

## Said Hawwa and Modern Tasawuf: An Introduction

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### Abstract

*Returning to the focus of this study, Said Hawwa drew the author to introduce his thoughts on the discussion of modern Tasawuf. In the field of Tasawuf, Said Hawwa studied with Tasawuf figures of his time, such as Sheikh Muhammad al-Hasyimi as the head of the tariqah ad-Darqawiyyah in Damascus, then he also studied with Sheikh Ibrahim al-Ghalayini, the leader of the tariqah an-Naqsyabandiyyah, even he follows the halaqah of this tarekat remembrance. But then he did not continue because this new teacher told him to 'uzlah. The approach used is a sociological approach, by maintaining the social conditions that influence the character's thinking when he is in his country of Syria under the auspices of the eastern tradition and the Arab world of thought where he is in the midst of a society that adheres to modernization, secularization and globalization. In addition, it also uses a historical approach, to see the background of the character's thoughts, previous figures that influenced his thinking, as well as in the spiritual aspect in the history of the development of science in each tradition and religion.*

### Keywords

Said Hawwa; modern Tasawuf; introduction



## I. Introduction

Applying Tasawuf in modern life is not as easy as turning the palm of the hand. Hawwan Tasawuf has become one of the "enemies" of modern Islam. The rejection of Tasawuf is due to the concepts and practices of Tasawuf which are considered wrong, deviant and contrary to Islamic law. Therefore, it is not excessive if Tasawuf is considered a source of superstition, bid'ah, and khurafat (Azhar, 2000).

To convince Tasawuf especially modern Tasawuf is not easy, because Tasawuf is subjective and unlike other general sciences. So the practice and spiritual experience experienced by hawwary Tasawuf actor has an influence on the meaning of Tasawuf. The experience is of course special so that it is not easy for others to understand, especially those who are not Tasawuf practitioners (Riyadi, 2016).

Responding to this modern Tasawuf, one of the perpetrators of modern Tasawuf whose name is widely known and takes part in the community with his works is Said Hawwa. He is known as a figure in the Islamic movement, a fighter against colonialism, an accomplished preacher, author of books and also a practitioner of Tasawuf (Mohammad, 2006).

His prominence in the field of the Islamic movement is known through his activities as a high-ranking officer of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. He also fought against the French occupation of his country and was added as a da'i who was so evocative through da'wah material that aroused the spiritual awareness of his congregation. Then through his

works, Said Hawwa's idea of soul determination (nafs) can be said to be more widely known, such as *Tarbiyatunâ ar-Rûhiyah* (Hawwa, 2010) which explores further Imam Ghazali's thoughts on the soul. Finally, his figure as a practice of Tasawuf for some people puts his position as a Sufi.

If we look at the summary of views on Said Hawwa, it is clear that apart from being a figure in the Islamic movement and outwardly being known as a spiritual sprinkler with a Tasawuf approach through his writings and preaching lectures, there can be no doubt that Said Hawwa is essentially a Sufi, or at least Said Hawwa. has been included in the group among the scholars who play a role in studying Tasawuf, such as Taftazani, Muhammad Mustafa, Shaykh Abu Hasan Ali Hasani an-Nadwi and others.

Returning to the focus of this study, Said Hawwa drew the author to introduce his thoughts on the discussion of modern Tasawuf. In the field of Tasawuf, Said Hawwa studied with Tasawuf figures of his time, such as Sheikh Muhammad al-Hasyimi as the head of the tariqah ad-Darqawiyyah in Damascus, then he also studied with Sheikh Ibrahim al-Ghalayini, the leader of the tariqah an-Naqsyabandiyyah, even he follows the halaqah of this tarekat remembrance. But then he did not continue because this new teacher told him to 'uzlah.

Said Hawwa stated that he was also involved with the tarekat and studied Tasawuf from the greatest and most trusted Sufi scholar, but this did not turn him away from the main foundations of Tasawuf, namely the Qur'an and al-Sunnah.

Said Hawwa is not the only figure who popularized this modern Tasawuf. Previously there were Fazlur Rahman, Seyyed Hossein Nasr and others. Therefore, with limitations and not being able to explain the concept of Said Hawwa's modern Tasawuf, this research is very important to find the construction, shape and characteristics as well as the relevance of Said Hawwa's modern Tasawuf in today's life which is more in-depth and detailed because as is belihawwad from his works, Said Hawwa's work has its own view of Tasawuf which is different from other Sufis.

Said Hawwa's thoughts on modern Tasawuf are not intact in one work, so the author must take an inventory (George, 1963) As far as the concept of Tasawuf is categorized as modern Tasawuf in all of Said Hawwa's works, the author also limits the purpose of this research to the problem in the formulation of the problem, namely to describe: 1) Said Hawwa's construction of modern Tasawuf in his works; 2) The form and characteristics of modern Tasawuf Said Hawwa; 3) The relevance of modern Tasawuf Said Hawwa in today's life.

## II. Research Methods

The approach used is a sociological approach, by maintaining the social conditions that influence the character's thinking when he is in his country of Syria under the auspices of the eastern tradition and the Arab world of thought where he is in the midst of a society that adheres to modernization, secularization and globalization.

In addition, it also uses a historical approach, to see the background of the character's thoughts, previous figures that influenced his thinking, as well as in the spiritual aspect in the history of the development of science in each tradition and religion. This research is also classified as research on biography (Sutadji, 2001) a character, because the method used is library research, by collecting a work of other figures and writers related to the topic of discussion.

Furthermore, all the data that has been collected were analyzed using the method of content analysis (content analysis) (Thominson, 1972), as an effort to analyze the meaning contained in the data which is the character's thoughts, and pay attention to the changes that

occur in the character's thinking at each phase of his life by tracing the factors that cause it. Based on the results of the analysis, the data was grouped with the stages of identification, classification, and categorization which were arranged logically and systematically. Then a conclusion is formulated by fully formulating Said Hawwa's idea about the spiritual dimension of Islam or Tasawuf.

### III. Discussion

#### 3.1 Short Profile of Said Hawwa

His full name is Said bin Muhammad Diib bin Mahmud Hawwa An-Nu'aimiy (Mohammad, 2006), better known as Said Hawwa. His nickname is Abu Muhammad. Said Hawwa was born in the Hiliyat District south of the city of Hamah, a city located in Suriyah, on 28 Jumadil at the end of 1354 H, coinciding with 27 September 1935 AD. His mother's name is Arabiyah al-Thaisy died when he was only 2 years old, his father then remarried. Then he moved to his grandmother's house under the care of his father. In his childhood Said Hawwa lived in a very simple environment. Little Said was under the guidance of his father who was one of the most respected, he was Haji Muhammad Diib Hawwa (1909-1989 AD) who appeared with fighters against French colonialism, so that his father was nicknamed a brave, respected, and full of wisdom.

His educational background began with digging knowledge of several shaikhs in Syria. Among the famous scholars are the shaikh of the city of Hamah, namely; Shaikh Muhammad al-Hamid, Shaikh Muhammad al-Hashimi, Shaikh Abdul Wahab Dabas Wazit, Shaikh Abdul Karim ar-Rifa'i, Shaikh Ahmad al-Murad and Shaikh Muhammad Ali al-Murad. In addition, Said Hawwa also studied with Mustafa as-Siba'i, Mustafa az-Zarqa, Fauzi Faidullah and several other ustadz (Al-Mustasyar, 2003). Sa'id Hawwa's Sufi character seems to have started from the guidance of several sheikhs he met so that it made an impression on his life.

It can be stated briefly here that later in his life he joined the Jam'iyah al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin (Al-Mustasyar, 2003), a few years after that, he attended lectures at the Syrian University. Then he joined the military service and graduated as an officer. A year later he married and was blessed with four children (Al-Mustasyar, 2003).

That's a glimpse of the lhawwal of education, but of course it needs to be explained later in detail as according to the confession of al-Mustasyar Abdullah al-Aqil who had met with Said Hawwa is also known as patient, friendly and has the nature of tawadu', wara' and zuhud. Sufi tendencies are more dominant in his life. The attitude of simplicity is very visible in appearance or in his modest residence far from luxury. His friendly and wara' made him loose for anyone wishing to print his book with or without permission (Al-Mustasyar, 2003). The Sufi life he lived made the books and commentaries written have a Sufistic tendency. His Sufi works concern the theme, especially in the context of cleansing the soul and purifying worship to Allah swt.

His work in the world of education was manifested in educational institutions, such as at al-Ma'had al-'Ilmi in the city of al-Hufuf in the Ihsa region for two years. In addition, Sa'id Hawwa also taught in Medina for three years and in Saudi Arabia for about 5 years. His knowledge is also conveyed through lectures, discussions and also stated in several books. He is one of the great writers of this modern era, his writing ability takes on a theme; da'wah and movement, fiqh, on the formation of the soul (ruhiyyah-tasawuf). One of his works concerns the theme of Tasawuf, namely Tarbiyatuna ar-Ruhiyyah. The advantage of this book is that it is not only about passive Tasawuf, but Tasawuf to awaken the soul in order to build a society that is strong, enthusiastic and clean.

At a young age, Said Hawwa for the first time became acquainted with the Muslim Brotherhood movement. The thoughts of the Ikhwan movement greatly shaped the

personality and mindset of Said Hawwa, who later became involved hawwan as a figure in the Ikhwan movement in Syria. In addition, his thoughts are manifested through books that are scattered and can be read and reached by anyone. From some of Said Hawwa's works, it can be categorized that the views of Said Hawwa's Islamic movement are in line with the founding figure of the Ikhwan Hasan al-Banna. The factor of the teacher who educates Said Hawwa also influences his religious thinking. In general, Said Hawwa's religious thought is part of a Sunni Islamic group known as the Expert Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah. Said Hawwa's pattern of thought can be seen through his interpretation of fiqh, aqidah, tasawuf in the book of interpretation which consists of 11 large volumes.

Among the popular religious notions such as theology or kalam, the Fiqh school of thought and the flow of Tasawuf. Based on the thoughts of scholars who are often quoted by Said H{awwa in his interpretations, it appears for example from the theological aspect, Said H{awwa's tendency is in line with an-Nasafi, namely Ash'ariyah followers.

Aspects of Fiqh can also be said, Said Hawwa is in line with an-Nasafi who is a Hanafi school of thought. The two religious notions above actually do not become dominant in Said H{awwa's religious thought. So he didn't talk about it much. This can be seen from several of his works which do not mention these two things in depth. As for the Tasawuf aspect, Said H{awwa devotes a lot of attention so that his works better reflect Tasawuf and moral dhawwalopment.

Finally, on March 14, 1987, M. Said was stricken with a kind of Parkinson's disease in addition to other diseases such as: sugar. High blood pressure, constriction, arteries, kidney and eye disease until he was admitted to the hospital and then out until he was forced to do uzlah. Precisely on Thursday 9-3-1989 AD, he died at the Islamic hospital in Aman.

### 3.2 His Tasawuf Thoughts

It is clear that Said Hawwa is a figure of Islamic harakah fighter who is full of dedication in pursuing the field of modern Tasawuf. The character of Tasawuf is quite prolific, namely trying to promote Islamic spirituality (Tasawuf) which is combined with the spirit of Islamic struggle.

In his book *Tarbiyatunâ ar-Rûhiyah*, Said Hawwa explained about Tasawuf which should be practiced by Muslims, especially experts in the da'wah movement and made an original image of Tasawuf with an implied motive to release Tasawuf from the exclusive and elite image. Said Hawwa wanted to re-socialize the science of Tasawuf because hawwary Muslim really needs this knowledge and needs to understand it correctly and precisely.

The book describes Said Hawwa's views on Tasawuf, its characteristics and studies in Tasawuf. In the book *Tarbiyatunâ al-Rûhiyah*, Said Hawwa explained about Tasawuf which should be practiced by Muslims, especially movement experts and want to re-populate the science of Tasawuf because hawwary Muslim really needs this knowledge and needs to understand it correctly and precisely.

The original title of the book *Tarbiyatunâ al-Rûhiyah* is *Taşawuf al-Harakah al-Islâmiyah al-Mu'âşarah* (current Tasawuf of the Islamic movement) views that most of his research emphasizes the experience of Sufis among people who claim to be experts in the da'wah movement and Islam.

Allah SWT. making Tasawuf as the principle of a person's success in life because someone who worships but is not sincere then his practice is in vain and someone who worships but does not have Islamic character is a disease of the heart that has no value in the sight of Allah. Therefore, the process of repair is tazkiyah or purification of the soul. Throughout history, the science of tazkiyah and tasawuf has been permeated with diversions and daif and false Hadiths which causes this science to need renewal by leaving these problems and khrafat. In addition to the main task of the Messenger of Allah is the tazkiyah

of the human soul, according to the author, this is probably what caused Said Hawwa to pay special attention to the field of Tasawuf and purification of the soul in several of his works, such as: *Tarbiyatunâ ar-Rûhiyah*, *al-Mustakhlis fî Tazkiyah al-Nafs dan Muzakarât fî Manâzil al-Şiddiqîn wa al-Rabbaniyah* and others.

Said Hawwa explained that among the factors that prompted him to write a Tasawuf book were as follows:

- a. The need for a contemporary Islamic movement consisting of scholars and preachers for a clear theory and view of Tasawuf will be able to maintain this science from deviations in the course of its flow which is always volatile as well as being able to fend off enemy attacks on this science. Spiritual life is very important to the activists of the Islamic movement and should not be completely ignored. Therefore, knowing Tasawuf is very important as it is equally important to understand organizational issues, activity agendas and other sciences. Without all of that, Muslims will lose their grip.
- b. Books that discuss and study Tasawuf are especially Tasawuf books which are arranged within the framework of the Ahlussunnah waljamaah creed and its various schools of jurisprudence. Therefore, Said Hawwa feels compelled to compile a book on Tasawuf because the Tasawuf books that have been circulating so far have not satisfied educated readers with their unsystematic descriptions, inaccurate terminology and hawwan tend to be redundant. Therefore, the presence of a book that discusses it systematically and clearly is a necessity.
- c. Most writers of Tasawuf books make this science as a special science (specialized science) hawwan though hawwaryone needs knowledge in this field because there are many things that are related to their own needs such as mental health, sanctity of the soul and other problems that are needed by hawwaryone. Therefore, these books need to be criticized and returned to their original position.
- d. The science of Tasawuf has been mixed with several things that make it like a puzzle. The science of Tasawuf does not seem like a science that gives a clear doctrine. Sometimes Tasawuf becomes a separate science from monotheism, fiqh and ushulu fiqh. Not infrequently too, Tasawuf is likened to inspiration which has the power of rhawwalation in determining something Shari'a and other legal provisions. In addition to interpreting the meaning of the Koran which is confusing because it understands the Koran from one angle only. If they try to deepen the text and understand it correctly, surely it is a virtue and perfection. That is what Said Hawwa wants to center on in this series of Tasawuf books.
- e. Most people who cultivate and practice the science of Tasawuf lack Islamic insight. Their understanding of Islam is narrow, they hawwan live far from their own era and far from Islamic principles that hawwary Muslim should know. Therefore, it has become an obligation for the Sufistic Islamic movement to correct and straighten this problem. Tasawuf must be returned to its place, namely as the originator of jihad. Some of the factors above, Said Hawwa was called to write in this series of Tasawuf books. Said Hawwa tried to rectify the understanding and mistakes that arise in the science of Tasawuf, especially the view that says that the journey to God is only through the Sufistic and tarekat paths.

The book *al-Mustakhlis fî Tazkiyah al-Anfus* which was written after *Tarbiyatunâ ar-Rûhiyah* aimed at clarifying again the position of purification of the soul, the method and implementation through physical and heart worship. This problem is caused by the book *Tarbiyatunâ ar-Rûhiyah* a fundamental discussion in understanding Tasawuf. According to Said Hawwa, one of the main sources of the book *al-Mustakhlis fî Tazkiyah al-Anfus* is book *Ihyâ' 'Ulumu ddîn* Imam al-Ghazali.

Said Hawwa explained how many mistakes occur among people regarding the journey to Allah swt. by mixing essence with the shell of nature and error. Many make means as ends, considering something introductory as everything. For example, some people consider the achievement of a clean and calm heart as the peak of the journey and make it the goal of all goals so that they forget the many obligations that must be shouldered.

Said Hawwa criticizes people who want to be Sufis but forget about jihad. Said Hawwa explains:

“Among the commands of Allah swt. is the command to jihad, to make the word of Allah swt. stay high. If we see a Sufi expert who has been busy with matters of a clean heart all his life, hawwan though he is obligated to uphold the word of Allah swt. and he forgets many obligations while still thinking that what he does is a perfection, then that is a big mistake.”

Said Hawwa then suggested that the science of Tasawuf needs to be learned by everyone and is not exclusive because every Muslim needs to travel to Allah swt. Sufism is a science that is needed by everyone and all walks of life.

According to Said Hawwa on the way to Allah swt. There are two most important problems, namely knowledge and remembrance. There is no journey to Allah without knowledge and there will be no journey to Allah swt. without knowledge and will not achieve the journey to Allah swt. without any remembrance. The science in question is knowledge of the Koran, al-Sunnah and all the knowledge needed with remembrance is remembrance that is ma'thur while still holding fast to Allah swt. and his apostle. According to him, even though a person has a high level of knowledge in his divine wisdom, he needs remembrance to achieve perfection towards God. Said Hawwa further detailed knowledge by mentioning four types of knowledge that must be mastered, namely: (1) knowledge of substances, the nature of Allah swt. and their names, (2) jurisprudence, (3) knowledge of the Koran and Hadith, (4) knowledge of circumstances and maqom, things that can clear up other al-Nafs.

Therefore, Said Hawwa emphasized the need for knowledge because science is an imam on the way to God. Whoever does good deeds without knowledge, his deeds are rejected. Said Hawwa also emphasized the need to adhere to the Shari'a because it can ignite the light of faith and an eternal burn for the heart to keep its light burning. Sticking to the Shari'a and practicing the Qur'an, humans can remain in their guidance. The position and function of the Qur'an other than as a holy book of the Qur'an is as a way of life for those who are pious and as a guide or guidance for humanity (Sinaga, 2020). The verses of the Qur'an which describe the communication process explicitly illustrate that potential kinesic aspects occur throughout the period in the process of human interaction (Fairus, 2018). The name of this interpretation is not a coincidence and origin, but this title reflects a nature that was shared with the Al-Qur'an (Kholil, 2020).

In this process of purification of the soul, the main problem is to focus on efforts to repair the heart so that it becomes healthy and guard the heart from the temptations of Satan. Attention to the heart, does not mean ignoring thinking activities, hawwan the main requirements to improve the heart are knowledge, knowledge-minded, makrifat accompanied by remembrance and deeds.

#### IV. Conclusion

From the various descriptions in this study, it can be concluded:

1. Said Hawwa's construction of modern Tasawuf is oriented to the texts of the Qur'an and Hadith, according to Said Hawwa that a sālik can also achihawwa the maqam-maqam that exist in Tasawuf. Said Hawwa tried to emphasize that these stations have a basis

for taking them in the Qur'an, including those discussed about the stations: repentance, zuhud, patience, tawakal, ridha and *mahabbah*.

2. The forms and characteristics of Said Hawwa's modern Tasawuf are:
  - a. Tasawuf is the most original tendency in the human soul.
  - b. There is no reason to reject or accept Tasawuf absolutely on the condition that a "measurement tool" is needed to reject or accept it.
  - c. Without the benefits of Tasawuf, humans are often unable to treat most of the mental or psychiatric illnesses that exist today. Psychiatric problems require spiritual education.

According to Said Hawwa, every Muslim is a traveler on the path to Allah as long as he carries out all that Allah has commanded him and he has a special place in the journey. Said Hawwa subtly denies the extreme Sufi experts who say that it is the practitioners of the Sufi orders who are truly on the journey to Allah swt.

3. The relevance of modern Sufism Said Hawwa in today's life that in dealing with a distant life, Sadi Hawwa's religious values suggest doing spiritual exercises according to the level of ability. Spiritual practices that do not interfere with work and obligations and waste the rights of the family. Through this spiritual practice, you will be able to increase your faith and the meaning of monotheism will become stronger. Said Hawwa also advised to always do daily wirid. Daily wirid which is a routine activity of a Muslim there needs to be a minimum of wirid-wirid and verses that must be read and it is necessary to add the wirid if you have spare time and to improve spiritually. Said Hawwa also outlined three problems in linking travel activities to Allah swt., namely: congregation or gathering for scientific activities, remembrance and discussion, humming or al-Insyad, and reading Sufism books and stories of pious people.

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