

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ORIENTALISM AND THE MYSTICISM (TASAWWUF): THE HISTORY OF THE RELATIONSHIP AND REASONS¹

A RELAÇÃO ENTRE O ORIENTALISMO E O MISTICISMO (TASAWWUF): A HISTÓRIA DA RELAÇÃO E AS RAZÕES

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Abstract: "Orientalism," a persistent and significant challenge to the Islamic world, has gained strength and transformed into various forms and strategies in the modern times. Orientalism displayed a pronounced fascination with the sects and factions that deviated from the authentic and accurate teachings of Islam, thereby distorting the true concepts and laws of the religion. This had a significant impact on numerous Islamic nations, leaving behind a prominent doctrinal influence like Sufism. Sufism holds the highest position among these various sects, and has garnered significant interest from Orientalism. This study aims to examine the factors that contribute to the connection between Sufism and Orientalism, and seeks to uncover the origins and historical development of such a intricate and intertwined connections between Orientalism and Sufism. The research findings demonstrate that although there are discrepancies in establishing the exact origin of Orientalism, there is substantial

evidence indicating a longstanding history of how orientalism could shape and help establish Sufism in the Muslim world. This is evident via their frequent exchange of practices and modifications. The relationship between Sufism and Orientalists is marked by a complex network of associations and activities associated with Orientalism. The association between Orientalism and Sufism emerged due to multiple factors. Nevertheless, the most noteworthy aspect was the resemblance between Sufism and the concept of Al-Batiniyah (esoteric) and the alignment of the ideas presented in "Doctrinal Sufism" with the intellectual perspectives of Orientalists. According to the findings, this research suggests dedicating more resources to the examination of the intellectual patterns of Orientalism and their evolving connection with religious sects and factions that oppose Islam. Additionally, it recommends closely monitoring the changes occurring within the Sufi movement and its current trends related to the Western world, such as "Francophone Sufism."

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Keywords: Intellectual relationships. Islam and West. Islamic sects and factions. Orientalism. Sufism.

Resumo: O "orientalismo", um desafio persistente e significativo para o mundo islâmico, ganhou força e transformou-se em várias formas e estratégias nos tempos modernos. O orientalismo demonstrou um fascínio pronunciado pelas seitas e facções que se desviavam dos ensinamentos autênticos e exactos do Islão, distorcendo assim os verdadeiros conceitos e leis da religião. Este facto teve um impacto significativo em numerosas nações islâmicas, deixando atrás de si uma influência doutrinária proeminente como o sufismo. O sufismo ocupa a posição mais elevada entre estas várias seitas e tem suscitado um interesse significativo por parte do orientalismo. Este estudo tem como objetivo examinar os factores que contribuem para a ligação entre o sufismo e o orientalismo, e procura desvendar as origens e o desenvolvimento histórico de ligações tão intrincadas e entrelaçadas entre o orientalismo e o sufismo. Os resultados da investigação demonstram que, embora existam discrepâncias no estabelecimento da origem exacta do orientalismo, há provas substanciais que indicam uma longa história de como o orientalismo pode moldar e ajudar a estabelecer o sufismo no mundo muçulmano. Este facto é evidente através do seu intercâmbio frequente de práticas e modificações. A relação entre o sufismo e os orientalistas é marcada por uma rede complexa de associações e actividades associadas ao orientalismo. A associação entre o Orientalismo e o Sufismo surgiu devido a múltiplos factores. No entanto, o aspeto mais notável foi a semelhança entre o sufismo e o conceito de Al-Batiniyah (esotérico) e o alinhamento das ideias apresentadas em "Doctrinal Sufism" com as perspectivas intelectuais dos orientalistas. De acordo com os resultados, esta investigação sugere que se dediquem mais recursos à análise dos padrões intelectuais do orientalismo e da sua ligação evolutiva com as seitas e facções religiosas que se opõem ao Islão. Além disso, recomenda que se acompanhem de perto as mudanças que ocorrem no movimento sufi e as suas tendências actuais relacionadas com o mundo ocidental, como o "sufismo francófono".

Palavras-chave: Relações intelectuais. Islão e Ocidente. Seitas e facções islâmicas. Orientalismo. Sufismo.

1. Introduction

The Holy Quran provides numerous tactics and methods to address the deviant sects and factions. Additionally, it warns others against the doctrinal and intellectual aberrations exhibited by these cults. Gaining insight into their circumstances, their methodologies, the origins of their viewpoints, and their affiliations is a key Quranic strategy. By embracing this methodology, the perils, deceit, and plots can be identified and revealed, as Allah, the Supreme Being, states: "And thus do We elucidate the verses, and thus the path of the wrongdoers becomes apparent." The verse you are referring to is from Surah Al-Anaam, verse 55.

The phenomenon of "Orientalism" has become stronger throughout time, evolving into new forms and strategies, and its impact on the Islamic Ummah cannot be overlooked.

Orientalism exerted an aggravated influence on beliefs, legislation, politics, economy, and culture. Orientalism had a significant influence on beliefs by showing an intense fascination in sects and factions opposing the authentic and accurate doctrine and beliefs of Islam, as outlined in the Quran and the Sunnah. Examples of such sects are Al-Raafizah, Al-Motazilah, and Al-Sufia (Sufism), among others. Orientalists have long been fascinated by these sects, dedicating their time and efforts to studying them. This has sparked curiosity and raised questions about their motivations for being interested in these unconventional groups. Some even go as far as adopting their perspectives, praising them, and advocating for the resurgence of their ideologies and beliefs.

The current study seeks to argue for the fascination of Orientalism with the unorthodox Islamic sect and its endorsement of a sect that advocates and disseminates religious innovation (Al-Bidah), commonly referred to as "Sufism".

Sufism shows several examples of "doctrinal deviations" and "religious innovations," and its fundamental tenets have been intertwined and overlapped with pagan and esoteric ideologies. Hence, it is untenable to regard Sufism as an exemplar embodying the authentic Islamic faith and its doctrines that are endorsed by the Quran and the Sunnah. These Islamic ideas and teachings differ from the perspective of Orientalism, which has historically and currently focused extensively on Sufism. Sufism embraced this Orientalist perspective through a reciprocal and consensual arrangement.

Our findings indicate that the situation has deteriorated as a result of recent alterations and adaptations to the concepts and methodologies of Orientalism. These

changes have caused some Muslims to mistakenly believe that the ideology has been entirely eradicated. The ramifications of this misunderstanding are evident in the lack of recognition given to Orientalism's endeavors to bolster Sufism, as well as the disregard for the potential hazards inherent in their interactions and their potential impact on the Islamic Ummah. Therefore, the paper aims to achieve the following objectives: To examine the origins and historical connection between Orientalism and Sufism.

To further explain the factors those have led to the development and continuation of the connection between Orientalism and Sufism.

The practice of Sufism is gaining popularity in numerous Muslim nations. There is a rise of individuals who propagate their beliefs in Sufism and its rituals. The enduring connection between Orientalism and Sufism, which has persisted since the inception of Orientalism and continues to the present age, carries significant implications and consequences. It is necessary to provide a detailed analysis and rationale for the ongoing perpetuation of this relationship. Although Sufism is characterized by unorthodox beliefs and ideologies, Orientalism portrays it as a faction that embodies the authentic and untainted essence of "Islam." This propaganda is extensively circulated, especially among individuals who are not adherents of Islam. Therefore, it is imperative to focus on eliminating the amalgamation of ideas, rectifying their erroneous notions, and revealing the inaccuracies they hold.

2. Methodology

In order to accomplish the study goals, an inductive approach is employed, as data is extrapolated and collected from works authored by Orientalists, books pertaining to Sufism, and literature that explore Orientalism and Sufism.

The researcher employs the analytical technique, which entails finding and correlating the aspects that contribute to the relationship between Orientalism and Sufism.

The research use terminologies that have a direct semantic correlation to its subject matter. These terms include Orientalism, Traditional Orientalism, Modern Orientalism, and Sufism. Below is a concise elucidation of these concepts:

The lexical significance of Orientalism (Al-Istishraque): The term "Al-Istishraque" does not appear in the classical Arabic language, suggesting that it was likely coined at a later time. Nevertheless, although it was not coined in the ancient Arabic dictionaries, its meaning

can still be comprehended by the application of the principles of morphology known as "Sarf and Ishtiquaqe" in Arabic Grammar. The

The term "Al-Istishraue" is derived from the verb "Sharaq," which signifies the action of rising or rising up. For instance, we use the phrase "Sharaqat Al-Shams" to describe the rising of the sun. Additionally, "Al-Mashirqu" refers to the specific location in Africa. The Arabic alphabet includes three letters, namely "Alif, Seen, and Taa." These letters were appended to the word "Sharaq" to form "Al-Istishraue," which signifies "to ask for something, request for something, demand for something." This meaning now aligns closely with the concept of "Al-Istishraue" (Orientalism), which refers to the study of the East.

The phrase "Al-Istishraue" refers to a concept known as Orientalism, which presents difficulties in reaching a consensus among experts over its precise definition. Some scholars emphasized a specific historical context in their description, while others examined its goals and objectives and evaluated its domains. It is necessary to recognize the significance of differentiating between the initial phase of "Traditional Orientalism" and the subsequent phase of "Modern Orientalism."

The field of "Traditional Orientalism" is primarily characterized by its scholarly nature and the use of Western methodologies to examine different aspects of the Eastern World (Waqi, 2006). However, the evolution of this concept did not end there. Instead, it underwent a significant transformation in the mid-20th century. It expanded beyond the realm of Academic Experts and began to be shaped by organized efforts and widespread interest. This transformation reflected the visions and perceptions associated with the East, Arab culture, and Islam. The concept was proposed through many means, and alongside scholars, advocates from diverse domains (including media, journalism, security, etc.) started contributing to its development (Bardawil, 2021). One concept that can be inferred from various definitions is the systematic efforts made by Western researchers who are not Muslim. These efforts span across intellectual, media, political, and other domains, and involve the study of doctrinal, legal, social, and linguistic aspects of Eastern nations, both Islamic and non-Islamic. These efforts serve different purposes, as mentioned by Al-Haaj and the Madina Centre for Western Studies in 2018.

The term Orent "al-sharq," commonly linked to the notion of Orientalism, carries a moral connotation rather than a material one, and it is crucial to have this in mind. The fact that the Orientalists focused exclusively on countries in the geographical East, in contrast to the western world, is inconsequential. According to certain experts, the term "al-sharq" has

been understood to have moral implications. One such interpretation is "Al-Sharq Al-Huwiyyah" which means "The East is the identity" (Shahid).

The lexical meaning of Al-Tasawwuf (Sufism) is subject to various theories regarding its origin. One theory suggests that it is derived from the word "Al-Safa," while other attributes it to the companions of the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) known as the people of the bench (Ashab Al-Suffa) (Kallabathi, 1980). The term "Sufi" is commonly linked to an individual named "Sufah," specifically Al-Ghaus ibn Murr. This individual had dedicated his life to the worship of Allah the Almighty in close proximity to the Sacred House of Allah (Bait Allah Al-Haram) (Abu al-Faraj, 1984). The term is also ascribed to the "Saff standing before Allah the Almighty." (Ghani, 2016).

In addition to the aforementioned, the term Sufi is also linked to the Greek word Sophia, which denotes "wisdom." The Sufis are connected to the Greeks due to their early expression of the concept of Wahdat Al-Wujood (the unity of existence), which bears resemblance to Greek philosophy. (Al-Kashani, 1992) and Abu Al-Rayhan, 1983. Furthermore, the term "Sufi" is believed to derive from the Arabic "Al-Soof," which translates to wool (Al-Tusi, & Sorour, 1960). Among various etymological explanations, the final one is perhaps the most favored in terms of the word "Sufi's" origin. This explanation is considered linguistically correct and lacks any linguistic or customary disputes. The prevailing opinion among skilled Sufis and others favored the final perspective put forth by Al-Afifi (Al-Din & Al-Dhahabi, 1984).

The leaders of Sufism have diverse perspectives regarding the contextual interpretation of the term "Sufism" (Al-Tasawwuf). No definitive definition exists for the term. According to Al-Karkhi, Sufism can be defined as the acceptance of reality and the rejection of worldly possessions. Junaid, on the other hand, describes Sufism as the process of purifying the heart from seeking validation from others, abandoning common moral values, suppressing human traits, and avoiding personal desires and spiritual stages. In addition to the ones already mentioned, there exist over 100 perspectives on the contextual interpretation of Sufism (Al-Tusi, & Sorour, 1960). According to Al-Hafny (1991), the number of viewpoints on the essence of Sufism surpasses 1000. The text exhibits significant perplexity in understanding the concept of Sufism and the inability to establish clear limitations.

The historical and intellectual development of Sufism has contributed to the changes in the contextual meaning of Al-Tasawwuf. During the first emergence of Sufism, there was

a prevailing inclination towards asceticism and complete isolation for the sake of worshipping Allah. Nevertheless, the introduction of heretical views and desires resulted in a departure from established doctrine. This divergence involved the amalgamation of the beliefs of the ultra-Sufis with philosophies and pagan religions, accompanied by the creation of enigmatic terminology (Abu al-Faraj, 1984).

Hence, the difficulty in attaining a unanimous agreement over a comprehensive delineation of Sufism persists, even among experts who are not affiliated with Sufism. The majority of the information provided regarding its description and concept pertains to its stages, groups, and Sufi rituals.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The historical connection between Orientalism and Sufism.

In order to comprehend the connection between Orientalism and Sufism, it is crucial to acknowledge that these two phenomena emerged in countries where Christianity or Judaism maintain a prominent religious status, considering their diverse objectives with religion being of utmost importance. These nations are mostly influenced by secular intellectual trends, which are also associated with other processes that are antagonistic towards Islam, such as Christianization and colonialism. When discussing the connections between Orientalism and Sufism, it is important to note the interrelated linkages that enhance each other and the patterns that are mirrored in one another. Determining the precise origin of the development of the relationship between Orientalism and Sufism is a difficult task due to varying perspectives among experts (Al-Namlah, 2010).

Nevertheless, the consensus among numerous experts regarding the inception of Official and Organized Orientalism suggests a longstanding connection between Orientalism and Sufism. This association becomes particularly evident when we consider the term in a more expansive sense, beyond its conventional meaning, which primarily emphasizes the cognitive aspect and scholarly investigations. The formal inception of Orientalism took place in 1312 GC following the conclusion of the Crusades (Bardawil, 2021). When the chairs for the Arabic language were established in certain Western countries.

Ibn Taymiyyah emphasized the cooperation between certain Sufi devotees and the People of the Book (Ahl Al-Kitab) during their visits to Muslim nations, when discussing the events that occurred during that period. Several Sufi worshippers renounced Islam and began idol worship, while also venerating the "Cross." They asserted that their actions, such as

aligning with Christians and adopting their religion, were in accordance with instructions they received from the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). They claimed that the prophet instructed them to join forces with Christians in fighting against Muslims, as Muslims had allegedly fallen into disobedience and committed sins. The devils cunningly manipulated them, leading them to unquestioningly accept this false belief.

Throughout the previous two centuries, the Sufis have consistently held their position, even while the Islamic Ummah endured great suffering at the hands of the West and many Islamic nations were colonized by them. This colonization was a significant and influential factor in the development of Orientalism (Al-Namlah, 2011).

During that period, the Sufi groups experienced a significant growth in their reach and influence, and many of them aligned themselves with the colonialists.

Napoleon, a prominent French military commander, developed a strong interest in the Sufi and appointed them to significant positions in Egypt, which was one of the primary targets of colonial powers. The Bakri Sufis, specifically Al-Sindubi (1947) and Al-Taftazani (1963), had their leader (sheikh) appointed as a member of the Court founded by Napoleon on his first day in Cairo.

Prior to Napoleon's departure for Egypt, a compilation of the names of the sheikhs belonging to this order had already been assembled, indicating the influence of the research and reports provided by the Orientalists. Napoleon enacted legislation that elevated the standing of Sufism and its adherents. He specifically mandated the reinstatement of festivities commemorating the Birth of the Prophet (Mawlid) and personally participated in the event (Al-Jabarti, 2003).

The adherents of the Tijani Order are documented by Al-Nahhas in 2004. They were highly devoted agents of French colonialism in Algeria throughout the 20th century, playing a crucial role in enabling the successful execution of colonial objectives. The leader (Sheikh) accompanied one of the invaders' spies on a journey to Tunisia and the East in order to issue Fatwas (Sharia rulings) that banned any kind of resistance against the colonial powers. Additional Sufi Orders in Algeria, motivated by their own interests, aligned themselves with the colonizer and adopted a similar approach (Bishri & Maryam 1945) (Bushra & Mariam 2019).

The submission and cooperation of Sufis to the colonial power is connected to the principles of Kashf (spiritual revelation) and Ilham (spiritual inspiration), which have diminished rational thinking and intellect (Al-Ghazali, 2005). Additionally, they adhere to the

concept of Wahdat Al-Wujood (The unity of existence), which justifies their acceptance of all circumstances that come their way. Furthermore, they submit to it and forsake the methods, contending that individuals' activities serve as representations and symbols for a single entity, namely Allah.

While the Sufi Orders in Tunisia had varying perspectives on French colonialism, with some endorsing it and others opposing it, their general position was one of conciliation and unity with the colonizers. This position is presented from the viewpoint of colonial authority, utilizing studies and statistics regarding the Sufi Orders. These studies examine factors such as the number of followers, interrelationships between the orders, their social standing, the quantity of their *zaawiyah* or *khanqah* (a place for spiritual retreat and personal development), and other pertinent details.

The Sufi Orders were crucial in enabling the colonial authority to comprehend the threat they constituted. This understanding allowed the colonial power to adopt appropriate measures to manage and manipulate the Sufi Orders in order to further its own goals and aims (Al-Rasheed, 2013), (Al-Shahid, 2000). Multiple pieces of evidence substantiate this exploitation; yet, we will only select a handful in this discussion:

During the year 1818 AD, upon the arrival of French colonists in Kairouan, the local inhabitants sought the guidance of a French individual who had converted to Islam and was subsequently installed as the Imam of a prominent mosque. The individuals had great reverence for the shrine of a Sheikh within the mosque and sought his guidance by consulting him. He ventured into the sacred sanctuary and then emerged to caution them about opposing the colonizer. According to him, the sheikh counsels them to embrace and find satisfaction in this hardship, since it is now unavoidable. The ordinary citizens who had placed their trust in him were unable to protect Kairouan, allowing the settlers to enter the city unopposed (Al-Hafny, 2007).

The Sufi orders' stance towards Orientalism is prevailing. Nevertheless, there were a handful of groups who did not emulate their approach in handling invaders and colonists, like Abu al-Hasan al-Shazly, (Al-Din, & Al-Dhahabi, 1992) (Al-Najjar), who was a prominent figure among the opponents who resisted the Crusaders' invasion of Egypt in 647 AH and celebrated their eventual defeat. In addition, the Sanusi Order actively opposed Italian colonialism in Libya and certain *zawiyas* of Al-Rahmaniyah in Tunisia, which also made notable efforts to resist French colonialism initially, although their actions were sometimes characterized by uncertainty and indecision (Al-Qushayri, 2011).

Sufism exerted significant influence in integrating Western secularism into the Islamic world during the 20th century. Sufism held a prominent position as the prevailing religious ideology in the Ottoman Empire. Its doctrines and practices had a detrimental effect on the Islamic world, discouraging it from addressing this irreligious ideology. Consequently, Western secularism sought to align itself with Sufism and exploit it to further its objectives within the Islamic nation (Al-Ghamdi, 2014).

In the early 20th century AD, the Sufis and their followers expanded their reach to Western nations, thereby extending the influence of Sufism beyond the Islamic Ummah and into the Western world. The branches were created around Europe, and when their status and position grew firm, more top Orientalists joined them. The International Sufi Order was founded in 1411 AD in Britain during the 15th century. It eventually underwent a name change to "The International Sufi Movement." (Ashouri, 2016).

I am specifically discussing "Islamic Sufism." However, it is worth noting that "Western Sufism," which has strong influences from Jewish Qabbalah and Christian Gnosticism, is considerably older. The obscure beginnings of Islamic Sufism, as well as elements like geographical affinity and the existence of Arab populations, have influenced the spread of Sufism to the Western World (Malkawi, 2012). The prevalence of materialistic inclinations in the Western world during the 19th century led to a spiritual dilemma, prompting it to seek solace in the esoteric teachings of Islamic Sufism. This choice was driven by the resemblance between Sufism and the esoteric aspects of Judaism and Christianity that the Western world was already acquainted with.

The concept of the "Supreme Unity of Religions" (Zarcon, 2001) emerged, which is also a key goal of Francophone Mysticism (Al-Manjara, 1998) (Sheyal, 2000) (Al-Zaidi, 2003). The Maghreb Al-Arabi witnessed the initial emergence of this phenomenon throughout the later periods. Subsequently, its techniques and undertakings proliferated across Europe, serving as a conduit for religious and cultural interchange and reconciliation. Nevertheless, this reconciliation served as a catalyst for many individuals in the Western world to embrace Islam, representing a novel approach within the Islamic faith known as "Islam Bidai". The portrayal of Islam was significantly divergent from the authentic teachings of the Holy Quran and the Sunnah.

These Orders were compelled to deviate from Islamic teachings to the point where they abandoned the fundamental principles of Islam to cater to the desires of Sufism converts who were unable to detach themselves from the modern Western mindset. These converts

sought to liberate themselves from obligations and legal rulings that did not align with this mindset (Smileovitch, 1998)(Al-Din, 2019). The Orientalists' fascination with Sufism gained prominence in the 21st century with the establishment of the International Sufi Council in Britain in late 2009 AD. One of the council's primary objectives was to revitalize Sufism and acknowledge it as a manifestation of Islamic ideology. The enduring connection between Orientalism and Sufism exemplifies the merging of contemporary Orientalism with past Orientalism in regard to the significant fascination with Sufism, its empowerment, and its directions across the Islamic Ummah (Al-Mudaifer, 2014).

3.2. The factors contributing to the connection between Orientalism and Sufism.

The connection between Orientalism and Sufism can be attributed to the extensive knowledge Orientalists possess regarding the principles and teachings of Sufism, particularly its mystical aspects. This connection is reinforced by the alignment of their intellectual methodologies with the nature of Sufism, which encompasses a multitude of ideas and beliefs that are considered morally corrupt and deviant, such as the doctrine of "Al-Hulool" (Al-Ajam, 1999) (Idressi, 2010). The belief in divine incarnation, "Wahdat Al-Wujood" (Unity of Existence), and other beliefs that negate legal duties (Al-Takaleef Al-Shariyah) lead to apathy and lethargy among Muslims. These beliefs weaken their resolve to pursue sources of strength and to approach religious and worldly matters with seriousness. Therefore, Sufism, due to its conflicting beliefs and practices with the authentic teachings of Islam, played a significant role in the decline of Muslims and the deterioration of their civilization. This created favorable conditions for the penetration of Western secularization among Muslims during the 19th century (Azouzi, 2007).

Orientalists and Sufism share certain commonalities in terms of unorthodox concepts, hidden doctrines, and the utilization of pre-Islamic philosophy. Given this similarity, it is unsurprising that they mutually serve and exalt one another (Al-Harrani, 1949). Here are several instances that demonstrate their similarity:

Both Sufis and Christians share a common belief in Al-Hulool. Christians adhere to a limited concept of Hulool, which involves the manifestation of God in Christ. In contrast, Sufis provide a more extreme notion, namely the manifestation of the Absolute Lord in all beings. (Al-Abbas, 1971) (Al-Tuwaijri, 1965). He is exalted and elevated beyond the statements spoken about Him, demonstrating immense superiority.

Sufism and Judaism exhibit resemblances in their interpretation of sacred scriptures through the utilization of esoteric symbols (Idrissi, 2012), (Kamel, 1898). The Jews were renowned for their expertise in fortune-telling, astrology, and prediction, which the Sufis incorporated into their practices, referred to as Al-Kashf and mystical knowledge (Al-Shobaki, 2002). The Sufis and Christians share similarities in their practice of monasticism and abstaining from worldly pleasures. Both groups emphasize strict accountability for the soul, subjecting it to rigorous struggle and self-discipline. They also prohibit indulgence in material pleasures. Additionally, they both use a type of cloth worn by saints and Christian monks (Ghani, 2016).

Sufism shares commonalities with Judaism and Christianity in terms of incorporating behaviors such as listening (Al-Sima) and dancing (Al-Raqs) as religious rituals to establish a connection with God and engage in worship, as mentioned by Al-Abbas (1971) and Zaheer (2005). According to Zaza (1986), the Jewish people would engage in the singing of hymns and psalms, as well as playing the flute, during their religious gatherings and celebrations in their temples. Christians utilize gongs, known as Naaqoos, in their churches to signal the times for worship (Radoui, 2015) (Al-Suhrawardi, 2015). (Al-Sulami & Al-Nisaburi, 1998).

Regarding the resemblance between Orientalism and Sufism in the aforementioned aspects, it is noteworthy that Orientalists perceive this harmony between them and Sufism as evidence of a strong connection between Islam and other religions, particularly Christianity, which some Orientalists regard as a significant influence on Sufism within the Muslim community. This establishes a correlation between Sufism and other faiths, supporting the assertion that Sufism mostly adopted its doctrines from other religious traditions (Hassan, 1997).

The Orientalists garnered the endorsement of certain Sufis who sought to undermine the fundamental tenets of Islam by reviving the heterodox concepts of Sufism. The concepts propagated by the extremist Sufis, as mentioned by Shaaban (1988), do not accurately reflect the authentic principles of Islam as derived from the Quran and the Sunnah. The Orientalists possess a deep understanding of the significant disparity between Islam in its authentic manifestation and Islam as portrayed by zealous Sufis; a few even assert that the mystical Sufi movement poses a greater threat to Islam than rational ideology. The reference (Landau, 1977). Moreover, Orientalists argue that Sufis, through their departure from traditional Islamic beliefs, embody a contemporary, rational, and liberal mindset. Their ideologies, which challenge fundamental principles of Islam, like monotheism, are seen as a revolutionary force

that can overcome the stagnation within Islam and reinstate the rightful prominence of reason and intellect. Sufis themselves acknowledge this fact, as stated by Yafut (1989), Khaldun (2004), and Barada (1996). Hence, the Orientalists have endeavored to depict the radical Sufi doctrines and its external concepts as the authentic manifestation of Islam. In addition, they endeavor to propagate the fallacy that the Sufis encountered persecution due to the deprivation of their liberty, with certain advocates such as Al-Hallaj (Massignon, 2004). The sources used include Sahrawardi (Al-Falah & Al-Hanbali, 1985). Taymiyyah (1995) and Zaheer (2005) endured adversity and challenges in their pursuit of mental emancipation.

The aforementioned vision affects Western perceptions of Islam and portrays Muslims as zealous and radical individuals. Therefore, the Sufis and other non-conforming sects within Islam are motivated to incite rebellion, exacerbate conflicts, and foster a desire to break away from authentic Islam and the Muslim community. Their ultimate goal is to divide religious unity and Islamic nations (Tsiher, 2009) Smailovitch, 1997).

The Sufis alter the Shariah texts and manipulate their interpretations, aligning themselves with the approach employed by Orientalists and Western thinkers in general. This approach seeks to find strategies that allow for the modification of Islamic religious concepts and the weakening of its laws, as noted by Benard (1935), Reda (1958), and Abdullah & Al-Razi (1981).

4. Conclusion

The study's main findings are summarized below, following an examination of the historical context and factors contributing to the connection between Orientalism and Sufism:

The 20th century saw a revolution in the classic form of Orientalism, with alterations and modifications being made to its concepts, methods, and means. Sufism has undergone various historical stages and phases, starting with the notion of asceticism and culminating in a perilous doctrinal divergence promoted by its leaders and adherents.

The relationship between Sufism and Orientalism is not limited to a particular timeframe; instead, it originated with the inception of Orientalism and persists to the present day.

The relationship between Sufism and Orientalists is characterized by a mutual connection where both sides engage in the utilization of roles and the exchange of advantages.

The relationship between Sufism and Orientalists is marked by a complex network of associations and activities linked to Orientalism.

The relationship between Sufism and Western Religions was significantly influenced by the resemblance in esoteric principles and beliefs of pagan philosophies, as well as the alignment of theological mysticism with the intellectual methods of Orientalists.

Nevertheless, the emergence of Islamic Sufism in Western societies and the dissemination of its various sects played a role in the conversion of certain Western individuals to Islam. These Orders disseminated Islam through the novel principles of Sufism, rather than its accurate and unadulterated principles rooted in the Quran and the Sunnah.

The research findings suggest the following recommendations:

It is crucial to implement all required actions to safeguard the Islamic faith (Al-Aqidah Al-Islamiyah) against any threats to its integrity, erosion of Muslim solidarity, promotion of discord, and instigation of sectarian rifts.

To gain a deeper understanding of the intellectual tendencies among Orientalists and their current contacts with religious sects that challenge the authentic and unadulterated Islamic Faith, it is important to urge academics and students to dedicate more attention to this field.

It is important to continue monitoring the progress of the Sufi movement and to analyze its changes and current patterns, including the study of Francophone Sufism.

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