

Empowering the Institution of Tarekat Tasawuf in Melaka: A Preliminary Study

Mohammad Fahmi Abdul Hamid^{1*}, Khairul Azhar Meerangani², Siti Nurul Izza Hashim³, Muhammad Iskandar Shah Ab Ahmid⁴, H. Abdul Sattar⁵

^{1,2,3}Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, University Technology MARA Cawangan Melaka, Malaysia

⁴Post Graduate Student Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, University Technology MARA Cawangan Melaka, Alor Gajah, Melaka, Malaysia

⁵State Islamic University Walisongo Semarang, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRIS.2025.90700078>

Received: 26 June 2025; Accepted: 30 June 2025; Published: 30 July 2025

ABSTRACT

Tasawuf plays a crucial role in enhancing spirituality and shaping human character based on pure Islamic values. In Malaysia, particularly in Melaka, tarekat tasawuf institutions serve as primary platforms for practicing tasawuf based on the principles of Ahli Sunnah Wal Jama'ah. The Garis Panduan Tarekat Tasawuf Melaka 2016 (GPTTM 2016) was introduced to ensure the authentic and systematic practice of tasawuf. However, contemporary developments and challenges necessitate improvements to maintain the relevance and effectiveness of these guidelines. This study proposes the Garis Panduan Tarekat Tasawuf Melaka 2025 (GPTTM 2025), a more comprehensive framework aligned with current needs. The article suggests key elements that should be incorporated into the new guidelines, including clearer regulations for tarekat practices, official registration and certification, and stricter requirements for guru mursyid (syekh), such as the need for teaching credentials or certification (ijazah or tauliah). Additionally, the guidelines emphasize ethical relationships between mursyid and murid, monitoring of guru mursyid practices, and proper use of titles within tarekat circles. GPTTM 2025 also highlights education and training for tarekat practitioners, character assessment of students (murid), and social welfare within the tarekat community. It strengthens oversight of tarekat institutions, majlis zikir (zikr assemblies), and mechanisms for handling complaints and deviations. Moreover, the framework addresses the integration of technology in tarekat practices, monitoring digital dissemination of tarekat teachings, and ensuring transparency in waqf (endowment) fund management. These proposed improvements aim to reinforce the role of tarekat tasawuf institutions in Melaka, ensuring authentic, moderate, and contextually relevant tasawuf practices.

Keywords: Tarekat, Tasawuf, Ahli Sunnah Wal Jama'ah, Institutional Reform, Governance

INTRODUCTION

Tariqah Tasawuf have long served as a foundational pathway for addressing crises of identity throughout the ages. The discipline of Sufi orders represents one of the key mechanisms for purifying moral character and cultivating a strong sense of self within the Muslim community (Zakaria Stapa, 2012), a tradition that has been widely practiced in Islamic societies (Wan Suhaimi, 1999), particularly during the Islamic renaissance. The teachings of the Sufi path were systematized as early as the third century Hijrah with the primary aim of nurturing *taqwā* (God-consciousness) in human beings although in essence, this tradition has existed since the early days of Islam as a means of deeply internalizing the religion's teachings. Zulkifli Mohammad al-Bakri (2011) further elaborates that the discipline of *tariqah* plays a significant role in shaping a resilient and productive Muslim identity, grounded firmly in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Therefore, a structured and systematic practice of the Sufi

path may serve as an antidote to the spiritual maladies increasingly afflicting segments of contemporary society. Nevertheless, the foundation and practice of this discipline must be aligned with clear guidelines to ensure it does not deviate from its intended objectives.

The situation of *Tariqah Tasawuf* in Melaka, much like in other parts of Malaysia, reflects a rich and longstanding tradition in the spiritual development of the local Muslim community. Melaka was a major trade and Islamic center during the Melaka Sultanate. As such, Sufi orders as a branch of Islamic knowledge thrived through the networks of scholars and merchants who introduced Sufi teachings from various parts of the wider Islamic world. The development of *Tariqah Tasawuf* in Melaka began with the advent of Islam in the region, particularly flourishing during the golden age of the Sultanate. Scholars from India, the Arab world, and the Malay Archipelago played a pivotal role in disseminating Sufi teachings as part of broader dakwah efforts. During that period, orders such as the Qadiriyyah and Naqshbandiyyah were instrumental in guiding society on matters of spirituality and ethics. While early Sufi practices were more inclusive and organic in nature, they later evolved into more structured systems in parallel with global developments in Sufi institutions. Melaka also emerged as a center of learning for students seeking to deepen their understanding of *Tariqah Tasawuf*, which, at the time, remained rooted in strong oral traditions and daily spiritual practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Tarekat Tasawuf

Tariqah Tasawuf is one of the key disciplines within Islamic knowledge. Although the terms *tariqah* and *tasawuf* are often used interchangeably, they refer to distinct yet closely related concepts. Historically, the term *tasawuf* did not exist during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), his Companions, or the Tabi'in (Successors). Scholars such as Abdul Karim al-Qushayri (1921) assert that the term emerged in the 2nd century Hijrah, while others suggest its appearance in the 3rd century Hijrah (Mohd Faizal Harun, 2015). Nevertheless, the essence of this discipline existed during the Prophet's time, albeit unnamed and not discussed in detail as it is today (al-Taftazani, 1996).

The etymology of the word *tasawuf* has been the subject of various scholarly interpretations. Two major sources are often debated: one attributes it to the Greek word *sophia* (wisdom), while the other links it to Arabic roots such as *al-Suffah*, *al-Safa*, *al-Sifah*, *al-Saff*, *al-Sufanah*, *Sufah al-Qafa*, and most prominently *al-Suf*, which refers to the wool garments traditionally worn by ascetics (Puteh Ishak, 1993). Linguistically, *al-Suf* is considered the most appropriate derivation in Arabic, with the word *Sufi* naturally stemming from it (Muhammad Mustafa, 1996).

Tasawuf is seen as a personal duty in religion and involves understanding *ihsan*, which is explained in the well-known hadith of Jibril: "That you worship Allah as if you can see Him, and if you can't see Him, then know that He sees you" (Arief Salleh Rosman et al., 2021). It also includes improving one's character and spirituality, guiding people to behave with respect toward Allah, other people, and nature. *fardu 'ain* It also encompasses the ethical and spiritual refinement of the individual, teaching one to live with *adab* (etiquette) toward Allah, fellow humans, and the environment. Scholars of *tasawuf* often include this practice as part of the three main parts of religion mentioned in Jibril's hadith Iman (faith, connected to Tawhid), Islam (actions, connected to Fiqh), and Ihsan (spirituality, connected to *Tasawuf*). The holistic practice of these three dimensions leads one to *ma'rifatullah* true recognition of Allah often facilitated through the *tarekat*. Many verses in the Qur'an promote the idea of becoming spiritually pure (like in al-Shams: 9), emphasize the importance of the Hereafter (as seen in al-An'am: 32), and outline the qualities of the *muttaqun* (those who are aware of God) (found in al-Ahzab: 35), which are all key ideas in *tasawuf* (Yasir Nasution, 2007; Muhammad Hafiun, 2012; Hasan al-Syarqawi, 2003). *Practicing all three aspects.*

With regard to the origins of *tasawuf*, two perspectives dominate scholarly discourse. The first holds that *tasawuf* originated in Islam itself, grounded in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Numerous Qur'anic verses encourage spiritual purification (al-Shams: 9), highlight the superiority of the Hereafter (al-An'am: 32), and describe the traits of the *muttaqun* (the God-conscious) (al-Ahzab: 35), all of which form the foundational principles of *tasawuf* (Yasir Nasution, 2007; Muhammad Hafiun, 2012; Hasan al-Syarqawi, 2003).

The second view, often held by Orientalist scholars such as Ignaz Goldziher and Reynold Nicholson, argues that *tasawuf* has external origins, influenced by other religious traditions. Goldziher claimed that the Sufi ideals found in the Qur'an were syncretized from other beliefs (Harun Nasution, 2008), while Nicholson pointed to ascetic practices such as wearing wool garments as deriving from Christian tradition (al-Taftazani, 1996). Some also attribute *tasawuf* to Hindu, Buddhist, or Persian influences. However, such claims are disputed as Hinduism and Buddhism were not widespread in the Arabian Peninsula, and Persian society itself was largely influenced by Arab culture (Muhammad Hafiun, 2012).

In terms of categorization, *tasawuf* is commonly divided into three branches: ethical (*akhlāqī*), philosophical (*falsafī*), and practical (*'amālī*) *tasawuf*. While they differ in emphasis, these strands are not mutually exclusive and instead interact dynamically in addressing theological and spiritual challenges (H. Syamsul & Ahmad Saifudin, 2019). Ethical *tasawuf* focuses on refining human character to attain inner purity and ultimate spiritual contentment. Philosophical *tasawuf*, meanwhile, explores the convergence of intuitive and rational spiritual knowledge. Although it borrows philosophical language, its essence remains rooted in *dhawq* (spiritual taste or experiential insight), not rational deduction (Amin Syukur & Masyharudin, 2002). Practical *tasawuf* involves tangible spiritual disciplines aimed at drawing closer to Allah. This includes structured spiritual exercises that mark the journey of *salikīn* (spiritual wayfarers), often formalized within the framework of *tarekat* (Amin Syukur & Masyharudin, 2002). A *tarekat* is thus a designated spiritual path taken by individuals seeking nearness to Allah through progressive spiritual stages (*maqāmāt*) and tests.

A more detailed explanation of *tariqah* is offered by Shaykh Najm al-Din, who describes it as the embodiment of *taqwā* (God-consciousness) through spiritual exertion and progression through stations (*maqāmāt*). He further delineates the relationship between *sharī'ah*, *tarekat*, and *haqīqah*: *sharī'ah* represents servitude to Allah, *tariqah* entails conscious awareness of Allah within the heart, and *haqīqah* signifies witnessing Allah with the inner eye. Mawlana Zakariyya al-Kandahlawi (1970) asserts that *tarekat* and *tasawuf* are fundamentally synonymous. He asserts that *tarekat* is simply another name for *ihsan*, as mentioned in the hadith of Jibril, or, more precisely, that it is the method through which one actualizes *ihsan*. According to this view, the science of *tariqah* is none other than the science of *tasawuf* itself. The literature on *tarekat tasawuf* reflects a long-standing spiritual tradition rooted in the classical Islamic legacy and adapted in the Malay world. Several scholars have emphasized its significance in purifying the soul and cultivating ethical character (Zakaria Stapa, 2012; Zulkifli al-Bakri, 2011). However, a major gap in literature exists concerning contemporary institutional reform and governance frameworks for *tarekat tasawuf*, particularly in the context of Melaka. This study contributes to bridging this gap by exploring the transformation of guidelines through the proposal of the *Garis Panduan Tarekat Tasawuf Melaka 2025* (GPTTM 2025), grounded in both historical developments and current administrative needs

Distribution of Tariqah Tasawuf in Melaka

The distribution of Tariqah Tasawuf centers in Melaka is generally underdocumented in formal literature; however, several locations have been identified as hubs of Sufi activities and tarekat practices. These activities are often conducted within historical mosques, traditional pondok learning centers, and closed communities led by tarekat teachers (*mashayikh*). Firstly, Melaka's historical mosques play a vital role in the dissemination of Sufi teachings. Notable examples include Masjid Kampung Hulu and Masjid al-Abrar, both of which are known venues for spiritual gatherings and devotional practices such as *majlis houl* (commemorative *dhikr* assemblies) (MAIM, 2023). These mosques possess deep-rooted historical ties to the development of Islam in Melaka and continue to preserve the traditions of Sufi-based teaching. The influence of the Tarekat Ahmad ibn Idris is particularly evident in several districts in Melaka, marked by variations in spiritual lineage (*silsilah*) and practical implementation. This order was introduced to Sungai Udang, Melaka, by Tuan Guru Haji Wahid bin Othman (1909–1990), who studied under Haji Wan Musa (1874–1939) of Kelantan a direct inheritor of the Tarekat Ahmad ibn Idris through his father, the esteemed Sufi scholar Tuan Tabal. Through this connection, Haji Abdul Wahid adopted and subsequently propagated the order in Melaka. The teachings of Tarekat Ahmad ibn Idris can also be found in Ayer Limau and Kampung Lapan, which are parts of the Tarekat Ahmadiyyah al-Rashidiyyah al-Dandarawiyyah led by Shaykh Dato' Murtadza bin Haji Ahmad from Seremban (Murtadza, 2015).

Additionally, another group called Ahmadiyyah Idrisiyyah is led by Shaykh Haji Muhsin bin Abdul Rashid in

Masjid Tanah. In addition, another branch, Ahmadiyyah Idrisiyyah, is practiced under the leadership of Shaykh Haji Muhsin bin Abdul Rashid in Masjid Tanah. The presence of these branches in multiple locations indicates a clear influence from Negeri Sembilan. Tarekat Ahmad ibn Idris is also practiced at Darul Ansar Medical Center in Pulau Gadong, Melaka, under the name Tarekat al-Muhammadiyyah al-Ahmadiyyah al-Shadhiliyyah (Faudzinain Badaruddin et al., 2021). In contemporary times, tarekat tasawuf in Melaka continues to be practiced, particularly among individuals with a strong inclination toward spirituality. However, its presence is not as active or widespread as in the past. Institutions such as the Tarekat Naqshbandiyyah, Tarekat Qadiriyyah, and Tarekat Ahmadiyyah Rasyidiyyah in Paya Rumpit, Kampung Air Limau, and Kampung Lapan remain active. Likewise, the Tarekat Naqshbandiyyah Khalidiyyah in Serkam, Tarekat Naqshbandiyyah Khawajakaniah in Kuala Sungai Baru, Tarekat Qadiriyyah wa Naqshbandiyyah in Kampung Sungai Petai, Tarekat Alawiyyah in Kampung Tambak Bugis, and Tarekat Sanusiyyah at Darul Muhibbin continue to play a role in nurturing taqwā (piety) and spiritual consciousness among Muslims. Nevertheless, the practice of tasawuf in Melaka currently faces challenges in ensuring its relevance and alignment with the spiritual needs and realities of modern society.

Issues and Challenges in Tarekat Institutions

This discussion focuses on the issue of the misuse of the tariqah tasawuf in Melaka, particularly in reference to deviant teachings that have been declared heretical through official fatwas issued between 1986 and 2024. Within this period, a total of 15 prohibition fatwas were released against teachings that claimed to follow the Sufi approach but in reality contained elements that deviated from the principles of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah and contradicted Islamic sharī'ah. This scenario raises several critical concerns that warrant closer examination in this study, including the underlying reasons behind the public's acceptance of such deviant teachings, the effectiveness of current guidelines, the challenges posed by the digital era, and the impact on the creed ('aqīdah) and spiritual well-being of the Muslim community.

The Use of Tasawuf as a Legitimising Tool for Deviant Teachings

Since 1986, there have been fatwas issued prohibiting teachings such as the Tariqat Naqshabandiah Kadirun Yahya, due to the incorporation of distorted elements of tasawuf. Although such movements claim to be rooted in Sufism, their practices involve rituals and beliefs that are fundamentally incompatible with Islamic creed ('aqīdah) and sharī'ah. The use of the term tasawuf to legitimise deviant teachings illustrates how easily segments of the public can be influenced by practices falsely attributed to authentic Sufi traditions. This misuse reflects a significant gap in public awareness regarding the genuine principles of tasawuf and highlights the urgent need to investigate the factors contributing to societal acceptance of such heretical movements.

Doctrinal Deviation through the Manipulation of Wahdatul Wujud and Mysticism

The deviant teachings of Kebatinan Budi Suci (2007), which were officially declared heretical, illustrate how the concept of Wahdatul Wujud (Unity of Existence) has been manipulated in ways that violate the core tenets of Islamic creed ('aqīdah). This concept was blended with mystical elements such as the doctrines of Nur Muhammad and Nur Allah, creating confusion among segments of society unfamiliar with the distinctions between authentic Sufism and distorted interpretations of tawḥīd. The misrepresentation of such metaphysical concepts poses a significant challenge to the preservation of sound Islamic belief. Accordingly, this study seeks to examine how mystical elements are exploited to distort the proper understanding of 'aqīdah, especially in contexts where public religious literacy is limited.

Deviations in Dhikr Practices and Unauthenticated Rituals

In 2021, the teachings of Ilmu Syahadah and Zikir Nafas propagated by Ismail bin Kassim were officially banned due to their incorporation of dhikr practices that conflicted with the Sunnah. The modification of dhikr through mystical reinterpretations illustrates the manipulation of this core Sufi practice for deviant purposes. Such distortions reflect a concerning trend where the spiritual discipline of tasawuf is exploited under the guise of esoteric knowledge, leading to practices that lack basis in prophetic tradition and potentially mislead followers from authentic Islamic teachings.

Deviation through Mysticism and Superstition at Specific Sites

In 2015, the practice of khurafat (superstitious rituals) on Pulau Besar, Melaka, was officially declared heretical due to elements of veneration and ritual acts performed at so-called sacred sites. Practices such as seeking blessings at specific graves or ritual bathing at designated spots to ward off misfortune are among the mystical acts that have been falsely associated with tasawuf. This reflects a significant challenge in distinguishing between authentic Sufi practices and deviant superstitious rituals that compromise Islamic creed ('aqidah), particularly at locations imbued with historical or mystical significance. The blurred lines between heritage, myth, and spirituality further complicate efforts to uphold pure tasawuf in public understanding and religious practice.

Fatwa of the Concept of Ma'rifah that Undermines the Principles of Tawhīd

The 2023 fatwa against the teachings of Ilmu Makrifat by Dr. Wan Maseri and Haji Shaari bin Mohd Yusof points out how the idea of ma'rifah (gnosis) in tasawuf has been misrepresented. Their doctrine claimed that followers could achieve a form of "union" with God through inner consciousness an idea that violates the core principles of tawhīd and deviates from orthodox Islamic creed ('aqidah). Such misinterpretations of ma'rifah significantly mislead segments of the public, particularly those lacking proper understanding of its true meaning and position within authentic Sufi teachings. Such confusion reflects a critical area of concern in protecting the sanctity of Islamic theology from metaphysical ambiguities disguised as spiritual enlightenment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative approach, focusing primarily on document and content analysis as its main methods for data collection and analysis. This approach is deemed appropriate for gaining a more profound understanding of social and religious realities, particularly in relation to the institution of *Tariqah Tasawuf* in Melaka, the issue of doctrinal deviation, and the need for reform in existing regulatory frameworks. Information was collected by looking at different main and secondary documents, such as official fatwas from the state of Melaka, reports from religious institutions, old and modern texts on tasawwuf, academic journals, theses, and policy papers about Sufi practices. The analysis looked at the texts and documents by using both storytelling and detailed examination methods (Sugiyono, 2009), focusing on what they say, their background, and what they mean for today's *Tariqah Tasawuf* institutions. Additionally, the study used a careful and unbiased review of chosen documents to find patterns, themes, and important aspects in both the practices and differences of *Tariqah Tasawuf* (Ahmad Munawar Ismail & Mohd Nor Shahizan Ali, 2020). An inductive approach was used to uncover real-life situations and the social and religious effects from the case studies looked at, while a deductive approach was used to create suggestions for improvement, based on an assessment of the basic principles and current guidelines of the Garis Panduan Tarekat Tasawuf Melaka 2016. An inductive approach was used to uncover empirical realities and the socio-religious implications emerging from the case studies examined, while a deductive approach was employed to formulate recommendations for reform based on an evaluation of the fundamental principles and existing framework of the Garis Panduan Tarekat Tasawuf Melaka 2016. This dual analytical approach enables the study to connect the core institutional challenges faced by *Tariqah Tasawuf* with the development of a new, more practical and contextually relevant framework, Garis Panduan Tarekat Tasawuf Melaka 2025 (GPTTM 2025).

PROPOSED ENHANCEMENTS TO THE GARIS PANDUAN TAREKAT TASAWUF MELAKA 2016

Jabatan Mufti Negeri Melaka introduced the Garis Panduan Tarekat Tasawuf in 2016 to regulate tarekat practices in alignment with the principles of Islamic shari'ah. The proposal of *Garis Panduan Tarekat Tasawuf Melaka 2025* (GPTTM 2025) stems from the initiative by the *Jabatan Mufti Negeri Melaka* in response to increasing challenges posed by deviant Sufi teachings and unregulated spiritual practices. The idea was formally conceptualized during a series of internal deliberations in early 2024 and was endorsed as a necessary revision to the earlier 2016 guidelines. This initiative involved collaborations with academic institutions, religious councils, and selected *tariqat* representatives across Melaka. The drafting process was officially launched in Melaka in May 2024, with the aim of implementing the framework by 2025.

However, the continued emergence of deviant teachings indicates the need to reassess the effectiveness of these existing guidelines. This study proposes improvements to the current framework to strengthen the monitoring of tarekat teachings, including stricter verification of murshid (spiritual guide) credentials and a more systematic oversight mechanism. To implement the principle of Saddu al-Dharā'i' (blocking the means to harm), this study recommends the development of a more comprehensive framework known as Garis Panduan Tarekat Tasawuf Melaka 2025 (GPTTM 2025). The proposed GPTTM 2025 aims to establish stricter and more practical regulatory and monitoring procedures to ensure that every tariqah tasawuf operating in Melaka is effectively supervised. The use of Saddu al-Dharā'i' makes sure that only genuine and true tasawuf practices are supported, helping to protect the community from harmful teachings before they can spread widely. By embedding the Saddu al-Dharā'i' principle into GPTTM 2025, religious authorities will be equipped with a clear operational framework to regulate activities, authenticate spiritual guides (murshid), and uphold the integrity of approved tarekat practices. This study hopes to contribute meaningfully to the refinement of existing guidelines while also proposing practical measures to enhance public understanding of genuine tasawuf. Ultimately, such improvements will help the Muslim community distinguish between authentic Sufi teachings and distorted ideologies, protect them from threats to their 'aqidah, and ensure that tasawuf is practiced in accordance with the true tenets of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah.

Key Elements of the Garis Panduan Tarekat Tasawuf Melaka 2016

In 2016, the Jabatan Mufti Negeri Melaka introduced the *Garis Panduan Tarekat Tasawuf Melaka 2016* to ensure that *tariqah tasawuf* practices align with authentic Islamic teachings. These guidelines outlined several core elements to maintain the integrity of Sufi practices within the framework of *sharī'ah*. The key elements are as follows:

1. General Characteristics of Recognized Sufi Practices

This section outlines that accepted *tariqah tasawuf* practices must be grounded in sound knowledge of 'aqidah (Islamic creed), *sharī'ah* (Islamic law), and *akhlāq* (ethics). A Sufi teacher (*murshid*) must not consider themselves or their practices as superior to others. Acts of *dhikr* (remembrance of God) and *wird* (regular litanies) must be based on authentic sources, and all practices must follow the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions. Practitioners must uphold the lawful and unlawful (halal and haram); avoid reprehensible traits; and not alter or add to the *shahādah* (declaration of faith). They must consistently be under the guidance of a qualified *murshid* and must not abandon *sharī'ah* obligations, even at the highest levels of spiritual attainment (*maqām*).

2. Fundamental Principles in the Practice of Sufism

The principles of Sufi practice within the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* tradition emphasize the need to correct 'aqidah, *sharī'ah* observance, and purification of the heart. Recognized *tarekat* should be clearly identified, and guidance must be received from a qualified and reputable *shaykh*. Practitioners must consistently uphold the *sharī'ah* and should not rely solely on *ḥaqīqah* (inner reality) without grounding in *fiqh*. Arrogance (*ujub*) and pride must be avoided, and reliance on mystical disclosures (*kashf*) must not override the Qur'an and Sunnah. The ultimate aim is nearness to Allah through sincere obedience, worship, and knowledge (*ma'rifah*), not the pursuit of miracles or outward displays of sainthood (*karāmah*).

3. Essential Criteria for a Sufi Guide (*Murshid*)

To lead others on the spiritual path, a *murshid* must fulfill several key criteria: profound knowledge of the Qur'an, Sunnah, and *fiqh*; personal spiritual attainment and a valid spiritual lineage (*silsilah*); and embodiment of *zuhd* (asceticism), justice, and piety. A *murshid* should possess leadership qualities, noble character, and the ability to resolve the spiritual concerns of disciples. The guide must actively promote virtue and forbid wrongdoing and have a strong history of association with other recognized spiritual leaders over an extended period.

4. Proper Conduct by a Sufi Guide (*Murshid*)

A *murshid* must not promote themselves to attract followers, nor should they prevent disciples from seeking knowledge elsewhere. They should regularly dedicate time for spiritual retreat (*khalwah*), demonstrate gentleness, protect the dignity of disciples, and avoid exploiting followers for material gain. When a disciple shares mystical experiences, the *murshid* should provide additional guidance to strengthen their spiritual discipline without glorifying them. This procedure ensures the relationship between guide and disciple remains rooted in sincerity and ethical conduct.

5. Conditions for Disciples in Sufi Practice

Disciples must meet several key conditions. They must approach the path with sincerity, purify themselves of blameworthy traits such as arrogance and envy, and repent from sins. Disciples must receive formal *ijāzah* (authorization), obey both Allah and the *murshid*, and be diligent in their remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*) and acts of worship. They must pursue continuous learning, remain within the bounds of *sharī'ah*, and uphold patience and proper etiquette. Disciples must also ensure that worldly distractions do not compromise their spiritual journey.

6. Etiquette of Disciples Towards Their *Murshid*

Disciples must show complete trust in and obedience to their *murshid*, as long as the instructions do not conflict with Islamic law. They should surrender themselves sincerely and avoid making personal decisions without consulting the *murshid*. Speaking harshly or impatiently to the *murshid* is prohibited. Disciples must wait for their turn to meet the *murshid*, not ask for more than what is given, and refer mystical experiences to the *murshid* for interpretation. Frequent attendance at spiritual gatherings and visits to the *murshid* are essential to maintain a strong spiritual bond.

7. Indicators of Deviation in Tariqah Tasawuf

Deviations in Sufi orders in Malaysia include oaths or pacts between disciples and guides that contradict Islamic teachings, *mubāya'ah* (pledging allegiance) to individuals outside of *sharī'ah* compliance, and practices that contradict Islamic jurisprudence. Other concerning beliefs include the idea that only a *murshid* can act as a go-between to Allah, personal interpretations of the Qur'an, too much reliance on the idea of *rābiṭah* (spiritual connection), and claims that a specific tarekat can postpone the Day of Judgment or ensure help in the afterlife.

Proposed Improvement of the Melaka Sufi Order Guidelines 2016

The *Garis Panduan Tarekat Tasawuf Melaka*, created in 2016, was designed to make sure that the practice of *tariqah tasawuf* stays true to *Ahli Sunnah Wal Jama'ah* and follows real Islamic *shariah* and *aqidah* principles. According to the 2016 guideline issued by the Jabatan Mufti Kerajaan Negeri Melaka, several important elements were comprehensively addressed. The guideline mainly explained what *tariqah tasawuf* means and laid out the basic rules, requirements, and proper behavior (*adab*) needed for practicing Sufism.

However, one major shortcoming lies in the absence of operational procedures. Operational procedures refer to practical and technical steps that must be followed to implement a task or achieve a goal in a systematic and organized manner. Therefore, we deem it necessary to enhance the 2016 Guidelines. The upcoming *Garis Panduan Tarekat Tasawuf Melaka 2025* (GPTTM 2025) acts as a monitoring and control instrument to prevent any deviation or misappropriation that may arise from tarekat practices. Its objective remains aligned with the 2016 guidelines to ensure that Sufi practices are performed correctly, without neglecting the requirements of *shariah* and authentic *aqidah*.

Both documents stress the importance of safeguarding tarekat from being misused or misinterpreted in a way that could lead to theological deviation or religious innovation (*bid'ah*). The core principle upheld is that tarekat practices must be strictly regulated to preserve the sanctity of Islamic teachings. Below is a summary comparison

between the existing elements of the 2016 Guidelines and the proposed enhancements under the 2025 revision.

NO	Garis Panduan Tarekat Tasawuf Melaka 2016 (GPTTM, 2016)	Proposed Improvement Garis Panduan Tarekat Tasawuf Melaka 2025 (GPTTM 2025)
1	General Characteristics of Recognised Sufi Practices Fundamental Principles in the Practice of Tariqa Tasawuf	Operationalization of Tarekat Based on the Principles of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah Registration and Verification of Tariqa Tasawuf Centers
2	Basic Conditions for a Tarekat Sheikh (Murshid) Etiquette of the Sheikh (Murshid)	Conditions and Recognition of Murshid (Sheikhs) Monitoring and Validation of Murshid Criteria for Teaching Ijazah or Official Recognition for Murshid Ethical Guidelines for Sheikh–Disciple Relationships Monitoring of Murshid Practices Regulations on the Use of Honorific Titles
3	Conditions for Disciples in Sufi Practice Etiquette of Disciples Towards the Sheikh	Education and Training for Sufi Practitioners Ethics of the Disciple–Sheikh Relationship Monitoring the Practices and Conduct of Sufi Disciples Protection Measures for Disciples Social Welfare within the Tariqa Tasawuf
4	Elements of Deviation in Tariqa Tasawuf	Institutional Control and Monitoring of Tariqa Tasawuf Oversight of Dhikr Assemblies Complaint Handling and Resolution of Deviations Criteria for the Dissolution or Suspension of Tariqa Tasawuf Management of Innovation and Technology in Sufi Practices Control over Writings and Dissemination of Sufi Practices in Digital Media Management of Sufi Endowment (Waqf) Funds Monitoring of Extremist Practices Enforcement and Implementation of Order Dissolution

Implementation Strategy and Acceptance of GPTTM 2025

To ensure the effectiveness and broader acceptance of the *Garis Panduan Tarekat Tasawuf Melaka 2025 (GPTTM 2025)*, a strategic and contextual implementation approach is proposed. The success of the guideline does not rest solely on its policy content, but rather on a multidimensional strategy that considers the lived realities of the institutions, diversity of Sufi practices, and the readiness of tarekat communities.

1. Stakeholder Engagement

A structured engagement process involving key stakeholders such as *guru mursyid* (spiritual guides), tarekat disciples, state religious authorities, and academic experts should be integrated during the development and

implementation phases. This inclusive approach aims to ensure that the guideline reflects the contextual realities of Melaka's Sufi landscape and avoids a rigid, top-down model. Such consultations also foster legitimacy and encourage broader community acceptance.

2. Phased Implementation

A gradual and phased rollout is crucial to minimise resistance and allow time for adaptation. The first phase may involve pilot programmes in selected tarekat institutions, followed by a period of assessment and refinement based on feedback. The final phase would include statewide implementation, tailored to insights gained from earlier stages. This ensures a responsible, adaptive process that aligns with institutional capacity and cultural sensitivity.

3. Institutional Capacity Building

To strengthen the readiness and compliance of tarekat institutions, capacity-building initiatives such as workshops, seminars, and certification courses for Sufi leaders and administrators are proposed. These programmes may include modules on institutional governance, ethical compliance, shariah literacy, and risk management. Enhancing institutional professionalism is essential to ensuring the effective and sustainable application of the guideline.

4. Digital Integration and Literacy

In line with digital transformation, incorporating technological solutions into tarekat governance (e.g., digital documentation, communication systems) can enhance overall efficiency. However, such integration must be supported by digital literacy training, especially for rural communities. It is essential that digital platforms remain user-friendly and accessible to avoid excluding key segments of the Sufi population.

5. Monitoring and Feedback Mechanisms

To ensure GPTTM 2025 remains dynamic and responsive, a continuous monitoring system should be established. This may include the formation of a state-level monitoring committee, periodic institutional reporting, and community feedback channels. These mechanisms will help assess compliance, identify on-the-ground challenges, and support ongoing refinement of the guideline in response to emerging needs and realities.

The proposed strategies serve not only as a practical response to stakeholder concerns but also as a roadmap for strengthening institutional alignment and public trust. With these approaches in place, GPTTM 2025 is envisioned not merely as a regulatory document, but as a transformative framework for the sustainable development of tarekat institutions in Melaka.

CONCLUSION

The institution of tariqa tasawuf in Melaka plays a vital role in shaping the spiritual identity of the Muslim community, grounded in the principles of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah. However, current realities reveal that numerous challenges remain, such as the distortion of tasawwuf concepts, abuse of authority by murshid leaders, and the spread of deviant teachings under the guise of Sufism. This highlights that while the Garis Panduan Tarekat Tasawuf Melaka 2016 provides a strong foundation, it remains inadequate in addressing present-day threats, especially within the context of the digital era and the complexities of modern society. The proposed Garis Panduan Tarekat Tasawuf Melaka 2025 (GPTTM 2025) offers a more holistic and operational framework. The focus is on officially recognizing murshid teachers with a formal tauliah or ijazah system, keeping track of dhikr gatherings, maintaining ethics in the murshid–murid relationship, using technology to share teachings, and being open about how waqf funds are managed. This method uses the principle of Saddu Zara'i (blocking harmful actions) to carefully prevent mistakes and make sure that the practice of tasawwuf stays true to genuine shariah and aqidah. It is hoped that this proposal will further strengthen the institution of tariqa tasawuf in Melaka so that they remain relevant, resilient, and capable of guiding society toward an authentic and contextually grounded spiritual path. Therefore, a concerted effort between religious authorities, academic institutions, and

tarekat communities is essential to ensure that GPTTM 2025 becomes a genuine empowerment instrument rather than just a guiding document. Strengthening the institution of tarekat is not only a religious imperative but also a strategic necessity in confronting the spiritual challenges of the present and the future.

REFERENCES

1. Abdul Karim al-Qusyairi. (1921). *al-Risalah al-Qusyairiyah*. Kaherah: tp.
2. Ahmad Munawar Ismail & Mohd Nor Shahizan Ali. (2020). *Mengenali Kuantitatif & Kualitatif dalam Penyelidikan Pengajian Islam*. Bangi, Selangor: Fakulti Pengajian Islam, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.
3. Al-Jurjani, al-Sayyid `Ali ibn Muhammad. 1938. *Al-Ta`rifat*. Qahirah: Maktabah wa Matba`ah Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi wa Awladihi.
4. Al-Kandahlawi, Z. (1970). *Al-Syariah wa al-Tariqah*. Kaherah: Dar al-Rashid.
5. Al-Taftazani, Abu al-Wafa' al-Ghanimi. (1996). *Perkembangan Tasawuf Islam*. Kuala Lumpur: Bahagian Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Jabatan Perdana Menteri.
6. Arief SALLEH Rosman, Mohd Syukri Yeoh Abdullah dan Md Zuraini Mashrom. (2021). *Disiplin Ilmu Tarekat Rohani Berasaskan Manhaj Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah*. Johor Baharu: Jabatan Mufti Johor.
7. Bakri, S., & Saifuddin, A. (2019). *Sufi healing: Integrasi tasawuf dan psychology dalam penyembuhan psikis dan physic* (Ed. 1). Depok: Rajawali Pers.
8. Faudzinaim Badaruddin, Mohd Khaidir Ahmad, & Ahmad Faisal Abdul Hamid. (2021). Tarekat Ahmad B. Idris Al-Fasi dan pengaruhnya di Malaysia. *Academica*, 91(1), 155–166.
9. Hafium, M. (2012). Teori Asal Usul Tasawuf. *Jurnal Dakwah*, 13(2), 241–253.
10. Hasan as-Syarqawi. (1987). *Mu'jam al-Fadhil al-Sufiyah*. Kaherah: Muassasah Mukhtar.
11. Ishak, Puteh. 1993. *Ibn Taymiyyah, Sejarah Hidup dan Tasawuf*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia.
12. Jabatan Mufti Negeri Melaka (2016). *Garis Panduan Tarekat Tasawuf Negeri Melaka*.
13. Jabatan Mufti Negeri Melaka (2025) Retrieved September 6, 2024, from <https://muftimelaka.gov.my/fatwa-buhuth/aqidah/>
14. Majlis Agama Islam Melaka. (n.d.). Houl Melaka [Video]. Facebook. Retrieved September 6, 2024, from <https://www.facebook.com/maimmelaka/videos/houl-melaka/283901790845366/>
15. Masjid Al-Abrar Semabok. (n.d.). Masjid Al-Abrar Semabok. Facebook. Retrieved September 6, 2024, from https://www.facebook.com/MasjidAlAbrarSemabok/?locale=ms_MY
16. Mawlana Zakaria al-Kandahlawi. (1970). *Al-Syariah wa al-Tariqah*. Kaherah: Dar al-Rashid.
17. Mohd Faizal Harun (2015) *Tasawuf dan tarekat sejarah perkembangan dan alirannya di Malaysia*. UUM Press, Sintok.
18. Sugiyono. (2009). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta Arikunto.
19. Syukur, M. A., & Masyharudin. (2002). *Intelektualisme tasawuf*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
20. Wan Suhaimi Wan Abdullah, "Konsep Maqamat dan Ahwal Sufi: Suatu Penilaian," *Journal Usuluddin*, vol. 10 (1999), 52.
21. Yasir Nasution. (2007). *Cakrawala Tasawuf*. Jakarta: Putra Grafika.
22. Zakaria Stapa. (2012). *Pendekatan Tasawuf dan Tarekat: Wadah Pemeraksanaan Jati Diri Ummah*. Bangi: Penerbit University Kebangsaan Malaysia.
23. Zulkifli Mohammad al-Bakri. (2011). "Kedudukan dan Peranan Tasawuf Dalam Pembinaan Ummah". *Prosiding Diskusi Tarekat Tasawuf Negeri Sembilan 2011*, Jabatan Mufti Kerajaan Negeri Sembilan, 22-24 November 2011.