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## **Sufis and Women: The Study of Women's Sufis in the Western World**

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### Abstract

*The lack of records about the involvement and contribution of women in Sufism texts cannot be used as an excuse that women have a small role and position in the development and dissemination of Sufism teachings, doctrines and practices. So far, the well-known female Sufis, namely Rabi'ah al-Adawiyah (717-801) and Aishah al-Ba'unuyyah (c. 1456-1517), are two big names who prove that women have equal opportunities in spiritual attainment. Many researchers discuss female Sufis but focus on the eastern world and parts of India, only a few researchers have written about female Sufis in the West, therefore the authors are interested in discussing female Sufis in the West. This research is a library research. The author uses a literature review with the data sources used in this paper are secondary data originating from the literature such as books, journals, articles, and various sources that are relevant to the theme of the discussion in this paper.. The results of the study describe female Sufis in the contemporary era such as Hajjah Amina Adil and Hajjah Naziha Adil with their organizations engaged in philanthropy. Then another female Sufi is Nahid Angha who is known as one of the founders of the International Sufi Woman Organization, a world Sufi women's organization. This organization is concerned with peace programs and women's empowerment. The next female Sufi, namely Eva de Vitray in the path of Sufism, Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch or Hawwa Hanim, took allegiance to the murshid of the Qadiriyyah order from Morocco, Sheikh Hamzah al-Qadiri al-Boutchichi. Eva is also connected with Sheikh Khaled Bentounes, a murshid of the Syadziliyyah-Alawiyah tarekat who lives in France*

## Kata Kunci

*Sufi perempuan, dunia barat, pengetahuan spiritual.*

## Abstrak

*Minimnya catatan tentang keterlibatan dan kontribusi kaum perempuan dalam naskah-naskah sufisme tidak bias dijadikan alasan bahwa kaum perempuan memiliki peranan dan posisi yang kecil dalam perkembangan dan penyebaran ajaran, doktrin dan praktik sufisme. Selama ini sufi perempuan yang sudah sangat terkenal yakni Rabi'ah al-Adawiyah (717-801) dan Aishah al-Ba'unisyah (c. 1456-1517), adalah dua nama besar yang membuktikan bahwa kaum perempuan memiliki peluang yang sama dalam meraih pengetahuan spiritual. Banyak peneliti yang membahas mengenai sufi perempuan akan tetapi berfokus di dunia timur dan bagian India, baru sedikit peneliti menulis sufi perempuan di Negara Barat, oleh karena itu penulis tertarik untuk membahas para sufi-sufi perempuan di dunia Barat. Penelitian ini merupakan kajian pustaka. Penulis menggunakan suatu tinjauan literatur dengan sumber data yang digunakan adalah data yang bersifat sekunder yang berasal dari kepustakaan seperti buku, jurnal, artikel, dan berbagai sumber yang relevan dengan tema pembahasa. Hasil penelitian memaparkan sufi-sufi perempuan di era kontemporer seperti Hajjah Amina Adil dan Hajjah Naziha Adil dengan organisasinya yang terjun dalam filantropi. Lalu sufi perempuan lainnya, yaitu Nahid Angha yang dikenal sebagai salah satu pendiri Internasional Sufi Woman Organization, sebuah organisasi sufi perempuan dunia. Organisasi ini konsern pada program-program perdamaian dan pemberdayaan perempuan. Sufi perempuan selanjutnya, yakni Eva de Vitray dalam jalan kesufian, Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch atau Hawwa Hanim berbaiat kepada mursyid tarekat Qadiriyyah asal Maroko, Syekh Hamzah al-Qadiri al-Boutchichi. Eva juga terhubung dengan Syekh Khaled Bentounes, seorang mursyid tarekat syadziliyyah-alawiyah yang tinggal di Perancis.*

## Introduction

In the field of Sufism, from various existing literature, it is known that women have also played an important role in the history of thought and mysticism. The presence of female Sufis in Islamic literature is a theme that still needs to be studied intensively. This is because in the historical trajectory, the presence of female clerics has often been at an edge. The assumption that Sufism is the world of men may not be completely wrong, if you look at the pages that are presented now, it confirms this. The histories

that are conveyed, written, as well as the works that are read today, are entirely the world of men. There is hardly a single work of Sufism that can be said to be the legacy of Sufi women, except-the stories of piety and wisdom told by pious men (read: the Sufis). Although not too much, there are womens who are called, precisely considered, Sufi women, such as Amīnah, the mother of the Prophet Muhammad. and Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad, who is revered by Muslims because of her close relationship with the Prophet Muhammad. While other wives of the

Prophet, such as Zaynab bint Khuzaymah, were famous for their kindness and love to help people, so they were given the title Umm al-Masâkn (mother of the poor).<sup>1</sup>

In later developments, various manuals—texts that define the history, practice and thought of Sufism from the early days—describe the various contributions of women in Sufism. However, as mentioned above, the number of women recorded in these texts is much smaller than the number of male Sufis. In *Hilyat al-Awliya*, Abu Nu'aim al-Isfahani lists 28 women and 649 men; in *Nafahat al-Uns*, Abdurrahman Jami noted 35 women and 564 men; in *Tabaqat al-Kubra*, Abdul Wahab al-Sha'rani lists 16 women and 412 men and most of the women's names mentioned in the texts are members of the Prophet Muhammad's family, Companions or female figures in the Qur'an. The same thing is also seen in other Sufism texts: in *al-Risalah fi 'ilm al-Tasawwuf*,<sup>2</sup> Abu Qasim al-Qushayri recorded 83 men and did not mention any female Sufi names in *Kashf al-Mahjub*, Abu Hasan Ali ibn Usman al-Jullabi al-Hujwiri recorded 12 women and 109 men; in *Tadzkirot al-Awliya*, Fariduddin Attar notes 1 woman and 72 men; in *Kitab al-Bayadwa al-Sawad*, Abu

<sup>1</sup>the work of Ibn Sa'ad in *Kitab al-Tabaqat al-Kabir Volume VIII*. The work mentioned more than 629 women companions of the Prophet. It is narrated how the female companion of the Messenger of Allah (saw) prefers to sacrifice his property for the Messenger of Allah, than for his interests. A previous Sufi woman, Umm Haram, is recorded as a Sufi whose tomb was found in Lanarka Cyprus. She is the daughter of Milhan and still has ties to the family of the Prophet Muhammad. Her husband was Ubaydah bin al-Shamit. Umm Haram was eager to take part in the war after dreaming of meeting the Messenger of Allah, so she was allowed to join the army that was involved in the war at sea. In the year 27 H., Uthman issued the permit to fight at sea. The husband and wife and several friends departed from Medina and entered Damascus and then to Jerusalem. The group was attacked by the infidels and Umm Haram fell from her horse and fell with the victory of the soul. Immediately he was buried there. Because she died in the holy war, Umm Haram was called a martyr, and her grave was called the tomb of a Sufi. Sururin, "Perempuan Dalam Lintasan Sejarah Tasawuf", *Ulumuna* XIV, No. 2 (2010): 301-302, see also, Mustofa, "Tinjauan Budaya Atas Kultur Tasawuf Berbasis Mursyid Perempuan", *El-Harakah* 10, No. 3 (2008): 259-271.

<sup>2</sup>Abu Qasim al-Qushayri, *Risalah Qusyairiyah Induk Ilmu Tasawuf* (Surabaya: Risalah Gusti, 2014).

Hasan al-Sirjani recorded 8 women and 478 men.<sup>3</sup>

In the next period, female Sufis contributed a lot to the development of Sufism teachings. This has been mentioned in various Sufism texts. However, as mentioned earlier, the construction of patriarchal culture makes them marginalized. As a result, the number of mentions of female Sufis is less than that of male Sufis. The name Rabi'ah al-Adawiyah still appears quite often in women's Sufism literature.<sup>4</sup> His name is mentioned several times when talking about the Sufi generation in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century Hijriyah. Al-Taftazani called this generation the ascetic generation in which the *zuhud* life pattern began to grow and move. According to Ibn Khalikan, this Sufi woman who was born in Basra around the year 95H/717M was given a simple name, Rabi'ah, because she was the fourth child. This simple name was given because his family hoped that a boy would be born. At that time, the existence of a boy had its value in society, as the foundation of the family, while the previous three children were girls.<sup>5</sup>

Other Sufi women recorded in history include Nafisah (145 AH – 208 H), the great-grandson of Hasan bin Ali bin Abi Talib who was famous for his ability to understand the Qur'an as well as its interpretation and religious poetry. There was also Sya'wanah, a former black slave who was known for her sadness and piety as well as her good voice in reciting the holy Qur'an and

<sup>3</sup>Laury Silvers, "Early Pious, Mystic Sufi Women," Lloyd Ridgeon (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Sufism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 24. See also, M. Iqbal Maulana, "Spiritualitas Dan Gender: Sufi-Sufi Perempuan", *Living Islam*. I, No. 2 (2018): 360-377.

<sup>4</sup>Rabi'ah marked a paradigm shift in Sufism at the end of the second century Hijriyah, namely from the paradigm of fear to love. Rabi'ah deserves to be used as a reference to the treasures of Islam to control oneself and guard the steps of a Muslim in worship in the struggles of various ideologies in this global era. Rabi'ah also deserves the title *rausyan fikr* or an enlightened person, to borrow Ali Shariati's term. Someone who can Emawati, "Menapaki Cinta Sejati yang Dirindukan: Pembelajaran dari Sufi Perempuan Rabi'ah al-'Adawiyah", *Qawwam* 11, No. 2 (2017): 79-94.

<sup>5</sup>Ichsan Habibi, "Perempuan dalam Thariqah (Studi Terhadap Peran Perempuan dalam Thariqah Tijaniyah Bangka)", *Scientia: Jurnal Hasil Penelitian* 4, No. 2 (2019): 181-204 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32923/sci.v4i2.1020>.

poetry, and Fatimah (d. 233H/838M), one of the greatest *makrifat* experts.<sup>6</sup> In addition to female Sufi teachers, although there are few, there are also female guardians recorded in several official records in various regions, especially in tombs, which are often visited for various purposes. Of the many regions, India is the richest region with regional Sufi women compared to Anatolia, Iran, North Africa, Pakistan and others. Some of the more well-known names include Jihannara (daughter of Shah Jihan) and his mystical mentor, Bibi Khatun (d. 1639CE, a prominent female wali in the *Tariqah Qadhiriyah* in Punjab).<sup>7</sup>

In the latter part of the Middle Ages, it was recorded that the *khanaqah* allowed women to congregate on mystical paths and religious life in general. In Mamluk Egypt, for example, there is a sheikh (female sheikh) who leads the congregation in religious ceremonies during prayer times. A number of Sufi orders also allow women to become regular members, although some do not allow women to be in their environment. The order that provided the greatest opportunities for women was the Bektasi in Ottoman Turkey. Here they are all considered equal to men; they had to undergo the same swearing-in ceremony and participate in banquets and gatherings together.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the tarekat consisting of women is the Qadiriyyah *tarekat*, which has about two or three thousand women members. In Africa, the Rahmaniyyah, with about thirteen thousand members, and several members of the *Tarekat Khalwatiyyah*, *Tijaniyyah*, *Heddawah*, and *A'issawiyah*. In the international world, there is a Sufi women's organization based in the United States. In his introduction, the founder of the Sufi Women Organization, Seyedeh Nahid Angha.

<sup>6</sup>For more details, see Muhammad Alfian Budi Pratama, "Biografi Tokoh Sufi Wanita dalam Kitab "Manaqib Sayyidah Nafisah" (Suntingan Teks Beserta Analisis Isi)", *Thesis*, Semarang: Universitas Diponegoro, 2020.

<sup>7</sup>Annemarie Schimmel, *Dimensi Mistik dalam Islam*, translated by Sapardi Djoko Damono, et al. (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 2003), 553-554.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

She revealed that the organization she leads pays more attention to the roles and responsibilities of a mother. It was further explained that women as mothers play a very important role in building world civilization and the next generation. The themes that are carried are more in line with developing issues, such as issues of gender, education, human rights, women, children, and so on.<sup>9</sup>

Seeing the background above the author is interested in researching female Sufis, especially in Western countries, where so far many writers have focused on female Sufis in the eastern world, therefore it is very interesting to study about female Sufis in the Western world, and to answer questions about; Aren't there women in the world of Sufism? Is it true that the world of Sufism belongs entirely to men only? To distinguish this research from other studies, the author previously explained about female Sufis, namely:

*First*, Abu 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami, entitled *Early Sufi Women: A bilingual critical edition of as-Sulami's Dzikir an-Niswa al-Muta'abbidat as-Sufiyyat*, in this book explains that in which she became a spiritual teacher and exemplary Islamic piety, they serve as teachers and guides who in the same way as Muslim men do, often surpassing men in their understanding of Sufi doctrine, the Qur'an, and Islamic spirituality. Whether they were scholars, poets, founders of Sufi schools, or individual mystics and ascetics, they embodied the undisguised. This book has importance for the growing body of literature researching the history of women in Islam this is the first translation into English of a rare study of the Eighty-two Sufi women by the tenth-century Iranian scholar as-Sulami. The author is known primarily for his studies of the Sufi knighthood and the Malamitiyya (a Sufi order that followed the "path of blame," of which his father was a

<sup>9</sup>Read articles in <http://www.Sufiwomen>. Some of the articles published on the website include: Women in the Qur'an by S. Kianfar, Women in Islam by Seyedeh. Nahid Angha; The Role of Women in Religion A Shifting Paradigm by Sharon Mijares.

member), as well as his compendium of the lives of a hundred Sufi men.<sup>10</sup>

*Second*, the work of Muhammad Ainun Najib, “Sufism and Women of Sufi-Feminist Thought KH. Husein Muhammad”. KH. Husein Muhammad is often classified as a liberal feminist because of his involvement in feminist thought and movement in Indonesia. Some researchers firmly liberal feminism in the thought of Kiai Husein. However, if you read it carefully, Kiai Husein’s feminist thought and movement have a Sufistic nuance, even though it starts with the interpretation of gender or women’s fiqh, which is the core of his knowledge. Sufi-feminism with an esoteric dimension of Islam provides a friendly place for women. In the contemporary era like today, Sufism which is predicted to die has actually contributed to understanding women with the various problems that surround them. In the context of the study of feminism, Sufi-feminism is not yet unknown. The flow of feminism consists only of liberal feminism, radical feminism, and socialist feminism. However, that does not mean closing the growth of other streams of feminism. It takes an in-depth discussion of the epistemology, ontology and axiology of Sufi-feminism so that it is firmly established as one of the schools of feminism as well as Sufism.<sup>11</sup>

*Third*, Joseph Hill’s work entitled, “Picturing Islamic Authority: Gender Metaphors and Sufi Leadership in Senegal”, Adherents of the contemporary Sufi *Fayḍa Tijāniyya* movement in Senegal, describes the changing relationship of religious authority in terms of familiar social realities. While the most widely used metaphors are probably fatherly for male leaders and motherly for female leaders, various masculine and feminine metaphors can describe both men and women. The founder of *Fayḍa Tijāniyya*,

<sup>10</sup>Abu ‘Abd Al-Rahman Al-Sulami, *Early Sufi Women: A bilingual critical edition of as-Sulami’s Dhikr an-Niswa al-Muta’abbidat as-Sufiyyat* (America: Fons Vitae, 1999).

<sup>11</sup>Muhammad Ainun Najib, “Tasawuf dan Perempuan Pemikiran Sufi-Feminisme KH. Husein Muhammad”, *Kontemplasi: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 08, No. 01 (2020).

Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse, was best known by his students as “Baay” (“Father”). At the same time, these women deconstruct gender distinctions using mystical discourses, presenting all Sufis as “male” and sometimes revealing that gender has no reality. Although some scholars have argued that Sufi gender metaphors value male and masculinity while taking into account women and femininity, this article suggests that the effect of the metaphor should be sought in the performative context in which it is invoked. The ancient gender metaphor now envisions a new judge of religious authority, including the number and influence of female Sufi leaders.<sup>12</sup> From the research above that research on female Sufis, especially in Western countries, therefore this research is interesting to writes.

In this study, female Sufis in the West are different from Rabi’ah or male Sufis in general, which so far are considered Sufis or Sufis who only care about individual piety (*khalwat, uzlah, zuhud*) rather than social piety. Although it’s not completely wrong and not completely right. With this research, the author shows that female Sufis in the West put forward their social attitude more with the teachings of Sufism called *mahabbah*, not only as lovers of God but also lovers of others by helping fellow humans in need.

### **Women in Sufism Perspective**

The Sufistic approach in the gender or female paradigm turns out to be a good solution from the long debate about whether men are masculine and higher than women who are considered feminine or whether they are indeed equal. The arguments of the Qur’an and the hadiths that exist, textually give the impression that women are secondary creations while men are the first sex creatures. Contextually, the position is equal and equal between men and women, which is only seen in the ritual and moral dimensions which stipulate that men and women have rights and obligations

<sup>12</sup>Joseph Hill, “Picturing Islamic Authority: Gender Metaphors and Sufi Leadership in Senegal”, *Islamic Africa* 5, No. 2 (2014).

in carrying out obedience and obedience to God. Through the Sufistic approach, it will be seen that gender studies do not need to focus too much on the issue of whether women are inferior, equal, or not. or even taller than men. The study of Sufism emphasizes more on aspects of the quality of temperament and character of the male and female gender without seeing it from the side of men and women as beings of different sexes. Gender is not an essential distinguishing factor between women and men as are other outward attributes, such as hair, skin, clothing, gait, voice, and so on.<sup>13</sup>

According to Ibn al-'Arabi, women can be said to be equal, lower and higher than men. Women are equal to men in certain aspects, such as humanity, qutub level and prophethood. At the same time, women are in his view inferior to men for certain reasons, such as the fact that women came from men (Hawa came from Adam's rib) and the fact that women could not reach the level of apostolate and mission that only achievable by men. However, women have privileges that are not possessed by men, such as tremendous power in women and witnessing the most perfect God in themselves.<sup>14</sup> In the Sufi tradition, women are placed very high. There is no scientific and cultural tradition that places women so high above the Sufi tradition.<sup>15</sup>

Lynn Wilcox, who asserted that the debate over the disagreement between men and women is actually on the material physical dimension. While on the spiritual dimension, there is no gender difference. Even the debate on gender differences is irrelevant on this level. In her book, *Women and the Holy Quran: A Sufi Perspective*, Lynn Wilcox states, a variety of subtle qualities, roles struggles, conflicts, and social definitions of

women and men in the material world are physical and secularism nuanced. All these changes with time, culture, and geographic location. The debate about what women should and should not be is usually at this low level and is often associated with political or socio-economic issues, and also deals with efforts to control power. Though a person may be able to control others physically, he can never control the souls of others. Even Pharaoh, with all his might, was unable to do so. Ruh, Wilcox asserted, is unreachable, because it is at a higher level. In the spirit realm, gender is meaningless. Spiritually, gender - male or female - does not matter. In short, the gender debate is irrelevant on this level.<sup>16</sup>

In the context of the *tarekat*, sex segregation remains the norm. In Morocco, for example, women can be found among lovers or outside visitors who attend the common rites of popular Sufi orders/*tarekat*, such as the Isawah or Hamadsyah orders. In Egypt, the Council of Sufi Orders officially banned the membership of women. In Egyptian cities, such as Cairo and Alexandria, women who followed the teachings of the Sufis often had to practice Sufism in a semi-closed manner, by holding meetings in houses or other separate places where men's worship was carried out. Sometimes, as a compromise, prayer sessions may be held under the auspices of women's sections in voluntary Sufi associations, such as the 'Asy'rah Muhammadiyah in Egypt. Although Sufi teachers may give lectures to women, one finds men and women participating together in the teachings and prayers that characterize the doctrinal aspects of Sufism. Although Sufi teachers may give lectures to women, one finds men and women participating together in the teachings and prayers that

<sup>13</sup>Abdul Jalil, Hj. St. Aminah, "Gender dalam Tinjauan Sufisme Sebagai Konsep Kesetaraan Feminim dan Maskulin Melalui Pendekatan Spiritual", *KURIOSITAS: Media Komunikasi Sosial dan Keagamaan* 2, No. 2 (2019): 123 – 134.

<sup>14</sup>Kautsar Azhari Noer, *Tasawuf Perennial: Kearifan Kritis Kaum Sufi* (Jakarta: PT Serambi Ilmu Semesta, 2002), 64.

<sup>15</sup>Tedi Supriyadi, "Perempuan dalam Timbangan al-Quran dan Sunnah: Wacana Perempuan dalam Perspektif Pendidikan Islam", *Jurnal Sosioreligi* 16, No. 1 (2018), 18.

<sup>16</sup>Lynn Wilcox, *Wanita dan al-Quran dalam Perspektif Sufi*, translated by DICTIA from the original title, *Women and the Holy Quran: A Sufi Perspective* (Bandung: Pustaka Hidayah, 1998), 123; and see also Norhidayat, "The Origin Of Women Creation In The Perspective Of Sufi Commentary", *Khazanah: Jurnal Studi Islam dan Humaniora* 15, No. 1 (2017): 1-21, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18592/khazanah.v15i1.1129>.

characterize the doctrinal aspects of Sufism.<sup>17</sup>

However, we can see that women also have a very important role in the development of Sufism. According to al-Sulami, the emergence of female Sufis began in the Middle Ages. Where at that time they as Sufis served their brothers, studied together and then supported them financially and some even surpassed men in science and also the practice of Sufism. Then at the end of the Middle Ages women began to gather more freely and study mysticism and religious life like men. Until in Egypt it was recorded that there was a Sheikh (female sheikh) who led his congregation at every religious event. In Africa there is also the Rahmaniyyah which has about thirteen thousand members, and several members of the *sufisme Tijaniyah* and *Khalwatiyah* which are growing. *Sufi Woman Organization* based in the United States and founded by Seyedah Nahid Angha which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Islamic cultural civilization, especially in the field of Islamic spirituality teachings, is not in line with patriarchal understanding which does not provide opportunities for women to work a lot. In Islamic culture, men and women are partners who need each other, complement each other, and do not clash or humiliate each other. Even the basic spiritual teachings of Islam are essentially giving women the same rights, roles, and obligations as men, including in terms of occupying positions as murshid leaders. Therefore, it is not important for Sufi institutions to always prioritize men to become murshid, but on the contrary, it also makes women be allowed to become murshid. The cultural civilization that Islam wants is to state that men and women alike have the potential to become servants of *muttaqin* idols, and are equally responsible as caliphs on earth, including being teachers of the *tarekat* (murshid). That is why the appointment of women as murshids will not reduce or damage the identity of the attachment nature of certain Sufi

groups, on the contrary, it is a form of glorifying as well as respecting God as the creator. For this reason, Sufism based on female murshids should be published to restore the history of cultural civilization, the basic teachings of Islam, which recognize the similarities and parallels between men and women.<sup>18</sup>

### **Women Sufis in Europe:**

#### **Hajjah Amina Adil and Hajjah Naziha Adil: HNCO (Hajjah Naziha Charitable Organization)**

Hajjah Amina Adil is a well-known writer, teacher and spiritual advisor who for more than 40 years has dedicated her life to helping people from all walks of life get to know Islam better. She also has an important role in helping Muslim women to understand and implement the various rights that Allah (swt) has established for women according to the religion of Islam. Hajjah Amina was born in Kazan Province, Russia during the early days of communist rule, which ordered ethnic cleansing of Jews, Christians and Muslims. Many of his neighbors mysteriously disappeared and millions more were exiled to camps in Siberia, where many died of cold or starvation. When he was a child and just learning to walk, his family but for their safety by walking in the dark of night on a dangerous journey. They went through it only with the clothes attached to their shoulders. After more than a year in pursuit of deadly communist officials, his family miraculously made their way to Arzurum in Turkey's northeast. So, at a young age, Hajjah Amnia has been awarded a high degree as a 'muhajirah', which means people who have emigrated from Tyranny and the unjust to a place where they can practice their religion openly, for that it is said that there are a special reward with Allah (swt).

This experience in youth seems to have shaped Hajjah Amina's love for family, society and travel, her firm stance on justice, and her love

<sup>17</sup>Sururin, "Perempuan dalam Lintasan Sejarah Tasawuf", 301-302.

<sup>18</sup>Mustofa, "Tinjauan Budaya Atas Kultur Tasawuf Berbasis Mursyid Perempuan", *el-Harakah* 11, No. 2 (2009): 105-117.

for Islam. However, after 12 years in Turkey, Hajjah Amina's father had a spiritual vision that he had been ordered to move his family to Sham (Damascus), which was their first destination when leaving Russia. In Damascus they find the life they seek this greeting. They lived in Jabbal Qasiyun, a high mountain where the whole city could be seen. herehis family met with Grandshaykh Abdullah al-Fa'iz ad-Daghestani from the Golden Chain of the Naqshbandi Order, who then supervised and specifically supervised the spiritual and religious development of Hajjah Amina, through Grandshaykh Abdullah, he studied Sufism (sufism-spirituality in Islam), while Fiqh was studied through well-known scholars, such as: Sheikh Salis Farfour from Syria, Sheikh Mukhtar Alaily, and later the Secretary General for Religious Affairs in Lebanon. Hajjah Amina's teacher and mentor has always been amazed by her sharpness. At a young age, he also has a great memory and ability to understand and explain complex issues within the framework of Islamic Law.<sup>19</sup>

On the advice of Grandshaykh Abdullah al-Fa'iz ad-Daghestani, at the age of 23 he became engaged to the young Sheikh Nazim, and a month later they married and lived with him for almost 50 years. In fact, Shaykh Nazhim often stated that his wife looked to him as if she had been married for the first time. They have lived together and raised their four children (Muhammad Adil, Hajjah Nazihe Adil, Bahauddin Adil and Hajjah Ruqayyah Adil), among Syria, Turkey and Cyprus and are currently devoted to 16 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren.

Having been married for 50 years to Sheikh Nazim Adil Haqqani mursyid of the *tarekat* Naqshbandi Haqqani, Hajjah Amina has traveled the world. A scholar in the field of Sharia as well as a Shaykh, he has thousands of students throughout North and South America, Europe,

the Far East and Middle East, Southeast Asia and Central Asia and Africa. He studied under many scholars in the Middle East and Turkey including Gandshekh Abdullah ad-Daghestani an-Naqshbandi, Hajjah Amina also came from the family of the Prophet Muhammad. On tuesday. November 16, 2004, at 5:45 pm coincided with the 3rd of Shawwal 1425 H Hajjah Amina passed away to the Divine Presence.<sup>20</sup>

Hajjah Naziha Adil Kabbani is Ahlu 'l-Bayti, a descendant of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) through her paternal and maternal lineages, which includes the polestar of saints, Shaykh Abdul Qadir al-Jilani and globally renowned poet Jalaluddin Rumi (may God be pleased with them). Hajjah Naziha is the oldest child of Shaykh Muhammad Nazim Adil (d.2014), founder of the Naqshbandiyya-Nazimiyya Sufi Order, and Hajjah Amina bint Ayesha (d.2004), a shaykha and Islamic scholar who wrote extensively on lives of the prophets, whose family escaped religious persecution in Tatarstan, Russia. She is married to Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, Shaykh Nazim's deputy and spiritual heir, and together they advise Muslims around the world.<sup>21</sup>

Hajjah Naziha was born in Damascus into a unique household dedicated to the service of Allah (swt). She lived next door to the renowned Shaykh 'Abdullah al-Fa'iz ad-Daghestani, then leader of the Naqshbandi Sufi Order, who gave her the distinct honor of translating his Arabic lectures to Turkish. Shaykh 'Abdullah predicted she would be a teacher of women, which became a reality in the early 1990s. Over the years she has served as: Chairwoman, Kamilat Muslim Women's Organization; Writer, The Muslim Magazine, a national quarterly read by policymakers on Capitol Hill; Co-Chair, the International Islamic Unity Conference (Women's Interests) in Washington, DC.

<sup>20</sup><https://naqshbandi.org/living-masters/hajjah-amina-adil/> (accessed July 14, 2021).

<sup>21</sup>Laleh Bakhtiar, *Sufi Women Of America Angels in The Making* (Chicago: The Institute of Traditional Psychoethics and Guidance, 1996), 38.

<sup>19</sup>Siswoyo Aris Munandar, "Sufi dan Perempuan: Studi Gerakan Perempuan Hajjah Naziha Adil al-Haqqani", *Refleksi* 22, No. 1 (2022): 80-102.



Hajjah Naziha advises women on issues of Shari'ah, family life, and reconnecting with their spiritual selves. She has traveled extensively throughout the Middle East, United Kingdom, Europe, the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia, Australia, South America, the Caribbean, Canada and the United States. For more than twenty years, Shaykh Hisham and Hajjah Naziha have advanced Shaykh Nazim's legacy by directing various emergency disaster relief and humanitarian aid projects in Banda Aceh, Indonesia (tsunami relief); NWFP, Pakistan (earthquake relief); Kabul, Afghanistan (modern medical equipment and winter clothing); and Istanbul, Turkey (earthquake relief). HNCO is the natural evolution of their past work to advance those outreach projects dearest to Shaykh Nazim's heart.

*The Kamilat Muslim Women's organization* was founded in 1997 and is dedicated to addressing the various "quality of life" issues facing Muslim women in America and Canada. The organization opened an office in Washington with the aim of responding to domestic issues related to family, health, education, and marriage. This organization also organizes philanthropic activities related to emergency relief efforts for Muslim refugees who come to America. The foundation also has an initiative program to raise awareness of Muslims on specific issues, including the risk of breast cancer and domestic violence. The foundation also works with various secular organizations that share the same concern. The organization offers cultural sensitivity training to interested groups and encourages volunteerism among Muslim women. Muslim women are provided with home health education and English language instruction to Muslim immigrants who have recently settled in America. The organization introduces 40 unique Muslim cultures that exist within the American Muslim community.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup>David W Damrel, "Tarekat Naqsyabandi-Haqqani di Amerika Utara", *Sufi-Sufi Diaspora: fenomena Sufisme di Negara-Negara Barat* (Bandung: Mizan Media Utama, 2006), 204; and see also, Sheiaz Yaqub and Gulshan Nisa Rehman, *Hajjah Naziha*

While in the field of philanthropy, *Kamilat Muslim Women's* in collaboration with HNCS/HNCO (*Hajjah Naziha Charitable Society*) is a charity based in the UK, Indonesia and America with a global reach that was founded in 1997 and founded by Putri Syekh Nazim Adil al-Haqqani namely Hajjah Naziha Adil Kabbani. HNCS is also referred to as a Muslim charity which aims to improve the welfare of people in need through efforts at local and global levels. Projects that have been supported by the organization include emergency aid, food and clothing for the homeless, dug wells, educational books and distribution of school supplies, and assistance to orphans at the international level.<sup>23</sup> HNCO is committed to preserving the legacy of Sheikh Muhammad Nazim Adil. His daughter, Hajjah Naziha Adil Kabbani is a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), through a maternal and paternal line. She married Sheikh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, the deputy and spiritual heir of Sheikh Nazim. Hajjah Naziha and Sheikh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, representatives and spiritual heirs of Sheikh Nazim, together they advise Muslims and teach the inherited Tarekat, namely the Naqshabandiyah al-Haqqani Jama'at around the world, including traveling throughout the Middle East, UK, Europe, the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia, Australia, South America, the Caribbean, Canada and the United States.<sup>24</sup>

HNCO is a philanthropic organization that believes in the power of community and group collaboration with shared vision and values. Recognizing that mission can only be accomplished through the generosity of others, the charity and its members are committed to the efficient and compassionate allocation of resources; to help the wider community. This donation is divided into several campaigns and

*Charitable Organization (A company limited by guarantee)* (England: Lancashire, 2019).

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Hajjah Amina Adil, *Aroma of Purity*, Tp, 2012. 4.

aims to help the homeless, support orphans, feed the hungry, provide safe drinking water, education and medical assistance, and emergency assistance in the event of a natural disaster.<sup>25</sup>

HNCS/HNCO Objectives and Programs; First, providing hot meals for people in need in Indonesia, Malaysia, Africa and the homeless in the UK. Second, Digging fresh water wells in rural Africa, where they will drink clean water for the first time. Third, Distributing books and education supplies to children in Indonesia and Africa. Fourth, Supporting orphans with housing, healthcare and education until they reach adulthood in third world countries. Fifth, Holding free classes in all core academic subjects (English, Science & Mathematics).

HNCS also collaborates with several companies, Islamic boarding schools to deposit and raise funds through the payment of Zakat. Many Muslims choose to pay Zakat during the month of Ramadan, which is a requirement to make donations based on personal income, savings and possessions after crossing a certain threshold. Visit the HNCO/HNCS website at [hajjahnazihacharity.co.uk](http://hajjahnazihacharity.co.uk), where you will find a Zakat calculator, to see if assets are net or over the Nisab, and if so, how much they can donate to charity this year. In this modern era, donations can be made online and the wab has been managed by the Naqsyabandiyah al-Haqqani Sufi Order, if there is no donation, it can be made through HNCO/HNCS by visiting the HNCS wab address. Payment of zakat such as zakat fitrah.

HNCO (Hajjah Naziha Charitable Organization) points to some of the poorest areas in the world, for example Pakistan, HNCO provides food to villages in low-income Pakistan. Activities are carried out for one week 2 times - 5 times. When entering the month of Ramadan, activities to help others are carried out every day

during the month of Ramadan, then the HNCO volunteer team will travel to villages in various parts of Pakistan, with essential supplies including wheat flour, rice, butter/ghee, lentils and spices. For the men, women and children living in the area, simple dining is considered a luxury.<sup>26</sup>



**Figure 1:** HNCO Assistance with Clean Water Pumps and Cataract Surgery in Pakistan

HNCO volunteers are currently in Pakistan installing 100 water pumps in some of the most remote and poorest places in the country. For

<sup>25</sup>Siswoyo Aris Munandar, "Gerakan Sosial dan Filantropi Tarekat Qadiriyyah wa Naqsyabandiyah di Indonesia", *Nuansa Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Sosial dan Kegamaan Islam* 17 No. 2 (2020): 163.

<sup>26</sup><https://Hajjahnaziha.org>

some residents, this will be the first time they will have access to clean water in their hometown in their lifetime. Pakistan ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in the list of top 10 Countries with lowest access to clean water, while nearly 19,500 children under 5 die every year from diarrhea. Giving water saves lives, which is a very useful act. As Allah says in the Qur'an: "And whoever saves all mankind" (Qur'an 5: 32). This inspiring initiative was funded by generous donations from HNCO supporters who built on the highly successful Ramadhan Food Village Ramadhan 2019 Food Drive, which resulted in 30 villages being fed in 30 days in Pakistan and 30 villages being fed in 30 days in India and building schools in villages that were not covered by education, and could not afford teaching staff. The school is intended for underprivileged children (read: poor), and presents volunteers, HNCO members and students of the Naqsyabadiyah al-Haqqani Sufi Order as teaching staff. On the other hand HNCO provided 100 cataract surgeries with IOL (Intra Oculor Lens) implants.

### **Contribution of HNCO (Hajjah Naziha Charitable Organization) in the Covid-19 Era**

HNCO is a UK charity with a global outreach. A self-proclaimed interfaith organisation, the team prides itself of allocation of funding based solely on its own motto: help where it's needed most. Yet, for a charity that is on the surrounding community for much of its fundraising, and a community that is on the charity for regular care and at times, urgent relief; in a year that has affected each and every one of its supporters and service users, how can a charity such as HNCO survive? Here, HNCO's Gulshan Rehman reflects on the past 15 months, from the logistics of lockdown to making the most of every penny donated, from local services to global travel, and coming back stronger than ever.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup>Alima Nadeem, "How a Brier field woman is supporting homeless in Burnley", How a Brier field woman is supporting homeless in Burnley, Lancashire Telegraph.

While - as a charity - we have seen the devastating aftermath of natural disasters, some of the world's most impoverished men, women and children, and had the saddest encounters with individuals who have spent their whole life alone and without a home, nothing prepared us for the Coronavirus pandemic. At the beginning of 2020, Hajjah Naziha Charitable Organization (HNCO) was experiencing its most successful period by far. On 'home soil', the previous 12 months had seen regular homeless feeds services set up across multiple local towns – including hygiene packs and a free hair cutting service - community outreach programs completed with hospices and hospitals in Lancashire and Manchester, thousands of pounds raised through a Christmas supermarket bag-packing drive with volunteers from Nelson & Colne College, plus appearances on regional radio and in local newspapers. Overseas, the Safe Drinking Water program meant that water pump installations were now in the hundreds, 50 men and women circumstances far beyond our control; much like the people we help every day. Over the months that followed, more and more people needed our help; but we had less opportunity to raise funds. We were lucky that donations were still coming in, however, and more than ever before we needed to make sure that every penny went straight to a cause or campaign with barely a second to spare. At HNCO HQ, we streamlined marketing and admin activities to the bare minimum so that we could get 'feet on the ground'. We ramped up homeless feeds and additional services to be handed out alongside hot food and snacks, such as health advice leaflets.<sup>28</sup>

The second annual Ramadan Food Drive and Qurbani projects had fed more families than ever before, and - in conjunction with world-renowned organization Muslim Hands - HNCO had helped to fund a free cataract clinic in Pakistan. By the end of January 2020, HNCO as a charity was still not 'officially' three years old yet it had not only

<sup>28</sup>See in HNCO NEWS Spring 2021.

received the nomination of ‘Charity of the Year’ at The 8<sup>th</sup> British Muslim Awards 2020, it came away with the Highly Commended award from the highly prestigious event. 2020 was set to be the start of another fantastic year for HNCO and all of its helpers. With an idea book full of ways to raise funds and most importantly, help even more people in even more ways and places, the team was raring to go. Unfortunately, and unknownst to anyone,<sup>29</sup>

Starting right at the beginning of lockdown, mid-March 2020, it almost seems a bit of a blur now. My first thought when Lockdown was announced was that we had just completed a homeless feed in Manchester the Friday before and we promised we’d be back the next week. Could we still do it? What would they think if we didn’t go? What did they know about the current situation? Was it safe for the volunteers? Our best form of ‘attack’ was to adapt. As a charity, we need to be resourceful at the best of times and here we found ourselves in hand sanitiser, face masks. We actively sought out local food banks, church and community centres, refugees to see what they needed and how we could help, and sent educational books to prisoners in the North West as visitation and social time was restricted. Overseas, we funded further community projects, installed hundreds of water pumps, continued with food drives in the most impoverished areas and launched the HNCO Build a Mosque appeal.



**Figure 2:** HNCO Philanthropy Movement in the Time of Covid-19

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

Now, as the second Ramadan of the pandemic, we finally feel at the stage where we can look back, reflect on what how we worked as a team, review what our service users need from us now versus then, and try to communicate that back to our supporters, who are genuinely some of the most kind and generous people in the world. There is no such thing as furlough for a charity; many have been hit very hard since March 2020. Like so many other organisations, HNCO has worked just as hard to keep its services going, and we have put together the following magazine to offer an overview of some of these events and activities.

The white t-shirts and caps of HNCO volunteers have been a familiar sight in Manchester’s Piccadilly Gardens for approximately two years. Once a week, including during lockdown, the homeless men and women of the city can expect a hot drink, home cooked meal and snacks, but during the holy month of Ramadan, this service takes place every night for 30 days, even though many of the volunteers will have been fasting throughout the day. In April and May 2021, the HNCO team joined several other charities in Manchester as stalls were set out every night serving hot, home cooked food such as samosas and rice, tea, coffee and hot chocolate, plus fruit, cakes and biscuits. Gulshan and Maryam Rehman - two sisters from HNCO – explained the importance of ‘helping the homeless’, especially to HNCO supporters and were happy to report that service user numbers were back up to “pre-Covid” for the first time since the pandemic: “Some people think it must be harder for us to set up the food stalls in Ramadan - especially when we have been fasting since sunrise every day, but actually it makes it easier. The Holy Month teaches us sacrifice and fosters compassion. It is of course important to help people everyday, but during this 30-day period, it is more crucial than ever.

HCNO continued the service throughout Lockdown and handed out masks, wipes, sanitiser and advice leaflets. Now as some ‘normality’

returns, we need to be conscious of the fact that for people without homes, much of their life still hasn't changed. So, if HNCO is being a regular source of support means 'normal' to them, will continue to be there, and we thank our supporters for providing vital funds to allow us to keep doing that.

### **Nahid Angha and International Association of Sufism**

Nahid Angha is known as one of the founders of the International Sufi Woman Organization, a world Sufi women's organization. This organization is concerned with peace programs and women's empowerment. Nangha is this woman who received an award from the United Nations. She is the daughter of Moulana Shah Maghsoud and Mah Talat Etemad Moghadam. His father was known as a murshid of the Uwaisi *tarekat*. His mother is of Iranian aristocratic descent. His father introduced the Sufi world when he was twenty years old. He has a doctorate in Psychology and Islamic Studies. Nahid Angha by Huffington Post named her one of the 50 Strong Female Religious Leaders in 2014. Nangha is also known as an active advocate for human rights with a focus on women's rights.

Not only pursuing the Sufi world, Nahid Angha is known as a writer, lecturer and human rights activist and executive editor of the journal *An Inquiry*. Nahid is the eldest son and first student of Moulana Shah Maghsoud Angha, one of the leaders of the Uwaisi Order. The daughter of Moulana Shah Maghsoud, a twentieth century Persian Sufi of the Uwaisi School of Sufism, Angha was the first woman appointed to teach at her father's school, and later the first woman to ever sit on an inner circle council with Muslim leaders from around the world to lead meditations at the Symposium, annual Sufi. In 2000, he was awarded the UNESCO "Emissary of Peace" award for his work as a humanitarian leader.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup>See in the International Association of Sufism, <http://ias.org/about/founders/> (accessed July 17, 2021).

She is the first Muslim woman inducted to the Marin Women's Hall of Fame in 2005. An internationally published author, she is one of the major Muslim writers and scholars of the present time with over fourteen published books, and she has compiled a series of biographies of contemporary Sufi Women. Her dedication to peace has led her to serve in various leadership roles in large-scale international interfaith organizations. Angha has given lectures and taught classes nationally as well as internationally. This includes speaking engagements at the United Nations, the University of California, Berkeley, Stanford, the Smithsonian Institute, State of the World Forum Conference: San Francisco, Parliament of the World Religions Conferences: Cape Town and Barcelona.<sup>31</sup> Locally, Angha has held numerous positions on interfaith councils and was an active member of the Marin Interfaith Council. She established a partnership with Dominican University that, in an annual series of "Building Bridges of Peace" lectures. The first lecture brought together members from all the religious communities in the County, as well as the general public, to establish networks for joint community action and social justice. In San Jose, where people of many cultures reside, Angha formed a domestic violence awareness and prevention program for women in the Middle Eastern community.<sup>32</sup>

As the author of several of his writings published internationally. Not only scientific works but also translating classical Sufi literature. His dedication to peace has led him to take part widely, especially in inter-religious relations. Angha is also known as a speaker and lecturer at several universities in America and the world including the University of California, Berkeley and the Smithsonian Institute. He has written

<sup>31</sup>See in the Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality & Equality, <https://www.wisemuslimwomen.org/muslim-woman/nahid-angha/> (accessed July 14, 2021).

<sup>32</sup>See in Eliminating Racism Empowering Women YWCA Golden Gate Silicon Valley, <https://yourywca.org/honorees/dr-nahid-angha/> (accessed July 14, 2021).

many books on the subject of Sufism, philosophy, and spiritual journeys including *Negah*, *Divan*, *Principles of Sufism*, *The Journey: Seyrva Soluk*, *Salek* and others. He has also translated works of great Sufi works such as Rumi's poetry, Omar Khayam, Hafez and Shah Maghsoud Together with her husband Ali Kianfar, co-founded the International Sufism Association (IAS), a non profit organization in California dedicated to the teachings of Sufism and Sufism past and present. This association has a mission to uncover the interrelationships between Sufi principles and scientific principles through lectures, publications, creating forums for ongoing dialogue among Sufis from around the world. In 1993, Nangha formed the International Sufi Women's Organization in 1993.<sup>33</sup>

### **Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch**

Sufism began to be highly respected in European Orientalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The studies and translations carried out by scientists and scholars have contributed to the knowledge of Sufism in Europe and thus the spread of its practices. Although some Muslims criticize European orientalists often without distinction, there is evidence that first of all these orientalists knew the Islamic tradition better than these Muslims, and secondly, that they were quite possibly not evil. Famous scholars are found in Sufism studies and those with charismatic personalities occupy themselves in spiritual pursuits, either in Christianity or in Islam, or even on the points of similarity between these two great religions. An example in this case is Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch.

For a learner and seeker of universal truth, Sufism is a light that can illuminate the dark path of life. The same is true for Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch, a female intellectual who tethers her

love to the Sufistic path. In Sufism, he not only got answers from his anxiety about religion and the conflicts in it, but he also drank a beautiful and enchanting estuary of substantial teachings. Perhaps for the public in Indonesia who often reads Sufistic works by female Western intellectuals, the name Eva de Vitray is not as well-known as Annemarie Schimmel. One of the reasons is that Eva de Vitray's works are mostly written in French. And not many of his works have been translated into English. This article will briefly review Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch's journey as a Sufi woman who falls in love with Rumi.<sup>34</sup>

Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch was born Eva Lamacque de Vitray in 1909 in Paris, France. He was born into a devout Catholic aristocratic family. No information was found regarding the names of the father and mother. His childhood education was spent in a Catholic Dormitory in France. He is a critical, honest, and courageous child. At the age of about fifteen years, she has become a student who is very critical of various principles of Catholic theology. He read a lot and debated with the priests and nuns, his teachers at school. The search for truth, which had been ingrained and honed since his youth, continued to be carried over until he studied law and completed his doctorate in philosophy with a concentration on Plato's symbolism.<sup>35</sup>

These traits were allegedly inherited from his grandmother, a Scottish Anglican, who said to him, "always be honest and dignified, never cheat." Eva de Vitray married at the age of 22 to a French Jew of Russian descent, Lazare Meyerovitch, so this is the name she took after her marriage. With her husband, she lived in Paris while working as an administrator in the laboratory of Frederic Juliot Curie, who won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1935. During this time, Eva de Vitray had several dreams. "In

<sup>33</sup>Wildan Imaduddin Muhammad, "Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch (Hawwa Hanim), Perempuan Sufi dari Perancis", <https://iqra.id/eva-de-vitray-meyerovitch-hawwa-hanim-perempuan-sufi-dari-perancis-237165/>(accessed August 1, 2021),

<sup>34</sup>Ibid. Camille Helminski, *Women of Sufism: A Hidden Treasure* (London: Horticultural Hall, 2003), 109-110.

<sup>35</sup>Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch - Wikipedia(accessed September 20, 2021).

my dream, I was buried. On the gravestone, my name is written in Arabic, Hawwa. At that time, I had frequent discussions with Juliot Curie about this dream. He said it was just an ordinary sleeping flower.” Around the 1940s, the invasion of German Nazi troops into French territory resulted in Eva having to leave Paris as well as get out of Juliot Curie’s laboratory. It was in this year that Gestapo soldiers knocked on her door, asking where her husband was who was part of the French liberation army. At that time he was alone with his three-year-old son. Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch witnessed atrocities during the war. He witnessed about 642 people being rounded up by Nazi German soldiers, mostly children, and women. They were put into the church, then the church was burned and left the people to die.<sup>36</sup>

After the war, Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch worked at the Center national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS). A research institute in France while continuing to learn various things. In the 1950s, a friend in his Sanskrit class had just returned from Pakistan to visit his home and gave him a gift of a book called *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* written by the famous Islamic thinker, Muhammad Iqbal. As someone who has a sharp mind and an easily touched heart, Eva de Vitray is immersed by the clarity of Iqbal’s description and the beauty of his explanation. In the book, Iqbal outlines the individual’s position in the structure of the universe and the correlation of religion with the highest reality that is unreachable, as well as covering the entire universe. Iqbal quotes a lot of Jalaluddin Rumi’s opinions and thoughts from his book *Matsnawi* and others. It was through this book that Eva de Vitray went deeper into studying Islam, especially the teachings of Jalaluddin Rumi.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Wildan Imaduddin Muhammad, “Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch (Hawwa Hanim), Sufi Woman from France”, <https://iqra.id/eva-de-vitray-meyerovitch-hawwa-hanim-perempuan-sufi-dari-perancis-237165/> (accessed October 12, 2021). For Eva de Vitray’s work on Sufism, you can read the book: Eva de Vitray, *Antologija Sufijskih Tekstova* (Croatian: Naprijed, 1988).

Then, an Indian friend of her, who she had learned Sanskrit with and was a disciple of Einstein, came to visit her and gave her a book by Muhammad Iqbal. “I realized that a singular truth was being mentioned in the book. Moreover, I read much of a person called Rumi and felt affection towards him,” she said. Eva de Vitray was overwhelmed when she read a quote of Rumi mentioned in the book: “Even the minuscule movement of a person on the Earth is recorded by solar systems within undiscovered galaxies.” She pinched herself to see whether this was a dream. Remembering the words of a physicist friend of hers, “Einstein says that when you touch a cup, this movement is perceived by other solar systems”, she was affected tremendously as Rumi’s quotation dated back to the 13<sup>th</sup> Century.

For this reason, his interest began with efforts to translate Iqbal’s books he read into French. After that, Eva then learned Persian in order to be able to directly access and feel the beauty of Jalaluddin Rumi’s expression. Simultaneously Eva de Vitray translated Rumi’s works into French. Eva managed to translate approximately 50,000 stanzas of poetry in Rumi’s magnum opus, *Matsnawi*, in approximately 1100 pages. Apart from translating other Rumi books such as *Fihi Ma Fihi*, *Rubayat*, and *Diwan al-Kabir*.<sup>38</sup>

Unlike Annemarie Schimmel, Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch firmly converted to Islam after approximately three years of studying Islam and Sufism. Despite much opposition and opposition from his immediate environment, he remained steadfast in practicing Islam. The Islamic name he chose was Hawwa Hanim. After

<sup>38</sup>Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch, who translated it into French, described it as “a truly interesting work, not only for understanding the mind of the Master and Sufism in general, but also for the depth and excellence of the analysis of its content, which makes initiation about itself. Like *Matsnawi*, *Fihi Ma Fihi* is very didactic (teaching), and as De Vitray points out,” in it, the meaning of this didactic is explained even more clearly. Mulyadhi Kartanegara, *Jalal al-Din Rumi: Guru Sufi dan Penyair Agung* (Jakarta: Teraju, 2004), 12-13 collections of works can be seen in “Homage Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch décembre 2020”, Tribute to Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch - Sufi Awareness (consciencessoufie.com)

converting to Islam, Eva de Vitray decided to return to take doctoral studies at the University of Paris with a concentration on the teachings of Jalaluddin Rumi's mysticism. Her dissertation was successfully defended in 1968. A year later, Eva de Vitray had the opportunity to teach philosophy at Al-Azhar Cairo as a CNRS representative for approximately five years in the period 1969 – 1973. In between her activities in Cairo, in 1971, Eva performs the pilgrimage to Mecca.<sup>39</sup>

Eva or her Islamic name; Hawwa has produced many investigations that have paved the way for recognizing Islam. His works entitled 'Mystique et poesieen Islam' (Poetry and Islamic Mystics) and 'Djalaluddin Rumi et l'ordre de dervichestourneurs (Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi and Whirling Dervish) in 1972 have opened the eyes of the West to the wonder of Rumi's poetry and the perfection of Islam. as 'the way of life'. Even in her book '*La quete de l'absolu*' (The Search for Absolute Meaning) a Mathnawi translation, Eva proclaims the existence of nuclear physics theory in Rumi's work. Until now, Rumi's works continue to be read all over the world, explaining the meaning of a life full of love. America saw Rumi's poems as bestsellers. Europe is increasingly paying attention to Rumi through the investigations of orientalist such as Annemarie Schimmel and AJ Arberry.<sup>40</sup>

Annemarie Schimmel when conducting a book review of Eva de Vitray's English translation, entitled Rumi and Sufism, published by the Middle East Studies Association Bulletin, admitted that she met Eva personally for the first time in 1973 in Konya, Turkey. At that time they were attending the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Jalaluddin

Rumi. For Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch, Turkey is the second home after France. He frequently visited Turkey, especially Konya, where Rumi is buried. The Turkish authorities at that time even gave honorary citizens (citizen of honor) for him. He also received a doctorate honoris causa from Selcuk University for his invaluable contribution to Rumi and Turkish culture.

In the path of Sufism, Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch or Hawwa Hanim pledged allegiance to the murshid of the Qadiriya order from Morocco, Sheikh Hamzah al-Qadiri al-Boutchichi. The first time Eva came, Sheikh Hamzah muttered, "Rumi is here, Rumi is here." In addition to Sheikh Hamzah, Eva is also connected with Sheikh Khaled Bentounes, a murshid of the Syadzilyah-Alawiyah *tarekat* who lives in France.<sup>41</sup> Eva de Vitray Meyerovitch died in Paris in 1999, at the age of 100. She told her friends in her last will: "Bury me in Konya when I'm dead, so that I can be in his [Rumi's] spiritual presence." While his last will was delayed due to her children's opposition, it was fulfilled finally during the anniversary of eb-i Arus in 2008. Her body was interned in the ler Cemetery in Konya, near Rumi's resting place, after being transported from the Thiais Cemetery in Paris.

## Conclusion

The author has attempted to name and review several female Sufis in the Western world. Compared to male Sufis, the number of female Sufis recorded in the pages of history is much less. At least the names of female Sufis in the history of Sufism are because culturally women are often positioned lower. They are considered weak creatures who in various aspects really need the protection of men. As Sururin, in his

<sup>39</sup>Wildan Imaduddin Muhammad, "Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch (Hawwa Hanim), Sufi Woman from France", <https://iqra.id/eva-de-vitray-meyerovitch-hawwa-hanim-perempuan-sufi-dari-perancis-237165/>(accessed October 12, 2021).

<sup>40</sup>Zaki Sapuan, "Eva De VitrayMeyerovitch: Memeluk Islam Kerana Rumi", <https://www.thepatriots.asia/eva-de-vitray-meyerovitch-memeluk-islam-kerana-rumi/> (accessed September 20, 2021).

<sup>41</sup>Eva de Vitray, *Universalité De L'islam*, (French: Espaces libres, 2014), 15. If you want to read Eva's writings on Sufism, you can visit the site: Tribute to Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch - Sufi Awareness (consciencessoufie.com)



work entitled “Women in the Trajectory of the History of Sufism” that in the world of Sufism, the strong influence of culture that so firmly distinguishes people from this gender aspect, makes the position of women not get a reasonable space. All of this, in turn, causes the contribution and dedication of women to be invisible or perhaps even “deliberately” not highlighted in the Sufi world. From the explanation above, we can see the contribution of female Sufis and even their organizations are growing very rapidly, on the other hand there are still many female Sufis in Europe, one of them: Bagha, Latifa, Aliya, Khadija, and Rasheedah. It will be very interesting if the next researcher can write about the female Sufis that the author has mentioned.

As for the discussion above, Hajjah Amina Adil is a well-known writer, teacher as well as spiritual concern and as a female Sufi who has helped Hajj for more than 40 years to help people from all walks of life get to know Islam better. She also has an important role in Helping Muslim women to understand and implement the various rights that have been ordained by Allah (swt) for women according to the religion of Islam. Grand shaykh Abdullah al-Fa’iz ad-Daghestani from the Gold Chain of the Naqshbandi Order, which is also the sanad of Hajjah Amina’s congregation.

The next female Sufi, namely Eva de Vitray in the path of Sufism, Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch or Hawwa Hanim, took allegiance to the murshid of the Qadiriyyah order from Morocco, Sheikh Hamzah al-Qadiri al-Boutchichi. The first time Eva came, Sheikh Hamzah muttered, “Rumi is here, Rumi is here.” In addition to Sheikh Hamzah, Eva is also connected with Sheikh Khaled Bentounes, a murshid of the Syadziliyyah-Alawiyah *tarekat* who lives in France. In addition, there is Nangha, she formed the International Sufi Women’s Organization in 1993. This organization is concerned with peace programs and women’s empowerment. Nangha is this woman who received an award from the United Nations.

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