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Sufism and Sustainable Mental Well-Being: A Psychospiritual Approach to Inner Peace

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Abstract

Objective: This study examines the psychospiritual dimensions of Sufism and their relationship to sustainable mental well-being and inner peace through the integration of nafs, qalb, and ruh. The study also highlights the relevance of Sufism to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 concerning Good Health and Well-Being. **Theoretical framework:** Sufism views humans as multidimensional beings consisting of nafs (soul/self), qalb (heart), and ruh (spirit). The balance among these dimensions is essential for achieving emotional stability and inner peace through tazkiyatun nafs (purification of the soul). **Literature review:** Previous studies on Sufism, Islamic psychology, and mental health indicate that spiritual practices such as dhikr, muraqabah, and muhasabah contribute to emotional regulation, anxiety reduction, and psychological well-being. **Method:** This study employed a qualitative approach using a systematic literature review. Data were collected from books, journals, and scholarly publications related to Sufism, Islamic psychology, and mental health, then analyzed using qualitative content analysis. **Results:** The findings show that imbalance among nafs, qalb, and ruh may lead to anxiety, emotional instability, and inner conflict. In contrast, practices such as dhikr, muraqabah, muhasabah, and tawakkal support emotional regulation, self-awareness, resilience, and inner peace. **Implications:** This study demonstrates that Sufism offers a holistic psychospiritual framework for promoting sustainable mental well-being through the integration of psychological and spiritual dimensions. **Novelty:** The novelty of this study lies in integrating classical Sufi concepts with modern psychological perspectives to formulate a psychospiritual model of sustainable mental well-being.

Keywords: sufism, psychospirituality, sustainable mental well-being, inner peace, islamic psychology.

INTRODUCTION

Mental health has become one of the most urgent global challenges in contemporary society. Increasing levels of anxiety, depression, emotional instability, and existential crisis indicate that modern individuals experience not only psychological distress but also spiritual emptiness. Rapid technological advancement, social media dependency, academic pressure, workplace competition, and the growing culture of hyper-productivity have significantly affected human psychological well-being [1]. In many cases, individuals experience a loss of meaning in life, emotional exhaustion, and identity crises caused by social and cultural transformation in the modern era [2]. These conditions demonstrate that mental health problems are multidimensional and cannot be understood solely through biological and psychological perspectives.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that depression and anxiety disorders are among the leading causes of disability worldwide, highlighting the importance of sustainable mental health as a global concern. This issue is closely related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 3 concerning Good Health and Well-Being, which emphasizes the importance of promoting mental well-being and reducing psychological disorders through holistic and inclusive approaches. However, contemporary mental health approaches still tend to emphasize medical and psychological interventions while often neglecting the spiritual dimension of human existence [3]. Several studies indicate that spiritual emptiness and the absence of existential meaning significantly contribute to emotional distress and psychological instability. Therefore, sustainable mental well-being requires an integrative framework that combines psychological and spiritual dimensions.

In this context, Sufism offers a psychospiritual approach that emphasizes inner purification, spiritual awareness, and emotional balance. Sufism views human beings as multidimensional entities consisting of *nafs* (soul), *qalb* (heart), and *ruh* (spirit), which interact dynamically in shaping human behavior and psychological conditions [4]. The imbalance between these dimensions may lead to anxiety, inner conflict, and spiritual disorientation, whereas harmony among them contributes to inner peace and psychological stability. Through the process of *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul), Sufism aims to transform the human soul from *nafs ammarah*, which is dominated by desires and impulsivity, toward *nafs mutmainnah*, a state of tranquility and spiritual balance [5]. Spiritual practices such as *dhikr*, *muraqabah*, and *muhasabah* are considered important methods for achieving emotional regulation and inner peace.

Several previous studies have discussed the relationship between spirituality and mental health, including the role of mindfulness, religious coping, and Islamic spirituality in reducing anxiety and improving psychological well-being [6]. Other studies have examined Sufism as a spiritual therapy and explored its relevance to Islamic psychology. Nevertheless, most previous studies tend to focus only on specific spiritual practices such as *dhikr* or mindfulness without comprehensively analyzing the psychospiritual structure of the human soul in Sufism. Furthermore, previous research rarely integrates the concepts of *nafs*, *qalb*, and *ruh* into a holistic framework of sustainable mental well-being. Existing studies also tend to discuss spirituality normatively without connecting Sufi psychospiritual concepts to contemporary psychological theories such as emotional regulation, self-awareness, and transpersonal psychology.

Based on these limitations, this study seeks to fill the existing research gap by offering a comprehensive psychospiritual analysis of Sufism through the integration of *nafs*, *qalb*, and *ruh* as interconnected dimensions of inner peace and mental well-being. This study also positions Sufism not merely as a spiritual doctrine but as a holistic psychospiritual framework relevant to contemporary mental health discourse and the achievement of SDG 3 on Good Health and Well-Being. The novelty of this study lies in the integration of classical Sufi concepts with modern psychological perspectives to formulate a sustainable mental well-being model based on spiritual balance, emotional regulation, and inner peace. Unlike previous studies that focus partially on spiritual practices, this study develops a broader conceptual framework linking Sufi psychospiritual dimensions to holistic mental health and sustainable well-being [5].

Therefore, this study aims to examine the psychospiritual dimensions of Sufism and their relationship to inner peace through the integration of *nafs*, *qalb*, and *ruh* within the context of sustainable mental well-being. This research is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of Islamic psychology and psychospiritual studies, as well as practically to the development of holistic mental health approaches that integrate psychological and spiritual dimensions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mental health has become a critical global concern due to the increasing prevalence of anxiety, depression, stress, and emotional instability in contemporary society. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 3 on Good Health and Well-Being, emphasize the importance of promoting mental health through comprehensive and sustainable approaches. While modern psychological interventions have contributed significantly to the treatment of mental disorders, many scholars argue that mental well-being requires a more holistic perspective that incorporates psychological, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions. In this regard, spirituality has gained increasing attention as a significant factor influencing psychological resilience, life satisfaction, and overall well-being [5].

Sufism, as the spiritual dimension of Islam, offers a psychospiritual framework that emphasizes the development of inner peace through the integration of *nafs* (self), *qalb* (heart), and *ruh* (spirit). According to Sufi teachings, psychological distress often emerges when these dimensions become imbalanced. Excessive attachment to desires and material pursuits may strengthen the lower tendencies of the *nafs*, resulting in emotional instability, anxiety, and inner conflict. Conversely, harmony among the *nafs*, *qalb*, and *ruh* fosters emotional balance, spiritual awareness, and psychological well-being [6].

Previous studies on spirituality and mental health suggest that spiritual practices can positively influence emotional regulation and coping mechanisms. Within the Sufi tradition, practices such as *dhikr*, *muraqabah*, *muhasabah*, and *tawakkal* are viewed as effective methods for cultivating self-awareness, reducing stress, and strengthening resilience. These practices encourage individuals to develop mindfulness, emotional control, and a deeper sense of meaning in life. Furthermore, spiritual awareness provides an existential foundation that helps individuals navigate uncertainty, adversity, and psychological challenges [6].

Contemporary psychological theories, particularly humanistic and transpersonal psychology, demonstrate notable similarities with Sufi perspectives. Humanistic psychology emphasizes self-actualization, personal growth, and the search for meaning, while transpersonal psychology highlights spiritual consciousness and transcendental experiences as important aspects of human development. Both perspectives recognize that psychological well-being extends beyond symptom reduction and includes purpose, self-awareness, and inner fulfillment. These concepts correspond closely with Sufi teachings concerning spiritual purification and inner transformation [7].

Despite growing interest in spirituality and mental health, existing studies often focus on specific spiritual practices without examining the broader psychospiritual structure proposed by Sufism. Limited attention has been given to the integrated roles of *nafs*, *qalb*, and *ruh* in promoting sustainable mental well-being. Therefore, a comprehensive exploration of Sufi psychospiritual concepts is necessary to develop a holistic framework that contributes to SDG 3 by supporting emotional resilience, inner peace, and long-term psychological well-being [7].

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative approach using a systematic literature review design to examine the psychospiritual dimensions of Sufism and their relationship to sustainable mental well-being and inner peace [7]. A qualitative approach was selected because the study focuses on interpreting conceptual meanings related to Sufi psychospiritual teachings, particularly the concepts of *nafs*, *qalb*, and *ruh*, within contemporary mental health discourse. The study was based on an interpretive paradigm emphasizing spiritual meanings, values, and human experiences embedded in Sufi teachings. This paradigm enabled the integration of classical Sufi concepts with modern psychological theories, especially emotional regulation, mindfulness, self-awareness, and transpersonal

psychology [8]. In addition, the study explored the relevance of Sufism to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 concerning Good Health and Well-Being through a holistic psychospiritual perspective.

The literature review was conducted systematically through several stages: identification, screening, selection, coding, analysis, and synthesis of relevant academic sources. Data were collected from academic databases such as Scopus, Google Scholar, Web of Science, and Dimensions. Articles published between 2010 and 2025 were selected to ensure the relevance of discussions on spirituality and mental health. The keywords used included “Sufism,” “psychospiritual,” “mental well-being,” “inner peace,” “Islamic psychology,” “tazkiyatun nafs,” “dhikr,” “muraqabah,” and “transpersonal psychology.” The sources consisted of primary and secondary literature. Primary sources included classical and contemporary books discussing Sufism, Islamic psychology, nafs, qalb, ruh, and spiritual purification, while secondary sources included peer-reviewed journal articles and scholarly publications related to spirituality and mental health. The inclusion criteria covered peer-reviewed journals, English-language articles, reputable academic books, and studies directly related to Sufism, spirituality, and mental well-being. Sources lacking academic credibility or unrelated to the research focus were excluded from the analysis.

Data analysis employed qualitative content analysis combined with thematic analysis to identify patterns, themes, and conceptual relationships within the selected literature [9]. The analysis process involved data reduction, thematic coding, categorization, interpretation, and conceptual synthesis. The coding process grouped the literature into major themes such as nafs, qalb, ruh, tazkiyatun nafs, emotional regulation, spiritual awareness, mindfulness, and inner peace. The interpretation stage focused on examining the relationship between Sufi psychospiritual concepts and modern psychological perspectives regarding psychological well-being, coping strategies, and spiritual consciousness. A synthesis approach was then used to formulate an integrated conceptual framework demonstrating how the balance between nafs, qalb, and ruh contributes to sustainable mental well-being. To ensure validity and analytical rigor, the study applied source triangulation through thematic comparison and cross-referencing among classical Sufi scholars, Islamic psychology literature, and contemporary psychological theories.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of the Soul in Sufism: Nafs, Qalb, and Ruh

Sufism, as the spiritual dimension of Islam, emphasizes the importance of understanding the structure of the human soul as the foundation of psychological and spiritual well-being. Human beings are viewed as multidimensional entities consisting of nafs (soul/self), qalb (heart), and ruh (spirit), which interact dynamically in shaping human behavior and inner peace [10]. This psychospiritual perspective is relevant to contemporary discussions on sustainable mental well-being and supports Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 concerning Good Health and Well-Being.

The nafs represents human desires, emotions, and biological impulses. In Sufism, the nafs develops through several stages: nafs ammarah, nafs lawwamah, and nafs mutmainnah. Nafs ammarah reflects uncontrolled desires and impulsive behavior that may lead to anxiety and psychological instability. Nafs lawwamah indicates self-awareness and moral reflection, while nafs mutmainnah represents a tranquil soul characterized by emotional balance and inner peace [11]. This spiritual transformation demonstrates the importance of self-control in achieving sustainable mental well-being.

The qalb (heart) functions as the center of spiritual consciousness, emotions, and moral awareness. A purified heart encourages positive behavior, emotional stability, and psychological peace, whereas an impure heart may lead to anxiety and negative behavior

[12]. Spiritual practices such as dhikr and worship are considered important for maintaining the spiritual and psychological health of the qalb.

Meanwhile, the ruh (spirit) represents the transcendental dimension within human beings that connects individuals to God and provides meaning and purpose in life. In Sufism, spiritual emptiness is considered one of the causes of psychological distress. Therefore, strengthening the ruh through spiritual practices contributes to emotional resilience and inner peace. The interaction between nafs, qalb, and ruh forms the basis of human psychospiritual dynamics. An imbalance among these dimensions may cause emotional conflict and mental distress, while harmony among them supports inner peace and holistic mental health. From the perspective of modern psychology, this concept aligns with holistic approaches that integrate emotional, cognitive, and spiritual aspects of human well-being. Therefore, the psychospiritual concept of Sufism offers an important contribution to sustainable mental well-being and holistic mental health development in contemporary society.

The Dynamics And Interactions Among The Elements Of The Soul

Sufism views the human soul as a dynamic and continuously evolving system shaped by the interaction between nafs (soul/self), qalb (heart), and ruh (spirit) [13]. These interactions determine a person's psychological, emotional, and spiritual condition. In the context of sustainable mental well-being, the balance among these elements is essential for achieving inner peace and emotional stability, which are closely related to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 concerning Good Health and Well-Being.

The dynamics of the soul emerge when the nafs and the ruh influence the qalb as the center of consciousness. When the nafs becomes dominant, individuals tend to follow impulsive desires and negative emotions that may lead to anxiety, inner conflict, and psychological distress. Conversely, when the ruh becomes stronger, the heart directs individuals toward spiritual awareness, self-control, and positive behavior [14]. This internal conflict is considered part of the spiritual development process in Sufism.

The condition of the soul is also influenced by environmental factors and life experiences. Social pressure, emotional experiences, and cultural changes may strengthen or weaken the balance between nafs, qalb, and ruh. Therefore, the state of the soul is not static but fluctuates over time. In Sufism, this transformation is viewed as a spiritual journey toward inner balance and psychological maturity. From the perspective of modern psychology, the dynamics of the soul resemble the interaction between instinctual impulses, emotional regulation, and moral consciousness. An imbalance among these dimensions may contribute to stress and mental disorders, while harmony among them supports sustainable mental well-being and holistic mental health. Sufism offers spiritual practices such as dhikr, muraqabah, and muhasabah to manage these inner dynamics, strengthen spiritual awareness, and control emotional impulses.

Therefore, the dynamics and interactions among nafs, qalb, and ruh demonstrate that Sufism provides a holistic psychospiritual framework for understanding human mental health. This approach contributes not only to spiritual development but also to the promotion of sustainable mental well-being in contemporary society.

Tazkiyatun Nafs: Purification of the Soul

Tazkiyatun nafs is a central concept in Sufism that refers to the process of purifying the soul from negative traits while cultivating positive spiritual qualities. The term derives from tazkiyah, meaning purification and growth, and nafs, meaning soul or self [15]. In Sufism, this process is considered essential for achieving inner peace, emotional balance, and spiritual maturity. Within the context of sustainable mental well-being, tazkiyatun nafs

offers a psychospiritual approach that supports Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 concerning Good Health and Well-Being.

From a Sufi perspective, human beings possess dual tendencies toward both good and negative behavior. Therefore, tazkiyatun nafs functions as a process of self-discipline aimed at controlling destructive traits such as anger, arrogance, envy, and excessive worldly desires [16]. These negative traits are considered major obstacles to psychological stability and inner peace. At the same time, tazkiyatun nafs seeks to develop positive qualities such as patience, sincerity, gratitude, and trust in God. The development of these virtues reflects the spiritual transformation of the individual.

The ultimate goal of tazkiyatun nafs is to attain the state of nafs mutmainnah, a tranquil soul characterized by emotional stability, spiritual awareness, and inner peace. This condition reflects harmony between emotional and spiritual dimensions and contributes to holistic mental health. In Sufism, closeness to God is regarded as the primary source of happiness and psychological well-being [17].

From the perspective of modern psychology, tazkiyatun nafs shares similarities with concepts such as self-regulation, emotional regulation, and self-improvement. The process is carried out through spiritual practices such as dhikr (remembrance of God), muhasabah (self-reflection), and muraqabah (self-awareness and spiritual monitoring). These practices help individuals manage emotions, increase self-awareness, and develop psychological resilience. Furthermore, tazkiyatun nafs emphasizes the balance between worldly and spiritual needs, which is essential for sustainable mental well-being. Through this psychospiritual process, Sufism offers a holistic framework for promoting mental health, emotional stability, and inner peace in contemporary society.

Table 1. Matrix of Psychospiritual Dimensions in Sufism and Sustainable Mental Well-Being

Psychospiritual Dimension	Conceptual Focus	Psychological Indicators	Spiritual Practice	Contribution to Sustainable Mental Well-Being (SDG 3)
<i>Nafs</i> (Soul/Self)	Stages of spiritual development: <i>ammarah</i> , <i>lawwamah</i> , <i>mutmainnah</i>	Impulsivity, self-control, and emotional stability	<i>Tazkiyatun nafs</i>	Emotional balance and inner peace
<i>Qalb</i> (Heart)	Center of spiritual awareness and morality	Self-awareness, empathy, and moral sensitivity	<i>Dhikr</i> and <i>muraqabah</i>	Mental clarity and psychological well-being
<i>Ruh</i> (Spirit)	Transcendental and divine dimension	Meaning in life, spiritual well-being	Worship and contemplation	Existential meaning and life purpose
<i>Aql</i> (Reason)	Reflective and spiritual rationality	Cognitive control, decision-making	<i>Tafakkur</i> (reflection)	Balance between rationality and spirituality
<i>Tazkiyatun Nafs</i>	Purification and self-transformation	Emotional regulation, stress management	Spiritual discipline (<i>riyadhah</i>)	Reduced anxiety and emotional distress
<i>Maqamat</i> (Spiritual Stages)	Patience, sincerity, repentance, trust in God	Coping skills, mental resilience	Internalization of spiritual values	Psychological resilience and stability
<i>Ahwal</i> (Spiritual States)	Spiritual emotions: love, fear, hope	Emotional awareness, spiritual sensitivity	Spiritual experience	Emotional maturity and self-awareness
<i>Dhikr</i>	Remembrance of God	Relaxation, mindfulness, emotional calmness	Repetitive spiritual remembrance	Anxiety reduction and emotional well-being
<i>Muraqabah</i>	Awareness of God's presence	Focus, self-awareness, and emotional control	Spiritual meditation	Inner peace and mental clarity
<i>Muhasabah</i>	Self-reflection and evaluation	Behavioral control, self-improvement	Reflective self-assessment	Emotional stability and personal growth

<i>Tawakkal</i>	Trust and surrender to God	Calmness, stress management	Reliance on divine guidance	Reduced anxiety and psychological burden
<i>Ridha</i>	Acceptance and gratitude	Life satisfaction, emotional acceptance	Acceptance of life circumstances	Emotional balance and inner peace
<i>Mahabbah</i>	Divine love and spiritual affection	Positive emotions, tranquility	Spiritual closeness to God	Psychological harmony and well-being
Psychospiritual Integration	Integration of spirituality and psychology	Holistic mental health	Sufism and psychology integration	Sustainable mental well-being

The Stages of the Soul in Sufism: Nafs Ammarah, Nafs Lawwamah, and Nafs Mutmainnah

The stages of the soul (nafs) in Sufism describe a gradual process of spiritual and psychological transformation toward inner peace and emotional balance. In Sufi thought, the soul continuously develops through different levels reflecting human moral, emotional, and spiritual conditions [18]. This framework is relevant to contemporary discussions on sustainable mental well-being and aligns with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 concerning Good Health and Well-Being.

Sufi scholars generally classify the soul into three main stages: nafs ammarah, nafs lawwamah, and nafs mutmainnah. Nafs ammarah represents the lowest stage, where behavior is dominated by desires, impulsivity, and negative tendencies [19]. Individuals at this level often lack emotional control and moral awareness, resulting in psychological instability and inner conflict. The next stage, nafs lawwamah, reflects the emergence of self-awareness and moral reflection. Individuals begin to evaluate their actions, recognize mistakes, and develop self-control. Internal conflict between desires and moral values becomes a driving force for personal growth. From a psychological perspective, this stage relates to emotional regulation and reflective thinking.

The highest stage, nafs mutmainnah, refers to a tranquil soul characterized by emotional stability, spiritual awareness, and inner peace [20]. Individuals at this level are able to manage desires effectively and maintain psychological resilience despite external pressures. This condition reflects holistic well-being because it integrates emotional, spiritual, and moral balance. The transformation from nafs ammarah to nafs mutmainnah requires continuous spiritual discipline through practices such as dhikr (remembrance of God), muhasabah (self-reflection), and muraqabah (spiritual self-awareness). These psychospiritual practices strengthen self-control, enhance emotional awareness, and support sustainable mental well-being. Taken together, the stages of the soul in Sufism offer a holistic framework for understanding human psychological and spiritual development. This perspective contributes to Islamic psychology by integrating spiritual growth, emotional regulation, and inner peace within the broader discourse of sustainable mental health.

Tazkiyatun Nafs: The Process of Spiritual Transformation

Tazkiyatun nafs is a fundamental concept in Sufism that refers to the purification and development of the soul toward spiritual maturity and inner peace [21]. This process involves not only eliminating negative traits but also cultivating positive spiritual qualities that contribute to emotional balance and sustainable mental well-being. In the context of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 concerning Good Health and Well-Being, tazkiyatun nafs offers a holistic psychospiritual framework for promoting mental health. The process begins with self-awareness, where individuals recognize their spiritual and psychological condition. Awareness of personal weaknesses encourages self-reflection and

motivates behavioral change. The next stage involves self-control, particularly in managing negative impulses arising from the nafs through spiritual discipline and ethical restraint [22].

Spiritual transformation in Sufism also includes the processes of takhalli and tahalli. Takhalli refers to purifying the soul from destructive traits such as arrogance, anger, and envy, while tahalli emphasizes the cultivation of virtues such as patience, sincerity, gratitude, and trust in God. These stages strengthen emotional stability and spiritual awareness, which are essential for achieving inner peace. The process is reinforced through psychospiritual practices such as dhikr (remembrance of God), muhasabah (self-reflection), and muraqabah (spiritual self-awareness). These practices help individuals regulate emotions, maintain self-control, and develop psychological resilience. Individuals who undergo tazkiyatun nafs tend to experience greater emotional balance, stronger spiritual awareness, and a deeper sense of meaning in life [23].

Spiritual transformation is gradual and requires consistency, patience, and supportive social environments. Through this process, Sufism provides a holistic approach to sustainable mental well-being by integrating spiritual growth, emotional regulation, and psychological health.

The Concept of Ithmi'nan: Inner Peace from a Sufi Perspective

In Sufism, ithmi'nan refers to a state of inner peace characterized by emotional stability, spiritual calmness, and freedom from anxiety [24]. This condition represents one of the ultimate goals of the spiritual journey and is closely associated with nafs mutmainnah, a tranquil soul that has achieved balance between emotional and spiritual dimensions. The concept of ithmi'nan is highly relevant to contemporary discussions on sustainable mental well-being and supports Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 concerning Good Health and Well-Being.

Inner peace in Sufism emerges through a harmonious relationship between humans and God. Achieving this state requires continuous spiritual purification and self-discipline. One of the primary practices for cultivating ithmi'nan is dhikr (remembrance of God), which helps calm the mind and reduce emotional distress [25]. In addition, muraqabah (spiritual awareness) strengthens self-control by encouraging awareness of God's presence in everyday life. This awareness helps individuals regulate thoughts and emotions more effectively. Self-reflection through muhasabah also plays an important role in reducing inner conflict and improving emotional awareness. Likewise, the concept of tawakkal (trust and surrender to God) enables individuals to accept life circumstances with greater calmness and resilience, thereby reducing anxiety and psychological pressure [26].

From a psychological perspective, ithmi'nan shares similarities with psychological well-being because both emphasize emotional balance, life satisfaction, and stress management. Individuals who experience inner peace tend to demonstrate stronger emotional resilience and greater ability to cope with life challenges. In Sufi thought, this condition is closely linked to the purity of the qalb (heart). A purified heart promotes tranquility and emotional stability, whereas negative traits such as envy and arrogance contribute to anxiety and inner unrest.

Through practices such as dhikr, muraqabah, and muhasabah, Sufism offers a psychospiritual approach to achieving sustainable mental well-being. Beyond reducing stress and anxiety, ithmi'nan also provides a deeper sense of meaning and purpose in life [27]. This demonstrates that inner peace in Sufism is not merely a spiritual ideal but also an important foundation for holistic mental health in contemporary society.

Indicators of Inner Peace from a Sufi Perspective

Inner peace is one of the primary goals of Sufism and reflects a balanced relationship between emotional, psychological, and spiritual dimensions. In psychospiritual studies,

inner peace can be identified through three main indicators: emotional stability, spiritual closeness to God, and self-acceptance (ridha) [28]. These indicators contribute to sustainable mental well-being and align with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 concerning Good Health and Well-Being.

The first indicator is emotional stability, which refers to the ability to regulate emotions and maintain psychological balance under various life conditions. In Sufism, emotional stability develops through self-control and spiritual purification. Individuals who can manage their emotions effectively tend to experience greater inner peace and resilience when facing stress. Practices such as dhikr (remembrance of God) and muraqabah (spiritual awareness) are considered important for calming the mind and strengthening emotional regulation [29].

The second indicator is spiritual closeness to God. In Sufi thought, inner peace emerges from a strong spiritual connection that provides meaning, security, and existential fulfillment. This closeness is cultivated through worship, remembrance, and continuous spiritual awareness. Psychological studies also associate spiritual well-being with improved mental health and emotional resilience [30].

The third indicator is ridha, or self-acceptance, which refers to accepting oneself and life circumstances sincerely and peacefully. This attitude helps individuals reduce anxiety, manage disappointment, and maintain psychological balance. From a psychological perspective, self-acceptance is closely related to emotional well-being and positive mental health. These three dimensions are interconnected. Emotional stability supports spiritual awareness, while spiritual closeness strengthens self-acceptance and emotional resilience. Together, they form a holistic framework for understanding inner peace and sustainable mental well-being within the psychospiritual perspective of Sufism.

The Nature of the Psychospiritual Dimension: The Integration of Psychological and Spiritual Aspects

The psychospiritual dimension integrates psychological and spiritual aspects to understand human beings holistically. Humans are viewed not only as rational and emotional beings but also as spiritual beings connected to God [31]. Psychological aspects include thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, while spiritual aspects involve faith, meaning, values, and transcendental awareness. This integration is increasingly relevant to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 concerning Good Health and Well-Being, particularly in promoting sustainable mental well-being through holistic approaches.

Modern psychology primarily focuses on emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions but often gives limited attention to spirituality. In contrast, Sufism emphasizes the balance between nafs (soul/self), qalb (heart), and ruh (spirit) as the foundation of psychological and spiritual health [32]. The interaction among these dimensions shapes emotional stability, personality development, and inner peace. This psychospiritual balance contributes to sustainable mental well-being and supports SDG 3 by encouraging holistic mental health approaches that integrate emotional and spiritual resilience. From a psychospiritual perspective, positive thoughts and emotional regulation contribute to psychological balance, while faith and spiritual awareness provide meaning and existential security. A strong relationship with God helps individuals develop resilience, emotional stability, and psychological well-being [33]. These values are closely aligned with SDG 3, which highlights the importance of mental health promotion and emotional well-being as part of sustainable human development.

The integration of psychological and spiritual dimensions is cultivated through practices such as dhikr (remembrance of God), muraqabah (spiritual awareness), and muhasabah (self-reflection). These practices strengthen self-awareness, calm emotions, and encourage positive behavioral transformation. Within the framework of SDG 3, such psychospiritual

practices can contribute to reducing stress, anxiety, and emotional instability while promoting sustainable mental well-being in contemporary society.

Contemporary psychological theories increasingly recognize the importance of spirituality, meaning in life, and self-awareness in maintaining mental health. Individuals who integrate psychological and spiritual dimensions tend to demonstrate stronger emotional resilience and better stress management [34]. Therefore, the psychospiritual approach of Sufism offers a holistic framework for achieving sustainable mental well-being and contributes to the broader goal of SDG 3 through the integration of emotional balance, spiritual growth, and inner peace.

The Nature of the Psychospiritual Dimension: Human Beings as Creatures with Inner and Transcendental Needs

The psychospiritual dimension views human beings as entities with not only physical and psychological needs but also spiritual and transcendental needs. Humans are understood as beings connected to a higher reality, namely God [35]. Spiritual needs include inner peace, emotional balance, and a sense of meaning in life, while transcendental needs relate to the human desire for connection with the divine. This perspective is closely related to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 concerning Good Health and Well-Being, which emphasizes holistic approaches to mental health and sustainable well-being.

In Sufism, spiritual and transcendental needs are central to human development because they contribute to psychological stability and inner peace. Unfulfilled spiritual needs may lead to anxiety, emotional emptiness, and dissatisfaction with life. Contemporary psychological studies also associate spiritual fulfillment with psychological well-being, emotional stability, and life satisfaction [36]. This indicates that sustainable mental well-being cannot be separated from the fulfillment of spiritual and emotional needs.

Transcendental needs provide direction and purpose in life. Individuals with strong spiritual awareness tend to have greater resilience and a clearer understanding of life's meaning. In Sufism, these needs are fulfilled through worship, dhikr (remembrance of God), and spiritual reflection, which strengthen the relationship between humans and God [37]. A strong spiritual connection creates emotional security, reduces psychological distress, and supports mental well-being. This aligns with SDG 3, which encourages strategies for promoting emotional resilience and psychological health.

The psychospiritual perspective also emphasizes that human well-being depends on the balance of biological, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions. In Sufism, this balance is cultivated through tazkiyatun nafs, the process of purifying the soul and developing positive qualities such as patience, sincerity, and self-control. This process helps individuals manage inner conflict, strengthen emotional regulation, and achieve spiritual balance. In contemporary mental health discourse, the psychospiritual dimension offers a holistic therapeutic approach that integrates spirituality and psychology. Beyond helping individuals understand themselves more deeply, this approach also supports the search for meaning in life, which is essential for emotional resilience and sustainable mental well-being [38]. Thus, fulfilling inner and transcendental needs becomes an important foundation for achieving holistic mental health and supporting the broader objectives of SDG 3.

Modern Psychological Perspectives: Humanistic Psychology (Self-Actualization)

Humanistic psychology is a major perspective in modern psychology that emphasizes human potential, personal growth, and self-development. This approach emerged as a response to psychoanalysis and behaviorism, which were considered too deterministic in explaining human behavior [39]. Humanistic psychology views individuals as autonomous

beings capable of growth, freedom, and self-awareness. Its emphasis on personal development and emotional well-being is relevant to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 concerning Good Health and Well-Being, particularly in promoting sustainable mental well-being.

One of the central concepts in humanistic psychology is self-actualization, introduced by Abraham Maslow as the highest level in the hierarchy of human needs [40]. Self-actualization refers to the process through which individuals realize their fullest potential and achieve meaningful personal growth. This process is not limited to external achievement but also involves inner satisfaction, emotional balance, and purpose in life. Individuals who achieve self-actualization tend to demonstrate higher psychological well-being, resilience, and life satisfaction.

Carl Rogers further developed this perspective through the concept of self-acceptance and openness to experience [41]. According to Rogers, psychological well-being emerges when individuals can align their self-concept with their lived experiences. Emotional conflict may occur when there is an inconsistency between personal values and actual experiences. Therefore, humanistic psychology emphasizes empathy, authenticity, and unconditional positive regard as important elements in personal development and therapeutic relationships.

In therapeutic practice, the humanistic approach focuses on helping individuals recognize their strengths, develop self-awareness, and achieve psychological growth rather than merely reducing symptoms. Contemporary psychological studies associate self-actualization with emotional resilience, stress management, and psychological well-being [42]. Likewise, Viktor Frankl emphasized that meaning in life is an essential factor in maintaining mental health and emotional stability. These ideas support SDG 3 by highlighting the importance of holistic mental health and emotional well-being. From a psychospiritual perspective, the concept of self-actualization can be integrated with Sufism because both emphasize self-development, inner balance, and the search for meaning. In Sufism, personal growth is not only directed toward realizing human potential but also toward strengthening spiritual awareness and closeness to God. This integration demonstrates that humanistic psychology and Sufism share similar goals in promoting sustainable mental well-being through emotional balance, self-awareness, and spiritual growth.

A Modern Psychological Perspective: Transpersonal Psychology (Spiritual Consciousness)

Transpersonal psychology is a branch of modern psychology that emphasizes spiritual awareness, transcendental experiences, and the development of higher consciousness. This perspective emerged as an extension of humanistic psychology, which was considered insufficient in addressing the spiritual dimension of human life [43]. Transpersonal psychology views human beings as possessing the potential to transcend the ego and achieve deeper spiritual understanding. This perspective is closely related to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 concerning Good Health and Well-Being because it promotes holistic approaches to sustainable mental well-being.

Spiritual consciousness in transpersonal psychology involves self-awareness, transcendental experiences, meditation, and deep reflection. These experiences help individuals understand themselves within a broader existential and spiritual context. Unlike conventional psychological approaches that focus primarily on behavior and cognition, transpersonal psychology considers spiritual experiences an important component of mental health and emotional well-being. Psychological well-being is therefore measured not only by the absence of mental disorders but also by the presence of meaning, inner peace, and spiritual fulfillment.

Stanislav Grof argues that transpersonal experiences can expand human awareness and deepen understanding of life and existence [44]. Such experiences often involve feelings of unity, transcendence, and connection with God or a higher reality. From a psychological perspective, spiritual awareness contributes to emotional balance, resilience, and a stronger sense of meaning in life. These values support SDG 3 by encouraging holistic mental health approaches that integrate emotional, psychological, and spiritual dimensions.

Transpersonal psychology also shares similarities with Sufism, particularly regarding spiritual transformation and inner awareness. In Sufism, spiritual consciousness is cultivated through practices such as *dhikr* (remembrance of God), *muraqabah* (spiritual awareness), and deep self-reflection. These practices strengthen emotional regulation, reduce anxiety, and encourage inner peace. Contemporary psychology often associates such experiences with altered states of consciousness that contribute to psychological growth and self-understanding. In therapeutic contexts, the transpersonal approach is used to help individuals cope with existential crises, stress, and emotional instability by fostering spiritual awareness and meaning in life. Research also indicates that individuals with stronger spiritual consciousness tend to demonstrate greater resilience and emotional stability [45]. Therefore, transpersonal psychology contributes significantly to sustainable mental well-being by integrating psychological growth, spiritual awareness, and holistic mental health within the broader framework of SDG 3.

A Modern Psychological Perspective: Mental Health and Well-Being

Mental health is a central concept in modern psychology that refers to an individual's overall psychological functioning and quality of life. Contemporary psychology defines mental health not merely as the absence of mental disorders but also as the ability to function effectively, maintain emotional balance, and adapt to life challenges [46]. This perspective is closely related to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 concerning Good Health and Well-Being, which emphasizes the importance of promoting sustainable mental well-being through holistic approaches.

Modern psychological perspectives increasingly integrate the concept of well-being into discussions of mental health. Well-being reflects not only happiness but also life satisfaction, emotional stability, meaningful relationships, and a sense of purpose. This multidimensional understanding highlights that mental health involves psychological, emotional, and social dimensions that interact continuously in shaping human well-being.

One influential framework is Carol Ryff's model of psychological well-being, which includes six dimensions: self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, and positive relationships [47]. Self-acceptance refers to the ability to appreciate oneself positively, while personal growth reflects continuous self-development. Purpose in life provides meaning and direction, whereas environmental mastery relates to the ability to manage life situations effectively. Autonomy and positive relationships further contribute to emotional resilience and psychological stability. These dimensions support SDG 3 by emphasizing the importance of holistic well-being and sustainable mental health. In addition to psychological well-being, modern psychology also recognizes subjective well-being, which focuses on happiness and life satisfaction. Subjective well-being includes affective aspects, such as positive and negative emotions, and cognitive evaluations of life experiences. Individuals with higher levels of emotional regulation and positive emotional experiences tend to demonstrate stronger psychological well-being and better stress management [48].

Mental health is also influenced by social and existential factors. Social support, healthy relationships, and meaningful social interactions contribute significantly to emotional security and stress reduction. Viktor Frankl further emphasized that meaning in life is an essential component of psychological resilience and emotional stability. These perspectives indicate that sustainable mental well-being requires not only psychological adjustment but

also emotional, social, and existential fulfillment. Overall, modern psychology views mental health and well-being as interconnected concepts that reflect the holistic quality of human life. This perspective provides a comprehensive framework for understanding sustainable mental well-being and aligns with the broader objectives of SDG 3 through the promotion of emotional balance, resilience, and meaningful living.

The Connection Between the Soul and Inner Peace

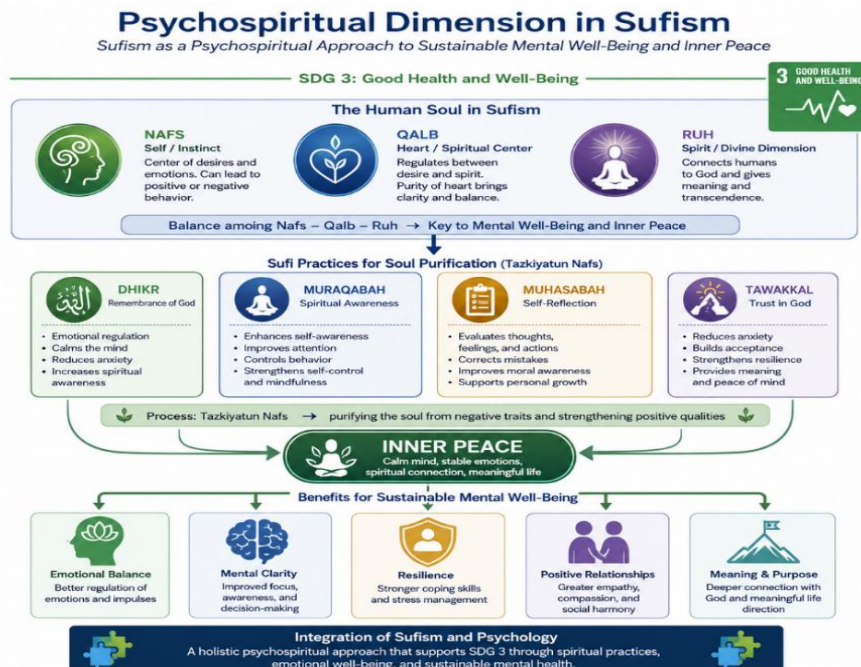


Figure 1. Psychospiritual Dimension in Sufism

The Role of the Balance Between the Nafs, Qalb, and Ruh

In Sufism, the human soul consists of three interconnected dimensions: nafs (soul/self), qalb (heart), and ruh (spirit). These dimensions shape emotional stability, behavior, and spiritual awareness. Their balance is essential for achieving sustainable mental well-being and aligns with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 concerning Good Health and Well-Being. The nafs represents instinctive drives and desires that may lead to either constructive or destructive behavior [49]. When dominated by uncontrolled desires, individuals may experience anxiety, emotional instability, and inner conflict, known as nafs ammarah. In contrast, disciplined self-control leads to nafs mutmainnah, a tranquil state characterized by emotional balance and inner peace.

The qalb functions as the center of moral and spiritual awareness, mediating between the impulses of the nafs and the guidance of the ruh. A purified qalb promotes clarity, ethical behavior, and emotional stability, whereas negative traits such as envy and arrogance contribute to psychological unrest. Meanwhile, the ruh connects individuals to God and provides existential meaning, which strengthens emotional resilience and psychological stability [50].

The balance among nafs, qalb, and ruh is cultivated through tazkiyatun nafs and practices such as dhikr, muraqabah, and muhasabah. These practices support emotional regulation, self-awareness, and spiritual growth. This finding suggests that Sufi psychospiritual concepts are comparable to holistic psychological models integrating emotional, cognitive, and spiritual dimensions. However, Sufism differs from secular psychology because it emphasizes transcendental awareness and closeness to God as the foundation of mental

well-being. Thus, Sufism offers a holistic framework for promoting sustainable mental well-being through the integration of psychological, emotional, and spiritual dimensions.

The Impact of Emotional Well-being on Mental Health

Mental health involves emotional stability, psychological balance, and the ability to adapt to life challenges. This perspective supports SDG 3, which emphasizes holistic approaches to sustainable mental well-being. Inner peace is closely associated with emotional well-being. Individuals with emotional balance tend to demonstrate stronger resilience, self-control, and life satisfaction. In contrast, unresolved emotional conflict and chronic stress may contribute to anxiety, depression, and emotional instability. This relationship indicates that mental health cannot be understood solely through cognitive or clinical perspectives. Emotional resilience is also influenced by spiritual meaning, moral values, and transcendental awareness. In Sufism, tazkiyatun nafs functions as a process of spiritual purification that helps individuals achieve emotional balance and inner peace [51].

Contemporary psychological approaches such as mindfulness, counseling, and stress management also support emotional regulation and resilience. However, Sufism adds a transcendental dimension by emphasizing spiritual awareness and closeness to God as important sources of psychological stability. Therefore, Sufism provides a psychospiritual framework that integrates emotional, psychological, and spiritual dimensions to promote sustainable mental well-being.

Sufism as Psychospiritual Therapy

Dhikr → emotional regulation

Sufism offers a psychospiritual approach that integrates spirituality and psychological well-being. One of its central practices is dhikr, the remembrance of God through verbal repetition and spiritual awareness. In Sufi tradition, dhikr functions to calm the mind, purify the heart, and strengthen spiritual consciousness. Psychologically, dhikr functions as a mechanism of emotional regulation because repetitive spiritual focus helps reduce maladaptive thoughts, anxiety, and emotional tension. This mechanism resembles mindfulness-based interventions that emphasize attentional control and present-moment awareness. However, unlike secular mindfulness, dhikr includes remembrance of God, which strengthens existential meaning, spiritual attachment, and emotional resilience.

The contemplative nature of dhikr also promotes relaxation and self-awareness, contributing to psychological stability and sustainable mental well-being. In Sufism, dhikr is closely related to tazkiyatun nafs, the purification of the soul from destructive traits such as anger, envy, and excessive desire [52]. This finding suggests that Sufi psychospiritual practices may function not only as preventive approaches but also as complementary therapeutic interventions in mental health treatment. Therefore, dhikr contributes to the development of Islamic psychology by positioning spirituality as an important element of emotional healing, psychological resilience, and inner peace within the framework of SDG 3.

Muraqabah → Self-awareness

Muraqabah is a central Sufi practice that emphasizes continuous awareness of God's presence and deep self-observation. This practice contributes significantly to self-awareness, emotional regulation, and sustainable mental well-being, aligning with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 concerning Good Health and Well-Being. Through muraqabah, individuals become more aware of their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, enabling better psychological control and spiritual balance.

From a psychological perspective, self-awareness is a core component of emotional intelligence and mental health. Regular *muraqabah* encourages reflective thinking and helps individuals recognize maladaptive thoughts and emotional reactions. This process strengthens emotional regulation and reduces impulsive behavior [53]. Similar to mindfulness practices, *muraqabah* promotes focused awareness of the present moment, although it also includes a spiritual dimension rooted in consciousness of God.

In psychospiritual therapy, *muraqabah* can support stress reduction, self-control, and psychological resilience. Studies on reflective and mindfulness-based practices indicate positive effects on attention, emotional balance, and psychological well-being. Integrating *muraqabah* with modern therapeutic approaches such as cognitive behavioral therapy may therefore strengthen holistic mental health interventions and contribute to sustainable mental well-being.

Self-Reflection and Self-Assessment

Muhasabah refers to self-reflection and self-evaluation aimed at improving behavior, thoughts, and spiritual awareness. In Sufism, this practice functions as a process of moral and psychological correction that supports emotional balance and inner peace. The concept is highly relevant to SDG 3 because reflective awareness contributes to sustainable mental well-being and psychological resilience. Psychologically, self-reflection helps individuals evaluate emotional experiences objectively and develop healthier coping strategies. Through *muhasabah*, individuals become more aware of irrational thoughts, emotional triggers, and personal weaknesses, allowing constructive behavioral change. This process also strengthens emotional regulation and self-control, which are essential for maintaining mental health [54].

Sufi teachings connect *muhasabah* with *tazkiyatun nafs*, the purification of the soul from negative traits. Reflection combined with spiritual awareness enables individuals to develop empathy, improve interpersonal relationships, and reduce psychological distress. As a psychospiritual practice, *muhasabah* offers a holistic framework for promoting emotional stability and sustainable mental well-being.

Trust in God and Anxiety Reduction

Tawakkal refers to trusting and surrendering to God after making a sincere effort. In Sufism, this concept functions as a psychospiritual coping strategy that reduces anxiety and emotional burden. Its relevance to SDG 3 lies in promoting emotional resilience and sustainable mental well-being through spiritual approaches. Anxiety often arises from uncertainty and the inability to control future outcomes. Through *tawakkal*, individuals learn to balance effort with acceptance, reducing excessive worry and cognitive stress. Psychologically, this attitude resembles emotion-focused coping because it helps individuals regulate emotional responses to uncontrollable situations [55].

Spiritual practices such as *dhikr*, prayer, and reflection strengthen feelings of security, calmness, and acceptance. Research also indicates that religiosity and spiritual trust are associated with lower anxiety levels and stronger resilience. In therapeutic contexts, integrating *tawakkal* with psychological interventions may support anxiety management and holistic mental health development.

The Integration of Sufism and Psychology: Sufism as a Holistic Approach

Sufism and modern psychology share a common concern for understanding human well-being holistically. Sufism views humans as biological, psychological, and spiritual beings connected to God, while contemporary psychology increasingly recognizes the importance of spirituality in mental health. This integration supports SDG 3 by promoting sustainable mental well-being through comprehensive psychological and spiritual approaches.

The Sufi concept of tazkiyatun nafs emphasizes self-purification, emotional regulation, and spiritual growth [56]. Similar ideas appear in humanistic and transpersonal psychology, which focus on self-development, meaning, and self-actualization. Sufi practices such as dhikr, muraqabah, and muhasabah also parallel mindfulness, self-reflection, and emotional regulation techniques in modern therapy.

Holistic psychospiritual approaches do not focus solely on symptom reduction but also on life meaning, spiritual awareness, and emotional balance. This integration contributes to psychological resilience, stress management, and inner peace. Consequently, Sufism offers an important framework for developing sustainable mental well-being within contemporary mental health discourse.

Relevance to Modern Psychological Therapy

Contemporary mental health approaches increasingly recognize the importance of spirituality in psychological therapy. Sufism offers psychospiritual concepts and practices that complement modern therapeutic methods and support SDG 3 concerning Good Health and Well-Being. Practices such as dhikr, muraqabah, muhasabah, and tawakkal contribute to emotional regulation, self-awareness, stress reduction, and anxiety management. Dhikr functions similarly to relaxation and mindfulness techniques, while muraqabah strengthens focused awareness and emotional control [57]. Muhasabah encourages reflective thinking, and tawakkal supports emotional acceptance and resilience.

Existential and transpersonal psychology also emphasizes meaning, spirituality, and self-transcendence as important elements of psychological well-being. Integrating Sufi practices into therapeutic settings may therefore enhance emotional healing and inner peace, particularly among individuals with strong spiritual or religious orientations. This integration reflects a more humane and holistic model of sustainable mental well-being.

Contributions to the Development of Islamic Psychology

Sufism contributes significantly to the development of Islamic psychology by offering a holistic understanding of the human soul through the concepts of nafs, qalb, and ruh. These concepts enrich psychological theories by integrating emotional, cognitive, and spiritual dimensions. Such integration is increasingly relevant to SDG 3 because it promotes sustainable mental well-being through spiritually grounded approaches.

The concept of tazkiyatun nafs provides a framework for self-development, emotional regulation, and moral transformation [58]. Sufi practices such as dhikr, muraqabah, and muhasabah can also function as psychospiritual interventions in Islamic counseling and therapy. Unlike purely secular approaches, Islamic psychology emphasizes spiritual balance and closeness to God as essential elements of mental health.

Sufism also contributes ethical values such as sincerity, patience, gratitude, and tawakkal, which strengthen emotional resilience and positive behavior. Contemporary research increasingly supports the relationship between spirituality and psychological well-being. Therefore, the integration of Sufism and psychology offers a strong foundation for developing Islamic psychology as a holistic discipline focused on sustainable mental well-being and inner peace.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the psychospiritual dimension of Sufism offers a holistic framework for understanding the relationship between the soul and sustainable mental well-being. In Sufi thought, the balance between nafs, qalb, and ruh determines emotional stability, psychological resilience, and inner peace. Mental well-being is therefore understood not only as the absence of psychological disorders but also as the achievement of spiritual balance and transcendental awareness. The findings reveal that Sufi practices

such as dhikr, muraqabah, muhasabah, and tawakkal function as effective psychospiritual mechanisms for emotional regulation, self-awareness, stress management, and anxiety reduction. Through the process of tazkiyatun nafs, individuals are encouraged to purify the soul from destructive traits while strengthening positive values such as patience, sincerity, gratitude, and trust in God. This process contributes to emotional balance, inner peace, and holistic mental health. This study also identifies a strong convergence between Sufi psychospiritual concepts and contemporary psychological theories, particularly regarding emotional regulation, mindfulness, self-awareness, coping strategies, and psychological well-being. These similarities indicate that Sufism possesses not only theological relevance but also psychological significance in addressing contemporary mental health challenges. Within the framework of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 concerning Good Health and Well-Being, Sufism provides a sustainable and holistic approach to mental health by integrating psychological, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. Inner peace cannot be achieved solely through material fulfillment or psychological intervention but requires spiritual awareness and a meaningful relationship with God. The novelty of this study lies in its integration of classical Sufi concepts with modern psychological perspectives to formulate a psychospiritual framework of sustainable mental well-being. This integration contributes theoretically to the development of Islamic psychology and psychospiritual studies while also offering practical implications for holistic mental health approaches in contemporary society. Therefore, Sufism should not merely be understood as a spiritual doctrine but also as a relevant psychospiritual approach for promoting sustainable mental well-being, emotional resilience, and inner peace in the modern era.

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Author Contribution

Siti Aisah independently conceived the study, conducted the literature review, analyzed data, developed the theoretical framework, interpreted findings, and prepared the manuscript entirely.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this study, including financial, institutional, professional, or personal relationships or affiliations.

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