

FROM “SUFİ ORDER RITUAL” TO INDONESIAN ISLAM

Sulanam

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Indonesia—geographically stretches from Sabang to Merauke—has a quite old and rich religious tradition. Before the Hindu-Buddhist inheritance such as Borobudur temple which then became one of the Seven Wonders of the World, Indonesia has many other traditions. Those traditions are manifestation of people’s need in the form of local religion.

Furthermore, this local religion gives Javanese people a medium in attaining an impressive “divinity”. It is called impressive because without revelation, the society, for example in Java, is able to recognize God; they called it as *Sang Hyang Tunggal* or *Sang Hyang Wenang* (The One, The Ruler of the Universe). Therefore, the coming of Hinduism and Buddhism in Indonesia can be interpreted as a mere complement to a “divine sense” which had been found by the society called as the One or the Ruler of *jagad alit* (micro cosmos) and the large universe (macro cosmos). This condition naturally goes the same with the coming of Islam in the archipelago. It must be noted that with those backgrounds, Islam comes to Indonesia not as pure religion but a mix with the local religion.

This is the case and also the background, why Indonesian Islam, particularly in Java, is very different from Islam in the Middle East such as in Saudi Arabia or Egypt. Moreover, Islam in Indonesia did

not come directly from the Middle East but from Persia and India which are famous for their accommodation towards cultures. It is why; Muslims in Indonesia can easily bind with local culture. These adaptation and acculturation patterns can be seen in some of the preachers in Java who are called Wali Sanga (Nine Saints), one of them was Sunan Kalijaga, whose method in spreading Islam was different from other preachers.

Sunan Kalijaga, who is known by many people for having supernatural power, is also known for his tolerant approach toward his *dakwah* on people as well as promoting social values than individual ones. The Methods used by Sunan Kalijaga were interesting and attract more people than any other Wali Sanga. One of the methods can be seen in the use of Javanese Puppet (*Wayang Kulit*) which was an icon for Hindhu-Budhist tradition. In addition, Sunan Kalijaga were also very smart in composing lyrics, for instance the tradition song *Gundul Pacul* and *Lir ilir* which are sung by many people until now (Chodjim, 183-203).

Those facts naturally raise a question, why Sunan Kalijaga did not fight against those Hindu-Buddhist cultures. Instead of eliminating un-Islamic practices like other preachers did, Sunan Kalijaga was keen to preserve the local tradition while also on the other hand spreading Islam in Java. It looks like the method he was used based on his awareness that the people already have an embedded religious tradition.

Other than that, it is also a matter of fact that Javanese traditions have many rituals which resembled Islamic ones. It can be seen, for example, from the ascetic practices (*bertapa*) which are similar to *i'tikaf* where people seclude themselves in the mosque for worship and devotion. Furthermore, there is a concept in Javanese tradition which was called as *laku*, the practice is materialized in the form of discipline and religious performance in order to be close to God. Naturally, this concept shares the same ideas with Islam which is called as *tasawwuf* (Sufism). Both of them tend to make close relation to God with the intention to get His blessing and mercy.

It should be emphasize here, that the way to get God's blessing and mercy is certainly not simple and single. That is why in the development of Sufism and Mysticism there are always differences in the form of religious denomination. In Islam, Sufism has even become a specific study. The foundation of Sufism is specifically based on the

quality of religiosity. The focus is on achieving quality rather than religious formality. This doctrine is emphasized on special ritual and practice. Usually we can see it through *thiker* ritual under a guidance of a *murshid* or teacher. This particular ritual is adapted to achieving enlightenment and wisdom in a method that promotes totality and humbleness (*kebushū*). The latter practice, create an opportunity in the mystical dimension of Sufism.

This mystical practice is only a medium, because to understand something “beyond reality”, *noumena*, or something behind the phenomenon, needs a reduction process in order to find and achieve pure consciousness. Regarding this concept, there are at least three practices or rituals with the purpose of achieving the supra reality. They are Phenomenological Reduction (belief in the existence of what we call “real” or “not real”), Eidetic reduction (belief in acquiring quality for human) and transcendental reduction (belief in pure subject as the cause of the universe). Those three achievements are the ones aim to be found by people who practice mystical rituals, because the goals are invisible (Chodjim, 33-34).

Regardless the pros and cons on mystical problem, the development of mysticism in Indonesia is in conjunction with the birth of Islam, i.e. when the Prophet Muḥammad received the revelation. The history shows that when Muḥammad became a prophet he repeatedly secluded himself in a cave to make him close to God. This habit, as we know, is very much similar with *tapa* tradition among Javanese people to get sign or enlightenment.

In addition to that, the contemplation of the Prophet in the cave is a process of seclusion from people of Mecca who is lost in the worldly things. The principal aim of this isolation activity is a religious method to approach the transcendent God. In that way, it can be said that the meditation of the Prophet Muḥammad is a process to communicate with God, to get peace of mind and probity against the ignorance (*jābilīyah*) of the Arab World at that time.

The expert of Islamic mysticism said, the *kehalwah* or solitary retreat done by the Prophet is in the line with the ritual of Islamic mysticism. It is must be noted that what the prophet had done in the past is the embryo of Sufism which was then taught by `Alī bin Abī Tālib. From this point onward, Ali educated his family and friends until Abdul-Qadir Gilani who is known as the founder of Qadiriyyah Sufi order.

The Development of Sufi Order and the Islam of *Rahmatan lil Alamin*

After Sayyidina Ali, the Sufi order has developed into several branches or orders. However, there are at least six Sufi orders which have been developed in Indonesia. There are: Qadiriyyah, Shadhiliyyah, Naqshbandiyyah, Khalwatiyyah, Sammaniyah and Shatariyyah Sufi orders. The name of Qadiriyyah Sufi order was taken from its founder Abdul-Qadir Gilani, this Sufi order position is important especially in the history of Islamic mysticism. This condition happens not only because the Qadiriyyah is the first Sufi order in Islam but also because this order is the embryo for other Sufi orders.

Shadhiliyyah was founded by Abul Hasan Ali ash-Shadhili. This order mostly practiced in Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan, and Syria. Some of the teachings do not suggest its followers to leave the worldly business and to practice Islamic law. The definition of *zūbud* or ascetics in this order does not mean to entirely leave the worldly things because the origin of *zūbud* is to empty the heart except for God.

Other than Shadhiliyyah, we can also find some other Sufi orders in Indonesia such as Naqshbandiyyah. This order was founded by Muhammad Bah al-Din al-Uwaisi al-Bukhari Naqsyabandi. Basically, this order originated from Abu Ya'qub Yusuf al-Hamdani, a Sufi who lived in the same era with Abdul-Qadir Gilani. This order spread to some countries mostly in Central Asia, Turkey, India, the Middle East and Indonesia. This Sufi order has its own ritual, one of them is *hush dar dam* (awareness of breathing). This is a concentration practice where someone must keep him/herself from any mistake while breathing. So it is about inhaling and exhaling while at the same time doing remembrance of God. You can also find a ritual called *safar dar watan* (travelling in the homeland). It is a ritual where you have to have a spiritual travel, detached yourself from imperfectness and traveling from failure to praiseworthy qualities

Another Sufi order developed in Indonesia is the Khalwatiyyah. The name was taken from a Sufi follower from Makasar, Yusuf Abul Mahasin Tajul Khalwati al-Maqassariy. This order spread among Makasar people and some Bugis people. Some of its rituals are *Yaqza* (awakening), awareness that he/she is nothing upon God, *muḥāsabah* or self-introspection, *inābah*, the willing to return to God, and *tafakkur*, think deeply about God.

The next Sufi order is Sammaniyah. The founder was Muḥammad bin `Abd al-Karīm al-Madanī al-Shāfi`ī al-Sammān. According to Snouck Hurgronje, Sammaniyah Sufi order developed rapidly especially in Aceh as well as South Borneo. In the latter, this Sufi order exists until now. It has several rituals for instance particular *thiker* (saman) which has many mystical elements.

The last one is the Shatariyah. The founder was Syaikh Abd Allah al-Syathary. Some historians noted that this order firstly developed in Bagdad through Ahmad Syathary then was improved by Ahmad Qusyasyi. Some people relate this order to *Transoxiana* tradition, it is so because it has chained to Abu Yazid al-Isyqi, which then connect to Abu yazid al-Bustami and Imam Ja'far Shadiq. It is not surprising that this order is known as Isyqiyyah in Iran, or Turkey.

Around the fifth century, Shatariyah was very popular in Central Asia. The followers implement ascetic way of life. To do this, the followers must reach perfectness level which is called as *akhyar* (the chosen one) and *abrar* (the best one). This Sufi order was spread in Indonesia through Abdurrauf al-Sinkili in Aceh. From there it is expanded to Java through Banten then went to Central Java, East Java and Kuanyar where some of its rituals blend into daily live such as in farming activities (Syam, 72-117).

The concept of Sufism in Kuanyar is very interesting because in this place Sufism and worldly live is mixed together in people daily live. To become followers in a Sufi order do not mean their daily lives are limited in *thiker* and religious rituals. They still can work as other people do. In this place the working concept is the same as worshipping God. There is no boundary between following Sufi order with the obligation to provide food to the family. Importantly, religious rituals are not always related with some formalistic activities as usually we have seen in the mosque.

Thus, the teaching of Sufi order is merged with daily live. This condition naturally shows the level of religious maturity. This can be said as the melting point of taking care of the relationship between humans and God (*ḥabl min Allāh*) and taking care of the relationship between fellow humans (*ḥabl min al-nās*). By doing the Sufi order rituals people or followers are able to accommodate these two-dimensional relations (with God as well as with fellow humans), then they can achieve the intrinsic level of happiness. []