

The Teachings of Sufism in the *Suluk Pesisiran*

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Abstract: Islam developed in Java, since the beginning, Sufism-style Islam. The world of Sufism among them is expressed through literary works. In the history of Javanese literature, the problem of Sufism is expressed in the form of *suluk* literature. *Suluk* literature was pioneered by one of Walisanga's members, namely Sunan Bonang at the end of the 15th century. This article focuses on the study of Sufism in one of Javanese *suluk* literary works, *Suluk Pesisiran*. The purpose of writing is to analyze Sufism in *Suluk Pesisiran*. The method used for this study is hermeneutics. The results of this study are in the form of an analysis of the meaning of mysticism values in the *Suluk Pesisiran*. From the results of these studies, it can be concluded that *Suluk Pesisiran* does have a close relationship with the teachings of Sufism, especially the moral teachings taken from the mystical teachings of Islam.

1 INTRODUCTION

The presence of Islam in the archipelago --not only in Java-- has influenced various joints of life. Not spared from the influence of Islam, including in the field of literature. In the history of classical Javanese literature in the beginning, the understanding of Islam that grew and developed in Java, in general, was a mystical Islam. The impact of Javanese literature to Islam falls into its own category, in addition to literary chronicles, literary *piwulang* (teaching), and puppet (*wayang*) literature (Nugroho, 2008: 1-5). The Javanese literary gave influence to Islam, for example, *Serat Ambya*, *Serat Dewaruci*, *Serat Zulkarnain*, *Serat Yusuf*, *Serat Bonang*, *Suluk Wujil*, *Serat Centhini*, *Serat Asmarakandi*, *Suluk Saloka Jiwa*, *Suluk Suksma Lelana*, and many more.

As known, Islam that grew and developed in Java, in general, was a Sufism (mystic) patterned Islam. The mystical orientation of the Javanese community was also recognized by M.C. Ricklefs, an Australian historian who researched Islam on Java, from the very beginning (around the 1300s) to the present. In his book *Islamisation and Its Opponent in Java*, which was recently published in Singapore, Ricklefs said in

a literary tradition, there was a kind of view that Javanese society is a society that has a distinctive mystical style (Ricklefs, 2013: 22). Because of the tendency of the people believe of mysticism, the attendance of Sufism-style of Islam which initially as a place in society in Java, then the normative (puritan) Islam.

Not all classical Javanese literature of Islamic influence is classified as *suluk* literature. Only classical Javanese literature carrying the mission of Sufism is classified as *suluk* literature. However, there are into two types of literary works, namely *wirid* literature and *suluk* literature (Simuh, 1988: 2). *Wirid* literature is classical Javanese literature *tasawuf* (Sufism) in the form of prose (*gancaran*), such as *Wirid Hidayat Jati* by Ranggawarsita. Meanwhile, *suluk* literature is classical Javanese literature with poetry (*macapat*, *tembang*), such as *Suluk Syeh Malaya and Suluk Saloka Jiwa* (both by Ranggawarsita), *Suluk Wujil* (Sunan Bonang), *Suluk Syeh Malaya*, and so on. The pioneer of *Suluk* literature is Sunan Bonang, one of the members of *Walisanga*, who lived in the late 15th century (Hadi, 2016: 205).

2 FOCUS AND METHODOLOGY

This research focuses on the study of one of the classic Javanese literature that has been translated into Indonesian, namely *Suluk Pesisiran*. The so-called *Suluk Pesisiran* is part of the results of research conducted by a research team chaired by Simuh on 41 texts *Suluk Cirebonan, coded LOr 7375*. The results of this study were then recorded with poetry in Indonesian by poet Emha Ainun Nadjib and published by Mizan Publisher Bandung in 1989, under the title *Suluk Pesisiran LOr Code 7375: Poetization of Emha Ainun Nadjib*.

The method used to analyze text is hermeneutics. Etymologically, hermeneutics comes from the Greek verb *hermeneuein*, which means to say or interpret; *hermeneian* noun, which is an expression or explanation of thought; and the name *hermeneus*. This name refers to the name of the character of Greek mythology, Hermes, who was assigned with bringing the messages of the gods to humans (Moules, 2002). Hermeneutics, as reception theory, is the door to the entrance of the philosophy of phenomenology into the study of literature, and is a reader-oriented theory (Darma, 2019: 109-116). In hermeneutics research, what is determined first is the object of research, and the object is in the form of text (Rohman, 2013: 18). The object of this research is the text *Suluk Pesisir LOr 7375: Poetization of Emha Ainun Nadjib*. Departing from the text is then interpreted as an attempt to interpret the transcript.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 The essence of Sufism

Etymologically, the word Sufism are from Arabic (Iqbal & Hunt, 2003). However, if viewed from the root, there are two opinions. The First opinion, is original from Arabic, but absorbed from Greek, *sophia*, means wisdom. The second opinion, is coming from the word *shuf* (Arabic), meaning coarse fleece, as clothing material for people who practice *zuhud*/ascetic behavior. However, there are several Arabic terms that are close to the meaning of Sufism. First, word is *shafa*, its means holy. That is, a Sufi is someone who always purifies the soul (*tazkiyatun nafs*). Second, words is from the *shuffah* word, it refers to *ashhab-i shusfah* or *ahl al shuffah*, which is a group of generations of companions of the Prophet Muhammad who spent their life living in the Nabawi Mosque in Medina to solely worship and renounce

worldly life (*zuhud*). Third, word is *shaff*, which means the ranks, namely referring to people who take the front row saffron in the congregation prayers, *shaff* the priority in prayer in congregation. (Schimmel, 1975; Mudhafir, 2011: 98).

From the various terms above, substantially, each term approaches the meaning of Sufism. As said in Al-Hujwiri (died estimated at 456 *Hijriah* / 1063 AD), the oldest treatise writer from Persia, *Kasyful Mahjub*, each of them has a strong *hujjah* (argumentation). The word *shafa* (chastity), for example, is a commendable thing, and the opponent is content (impurity). Therefore, supporters of this group always maintain the sanctity of the soul or mind, by always maintaining and improving morals. They avoid despicable traits that become mental impurities, and henceforth, fill lives with qualities that are commendable as "decorating" the soul (Al-Hujwiri, 1992: 40). From here, the term *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul) appears in the practice of Sufism.

3.2 Practice of Sufism

Spiritual stages in carrying out the *tazkiyatun nafs* include three levels, namely (1) *takhalli*, (2) *tahalli*, and (3) *tajalli* (Zahri, 1995: 74-91). The first step is *takhalli*, which is the stage of self-emptying, which is trying to eliminate the bad qualities that are inside. Despicable nature is mental impurities; it can be an obstacle to entering the spiritual realm. The second step is *tahalli*, which is the stage of self-filling, which is doing commendable actions, as a form of filling the soul. Good deeds are like nutrition for the soul, so that with such good deeds, the soul becomes healthy. And the third stage is *tajjali*, which is God's vision, the achievement of divine light within.

To do the spiritual stages that is describe in above, in the world of Sufism known as *suluk*. It could be that the term *suluk* literature in classical Javanese literature is taken from this term. Similarly, the term *wirid* literature, also refers to the treasures of Sufism, which term refers to the practice of remembrance. *Suluk* means taking the path of Sufism, the culprit is called *salik*. More specifically, *suluk* is interpreted as taking the path to God, usually by doing *khalwat*, which is to be in a quiet place to carry out devout and perfect worship. At that time, a *Salik* performed special services which essentially reached the three stages above (*takhalli*, *tahalli*, and *tajalli*).

3.3 Core teachings of Sufism

Departing from the understanding and practice of Sufism above, the core of Sufism teachings is to improve human morals with the aim of purely seeking God's grace (Zahri, 1995: 67). Exercises to improve morals are struggling to purify oneself from despicable qualities and adorn himself with praiseworthy qualities. Sufis believe that the wall that separates themselves from their Lord is their own desires. Including in this honest quality, for example, patience, gratitude to God, and willingness. Those four things are the core of Sufism teachings.

4 ANALYSIS OF THE CONTENTS OF THE SULUK PESISIRAN

As explained above, the essence of Sufism is the cleansing of the soul to attain the *akhlaqul karimah* (main morality). All of them aim to solely seek the pleasure of Allah SWT. Bad morality becomes a *hijab* (barrier) to be able to connect with Allah SWT. Morals are also reflections of the heart, because morality is only a phenomenon that appears in behavior that describes the condition of one's heart. Thus, bad character also reflects a bad heart. That is what Al Ghazali

calls liver diseases. But on the contrary, a good heart also reflects a good condition of the heart. With the mirror of the heart, humans "see" the Most Holy God. So that, if his heart is bad, it is also bad for God's light to reflect on him. A clean heart will be able to capture God's light perfectly.

One of the obstacles to cleansing one's heart is excessive worldly desires. Worldly things, the search for excessive self-sustenance, cause forgetting of the divine. This is revealed in the 2nd verse "Suluk Wragul" by Sunan Bonang (page 13-14) below:

*Maka dengarlah perlambang ini
Ada kera hitam sedang berdiri
Di tepi sungai
Tertawa keras tak kepalang
Kepada berang-berang yang mencari makan
Siang dan malam
Terus tanpa kesudahan
Tak ingat bahwa ia diciptakan Tuhan
Yang diingat hanya makanan
Tanpa mempedulikan bahaya
mengancam*

(So listen to this symbol
There is a black ape standing

By the river
Laughing absurdly
To beavers looking for food
Day and night
Continue without end
Don't remember that he was created by God
What is remembered is only food
Regardless of the danger threatening)

Therefore, humans must always improve their morality, by meditating (arising from "meditating"), not stopping thinking, and always open their minds, so that they can be trusted. This is because, whatever the conditions, the purpose of humans is to become the main human being. The 15th verse quote "Suluk Wragul" (page 19) below illustrates this:

*Bertapa ada tujuannya
Agar memperoleh ikan di rawa
Agar semua itu kena olehnya
Adapun bertapa di gunung
Tujuannya pun
Untuk memperoleh negara
Oleh masyarakat dipercaya
Begitu yang namanya pendeta
Terus menerus bertukar pikiran
Berbuat kepercayaan dalam
pemerintahan*

(Meditation has a purpose
In order to get fish in the swamp
So that all of that was hit by him
As for meditating on the mountain
The goal too
To get a country
Trusted by the community
That's what the priest's name is
Constantly exchanging ideas
Doing trust in government)

The next thing that is taught in Sufism is that one must always be patient. Patience is a mirror of emotional maturity. Anger is a mirror of uncontrolled lust. In the 3rd verse "Suluk Besi" (page 33), humans are always expected to be able to resist emotions, not indulge in anger:

*Sang pengembara menjawab
Tuan hendaklah tak bersikap begitu
Sedemikian menyepelkan.
Tuan Penghulu juga berucap lagi
Dengan kata-kata yang mengandung kemarahan
Hai orang hitam, pergi
Dari masjid ini!*

*Jangan berlam-lama di hadapanku
Sungguh tak akan kuberikan ilmu
Kepada manusia awam seperti engkau.*

(The wanderer answered
Sir, don't be so
So trivial.
Mister Penghulu*) also said again
With words that contain anger
Hi black people, leave
From this mosque!
Do not linger before me
I will not give knowledge
To ordinary people like you.)

*) *Penghulu* = Muslim leader

Patience alone is certainly not enough. Therefore, the next stage in Sufism is to be very grateful. Thus, being grateful is the next teaching of Sufism. Grateful, in this case, is conscious of position, conscious as a being. As a creature, humans must accept any gift given by Allah SWT, do not be jealous of and count on the blessings given by Allah SWT. The 37th verse "Suluk Wragul" (page 27) suggests this:

*Lebih-lebih jika renungkan ini
Dengan teliti
Betul-betul ingin bekerja
Terlalu penuh perhitungan akhirnya
Atas kekayaan orang-orang kaya
Maka kalau tak paham
Janganlah ikut-ikutan
Sampai kapan demikian
Sesungguhnya engkau disuruh mencari
kembali
Raga yang tersembunyi*

(Even more so if you think about this
Carefully
Really want to work
Too calculating finally
For the wealth of rich people
So if you don't understand
Don't join in
Until when is that
Surely you are told to search
back
Hidden body)

And the purpose of all of that, is to get only the divine pleasure. Because in the end, only God is the Existence. Everything in this world does not exist if God does not impose it. The existence of all creatures

- including humans - depends on the will of the Exalted God who does not want to create them. And creation will return to its Creator. In the 9th verse "Suluk Besi" (pages 35-36) it is written like this:

*Adapun papan tanpa tulisan
Ialah Allah semata
Bahwa ini semua Allah semata
Tak ada manusianya
Tulisannya tak terpendang
Hanya papan saja yang kelihatan
Itulah lambing adanya yang tunggal
Wujud Allah Maha Agung
Wujud tunggal rasa tunggal
Hidup tunggal, kekal tanpa bergeser
Itulah tempat yang betapa luasnya.*

(As for the board without writing
He is God alone
That this is all Allah alone
There is no human
His writing is not respected
Only the board is visible
That is the existence of a single symbol
The Exalted Form of Allah
Single sense of singular
Single life, eternal without merging
That is the place of how vast.)

5 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis above, *Suluk Pesisiran* - like the *suluk* literature in general - is loaded with Sufism values. These values are related to morality in the world of Sufism. Personality that must exist in someone if you want to take the path of Sufism. And that personality leads to the formation of the morality of mankind, the morality of human virtue. The main morality is the willingness to always improve, cleanse the soul (*tazkiyatun nafs*), be patient, give thanks, and solely seek the pleasure of Allah SWT.

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