *Semantic Scholar*, <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/c81d/d75ed29e7783b21d65567a5f4c6684e7839d.pdf>. Accessed 2 October 2022.
- https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1300/J293v09n02_04. Accessed 26 November 2022.
- <https://bmcp psychiatry.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12888-014-0216-9>. Accessed 7 November 2022.

- Ibn Majah, Yazeed. *English Translation of Sunan Ibn Majah*. Edited by Huda Khattab, translated by Nasiruddin al Khattab, vol. 5, Maktaba Dar-us-Salam, 2007.
- Muslim. *as-Sahih*, Dar Al-Jail, Beirut.
- McCraty, Rollin, and Fred Shaffer. "Heart Rate Variability: New Perspectives on Physiological Mechanisms, Assessment of Self-regulatory Capacity, and Health risk." vol. 4(1), *Global Advances in Health and Medicine*, 2015, Jan, p. 55, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4311559/>. Accessed 8 8 2023.
- Rennison, Nick. *Freud & Psychoanalysis*. 1st ed., Pocket Essentials, 2001.
- Sarwari, Abdul Qahar, and Mohammad Nubli Abdul Wahab. "The Relationship Between Zikr (Remembrance Of Allah), Heart Coherence And Intrapersonal Communication Among Muslim Postgraduate Students From Different Countries." *Journal of Language and Communication*, vol. 5(1), 2018, pp. 110-123,
- Seaward, Brian Luke. *Quiet Mind, Fearless Heart: The Taoist Path Through Stress and Spirituality*. Hoboken, New Jersey, Wiley & Sons, 2004.
- "UN leads call to protect most vulnerable from mental health crisis during and after COVID-19." *UN News*, 14 May 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/05/1063882>. Accessed 8 August 2023.
- Zuhri, Ahmad, et al. "The Zikir Concept As A Medium Of Quality Soul | Zuhri | Al-Hikmah: Jurnal Theosofi dan Peradaban Islam." *Jurnal Theosofi dan Peradaban Islam*, vol. 2, 2020, pp. 39-65. *Jurnal UIN SU*, <http://jurnal.uinsu.ac.id/index.php/alhikmah/article/view/7606>. Accessed 28 November 2022.

Mental Well-being of the True Practitioners of *Usul-e-Sab'a* in Light of Carol Ryff's Psychological Model: A Case Study on Maizbhandari Community

Md. Rabiul Hossen¹ Suborno Barua² Sheikh Mostafa³

Abstract

The prime focus of this paper is to understand the importance of practicing Usul-e-Sa'bafor gaining mental well-being. The true followers of the Maizbhandari Sufi Order have been practicing Usul-e-Sa'bato eradicate anxiety, stress, depression and mental distress. To get effective results from the study; the qualitative and quantitative research methods have been applied. For collecting data, a set of questionnaires of 21 items were asked to 30 true practitioners of the seven principles. The study shows that the respondents truly believe Usul-e-Sa'baguided them to inner peace and mental well-being. Usul-e-Sa'ba (the seven principles), an effective method of self-purification, is a comprehensive training program for the aspirants trying to break the shackles of mental discontent. It is an integral part of Maizbhandari Sufi Order originated by "Khatam ul Awliya" Ghawthul Azam Hazrat Mawlana Shah Sufi Syed Ahmad Ullah (Q.). Maizbhandari Sufi Order is a melting pot of Sufism where Usul-e-Sa'bacombines Sufi psychology and spirituality to eradicate the internal and external complexities of human beings. Carol Ryff's model of psychological well-being consists of positive relationships with others, personal mastery, autonomy, self-acceptance, meaning in life, and personal growth. The seven steps of Usul-e-Sa'ba have theoretical similarities with the six psychological factors of Carol Ryff that are considered standard scales of measuring mental well-being. This study aims to measure the mental well-being of the true practitioners using Carol Ryff's model of psychological well-being.

¹Lecturer, Department of English, Nanupur Laila-Kabir Degree College, Chattogram.

² Student, Department of English Language and Literature, International Islamic University Chittagong, Bangladesh.

³ Student, Department of Chemistry, Government City College, Chattogram.

Keywords Mental Well-being, Sufism, Maizbhandari Sufi Order, *Usul-e-Sab'a*(seven principles), Six-factor Model, Carol Ryff

Introduction

Mental well-being refers to the sound state of our mind. A sound mind helps you to be positive, confident, agile and determined at hard times. The harmonious interaction of emotional, psychological, and social components that fosters resilience and internal equilibrium is known as mental well-being. Mental and psychological wellness includes how you feel about yourself as well as how you react to the world and the quality of your relationships. It's critical to keep in mind that having a great mental health is not just about being free of disorders like sadness or anxiety. Positive qualities including a sense of purpose, contentment, sustaining good relationships, and fully engaging in life are key indicators of mental health. Individuals can construct a robust mental well-being via self-care and progress, much as a metal acquires strength through refining processes. World Health Organizations provides a statement about mental health in their *World Health Report 2001. Mental Health: New Understanding, New Hope*, (2001),

The importance of mental health has been recognized since its origin, and is reflected by the definition of mental health in the WHO Constitution as “not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”, but rather, “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being (3).

Sufism has been described in a variety of ways. Some see this as God destroying the person's ego, will, and self-centeredness before resurrecting him or her spiritually with the lights of His Essence. God then uses this alteration to guide the person's will in conformity with His Will. Islamic mysticism is known as *ta'awwuf* (literally, "to dress in wool") in Arabic, but from the early 19th century, it has been regarded as Sufism in Western languages. Sufism is an ambiguous name that originates from the Arabic word for a mystic,

"Sufi," Sufism considered by Al-Kaisi (2021) in his article "Rethinking Conceptual Sufism: A Synthesis of Islamic Spirituality, Asceticism, and Mysticism."

Sufism is commonly defined as the mystical dimension of Islam. Although it is generally a fair—though ultimately basic—description, Sufism is, in fact, a synthesis of three principles. These are Islamic spirituality, *zuhd* (*asceticism*) and mysticism. The concept of Sufism is part of the Qur'ānic message and its fundamental principles are no other than following the Sunnah and the Sharia. Sufism found its inspiration in the Qur'anic verses that speak of (1) the creation of the spirit and its potentialities, (2) the necessity for self-discipline and self-purification, (3) the requirement to adopt *zuhd* to attain righteousness, (4) the existence of realities beyond human physical perception, and (5) divine love and of God's enduring presence in the hearts of the faithful (191).

Sufism and spirituality can be combined and used to profuse mental well-being among adherents. "Spiritual and religious beliefs form an important means of coping with stress for a large number of people but unfortunately this has received little attention by the mental health professionals." (Nizamie et al. S221). "Spirituality in Islam is the devotion to an identifiable, recognizable God who has His descriptions in the holy Koran and the Prophet's teachings (Sunnah). This means living according to the five pillars of Islam: first, to expressly repeat and deeply internalize that there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his Messenger; second, to perform the duly prescribed prayers; third, to give Alms as charity; fourth, to fast the month of Ramadan; and fifth, if affordable, the Muslim should go to the Mecca Pilgrimage once in one's life time." (Tiliouine et al. 60) As Sufism is a combination of *Zuhd* (asceticism), mysticism, and Islamic spirituality, its essentiality to promote mental peace is evident. Maizbhandari Tariqa has incorporated Sufi teachings in

order to provide the followers a way of attaining humanity and divine revelation. Muhammad Muhiuddin in his says,

Syed Ahmad Ullah Maizbhandari was the initiator of Maizbhanari Tariqa. He originally took initiation with Syed Abu Shahama in Qaderiya Tariqa and later, in the course of his spiritual venture, he received *Khilafat* (deputyship) from his master. After returning to his home village 'Maizbhandar', he continued his spiritual rigor and charismatic mentorship, which, gradually, gave birth to a new Tariqa. Soon after, his spirituality attracted myriad of followers and disciples some of whom were also endowed with his deputyship (46).

The seven principles are a spiritual part of Sufism. It also has an inward connection to *Ihsan*, one of the basic principles of Islam. The precise definition of *Ihsan* given by Prophet when he said "*al-Ihsan* is to worship Allah (Subhanahu OaTa'ala) as if you see Him, and if you do not achieve this state of devotion, then (take it for granted that) Allah (Subhanahu OaTa'ala) sees you" (Al-Bukhari, 1997). Regarding *Ihsan*, the Almighty said in Surah Yunus of the Holy Qur'an:

To those who do right is a goodly [reward]- Yea, more [than in measure]! No darkness nor shame shall cover their faces! they are companions of the garden; they will abide therein [for aye]! (10: 26).

Unlike manmade theories, which are frequently ideological, biased, and rational, man-made ethics are not necessarily true. The seven principles are addressed as Quranic principles because the core points have been taken from the Quran. According to (Hossain 127), "These Quranic Sevenfold principles are easy, simple and natural methods of human life that makes an individual's daily routine easier." On the other hand, Islamic ethics are derived from the Divine revelations- the Quran and hadith, and are believed to be free from mistakes and errors. (Hoque et. al, 21). Also, Muhuddin (2021) says,

These principles and practices derived from the Holy Quran and *Sunnah* of the Prophet (^{Peace Be Upon Him.}), are designed to guide a seeker accumulate sublime characters of Islam as well as spiritual wisdom and moral perfection (62).

Therefore, these principles being derived from the holy book which is out of human vices and ideologies and it doesn't make it vulnerable and alterable. *Usul-e-Sa'ba* (the seven principles) is a spiritual and psychological unit that has some similarities with the six factors of psychological well-being derived by (Ryff 1071) which include self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, personal growth. Carol Diane Ryff is an American academic and psychologist who developed a world recognized scale for measuring mental well-being by six factors. According to Bertocci (2001),

The founders of the Maizbhandari tariqa developed a fairly elaborate “Seven Step” (*sapta paddati*) methodology for the attainment of their view of spiritual perfection, and any basic written description of it that I have seen always alludes to this doctrine reverently as the “Maizbhandari School of Thought,” alleging it to be a unique contribution to the world's body of spiritual knowledge (60-61).

These seven steps have been practiced by thousands of Maizbhandari devotees for mental peace since its introduction. The devotees are of different religions and cultures that have practiced it for a long period of time. But only the true practitioners of *Usul-e-Sab'a* have been able to achieve mental tranquility and divine communion. The true practitioners are those who are practicing *Usul-e-Sab'a* in their life subconsciously or unconsciously. This study targets the true practitioners belonging to the Maizbhandari community which is mainly devoted to Syed Ahmad Ullah Maizbhandari and His descendants. Hans Harder also talks about the Maizbhandari community in his epic work named *Sufism and Saint*

Veneration in Contemporary Bangladesh. The Maizbhandaris of Chittagong (2011),

The Maizbhandaris, a Sufi movement that has, since the nineteenth century, emerged from the village of Maizbhandar, situated some 40 Km north of Chittagong city in Fatikchari thana, in the plain between the mountains of Sitakunda and the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The Maizbhandaris, in some contexts, as we shall see, address not only Muslims but all local religious communities (7).

The study depicts the actual psychological state of the true practitioners of *Usul-e-Sa'ba*. The study shows only by practicing the seven steps diligently and truthfully the true practitioners have gained mental well-being with an increased amount of willingness, confidence, positivity and psychological tranquility.

Literature Review

Mental well-being

Good mental health helps us to cope with normal stresses of life, to be productive both at work and in our private life, to relate well with other people and to contribute to our community. According to (Conrad et al 7), "positive mental health is a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community." Socio-economic conditions, social network, religiosity and social support are prime influences of psychological well-being. The inner satisfaction where one is free to make positive decisions about life and is completely out of mental complexities can be wholly defined as mental well-being. The elements that contribute to achieving mental calm can vary from person to person, but the most crucial ones are universal. Building relationships, coping up with difficulties, taking positive decisions and finding a meaning to life

are the other ways of being in harmony or mental peace. Another way of attaining mental peace is by empowerment and self-efficacy which is attached with coping skills and thriving abilities. From (M. A. Zimmerman 583), empowering processes are those where people create or are given opportunities to control their own destiny and influence the decisions that affect their lives. On the other hand, Sufism and Spiritual psychology have a different yet similar way of giving mental peace to humans. Being an essential part of Islam, it provides guidance to those with depression and mental complexities.

Sufism and Sufi psychology

Sufism works as a standard in individuals' lives serving as a moral and ethical source of guidance and method of spiritual and psychological mental healing. If we view deep, Sufism comes from *Ihsan* which is a series of physical and mental action of every Muslim. Sufism also describes ways of living that combine religious ideals, such as living merely to embody the concepts of *Zuhud* and *qana'ah*. Sufism deals first and foremost with the inward aspects of that which is expressed outwardly or exoterically in the *Shariah*, the Islamic religious law. (Chittick 12) Sufism is regarded as a melting mold of every belief and values. Contemporary Sufism addresses modern problems of mental illness and depression through Islamic ethics and teachings. Sufism is a guidance through which one is brought near God with a clean heart and soul. Sufi teachings can be used as a technique to cleanse the soul of a variety of harmful emotions and energies since someone with a damaged spirituality is more prone to have psychological issues. It provides within the forms of the Islamic revelation the means for an intense spiritual life directed towards the transformation of man's being and the attainment of the spiritual virtues; ultimately it leads to the vision of God. (Chittick 9) Sufi psychology is the inner dimension of Sufism. In the Islamic tradition, the soul is considered the most significant

aspect of a human being, cleansing the soul with the intrinsic teachings of Sufism can help an individual get rid of harmful pleasures and eventually relieve him from pain. For example, the emphasis on the training of *nafs* (ego, self, soul) in Sufi psychology and its approaches to emotional and spiritual diseases have proved helpful in reducing stress and treating depression and anxiety. (Isgandarova 1147) Sufi teachings like *zuhud*, patience, honesty; submission, fasting, and resignation have a major impact on the true practitioner's psychological well-being. When someone has control over his desires and his surrounding environments, he has control over his life. Western psychologists regard self-actualization for building a peaceful and meaningful life. Psychologists even recommend Sufi meditation (*Muraqaba*) for enhancing good health. In order to maintain a broad perspective on the subject and give students guidance through spirituality, physicians and medical educators, recognizing that spirituality is a core patient need, have begun to address spirituality and health in the medical education curriculum. (M. Puchalski et al. 132).

Sufism and Maizbhandari Sufi order

Maizbhandari Tariqa or *Usul-e-Sab'awas* created by Hazrat Maulana Shah Sufi Syed Ahmad Ullah (R.) He continued his spiritual rigor and charismatic mentorship, which gradually gave birth to a new Tariqa. (Muhiuddin 46) Maizbhandari Tariqa is one of the most popular and influential Sufi order in contemporary Bangladesh. Maizbhandari Tariqa is the only Tariqa originated in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has a rich history of Sufi culture. This Sufi order, through its message of universal love, inclusion and morality, added a renewed flavor and force to the contribution of the Ancient Bengali saints, and consequently became the pilgrim center for the people of different religions, races, creeds, ethnicities and professions. (Muhiuddin 46-47). This Tariqa is a symbol of religious equality, inclusivity and social cohesiveness, accumulation of

indigenous religiosity and beliefs promoting integrative and cohesive society. Prophet Muhammad (^{Peace Be Upon Him.}) is the first Sufi according to many Sufis' and the Sufism that we see today bears the teachings and ideologies through *Silsila* of many Sufis from the past. Sufi Syed Ahmad Ullah in order to mirror his Tariqa with Sufism or the teachings of Prophet Mohammed (^{Peace Be Upon Him.}) goes back to the past and describes its formation in an elaborative way. He explains that during the time of the Prophet (^{Peace Be Upon Him.}), people used to receive his spiritual effulgence in any of the three ways. (1) *Tariqa-e-Abrar-e-Mujahedin*, (the path of holy fighters) who fought with him (pbuh) for his cause. (2) *Tariqa-e-Akhyar-e-Salihin*, (the path of the most pious) who followed him (pbuh) in his good cause. (3) *Tariqa-e-Shuhada-e-Ashiqin*, (the path of the sacrificed lovers) who sacrificed themselves for his (pbuh) love (Muhiuddin 53).

During the era of *Wilayat-e-Mutlaqa-e-Ahmadi*, these three spiritual streams accumulated in the personality of Syed Ahmad Ullah. This *Wilayat* or the unrestricted spiritual stream became known as Maizbhandari Tariqa (Hossain 192-193). Maizbhandari Sufi order is one of the most popular and influential Sufi order in contemporary Bangladesh. It is the only Sufi order that originated in Bangladesh with the answers and solutions to local problems. The order got its acceptance from its universalism of thoughts and practices. The Maizbhandar-based order is a powerful religious organization that transcends all notions of inclusivity and virtue of influence. It has been able to maintain the diversity of different cultures and religions and has been successful in bringing every class of people under one roof even in extreme restrictions from many reformist circles. (Muhiuddin 79) agrees that it is evident from his study that this Sufi order is a nucleus of universal love and devotion that prefers obedience and submission over exoteric rituals. Human beings are the best of creation and no discrepancies based on someone's faith, race, color or anything else should be allowed to marginalize this honor. The reason behind the vast

development and acceptance of Sufism is for its inclusivity and pluralism. Sufism has acted as a melting pot by accepting the beliefs, norms and ethics of other religious identities which helped it receive universal acceptance. All the norms and practices of Maizbhandari Sufi order have an inward influence and relation to Sufism.

Hazrat Maulana Syed Ahmad Ullah and his *Usul-e-Sab'a* (the seven principles)

The descendant of holy prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him.), Hazrat Maulana Shah Sufi Syed Ahmad Ullah (R.), was born in the village called Maizbhandar under the Fatikchari police station in Chattogram, Bangladesh on Wednesday, January 15, (1826 1244 AH).

Maizbhandari Tariqa (Maizbhandari Sufi order) has a unique characteristic of secularism, liberalism and also dominated by moral religion. Its distinctiveness and acceptance of people of all backgrounds, regardless of religion, caste, ethnicity, or customs, as well as its quick grasp and adherence to moral values, highlighted its significance in the village and the nation. Moreover, these Quranic Sevenfold principles are easy, simple, and natural methods of human life that make an individual's daily routine easier. (Hossain 127). In comparison with other Islamic Sufi methods of self-purification and permanence with Allah, these principles are easier and simpler to practice. They are not contradictory with other universal methods of self-purification; rather, they are pragmatic, encouraging and a remedy for the world crisis and a symbol of salvation. (Hossain 128). Notably, Muhiuddin (2021) says,

An aspirant's temporal and spiritual life after completing these stages is more active, meaningful and real as he has now managed to subdue his ego. His heart is now ready to reflect the light of Eternal Divine Love (62).

***Usul-e-Sa'ba* (the seven principles) and its Importance for Mental Well-being**

Usul-e-Sab'a (the seven principles) is instructions for individuals searching for purifying their minds and gaining mental peace. The Maizbhandari Sufi order embraced the seven principles (*Usul-e-Sab'a*) as a comprehensive training program for aspirants to help them gradually escape the traps of the world so that they might start their spiritual journey to the Divine Communion and develop the finest human attributes. The seven principles are described in two parts, *Fana-e-Salasa* (Three Annihilators) and *Mawt-e-Arba'a* (Four deaths) (Hoque et. al, 21).

***Fana-e-Salasa*-(the three Annihilators)**

Fana anil Khalq: *Fana* literally means annihilation, while *Khalq* literally means creation. It alludes to independence. This means that there should be no expectation of assistance or gain from others. It defines not to expect favor from others rather become self-reliant and be submissive to Allah. This mindset of over-reliance on others slows our mental growth. The practice of *Fana anil khalq* makes us self-reliant and boosts our self-efficacy. Drawing from these discussions, we define efficiency as the belief that one's efforts can make a difference in attaining goals, and empowerment as the utilization of resources to engage in social action to achieve desired goals. (Fisher and Gosselink 3-4). According to the six-factor model of psychological well-being derived by (Ryff 1071) the fully functioning person is also described as having an internal locus of evaluation, whereby one does not look to others for approval, but evaluates oneself by personal standards. Individuation is seen to involve a deliverance from convention, in which the person no longer clings to the collective fears, beliefs, and laws of the masses. Both Ryff and Syed Delawor Hossain Maizbhandari have agreed on the concept of individuation or annihilation of the dependence on

the creation in order to achieve mental freedom from the notions of everyday life.

Fana anil Hawa: In Sufi terminology, "to avoid pointless and vain talks and activities is called *Fana anil Hawa*. This means avoiding pointless things, refraining from superfluous work or discourse, and refraining from pointless activities. A person's livelihood is made simpler and more hassle-free by practicing it. Time management is an issue for all of us. It is pointless to engage in activities like chatting or procrastinating when we have deadlines to meet. These pointless activities later result in poor exam scores, job rejections, and reprimands for being late. Our passions often lead us to immoral behavior. Although happiness can be attained through the acquisition of things, financial security, power, and notoriety, it is also ephemeral. All joys are connected to stimuli that depend on different factors and experiences we have. *Fana anil Hawa* practice allows us to eliminate our weaknesses. (Ryff 1071) says, one who functions positively has goals, intentions, and a sense of direction, all of which contribute to the feeling that life is meaningful. Both Ryff and Syed Delawor Hossain Maizbhandari have agreed on the concept of positively dealing with every action of life, refraining from superfluous works.

Fana anil Irada: *Fana anil Irada* is the Sufi phrase for submitting one's will to Allah's will. It means to prefer Allah's will and to diminish own desires into His wills, as a result, 'submission (*taslim*) and contentment (*rida*) will be achieved. (Hossain 126-127). We hold people accountable for our suffering and our mistakes. Understanding the mystical phenomena of Allah (^{Subhanahu} Oa'Ta'la) and submitting all sufferings, pains and mistakes upon Him will make us diminish our tensions and problems. Creating a relationship of love and affection with the almighty diffuses a serene mind. The practice of *Fana anil Hawa* assists an aspirant for a complete submission to Allah (^{Subhanahu} Oa'Ta'la) and his desires finds a source of

fulfillment. (Ryff 1072) says, a high scorer of psychological well-being possesses a positive attitude toward the self; acknowledges and accepts multiple aspects of self, including good and bad qualities; feels positive about past life. Syed Delawor Hossain Maizbhandari has also agreed on the principle of accepting the good and bad qualities of self while feeling positive about life. He emphasized on the submission of one's self to Allah (^{Subhanahu} _{OaTa'la}) and diminishing one's desire to become optimistic about life.

***Mawt-e-Arba'a-* (Four types of Death)**

***Al Mawt al Abyad-* White Death:** When we learn to master our urges, feelings, and excessive desires, we achieve white death. It enlightens the human soul. Fasting during the month of Ramadan or voluntary fasting is an example of it (Hossain 126-127). Self-control, self-regulation, and self-restraint are vital components of human nature. The traits control wise and precise decisions and prevent us from being sidetracked. The instruments support us in keeping our hearts morally and ethically upright. This practice keeps an aspirant bound to the Almighty indirectly incorporating submissive tendencies and shaping a behavior of self-control and self-regulation. (Ryff 1072) agrees, he who has a sense of mastery and competence in managing the environment; controls a complex array of external activities; makes effective use of surrounding opportunities; is able to choose or create contexts suitable to personal needs and values. Syed Delawor Hossain Maizbhandari also agrees on making an effective use of surroundings and having control over a complex array of external activities and desires can be achieved through frugality and fasting.

***Al Mawt al Aswad-* Black Death:** Black Death is the end of the agony we feel after receiving criticism. It draws attention to the unwholesome state of affairs. Criticism motivates us to do better, inspires us to complete our tasks flawlessly, trains us to pay attention

to our work, and develops a habit of tolerance. Criticism makes flaws clear to us so we can fix them and become error-free. In actuality, it is an opportunity for us to assess our actions, learn new things, and become flawless. Further, it pushes us to lead a life with clear objectives making our lives smooth and peaceful. (Ryff 1072) accepts that those with high scores of psychological well-being have warm, satisfying, trusting relationships with others; are concerned about the welfare of others; capable of strong empathy, affection, and intimacy; and understands the give and take of human relationships. On the other hand, Black Death emphasizes on the capability of empathy, affection and intimacy towards everybody.

Al Mawt al Ahmar- Red Death: The Red Death is a lesson in killing off avarice and immoral sexual urges. The principle recommends fighting against the fatal and destructive habit of greed that is ingrained in human nature. Greed inspires unethical ideas and evil intentions that lead to illegal money acquisition, inflicting harm on others for personal benefit, and violating legal and humanitarian norms. The Sufi elements imply that a person can only maintain the happiness of their loved ones if they are content with themselves. Satisfaction and self-actualization create a sense of acceptance of every notion of life and strengthens our psychological state. (Ryff 1071-1072) says the high scorers of psychological well-being are self-determining and independent; is able to resist social pressures to think and act in certain ways; regulates behavior from within; evaluates self by personal standards and the individuals are self-actualizers. Similarly, practice of red death enables one to control his environment independently and oppress his desires making him autonomous.

Al Mawt al Akhdar- Green Death: It alludes to a lack of desire for a luxury lifestyle and a love and devotion is Allah. However, our desire for money and power leads us down dark, illegal paths that will eventually bring about our demise. Our insensibility has a

negative impact on our life as a result. We get disengaged from life's fundamental goal. The Green Death principle in action makes us think of the lovely, fruitful, and active season of spring. For finding a meaning in life and living a frugal life we should practice green death. The idea is even similar to Maulana Jalal-ad-Din Rumi's major ideas and teachings of acceptance and acknowledgement of both positive and negative experiences; unlearning of old habits and looking at the world with new eyes; decentering, changing one's focus from Self to Other; and attunement of body and mind through meditation, music and dance (Mirdal 6). According to (Ryff 1072), optimal psychological functioning requires not only that one achieves the prior characteristics, but also that one continues to develop one's potential, to grow and expand as a person. The need to actualize oneself and realize one's potential is central to the clinical perspectives on personal growth. Similarly, Green death influences one to lead an optimistic life by developing own potential in leading a frugal life. The practice of self-acceptance agreed by (Ryff 1071) is defined as a central feature of mental health as well as a characteristic of self-actualization, optimal functioning, and maturity which is similar to green death that emphasizes self-actualization and maturity to take decisions of leading simple life.

Research Objectives

This study wants to find out how doing *Usul-e-Sab'a* can make people feel better mentally. It wants to show that *Usul-e-Sab'a* is good for mental health. The study also wants to learn about the Maizbhandari community, who really practice *Usul-e-Sab'a*, and how it helps them live peaceful lives and feel good overall.

1. To identify how mental well-being is gained by practicing *Usul-e-Sab'a*.
2. To highlight the peaceful lives of the Maizbhandari community who are the true practitioners of *Usul-e-Sab'a*.

3. To correlate the scale of *Usul-e-Sab'a* with psychological well-being scales of Carol Ryff.

Research Questions

The *Usul-e-Sab'a* system is a crucial component of mental wellness, as it provides a systematic approach to emotional development and self-awareness. By engaging in practices such as meditation and positive social interactions, it cultivates a sense of inner tranquility and direction, while simultaneously encouraging harmonious relationships within a supportive communal setting.

1. Why is *Usul-e-Sab'a* important for mental well-being?
2. How does *Usul-e-Sab'a* bring mental peace?

Research Statement

Gawthul Azam Maizbhandari has been successful in gathering a myriad of help seeking individuals under the practices of *Usul-e-Sab'a*. Spirituality is that part of a person that searches for transcendent meaning and purpose in life. It is that part of a person that allows him or her to transcend his or her suffering. (Wahyudi et. al131). The Seven principles intricately made from the elements of Sufism and spiritual psychology have prevailed mental peace in the lives of the true practitioners of the Maizbhandari community. The exploration of the impact of *Usul-e-Sab'a* on mental well-being holds great significance due to its potential as a comprehensive approach to address psychological challenges. In light of the increasing demand for diverse methods to enhance mental health, it is pertinent to investigate whether *Usul-e-Sab'a*, with its spiritual, emotional, and psychological dimensions, can positively contribute to overall mental well-being. This research endeavors to delve into this question and provide valuable insights into an alternative avenue for fostering mental resilience and balance using Carol Ryff's six-factor model.

Methodology

Participants: Majority of the participants is male who are the true believers and practitioners of *Usul-e-Sab'a* living in Maizbhandar and they are aged from 18 to 60+. Participants between the ages of 18 and 30 are 5 (five) in number, those between the ages of 31 and 45 are 15 (fifteen), and those between the ages of 46 and 60+ are 10 (ten).

Data Collection: Data has been collected after taking concern from the participants. The first questionnaire survey was conducted over them and their opinion has been collected with their permission. The second survey was conducted over phone and all 30 participants have agreed to use their opinion for this research. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) has been used to analyze the data according to participant responses concerning the statements in both questionnaires. By using charts and relevant tables participants' perception has been shown using Microsoft Excel 2019. SPSS has been used to verify the reliability of the statements in the questionnaire, the Cronbach alpha method has been used, where the Cronbach alpha coefficient was found to be 0.933, which indicates strong reliability of the statements in the questionnaires of *Usul-e-Sab'a*'s mental well-being model. For checking the correlation of Mental Well-being with other variables Spearman rank correlation has been conducted.

The scale of *Usul-e-Sab'a*'s mental well-being model: A five-point Likert Scale was designed for the questionnaire of 21 items to know the opinion of the true practitioners of *Usul-e-Sab'a* to achieve mental well-being. The scale ranges from strongly disagreeing with 1 point to strongly agreeing with 5 points.

The scale of Ryff's psychological well-being model: A seven-point Likert Scale was designed for the questionnaire of 18 items by

Carol Ryff to measure mental well-being. (Ryff et al.) Her scale ranges from strongly agree of 1 point to strongly disagree of 7 points.

Research Frameworks

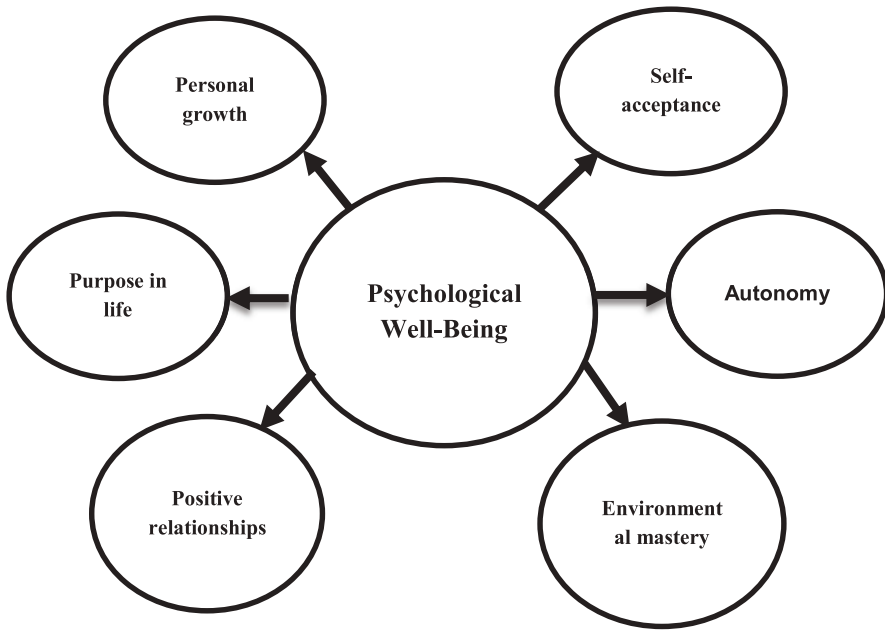


Figure 1: Ryff’s Six-factor model of psychological well-being

Ryff’s model has six independent variables with a single dependent variable. The six factors (IV) consequently impact psychological well-being (DV) of human beings.

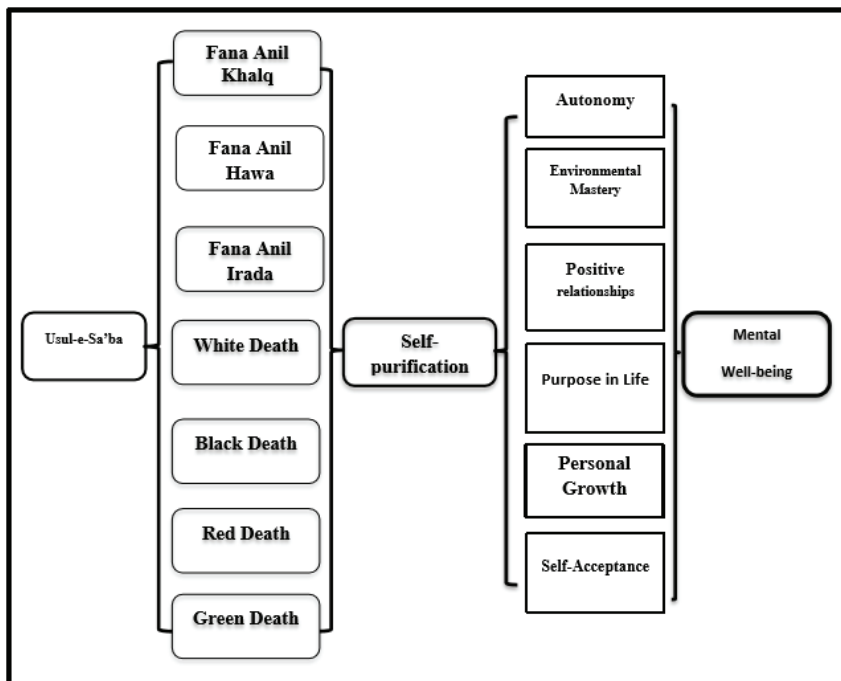


Figure 2: Conceptual diagram of *Usul-e-Sa'ba* fostering mental well-being

The Fana Anil Khalq, Fana Anil Hawa, Fana Anil Irada, White Death, Black Death, Red Death, and Green Death are the seven independent variables (IV) mentioned in the research framework above. The dependent variable (DV) for the seven principles is self-purification and mental well-being. The mental well-being dependent variable is affected by six mediating variables (MV) named as Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Purpose in Life, Personal Growth, Positive relationships with others, and Self-acceptance which are subsequently affected by one of the independent variables (IV). The hypothesis suggests that practicing the seven IV's can help individuals achieve self-purification (DV) and which subsequently assists to gain development of mental well-being (DV). Seven IV, six MV, and two DV were used to construct

and analyze the questionnaire. For each independent variable, a minimum of three questions were prepared. So, the total number of questions stands at 21 (twenty-one). Then the respondents' responses were analyzed on a five-point Likert scale. The research framework presented in the study focuses on investigating the relationships among various variables and their impact on self-purification, six factors of psychological well-being and mental well-being.

Results

Participants' Perception of *Usul-e-Sab'a*: For evaluating the opinion of the practitioners, the responses of the participants were analyzed by the Seven Principles; *Fana Anil Khalq*, *Fana Anil Hawa*, *Fana Anil Irada*, White Death, Black Death, Red Death, and Green Death.

Table 1: Percentage of participants' response on *Usul-e-Sa'ba*.

Variables	Statements	5	4	3	2	1
		Agree		Neutra		Disagre
Fana Anil Khalq	I do most of the domestic work on my own.	80%		20%		0%
	Self-reliance is necessary for a successful and peaceful life.	100%		0%		0%
	It is not necessary to being self-reliant	0%		0%		100%
Fana Anil Hawa	I spend most of the time using my Smartphone.	60%		16.67%		23.33%
	I cannot manage my time.	43.33%		16.67%		40%
	I like to spend my time gossiping with friends.	13.33%		20%		66.67%

Fana Anil Irada	I remain submissive to Allah (^{Subhanahu} OaTa ^{la}) all the time.	93.33 %	6.67%	0%
	I am always satisfied with what I have.	90%	10%	0%
	I do not feel depressed.	33.33 %	36.67%	30%
White Death	I have control over my eating habits.	60%	30%	10%
	I spend money according to my needs.	100%	0%	0%
	I can control my anger.	63.33 %	13.33%	23.37%
Black Death	We should criticize others.	10%	10%	80%
	I hate those who backbite	86.67 %	6.67%	6.67%
	Self-criticism is important for self-development.	83.33 %	6.67%	10%
Red Death	Everyone should try to lead a luxurious life	3.33 %	10%	86.67%
	Smartness in clothes and ornaments should be a priority.	6.67 %	16.67%	76.67%
	I want to lead a wealthy life.	10%	60%	30%
Green Death	I accept every bad or good incident as my destiny.	73.33 %	26.67%	0%
	I believe having internal peace is more important than having materialistic wealth.	86.67 %	13.33%	0%

	I have no longing for a luxurious life.	36.67 %	46.67%	16.67%
--	---	---------	--------	--------

Table1 shows that the practitioners maintain the seven principles in order to lead a successful and peaceful life. The percentage in most of the questions are positive and aligns with the objective of the questionnaire. According to the data, the participants think everyone should be self-reliant. Most of them are submissive to Allah (^{Subhanahu} ^{Oa'Ta'la}) and are satisfied with their conditions. The participants are receptive of the criticisms and backbites. Controlled and noteworthy spending and anger control management for most of the participants are satisfactory. Most of the participants are satisfied with their lives and don't long for luxurious life and materialistic wealth. However, many participants are unable to minimize their mobile phone addiction that consumes a lot of valuable time. To conclude, the responses reveal that most of the participants are mentally sound.

Table 2: Percentage of participants' response to Carol Ryff's psychological model

Variables	Statements	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
		Agree			Neutra l	Disagr ee		
Autonomy	I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions	36.6%			16.7%	46.7%		
	I have confidence in my own opinions, even if they are different from the way most other people think	50%			6.7%	43.3%		
	I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important	36.7%			0%	63.3%		

Environmental Mastery	The demands of everyday life often get me down	40%	10%	50%
	In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live	70%	6.7%	23.4%
	I am good at managing the responsibilities of daily life	73.3%	3.3%	23.4%
Personal Growth	For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth	70%	3.3%	26.7%
	I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how I think about myself and the world.	66.7%	13.3%	20%
	I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life a long time ago	26.7%	6.7%	66.6%
Positive Relationships	Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me	26.7%	6.7%	66.6%
	People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others	60%	13.3%	26.6%
	I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others	30%	3.3%	66.7%
Purpose in Life	Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them	76.7%	6.7%	16.7%
	I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future	46.7%	6.7%	46.7%
	I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life	33.3%	16.7%	50%
	I like most parts of my personality	70%	0%	30%

Self-Acceptance	When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out so far	70%	0%	30%
	In many ways I feel disappointed about my achievements in life	23.3%	23.3%	53.4%

Table 2 shows that among 30 respondents, most of them have strongly agreed to the questions. Most of them have agreed they are confident about their decisions and are not influenced by others' perceptions. Most of them can take charge of their surroundings and maintain the situation according to their benefits. Many respondents believe learning and experiencing is very important for personal growth. Positive relationships with others of most of the respondents is satisfactory. Many respondents have a goal in life and are confident of achieving it. About being satisfied in life, many respondents have been positive. This result indicates that most of the respondents are highly positive about life indicating a positive mental well-being. Moreover, the same aspirants have similarly displayed positive response in the previous result by practicing *Usul-e-Sab'a*.

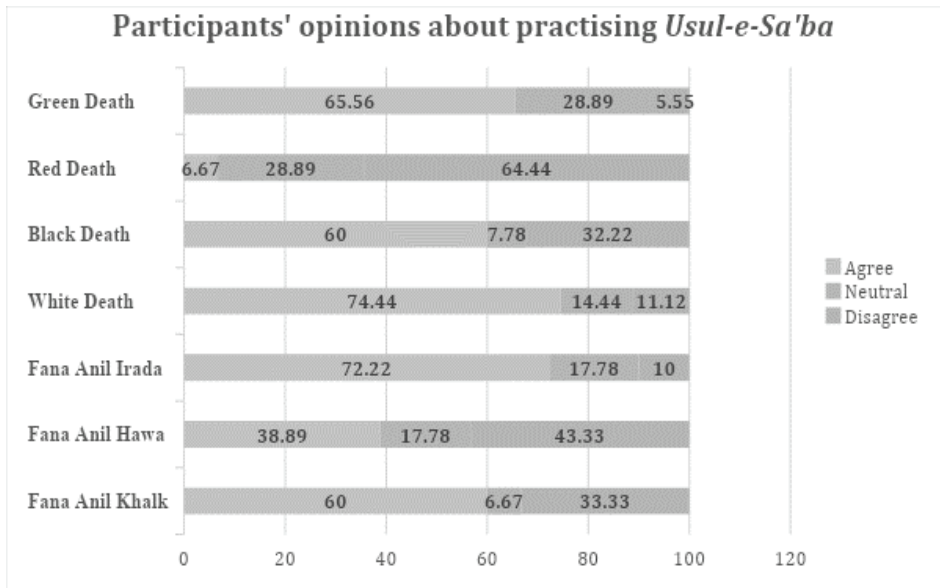


Figure 3: Respondents' overall perception about practicing *Usul-e-Sab'a*

Figure 3 is showing the main variables on overall responses regarding *Usul-e-Sa'ba*, practicing it as a method of achieving mental well-being. About 65.56% participants practice green death, only 6.67% couldn't practice Red Death, 60% of the practitioners maintain Black Death and 74.44% practice White Death significantly. Fana Anil khalq is being practiced by 72.22% respondents, 38.89% participants practice Fana Anil Hawa and 60% practice Fana Anil Irada.

Spearman Rank Correlation

To justify the correlation of the level of mental well-being with respondents' true practice of *Fana anil Khalq*, *Fana anil Hawa*, *Fana anil Irada*, White death, Black Death, red death and green death, Spearman Rank Correlation has been conducted. For the correlation between six factors of Carol Ryff's psychological well-being and seven principles, spearman correlation model has been used.

Table 3. Correlation between Mental Well-being and *Usul-e-Sab'a*

Spearman Correlation	Correlation Coefficient	Correlation Coefficient
Mental Well-being	1	.828
Fana Anil Khalq	.828**	1
Mental Well-being	1	.870**
<i>White Death (Mawte abyadh)</i>	.870**	1
Mental Well-being	1	.915**
Fana Anil Hawa & <i>Red Death (Mawte Ahmar)</i>	.915**	1
Mental Well-being	1	.870**
<i>Black Death (Mawte Aswad)</i>	.870**	1
Mental Well-being	1	.823**
<i>Green Death (Mawte Akdhar)</i>	.823**	1
Mental Well-being	1	.843**
Fana Anil Irada	.843**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From table 4, it has been found that all six principles are positively correlated with mental well-being. The correlation between mental well-being and *Fana Anil Khalq* has a strong correlation with the value r is 0.828. The correlation between mental well-being and *Fana Anil Hawa* has a strong correlation with the

value r is 0.925. The correlation between mental well-being and *Fana Anil Irada* has a strong correlation with the value r of 0.843. The correlation between mental well-being and White Death has a strong correlation with the value r of 0.870. The correlation between mental well-being and Black Death has a strong correlation with the value r of 0.870. The correlation between mental well-being and Red Death has a strong correlation with the value r of 0.904. The correlation between mental well-being and Green Death has a strong correlation with the value r of 0.823. All correlations with mental well-being have been measured by setting the value of r of 1.000 for mental well-being as a standard value as it has a single variable. Overall, the correlation between Mental Well-being and *Usul-e-Sab'a* shows strong and positive result.

Table 5. Correlation between *Usul-e-Sa'ba* and Carol Ryff's Six-factors.

Spearman Correlation	Correlation Coefficient	Correlation Coefficient
Autonomy	.703**	.618**
Fana Anil Khalq	.619**	.813**
Environmental mastery	.480*	.297
White Death	0.903**	.254
Personal Growth	.543*	.439*
Fana Anil Hawa & Red Death	.464*	.909**

Positive Relationship with others	.559*	.279
Black Death	.363*	.728**
Purpose in Life	.440*	.174
Green Death	.154	.870**
Self-acceptance	.517*	.134
Fana Anil Irada	.133	.964**

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In table 5, the results of correlation have been measured equally with both variables. At first, the correlation has been made between Autonomy and *Fana Anil Khalq* and later between *Fana Anil Khalq* and Autonomy. The correlation has taken place between Carol Ryff's six factors and *Usul-e-Sab'a* (seven principles). From the data, it has been found that the correlation between Autonomy and *Fana Anil Khalq* has a strong correlation with the value r is 0.703, 0.618, 0.619, 0.813 respectively. The correlation between Environmental mastery and White Death has a strong correlation with the value r of 0.480, 0.297, 0.903, 0.254 respectively. The correlation between Personal Growth and *Fana Anil Hawa* and Red Death have a strong correlation with the value r of 0.543, 0.439, 0.464, 0.909 respectively. The correlation between Positive Relationship with others and Black Death has a strong correlation with the value r of 0.559, 0.279, 0.363, 0.728 respectively. The correlation between Purpose in Life and Green Death has a strong correlation with the value r of 0.440, 0.174, 0.154, 0.870 respectively. The correlation between Self-acceptance and *Fana Anil Irada* has a strong correlation with the value r of 0.517, 0.134,

0.133, 0.964 respectively. Overall, the correlation between the variables shows moderate result.

Discussions

Modern psychotherapies and psychology have used Sufism and Spirituality very little to treat mental health problems. *Usul-e-Sab'a*, bearing the principles of Sufism, purifies the inner part of a human being, the soul. This purification occurs through practices and obedience to *Usul-e-Sab'a* and the creator. Self-purification of the soul and body leads to a decent state where one is able to avoid decisions that are harmful and desires that bring sorrow. Inner satisfaction can create a space where an individual can make decisions independently. This liberty makes one autonomous and profuse a state of self-confidence and drives one to lead a life without dependence. As dependence on others puts a barrier against growth and development, it is wise to be self-reliant. Empowerment has been the renowned term used for making a self-reliant human being. *Usul-e-Sab'a* shows an aspirant to start being self-reliant slowly by doing the usual chores at home. This behavior turns into a habit making an individual self-reliant indirectly. The results therefore show that empowerment is greatly achieved if the seven principles are practiced. This phenomenon is precisely stated in *Fana Anil Khalq*. Sufis led a simple, gentle and normal life. They don't think of or want luxury. Thus, their life is tranquil and harmonious. *Fana Anil Hawa* and Red death bear the principles to lead a simple and harmonious life like the Sufis. The results also show the practitioners are peaceful, their lives aren't chaotic. They are submissive to Allah. The mentality to lead an expensive and luxurious lifestyle is out of their knowledge. This simple and typical Sufi lifestyle has provided them a peaceful life. Meanwhile, to change the mentality of leading a luxurious lifestyle, there should be some practices to overcome the mental and physical desires. *Fana Anil Irada* and White death have taught the aspirants to maintain

their consumption of food, and materials. Weekly fasting and *Zikr* of Allah (Subhanahu OaTa'la) has made them have the control over their physical and mental desires. *Zikr* has made them closer to Allah (Subhanahu OaTa'la) and control over food and materials have benefitted them to live a simple and meaningful life. The practitioners have made their desires limited by following these principles. Black Death and green death empower the aspirants to be strong and vigilant from outside. Black Death prepares an aspirant to be receptive of praises as well as extreme criticisms. This practice proliferates a buffer state inside the mind and stops the aspirant from indulging in useless gossip, quarrels and debates. Besides ensuring inner peace of the aspirant, this practice ensures social harmony too. Green death not only makes an aspirant submissive and devoted to Allah (Subhanahu OaTa'la) but also develops the morality of the individual. Moral values and ethics are brushed off and cleaned so that it follows the true teachings of Quran. In every religion, the inner self of a human being is given more priority than the outer self. The purification of the soul yields the moral and ethical development of the body ushering peace and harmony. In fact, the core concept of gaining inner peace and harmony lies in the cleansing of the soul. Therefore, "*Khatam ul Awliya*" Ghawthul Azam Hazrat Maulana Shah Sufi Syed Ahmad Ullah (Q.) invented *Usul-e-Sab'a* as a training program for purifying the soul. His soul purification method named as *Usul-e-Sab'a* have significantly assisted the true practitioners to purify their souls in order to gain mental well-being. Moreover, anyone seeking to achieve mental well-being should at first purify their soul. The perception of the practitioners has supported this notion significantly. For understanding the perception of the practitioners better, Carol Ryff's six-factors were taken as a standard to measure the well-being of the participants. Though not completely, the similarities in the results mostly suggest that the practitioners of *Usul-e-Sab'a* also have a positive result in Carol Ryff's psychological model. Therefore, this study encourages future

researchers to use *Usul-e-Sab'a* as a psychometric tool to measure mental well-being and inspires to contribute in this research matter further. This paper tried to mend the research gap over the study relating to the particular use of Maizbhandari Sufi order and its *Usul-e-Sab'a* to gain psychological well-being. Though the paper bears some limitations like lack of large-scale survey and in-depth analysis of the relation between mental well-being and *Usul-e-Sab'a*, it can be concluded that *Usul-e-Sab'a* with the light of Sufism and Sufi psychology can usher mental well-being among the true practitioners. The study prefers *Usul-e-Sab'a* to be used as a method for receiving mental well-being.

Works Cited

- Al-Kaisi, Meis. "Rethinking Conceptual Sufism: A Synthesis of Islamic Spirituality, Asceticism, and Mysticism." *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2021, pp. 169–93, <https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2021.11.2.169-193>.
- Bertocci, Peter J. "A Sufi Movement in Bangladesh." *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, vol. 40, no. 1, 2006, pp. 1–28, doi:10.1177/006996670504000101.
- Chittick, W. C. "The Sufi Doctrine of Rumi." World Wisdom, Inc, 2005.
- Conrad, David, et al. "Promoting Men's Mental Health." *Promoting Men's Mental Health*, 2018, pp. 1–263, doi:10.4324/9781315376578.
- Fisher, Bradley J., and Carol A. Gosselink. "Enhancing the Efficacy and Empowerment of Older Adults through Group Formation." *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, vol. 51, no. 1–2, 2008, pp. 2–18, doi:10.1080/01634370801967513.
- Harder, Hans. *Sufism and Saint Veneration in Contemporary Bangladesh. The Maizbhandaris of Chittagong*. Routledge, 2011.
- Hoque, Shahjada Syed Irfanul, et al. "Application Of Seven Principles Of Maizbhandari Tariqa On Business Ethics For Sme's Sustainability In Fatikchari, Bangladesh." *American International Journal of Business and Management Studies* 3.1 (2021): 20-33.
- Isgandarova, N. "Muraqaba as a Mindfulness-Based Therapy in Islamic Psychotherapy." *J Relig Health* 58, 2019, pp. 1146–1160, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-018-0695-y>.
- Hossain, Syed Delowar, *Wilayat-e-Mutlaqa*. 3rd ed., Gausia Ahmadia Manjil, Maizbhandar Darbar Sharif, 1974.
- M. Puchalski, C., et al. "Spirituality in Psychiatry Residency

Works Cited

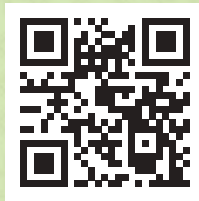
- Al-Kaisi, Meis. "Rethinking Conceptual Sufism: A Synthesis of Islamic Spirituality, Asceticism, and Mysticism." *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2021, pp. 169–93, <https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2021.11.2.169-193>.
- Bertocci, Peter J. "A Sufi Movement in Bangladesh." *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, vol. 40, no. 1, 2006, pp. 1–28, doi:10.1177/006996670504000101.
- Chittick, W. C. "The Sufi Doctrine of Rumi." World Wisdom, Inc, 2005.
- Conrad, David, et al. "Promoting Men's Mental Health." *Promoting Men's Mental Health*, 2018, pp. 1–263, doi:10.4324/9781315376578.
- Fisher, Bradley J., and Carol A. Gosselink. "Enhancing the Efficacy and Empowerment of Older Adults through Group Formation." *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, vol. 51, no. 1–2, 2008, pp. 2–18, doi:10.1080/01634370801967513.
- Harder, Hans. *Sufism and Saint Veneration in Contemporary Bangladesh. The Maizbhandaris of Chittagong*. Routledge, 2011.
- Hoque, Shahjada Syed Irfanul, et al. "Application Of Seven Principles Of Maizbhandari Tariqa On Business Ethics For Sme's Sustainability In Fatikchari, Bangladesh." *American International Journal of Business and Management Studies* 3.1 (2021): 20-33.
- Isgandarova, N. "Muraqaba as a Mindfulness-Based Therapy in Islamic Psychotherapy." *J Relig Health* 58, 2019, pp. 1146–1160, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-018-0695-y>.
- Hossain, Syed Delowar, *Wilayat-e-Mutlaqa*. 3rd ed., Gausia Ahmadia Manjil, Maizbhandar Darbar Sharif, 1974.
- M. Puchalski, C., et al. "Spirituality in Psychiatry Residency

- Al-Bukhari, Muhammed Ibn Ismaiel. *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari: Arabic-English (English and Arabic Edition)*. Translated by Muhammad M. Khan, Dar-us-Salam Publications, 1997.
- Tiliouine, Habib, et al. "Islamic Religiosity, Subjective Well-Being, and Health." *Mental Health, Religion and Culture*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2009, pp. 55–74, doi:10.1080/13674670802118099.
- Wahyudi, M., et al. "Psychological Well-Being Sufism Practitioners as A Sufistic Counseling." *KONSELING RELIGI Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling Islam*, vol. 11(1), 2020, pp. 145–58, doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.21043/kr.v11i1.6734.
- Zimmerman, M. A. "Psychological Empowerment: Issues and Illustrations." *American Journal of Community Psychology*, vol. 23(5), 1995, pp. 581– 599, doi:10.1007/BF02506983.
- "Surah Yunus." *Quraan Shareef*, <http://www.quraanshareef.org/Surah-Yunus>. Accessed 3 September 2023.

Note

Note

Darul Irfan Research Journal
A Journal on Sufism



Darul Irfan Research Institute (DIRI)

📍 6/G, Zakir Hossain Society,
Road # 04, South Khulshi,
Chattogram-4225, Bangladesh.

📍 Gausia Ahmadia Manjil,
Maizbhandar Darbar Sharif
Fatikchari, Chattogram,
Bangladesh.

☎ +88 01850 678 899

✉ tasauf.darulirfan@gmail.com

🌐 www.diri.org.bd