



Research Article

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Spiritual and Professional Motivation of Indonesian Academics Entering the Shaṭṭāriyah Sufi Order

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Abstract

Shaṭṭāriyah is one of the 46 ṭarīqa (Sufi order) in Indonesia that are mu'tabarah (Ṣahīh, straight, valid), which attracts academics from major cities, including Bandung. Questions such as (1) Why are academics interested in joining this Sufism? (2) Are they only motivated spiritually? and (3) Does professional development conflict with the concept of zuhud and uzlah? have remained unanswered. Therefore, this study aims to explore the spiritual and professional motivations of Indonesian academics entering ṭarīqa Shaṭṭāriyah. This is qualitative research with data collected from five lecturers in Bandung through observation and in-depth interviews from May 2021 to April 2022. The results showed that respondents interpreted religion as being submissive to Wasīṭah, a Shaykh of Shaṭṭāriyah who the only successor of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH is. Spirituality development through mujāhadah under the guidance of Wasīṭah by combining the goodness of shari'a and haqīqa. All respondents had reached the mutawasiṭ (intermediate) spirituality level, muṭmainnah, and radhiyah stages, which are levels of spirituality far above most Shaṭṭāriyah citizens. Furthermore, in terms of professional motivation, they possessed zuhud and uzlah, which are high levels of professionalism.

Keywords: *Shaṭṭāriyah; spiritual; mujāhadah; shari'a; haqīqa; zuhud; uzlah; professional; academic*

1. Introduction

The pro-contra debate about Sufism among Muslims led to the creation of 'anti' and 'pro' Sufism and ṭarīqa (Sufi Order) groups. According to Wagemakers (2017), salafis are the most vehemently opposed schools of Sufism. This is in addition to the research conducted by Ibrahim (2002), who compiled a chapter on *Tasawuf dan Pengaruh Asing* (Sufism and Foreign Influence). Anwar (2002)'s research titled "*Kenapa Harus Tasawuf?*" (Why Sufism?) and "*Tasawuf Tanpa Ṭarīqa*" (Sufism without Ṭarīqa) stated that Islam already has an umbrella, namely *akhlaq* (morality). These studies criticized the

concept of *ma'rifa* as misguided and heretical. Citing Nicholson, Hilal (2002) reported that the *ma'rifa* process comes from the Greek word *gnosis/kashf*, which means direct knowledge from God without intermediaries. Conversely, Sufism examines how human nature meets God's essence through the blessing of knowledge by a *dhikr* expert (Afandi, 2009). In this research, Afandi emphasized the role of a *dhikr* expert without using *kashf*.

The *ṭarīqa* are some of the supporters of Sufism and *ṭarīqa*, which has continued to thrive. Studies have shown that there are more than 70 parent *ṭarīqas* globally, one of which is *Shaṭṭāriyah* (en.wikipedia.org., 2022; slife.org., 2022). In Indonesia alone, there are 46 *ṭarīqa mu'tabarah* (Tedy, 2017). Harun Nasution, an Indonesian Islamic reformist, vehemently denied that Sufism and *ṭarīqa* originate outside Islam. Harun's rebuttals are summarized as follows: (1) The Prophet PBUH lived as a Sufi, (2) *Khulafa al-Rāsyidīn* – Abu Bakr Siddiq, Umar ibn Khattab, Uthman ibn Affan, Ali ibn Abu Ṭalib – and their senior companions imitated the Prophet PBUH for being Sufis, (3) when the caliphate was in the hands of the corrupt and nepotistic Umayyads and Abbasids, many scholars lived as Sufis, and (4) its teachings had solid roots in the Qur'an and Hadith (Nasution, 1990; Saude, 2011; Rahmat, 2016). Nahdhatul Ulama (NU), Indonesia's largest Islamic organization, oversees Sufism and *ṭarīqa*. Recently Muhammadiyah (inclined Wahhābi), the second-largest Islamic organization, supports Sufism even without *ṭarīqa* (Beck, 2014).

Shaṭṭāriyah is the oldest, unique, and largest *ṭarīqa* in Indonesia, with 46 *mu'tabarah* *ṭarīqas* (Azra, 2004; Mulyati, 2006; Laffan, 2011; Fathurahman, 2017; Taufani, 2018; Tedy, 2017). The lineage of *ṭarīqa* comes from the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, then continued to the 12 Shi'a Imamiya Imams, then the Wasitah (Shaykh of *Shaṭṭāriyah*) in India, and spread widely through the Mecca-Medina route thanks to Shaykh Sibgatullah (died, 1606). This *ṭarīqa* flourished in North Africa through Shaykh Muhammad al-Sanusi (d., 1859 AD) (Ernst, 2013). Then it developed in Indonesia and Southeast Asia through Shaykh Abd al-Rauf al-Sinkili (Aceh) at the behest of his teacher, Shaykh Ahmad al-Qushashi (died, 1660) (Christomy, 2001; Affandi, 2002; Ngadhimah, 2007; Fathurahman, 2003, 2017). In Indonesia, this *ṭarīqa* is one of 46 *mu'tabarah* *ṭarīqa* (Tedy, 2017). The largest *Shaṭṭāriyah* is based in Jogomerto (Nganjuk, East Java) (Rahmat, 2018).

Shaṭṭāriyah Jogomerto had vast influence in Java and Sumatra, with most of its members' farmers living in rural areas. A small number live in urban areas and work as entrepreneurs, traders, employees, state civil servants, soldiers, police, teachers, lecturers, notaries, doctors, and specialists. In the previous Wasitah period, there were also ministers in the Cabinet of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (Rahmat, 2018). This *ṭarīqa* attracts academics from major Indonesian cities, including Bandung.

2. Levels of Spirituality

In general, spirituality is an awareness of a transcendental dimension (Elkins et al., 1988) and living a sacred life (Puchalski et al., 2009). According to Hughes (2013) and Marzband et al. (2016), it can be based on religion or other worldviews.

In Islam, it is interpreted differently by experts. For instance, Abbasi et al. (2012) defined it as a situation with a meaningful life purpose, which stems from the belief in unlimited power, the perfection of God, and belief in life after death. Damad (2011) stated that peoples' spirituality depends on their knowledge and faith in Allah. In contrast, Marzband et al. (2016) reported that it is based on the Qur'an and its commentary (16:97 and 37:83-84) terms *hayātan tayyibatan* (the good life) and *qalbun salīm* (pure heart). *Hayātan tayyibatan* is defined as a good and worldly life, while the holy one is more afterlife oriented. Humans enjoy this holy life with good deeds and noble character without being tarnished by sins and bad morals (Ṭabaṭaba'i, 2010). Meanwhile, Ibn Kathir means a peaceful life because he obeys Allah and the Messenger by obtaining halal, good sustenance, and likes to give charity (Alu-Shaykh, 2009). The *qalbun* (heart) is a source of moral virtue and a determinant of good and bad morals; hence it is a state of the soul that accumulates good qualities such as faith, healthy thinking, fear of God, and benevolence, compassion, and peace. The ultimate goal of human

action, and the true perfection of man, is to become closer to God (Marzband et al., 2016).

A novice Muslim approaches God through the *shari'a*, by worshipping in a spiritual place (Latifa et al., 2019). Prayers can be performed in the mosque, at home, and other places. This is in addition to fasting during Ramadan and conducting Hajj in Mecca in the month of Zhulhijjah. However, a Muslim does not stop at the *shari'a* dimension but understands that God is everywhere, irrespective of their location. Based on this understanding, Muslims increase their spirituality through the *ṭarīqa* way by following the *Shari'a* to increase their holiness further and being closer to God (Latifa et al., 2019).

At the *ṭarīqa* level, the most prominent characteristic of this phase is the remembrance of God, called *dhikr* (recollection). The Qur'ān (2:152), which states, "Remember Me, and I will remember you. Give thanks to Me, and do not be ungrateful," is constant *dhikr* through continual repetition of the 99 names of God (*al-Asmā al-Husnā*). *Dhikr* in one's heart and verbalizing His holy name is a way of facilitating divine proximity and hence constitutes another attachment for Muslims. When individuals remember God, it brings them closer to Him. A divine saying assures Muslims of the relationship with the divine when God says, "I am present in My servant's thought of Me, and I am with him when he remembers Me" (Ibn-'Arabi, 2005). At this level, the original meaning is the information and the knowledge about God, wherein one may stop questioning and discussing God (Simuh, 1996; Latifa et al., 2019).

The highest level of spirituality is *ma'rifa*, and the most obvious feature of this phase is a close relationship with God (Latifa et al., 2019). The Sufis often quote two hadiths. First, "I was a hidden treasure who loved to be known, which led to the world's creation" (Shah-Kazemi, 2002; Ibn-'Arabi, 2005). The word "known" here is *u'raf: ma'rifa*, which implicitly commands humans to recognize their Lord. The second is "Whosoever knoweth himself knows his Lord" (Shah-Kazemi, 2002; Ibn-'Arabi, 2005), where the word "knowing" is *'Arafa*.

Ma'rifa aims to bring oneself near God and experience being with Him because there is no distance between the "subject" and the "object." A spiritual traveler (Sufi) sees God as imminent and omnipresent with their divine sight (Simuh, 1996; Latifa et al., 2019). According to Allah's Word: "And when My servants ask you about Me, then answer by saying that I am near. This is because I grant the supplication of those who pray to Me and obey all commands; hence they may always be in the truth" (Qur'ān, 2:186, 40: 60; 55:29). This is in addition to the verse "We are closer to him than his jugular vein" (Qur'ān 50:16). Since God is non-material and holy, the only element of a human being used to approach Him is the *qalb*, thereby the human soul should be pure. Purifying the *qalb* is accomplished through worship, making one closer to God. Therefore, a person should follow the *ṭarīq* (the ways or paths), which is a long and difficult process consisting of stages (*maqāmat*) as well as specific conditions (*ahwāl*). This process utilizes the sense of feeling in the heart to seek God (Simuh, 1996; Latifa et al., 2019).

Shaykh Muḥammad Bahārī (1265/1849–1325/1907) introduced *shari'a*, *ṭarīqa*, and *haqīqa* to Muslims through Shi'a Sufi, which were replaced by three terms, namely *fiqh*, *akhlāq*, and *tawhīd* though the contents remain *shari'a*, *ṭarīqa*, and *haqīqa*. *Fiqh* is an introduction to *'amal*, which is the implementation of worship, *'amal* is an introduction to moral perfection (*tahdhib al-akhlāq*) and morals towards *tawhīd*. This indicated that Bahārī attempted to reframe mystical thought by making it more acceptable to the Shi'ī seminary characterized by a rigid interpretation of Islamic law (Asghari, 2021).

Shaṭṭāriyah also uses the three terms in addition to *haqīqa*; hence the explanation is different. This Sufi order relates to the four human elements: body, heart, spirit, and sense. God's command in the Al-Qur'ān (2:208) "*udkhuḥū fi al-silmi kāffah* (Enter Islam totally)" from the perspective of Shaṭṭāriyah stated that "Islamize all human elements!". This implies that the body, heart, spirit and *sirr* carries out *shari'a*, *ṭarīqa*, *haqīqa*, and *ma'rifa* as a way to Islam (Simuh, 1996; Affandi, 2002; Muttaqien, 2014). Among Sufis, there is a hadith: "*shari'a* without *haqīqa* is *fasiq* (a great sin), and *haqīqa* without *shari'a* is *zindiq* (heretic) (Ibn-'Arabi, 2005). *Haqīqa* starts and ends with *ṭarīqa*, and *ma'rifa* (Rahmat, 2016). *Shari'a* is the process of conducting bodily worship, namely prayer, fasting, zakat, pilgrimage, and having noble character beneficial for humans. *Ṭarīqa* is *dhikr*, which is

associated with the process of remembering God as much as possible with each breath. Humans are created in the world in God's image, which implies they move, think, and others. Therefore, the spirit's task is to express *haqīqa*, which exists and moves by God. Humans should not claim to be intelligent or rich because it all comes from God, who provides these attributes to test them. People who pass God's test will use their intelligence to think of beneficial things for as many people as possible, such as easing the economic hardships of the poor. The *sirr* is human identity to God, which returns them to heaven in a happy state because they obeyed His commands. This can also be in the form of misery by going to hell for disobeying the commands of God and His Messenger. *Sirr's* task is to achieve *ma'rifa*, namely *fana` dzat* oneness with God after being mortal` and *fana` afal* by always carrying out His commands (Affandi, 2002; Affandi, 2006; Muttaqien, 2014; and interview with Wasīṭah (Affandi, 2011, 2012; Muttaqien, 2021).

The level of spirituality depends on the stages of lust, comprising seven stages. Bad spirituality is in the first and second stages of lust, *amarah* (anger), and *lawwamah* (rude and rebellious). The characteristics of the lust of anger are extreme happiness, wastefulness, greed, envious, revenge, jealousy, hatefulness, ignorant of obligations, arrogance, happiness to indulge in lust, and anger (Affandi, 2002; Muttaqien, 2014). This lust exists in the realm of the senses and is controlled by various desires of the lower world (Armstrong, 2000). The characteristics of *lawwamah* lust are reluctant, indifferent, happy to praise oneself, showing off, seeking to disgrace others, persecuting, lying, and pretending not to know obligations (Affandi, 2002; Muttaqien, 2014).

The medium level of spirituality is at the third level of lust, *mulhimah* and *murīd muḥtadi*. Its characteristics are likes to give, simple, compassionate, gentle, humble, repentant, patient, and ready to endure difficulties while carrying out obligations, such as ṣalāt, fasting, paying zakat, and hajj (Affandi, 2002; Muttaqien, 2014). This lust keeps man from evil and acts as a means to happiness under God's watchful eye (Armstrong, 2000). Lack of *mujāhadah*, makes it possible for the disciple who has been in the *muḥtadi* level for a long time to descend to a poor level of spirituality.

Muḥmainnah and *radhiyah* (*murīd mutawasiṭ* level) are at the fourth and fifth levels of spirituality, also known as the last stage. The characteristics of *muḥmainnah* lust are happiness in giving alms, *tawakkal*, worship, gratitude to God, excitement with Allah's provisions, and fear for Allah. The characteristics of *radhiyah* lust are noble personality, ascetic, sincerity, *wara'*, *riyadhah*, and keeping promises (Affandi, 2002; Muttaqien, 2014). Humans already at this level of spirituality are close to God and keep being closer until they reach a higher level of spirituality. Al-Qur'ān 89:27-30 "*Yā ayyutuhā al-naḥsu al-muḥmainnah irji`i ila rabbiki rādhiyatan mardhiyatan* means O *muḥmainnah* soul, return to your Lord with increase in spirituality for *radhiyah* and *mardhiyah*. *Fadkhuḥi fi`ibādī* means Enter the congregation of My servants and increase spirituality to the peak of lust, *insān kāmil*, while *wadkhuḥi jannatī* denotes enter into My paradise (Rahmat, 2016). This is because in the *mujāhadah* the new *murīd* is already at the level of *mutawasiṭ*.

The highest levels of spirituality are in the sixth and seventh stages of lust, *mardhiyah*, and *kāmilah*, also known as the level of *murīd al-Shaṭṭār*. The characteristics of *Mardhiyah* lust are good character, clean from all sins, willingness to remove darkness, and happiness to invite and enlighten the souls of creatures. The characteristics of *kāmilah* lust are *`ilm al-yaqīn*, *`ain al-yaqīn*, and *haqq al-yaqīn* (Affandi, 2002; Muttaqien, 2014). The true stage of Islam is when the servant is constantly on a journey with Allah (Armstrong, 2000).

The key to spirituality in Shaṭṭāriyah is to be obedient to Wasīṭah as the only representative and successor of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH (Affandi, 2002; Muttaqien, 2014), who knows God and His Will (Interview with Muttaqien, 2021). Obedience to the Apostle/Wasīṭah is a command of Allah in the Qur'ān 4:59, 5:35, 49:7, 2:143,238, 16:43, 21:7, etc. This is in addition to the command of the Prophet PBUH: "*Alaikum bi sunnatī wa sunnati khulafā al-rāshidīn al-mahdiyyīn*, which means "You must stick to my sunnah and those of my representatives who provide guidance" (Ahmad, 2013).

The development of spirituality under the guidance of Wasīṭah through *mujāhadah* combines the goodness of *shari'a* and *haqīqa*. *Mujāhadah* in Shaṭṭāriyah is the act of increasing worship through ṣalāt, fasting, getting rid of bad characters, paying zakat, *kifarat*, *jariyah* (monthly alms), and easing human

burdens through tolerance towards other religions (Rahmat, 2016; Fahrudin et al., 2022). It also recommends daily *mujāhadah* in the family through Maghrib, and evening prayers, `isha, religious dialogue assuming there are at least two Shaṭṭāriyah students. Also, a weekly joint *mujāhadah* at the branch, and for those who can afford it once a year, follow the central *path* with Wasīṭah. The obligatory prayer in Shaṭṭāriyah is twice the obligatory prayer for Muslims in general, namely the fard, also known as maghrib, `isha, ṣubuh, dhuhr, and `aṣar. This is followed by the circumcision prayers accompanied by the obligatory and night prayers, culminating in 73 *raka'ats*. Prayers like this are Allah's commands in the Qur'ān (2:238) "*hāfīzḥū `ala al-salawāti wa al-ṣalāti al-wuṣṭā*, meaning keep all your ṣalāts by conducting five daily prayers and ṣalāt *wuṣṭā*, which are the prayers prescribed by Wasīṭah."

3. The Relationship between *Zuhud* and *Uzlah* with Professionals

Zuhud and *uzlah* are two terms related to the professional attitude of Sufism practitioners in the modern world. Shaykh Abu Nasr al-Sarraj (Simuh, 1996) stated that there are seven stations of Sufism in carrying out spirituality, namely repentance, *wara`*, *zuhud*, *faqīr*, patience, *tawakkal*, and pleasure. These seven stations are heart purification stations, enabling them to be completely clear and not polluted by world things (Nicholson, 2007). Sufis generally use *uzlah* in boarding Sufism stations, especially *zuhud* stations, which were also undergone by Imam Al-Ghazali (1997).

Imam Al-Ghazali recounted the experience of *uzlah*, in summary: "I left Baghdad and distributed the wealth I had, without reducing it except for necessities, such as food for the children. Finally, I arrived in the land of Sham and stayed there for almost two years. Over there, I only did *uzlah*, seclusion, *riyadhah*, *mujāhadah*, and *zuhud* by trying to purify the soul, directing morals, and clearing the heart to *dhikr* to Allah SWT, as I got from the Science of Sufism" (Al-Ghazali, 1997).

Shaykh Al-Jilani (1988) explained that ascetic people eat and dress outwardly as humans while their hearts are full of *zuhud* practices inside and outside. He further explained as follows:

A man had the world in his hands but did not like it. He had the world but did not love it, which later became the enemy behind him. He later separated from the world because his heart was true to Allah `Azza wa Jalla and not damaged because of wealth (Al-Jilani, 1988).

Subsequently, Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani stated: "This world or treasure can be in hand or pocket for good intentions, however, do not take it to heart (Al-Jilani, 1988).

According to Imam Al-Ghazali (1997), there are three levels of *zuhud*. The first is a person who strives for asceticism towards the world and struggles to leave the lusts and desires known as a *mutazahhid*. Efforts like this still have shortcomings, and when people continue striving for it, they will reach the stage of asceticism. The second is the voluntary efforts associated with the world compared to the hereafter. This is like the difficulty one faces when opting for two dirhams without getting one. The possibility of leaving one to get two still has shortcomings. The third is being happy irrespective of what the world thinks without conflict because the world had nothing to do with the afterlife.

Imam al-Ghazali in *Ihya' Ulūm al-Dīn* stated six virtues of living in isolation from the hustle and bustle of life (*uzlah*). The first is with *uzlah*, which gives one plenty of time to worship Allah and think (*tafakkur*) about omnipotence and majesty. The second is it enables someone to be free from sin in association with society. The third is that it can free someone from quarrels and disputes and save themselves from useless talks (Al-Ghazali, 2016).

In Shaṭṭāriyah, repentance, *wara`*, *zuhud*, *faqīr*, patience, *tawakkal*, and pleasure are not Sufi maqamat. Instead, *faqīr*, precisely *alfaqīr*, is the main attitude of the Shaṭṭāriyah people. There are five characteristics of *alfaqīr* servants first is accusing people of committing the most sins and mistakes to enable *taubāt* (repentance). The second is the feeling of *mujāhadah*, which enables them to improve continually. The third is realizing that one is despicable and cannot do anything without God's mercy. Fourth is the need to improve one's quality, known as *taubāt*. The fifth characteristic is *alfaqīr* which is associated with being humble without arrogance (Fahrudin et al., 2022). Every daily action must be fought for repentance, *zuhud* (including *wara`*), patience, *tawakkal*, and pleasure.

Zuhud in Shaṭṭāriyah is "*tapa in saktengahing Praja*", a Javanese word for "*Praja*" which means

environment, society, nation, and state. *Praja* is a place for additional worship and good deeds in processing oneself to get closer to Allah. However, the feeling of Allah's heart is "*tapa*", which means people remember and live only for God. This implies, Allah enables government advancement by creating useful buildings, which are not the form of buildings. However, it is the work of grateful hearts to "want" to build to avoid the disaster of good deeds, such as arrogance, *riya'*, *sum'ah*, and *ujub*, because worship and good deeds must be sincere (Affandi, 2002; Muttaqien, 2014).

As for *uzlah*, it is "*nyingkrih ana ing sak ing tengahing kalangan*" in Javanese, which means the heart is alone in circles. Therefore, it is important to try hard to advance and be professional in preparing oneself as a human resource to achieve maximum benefit for the advancement of *Praja*. Unlike most humans on this earth, those in this category are not determined to have fun, show off, or be proud of their wealth, honor, and self-esteem, let alone indulge in lust. Instead, they are determined to be able to worship and do good deeds accelerated by the pace of the journey of conscience, spirit, and feeling closer to Allah (Affandi, 1990; Affandi, 2002; Muttaqien, 2014).

4. Materials and Methods

Sufism research is different from *shari'a*. According to Simuh, an expert on Indonesian Sufism, researchers must master its language and terms to have a clear view of Islamic teachings. Sufism research generally uses a qualitative approach, case studies, and grounded analysis (Simuh, 1996). It is related to our dissertation (Yahya, 2007; Fahrudin, 2013; Rahmat, 2010). Furthermore, two articles were published on Sufism in indexed international journals (Rahmat et al., 2016; Rahmat & Yahya, 2021) with data collected from Sufism lecturers, researchers, and active Wasitah students.

The qualitative paradigm interprets the views and behavior of humans in certain situations (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). This is a case study where researchers try to observe people in the respondent's environment, interact, and understand their language (Nasution, 1996). This study examines the spiritual and professional motivation of academics entering *ṭarīqa Shattāriyah*. The term Berger (1985) was used to describe the services of anthropology to become citizens of *Shattāriyah*, who foreigners are still. This is in addition to using the services of sociology, which is being a stranger in one's community.

Data were collected from five lecturers in Bandung who entered *ṭarīqa Shattāriyah* Jogomerto (Nganjuk, East Java) led by Kiai Muhammad Anwar Muttaqien. DePoy and Gitlin (2015) stated that the respondents must be people with experience and deep knowledge about *Shattāriyah*.

Table 1: Characteristics of research respondents

Name Initials & title	Gender	Age (years)	Enter the <i>Shattāriyah</i>	University
1. Prof. Dr. EM	Male	64	2008	Indonesia University of Education
2. Dr. FM	Male	38	2008	Widyatama University
3. GM, Master of Techniques	Male	36	2008	Bandung State Polytechnic
4. Dr. BW	Male	60	2005	Indonesia University of Education
5. HW, Master of Manajement	Female	60	2018	Indonesia University of Education

Incidentally, the research team has known the respondents for decades, although data were collected from May 2021 to April 2022 through observation and in-depth interviews with Wasitah. These included studying Wasitah's (current) and previous writings (48th Wasitah).

5. Case Studies/Results

The following case study answers the main research question:

- a. What is the spiritual motivation of academics to enter *Shattāriyah*?
- b. How did their religious conversion enter *Shattāriyah*?

- c. How do they interpret *zuhud* and *uzlah* with their professional development?
The results were sorted by non-responders, as shown in Table 1.

5.1 Spiritual Motivation

In the respondents' opinion, spirituality is the key to being obedient to *Wasīṭah*. As for spiritual improvement through maximum *mujāhadah* under the guidance of *Wasīṭah*. Each respondent aspires to attain the highest spirituality, *al-Shaṭṭār*.

Respondents 1,2,3 are one family.

Prof.Dr.EM (Respondent, 1) has carried out religious conversions several times. He was born into a *santri* family that is diligent in prayer, fasting, deepening religious knowledge, and being able to read the Qur'ān. The prof's father was the leader of Muhammadiyah; hence his primary to secondary education was at the Muhammadiyah Educational Institution. Studying at a Wahhābi-leaning Islamic University further strengthened his Wahhābi beliefs. After becoming a lecturer, Prof.Dr. EM studied Shi'a and became a follower and leader of the Shi'a school. At the age of 40, two questions arose that were of great concern to him: (1) Why is Islam different? Furthermore, (2) Why didn't God bring in another scholar whom 100% understood the Prophet's Islam? Which encouraged him to study Sufism. In 2004, EM's friend introduced him to the book *Risalah Shaṭṭāriyah – The Way to God*, written by *Wasīṭah* Kiai Muhammad Munawwar Affandi, which introduced him to 'Ilmu Shaṭṭāriyah. Although he doubted his friend's credibility, EM still reads the book. Another friend invited him to practice practical Sufism by entering *ṭarīqa* Qadiriyyah wa Naqshabandiyah (TQN). Prof.Dr.EM later became an active TQN practitioner until he bathed and prayed from midnight to early morning for 40 consecutive nights. His spirituality remained restless because those two questions still bothered him in 2008, Prof.Dr.EM invited his wife and two eldest children (Respondents, 2-3) to discuss the *Risalah Shaṭṭāriyah* earlier. Finally, Prof.Dr.EM went to *Wasīṭah* to closely study Shaṭṭāriyah Science and was then blessed by Kiai Muhammad Munawwar Affandi.

When his father entered Shaṭṭāriyah and told him about his new spiritual experience, a week later, Dr.FM (Respondent, 2) came to *Wasīṭah* and asked for a blessing. GM (Respondent 3) and his mother were also blessed a month later.

Regarding the spiritual motivation for entering Shaṭṭāriyah, the respondents explained:

Prof.Dr.EM: "[...] In, 2008 I visited the Pondok Sufi Shaṭṭāriyah. There is a Wasīṭah student to me that it is good to know God. I asked him if God could be recognized. He replied, "Yes, He can!" "I mean, is God's Essence recognizable?" I asked again. He replied, "Yes, it is!" He went ahead to tell me to verify with the experts. When I was about to go to Pa Kiai's house, he pulled my hand, "That's not the way; there is etiquette!"

[...] I was awake for 24 hours while remembering and feeling God's presence, which Wasīṭah whispered. [...] In 2012, Kiai Muhammad Munawwar Affandi died, and then I blessed Wasīṭah and his successor, Kiai Muhammad Anwar Muttaqien" (Interview with Prof.Dr.EM).

Dr.FM: "[...] After my father went to Pondok Sufi I regretted not following him; hence I prepared myself through fasting and was blessed. [...] After Kiai Muhammad Munawwar Affandi died, I gave blessings to Kiai Muhammad Anwar Muttaqien." (Interview with Dr.EM).

GM: "[...] My father and brother's new spiritual experience encouraged me to seek blessings. Therefore, a month after my father, I went to Pondok Sufi Shaṭṭāriyah with my mother and my mother's friend, and we were all blessed. [...] After Kiai Muhammad Munawwar Affandi died, I gave blessings to Kiai Muhammad Anwar Muttaqien." (Interview with GM).

Prof.Dr.EM's family is very religious, and, in this family, there are only six poor brothers who were sent to school. Most of Prof.Dr. EM's brothers also entered Shaṭṭāriyah, which encouraged the family to always conduct *mujāhadah* together at home. Similarly, Dr.FM and GM carried out

mujāhadah, at the homes of Respondents 1-2 by praying 73 *raka'ats* every day and night. Both families also paid *kifarat* and *jariyah* as a form of obedience to Wasīṭah, at least 5-6 times a year by meeting Wasīṭah and following the central *mujāhadah*. Every month of Ramadan, they followed a special *mujāhadah* at the center, a characteristic of *muṭmainnah* lust. This implies that they are at the level of *mutawasiṭ* spirituality and the stage of *muṭmainnah* lust. Respondents 1-2 already have the characteristics of *radhiyah* because they received severe tests repeatedly and are still happy. In addition, they are very tolerant of other religions/madhhab—for example, Prof.Dr.EM respects relatives' opinions to practice their beliefs while living in his house. GM also venerated his wife's brother, a Catholic, to stay at his house.

Respondents 4 and 5 are husband and wife.

Dr. BW (Respondent 4) has conducted religious conversions many times. He was born into an ordinary Muslim family but was just doing the obligatory prayers and fasting without reading the Qur'ān. Dr. BW is known to be happy to help ease the burden on his relatives and friends. As a student in the 1980s, he became interested in urban Muslims leaning towards Muhammadiyah. However, after becoming a lecturer in the late 1990s, he read a lot of Shi'a books, then joined and practiced it till early 2002, when a friend introduced ṭarīqa Shaṭṭāriyah through the book *Risalah Shaṭṭāriyah*. He is more focused on studying the lineage of Wasīṭah, which the Shi'a Imams continue. Dr. BW longed to meet Imam Mahdi, but this was impossible because the Imam is unseen. Finally, Dr. BW concluded that the occult Imam Mahdi is only one of several opinions because he longed to meet Imam Mahdi and asked for the blessing of the Shaṭṭāriyah Knowledge.

HW (Respondent 5) is a Chinese and a practicing Catholic. She, like her husband, is happy to help lighten the burden of others. In 1986, she converted to Islam and married Dr. BW (Respondent 4), a practicing urban Muslim. When her husband entered Shi'a, he, Shaṭṭāriyah he read Shi'a, *Risalah Shaṭṭāriyah* and *Bimbingan untuk Mencapai Derajat Muqarrabien* books but he was not interested in any of them. In 2018, HW's husband was restless with his spirituality because he worshipped an unrecognized God. Then he entered Shaṭṭāriyah.

Regarding the spiritual motivation for entering Shaṭṭāriyah, the respondents explained:

Dr. BW: "[...] I want to meet Imam Mahdi, according to Shi'a, 12, who is a great prophet. After asking questions and reading books about Imam Mahdi, it turns out that his occultation is just one of several opinions which made me doubtful of Islam. [...] From the genealogy of Wasīṭah, I realized that after Imam Mahdi was Imam Abu Yazid al-Busami and others. I believed this, and in 2005 I was blessed, and in 2012, I blessed the current Wasīṭah" (Interview with Dr. BW).

HW: "[...] Initially, I was a Catholic because I followed the beliefs of my parents and my extended family, all of whom are Catholic. After making friends with devout Muslims, I was interested in learning it, and in 1986 I converted to Islam. [...] After getting married to BW, I became more and more intensive in studying Islam. I practice it like most Muslims, and when my husband entered Shi'a and Shaṭṭāriyah, I studied it but was not interested afterward. [...] In 2018, I was anxious to worship a God I could see, and when Wasīṭah came to Bandung, I was blessed" (Interview with HW).

Dr. BW is an ordinary Muslim who married HW, a Catholic. In 1986 HW converted to Islam, and they are firm with their new spirituality. They pray 73 *raka'ats* daily, pay *kifarat* and *jariyah* almost every month, and are diligent in helping other people's difficulties. Even though they are very busy guiding these, they often participate in branch *mujāhadah*. Furthermore, as a form of obedience to Wasīṭah, they attend the central *mujāhadah* once a year. It implies they are at the level of *mutawasiṭ* spirituality, the stage of *muṭmainnah* lust. Respondent 4 has the characteristics of *radhiyah* lust because he received heavy tests repeatedly and is still happy. Additionally, they are very tolerant of other religions because they believe in living harmoniously with their brothers and sisters.

5.2 Professional Motivation

Respondents assessed that Shaṭṭāriyah encourages professional improvement. The concept of *zuhud*, in their view, should provide significant benefits to institutions and society as a form of worship and good deeds. The forms of *zuhud* include increasing education and positions from Master to Doctor, as well as from Head Lector to Professor. They are hard workers and never missed any teaching schedule. When lessons clashed, they changed the schedule to the time agreed by the students. Furthermore, they always prioritized guiding theses and dissertations while maintaining quality. The implementation of *uzlah* on respondents is as follows:

Prof.Dr.EM: "[...] In 2009 I sought Wasīṭah's permission to discontinue my wife's doctoral education and focus on paying for the children's education because the requirements for lecturers were sufficient for master's. Wasīṭah advised me to let her finish the degree because a Shaṭṭāriyah must be professional. [...] In 2020, I asked Wasīṭah if I needed to prepare for professorship requirements or retire? Wasīṭah advised me to provide greater benefits to the university."

Dr.FM: "[...] In 2015, four friends and I were selected as lecturers. At that time, the Chancellor required us to take doctoral education, either with or without a scholarship, which I did in, 2016 after making payment [...] Alhamdulillah, it turns out that God gave me sustenance from an unexpected direction. [...] In 2020, I published four articles in indexed international journals and earned a Doctorate, while four friends were dismissed as lecturers" (Interview with Dr.FM).

HW: "[...] I originally intended to retire. However, Wasīṭah emphasized the need for professionals to stay and assist students. That is why I'm studying at S3 and will apply for a professorship after graduation. Whether I succeed or fail to achieve a Doctorate and Professorship is good for me either way. However, I worked hard by reading many books, doing assignments, and writing articles." (Interview with HW).

The respondent's perspective is only an excuse of the heart, i.e., the intention is to be alone only to add worship and good deeds as Wasīṭah ordered. The form of action is the same as other professional lecturers, such as HW, BW, and FM, who prepare for professors' requirements. The successor's failure to achieve the position of Professor is a good thing. Similarly, GM did not study at S3 to obey his superiors, who asked him to occupy the head of the study program and was promoted.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

Respondents interpret religion as submissive to Wasīṭah as the representative of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, following al-Shaykh *al-kāmil mukammil*. This view is in line with ṭarīqa, who places the Murshīd (Shaykh of ṭarīqa) *al-kāmil mukammil* as the successor of Prophet Muhammad PBUH, though not every Murshīd has that position (Thohir, 2022). Examples of Murshīd *kāmil mukammil* from a perspective of Sufism are Abū Bakr Qalandar Rūmī in the Golden Horde in the XIV century AD (Shamsimukhametova, 2018), Zainullah bin Habibullah bin Rasul in Siberia and Kazakhstan, the Urals and the center of the Russian Empire in the early XX century AD (Khamidov & Khamidova, 2019), and Shaykh Ahmad Shohibul Wafa Tajul Arifin in Indonesia (Ridwan, 2015). Generally, the Murshīd as the Prophet's successor through the previous Murshīd is only in *talking* (whispering) *dhikr* to the murīd who asks for it (Yahya & Rahmat, 2020) and not in the overall reference to Islam. Meanwhile, as for the Shaṭṭāriyah every Wasīṭah is *al-kāmil mukammil* (Rahmat, 2016). Theoretically, the Qur'ān stated that among the people, there is always an Apostle/Ūlī *al-Amr/Al-Hādī/Wasīṭah*: "How can you be disbelievers, even though Allah's verses are read to you, and His Messenger is also in your midst?" (Qur'ān 3:101), "Obey Allah, obey the Messenger and lī al-Amr" (Qur'ān 4:59), "Know that among you there is an Apostle" (Qur'ān 49:7), "In every people there is a al-Hādī (Rasul/guider)" (Qur'ān, 13:7), "Seek al-Wasilata (*Wasāṭa*) that you may reach Him (Qur'ān 5:35, 2:143) (Rahmat & Fahrudin, 2018).

The spiritual motivation of respondents to enter ṭarīqa Shaṭṭāriyah because they want to

improve *mujāhadah* with Wasīṭah guidance is achieved through the combination of *shari'a* and *haqīqa* to reach the highest level of spirituality (*al-Shaṭṭār*). All respondents reached the *mutawasiṭ* (intermediate), *muṭmainnah*, and *radhiyah* stages and were very tolerant of other religions. The spirituality level of this respondent is far above most of the Shaṭṭāriyah residents who are just at the *muṭtadi* level (Rahmat, 2016). Spirituality and religious tolerance align with Hughes' research (2013). In contrast to most people who tend to be intolerant (Hughes, 2013; Rizal & Rahmat, 2019; Yahya & Rahmat, 2021; Munawar et al., 2021; Rahmat & Yahya, 2022).

All the respondents entered Shaṭṭāriyah in a happy state after previously carrying out several religious conversions. This finding is in line with Williams and O'Dwyer (2016) research that the more often a person converts to a religion, the greater their new belief. The motivation for the respondent's religious conversion is because they seek a spirituality that makes them happier. This contrasts with Australian women who converted to Islam due to social justice factors and the desire to understand better their partner's religion (Boz, 2011).

Regarding the professional implementation of the attitude of *zuhud* and *uzlah*. *Zuhud* was interpreted as providing great benefits for institutions and society as a form of worship and good deeds. This contrasts with Shaykh Al-Jilani (1988), who associated it with attitudes toward property ownership and *uzlah* as a heart. Imam Al-Ghazali (2016) called *uzlah* an exile as well as the worship of good deeds. Respondents showed a high level of professionalism. For example, HW, approaching retirement, enters S₃ because the lecturer must have a doctoral education instead of friends.

The motivation for entering ṭarīqa is not like religious conversion in general but the belief in happiness. After entering Shaṭṭāriyah, the respondents were motivated to increase their spirituality to the highest level. According to Latifa et al. (2019), the highest level in Sufism is *ma'rifa* after *shari'a* and *ṭarīqa*. In Shaṭṭāriyah, the peak of spirituality is *al-Shaṭṭār* (*insān kāmil*), while *shari'a*, *ṭarīqa*, and *haqīqa* are not levels but worship of the body, heart, and spirit that must be conducted simultaneously. Meanwhile, *ma'rifa* is achieved before or at the time of death, with *zuhud* is not related to property ownership but worship in the form of providing great benefits through professionalism. *Uzlah* is not an exile, but their heart is accomplished like other professionals with the addition to worship and good deeds.

This study limits the respondents to academics in Bandung; therefore, subsequent studies need to expand to all academics in big cities in Indonesia. It is also necessary to conduct the same research on other followers of ṭarīqa.

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