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Faith and Morality Within Sufi Texts: A Note on the Traces of Sufism And Its Textual Tradition In Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Sufism cannot be separated from the tradition of texts; it is based on the inspiration of Divine Revelation, infused with faith (*tawhid*), and experienced in practice. This practice is the 'path of purity and simplicity' (*fuqara, faqir*) aimed at uniting with God. Sufism is taught by the Sufis, who are "the chosen ones of God," according to Reynold A. Nicholson in *The Mystics of Islam*. Alternatively, according to the author of *al-Luma'*, as quoted by Nicholson, this term refers to the prophets, who are chosen for their purity, inspirational knowledge, and commitment to carrying out God's mission.¹ This paper is a textual analysis of existing Sufi works, combined with early Islamic traditions in Indonesia regarding faith and morality. The author employs historical and hermeneutic approaches to understand the traces of Sufism in Indonesia, as well as the mystical speculation and morality that have been essential spirits in the spread of Islam.

ABSTRAK

Sufisme tidak dapat dipisahkan dari tradisi teks; sufisme didasarkan pada inspirasi Wahyu Ilahi, diresapi dengan iman (*tauhid*), dan dialami dalam praktik. Praktik ini adalah 'jalan kemurnian dan kesederhanaan' (*fuqara, faqir*) yang ditujukan untuk bersatu dengan Tuhan. Sufisme diajarkan oleh para Sufi, yang merupakan "orang-orang pilihan Tuhan," menurut Reynold A. Nicholson dalam

The Mystics of Islam. Sebaliknya, menurut penulis *al-Luma'*, sebagaimana dikutip oleh Nicholson, istilah ini merujuk pada para nabi, yang dipilih karena kemurnian mereka, pengetahuan yang inspiratif, dan komitmen untuk melaksanakan misi Tuhan. Tulisan ini merupakan analisis tekstual dari karya-karya Sufi yang ada, dikombinasikan dengan tradisi Islam awal di Indonesia mengenai iman dan moralitas. Penulis menggunakan pendekatan historis dan hermeneutik untuk memahami jejak Sufisme di Indonesia, serta spekulasi mistik dan moralitas yang telah menjadi roh penting dalam penyebaran Islam.

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¹ Reynold A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam* (Bloomington: World Wisdom Inc., 2002), 88.

INTRODUCTION

The historicity of Islamic spirituality reveals the significant influence of Sufism in shaping the form of faith and morality within the Muslim communities. These historical traces should be brought into the context of Indonesia to not only revive the community's memory of the path of Sufism but also to recognize it as a noble tradition that has profoundly impacted the spiritual experience and growth of the community over time. We encounter this Sufi path in the early centuries of Islam in Indonesia through the *Wali* (plural: *Awliya*), who are those with a close or "friendly" relationship with God. The *Awliya* are 'the friends of God who have no fear nor grief' or those who have attained the highest mystical stages. The *Wali* later became well known within the brotherhood communities (*tariqah*) and traditional educational institutions, such as pesantren. Within these, a *Wali* shapes and teaches practical faith and morality.²

Sufism has produced many great works that encompass prose, poetry, and theological treatises. Without diminishing the essence of this discussion, we can mention Al-Ghazali and his work *Ihya Ulum al-Din*, which explores the concept of *tajdid* (renewal) and the importance of renewing religious understanding, as well as *Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal*, which presents his intellectual journey.³ Muhammad Abduh, in his *Tajdid* project, addressed the concepts of *taqlid* (blind imitation) and *taghrib* (Westernization), emphasizing the importance of Islamic values in the face of modern challenges, secularization, and Europeanization.⁴ Meanwhile Ibn al-Arabi firmly asserted that Islam is a religion of love because Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) is the beloved of God (*Habib*);⁵ Jalaluddin Rumi, in his *Mathnawi*, stressed that human love for God is a reflection of God's love and the importance of being a lover (manifesting love in daily life).⁶ Ibn Taymiyyah, in his work *Al-Hisbah fi'l Islam*, discussed morality in the public life of the Muslim community. Al-Suyuti, in his work *Al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an*, provided a comprehensive guide to the sciences of the Quran, and in *Al-Tasrif fi Ulum al-Tanzil wa al-Tafsir*, he elaborated on the methodology of Quranic exegesis. Additionally, Al-Shafi'i, in his work *Kitab al-Umm*, addressed Islamic jurisprudence, while *Al-Risalah* focused on the methodology of *fiqh*. These literary works of Sufism are relevant as they contain the primordial principles of Islam, offering an essential foundation for interpreting Islamic teachings in practice.

In the Nusantara – Indonesia, Martin van Bruinessen initiated a scientific study on the traces of Sufism by referencing certain manuscripts that were researched by

² Matt Stefon (ed.), *The Islamic World: Islamic Beliefs and Practices* (New York: Britannica Educational Publishing, 2010), 162.

³ Antony Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought: From the Prophet to the Present*, second edition (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 98-101.

⁴ Samira Haj, *Configuring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality, and Modernity* (California: Stanford University Press, 2009), 3-86.

⁵ Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*, 79.

⁶ Coleman Barks, at al., *The Essential Rumi* (New York: Castle Books, 1995), 100.

scholars such as Snouck Hurgronje (in the 1880s), G. J. Pijper (in 1961), van Ronkel, C.A.O. Nieuwenhuijze, G.W.J. Drewes, P.J. Voorhoove, and R. Roolvink, who also published their findings around the 1960s and even earlier. Bruinessen noted that the initial efforts to scientifically study Sufism and Sufi orders began in the mid-19th century, coinciding with a shift in Dutch colonial control, where trade control was replaced by direct territorial control. Bruinessen observed the significant influence of the Sufis after the shift from trade control, providing a more contextualized perspective. In other words, when exploring the scope of Sufi ideas within the Indonesian cultural context, we cannot overlook the strength of an interdisciplinary approach, incorporating elements of cultural anthropology, literature, history, and even psychology.⁷

Thus, when examining the spread of Islam in Indonesia, we are guided by Snouck Hurgronje, as explained by Drewes in the introduction to D.A. Rinkes' work, noting that mysticism, whether orthodox or considered heretical (such as pantheism, which will be discussed in this paper), played a significant role in religious education and practice for centuries. This is reflected in the manuscripts collected by Snouck Hurgronje in Java and Sumatra.

These manuscripts contain records of religious instructions, *dhikr* (remembrance), *wirid* (ritual recitations), prayers, and mystical practices taught by spiritual teachers. We will come to know the Shattāriyya order in Aceh and the role of figures such as Abdur Ra'uf of Singkel (known in Aceh as *Tengku*), who studied Islamic theology in the Arab world and was initiated into the Shattāriyya brotherhood by Ahmad Qushishi of Madinah. Snouck Hurgronje noted that many renowned Sufis in the Nusantara at that time had spiritual lineages connecting them to Ahmad Qushishi and his descendants. Particularly, Rinkes (1996) in *Nine Saints of Java* discusses the central role of Sufi saints in Java. This source will be utilized in this paper to contextualize the position and role of the *Wali* in the spread and teaching of Islam and Sufism in Java.⁸

METHOD

This study is a rational effort to explore moral and spiritual concepts in Islam, particularly those that intersect with the early Muslim communities in Indonesia. It employs historical and hermeneutic approaches to understand the traces of Sufism in Indonesia, as well as the mystical speculation and morality that have been essential spirits in the spread of Islam. The basis of this exploration lies in the recorded lives and works of the Sufis (*Wali*), or in the literary traditions found in history.

⁷ Martin Van Bruinessen, "Studies of Sufism and the Sufi Orders in Indonesia," *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series 38, No. 2 (Jul., 1998): 192-219, DOI: 10.1163/1570060981254813.

⁸ D.A. Rinkes, *Nine Saints of Java* (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute (MSRI), 1996), xxiii-xl.

DISCUSSION

Traces of Sufism: Texts and Contexts

Islam gradually arrived in Indonesia starting from the early centuries of the Hijri calendar, approximately the 7th and 8th centuries AD, in a dynamic manner. The progress of its spread involved Wali and sheikhs. Therefore, it is not surprising that various pieces of evidence of their presence have been found, such as the discovery of the ancient grave of Sheikh Syamsuddin al-Wasil (originating from Rum, Persia) of the Shafi'i school in the 12th century during the Kediri Kingdom. This archaeological discovery indicates that the spread and teaching of Islam during that period were strongly influenced by the Sufis of the Shafi'i school. For the Shafi'i school, law is very important for social and cosmic order. Law (fiqh) becomes a legal theory and contains practical moral guidance that has inspired all Muslim communities throughout history. The *Risalah* (Epistle) by Shafi'i serves as a primary guide for scholars and Sufis because it contains practical legal instructions based on the Sunnah and Hadith. Within it is an explanation of how revelation is interpreted to produce law, substantive jurisprudence, and its methodological principles, which have guided Sufis and scholars in spreading and grounding Islam.⁹

The influence of the Sufism of Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, Ibn Al-'Arabi, and 'Abd Al-Qadir Al-Jilani would be profoundly felt as Islam spread in Indonesia. In Aceh, for instance, during the 12th and 13th centuries, there was Sheikh Abdullah Arif from Yemen (believed to be a disciple of Sheikh 'Abd Al-Qadir Al-Jilani) who wrote the book *Bahrul Lahut*, found in the collection of Sheikh Yusuf al-Makasari. The manuscript of *Bahrul Lahut* contains Sufi teachings on divine knowledge—*ma'rifatullah*. It explains that there are two types of knowledge about God: *la ta'ayyun* and *ta'ayyun*. *La ta'ayyun* refers to the unlimited, which is knowledge of God in His transcendent reality, not bound by attributes or matter; while *ta'ayyun* refers to the limited, which is knowledge of God manifesting Himself immanently or emanating. Sufis interpret this process of transcendence to immanence as the "symbolism of the journey." *Asfar*, the work of Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi (Mulla Sadra), and the phrase "al-asfar al-'aqliyyat al-arba'ah" within it reinforce this theosophical argument. Knowledge of God is achieved through the symbolism of the journey, guiding humans from a state of ignorance to true

⁹ The existence of a Muslim is based on the law of Allah. Through it, a Muslim can comprehend their essence as a human being as well as a believer. The question is, how does a Muslim come to know the law of Allah? The first answer is through the Qur'an. The realization of this Divine Revelation is embodied in the way of being of the Prophet Muhammad, in the Sunnah and Hadith. Information about his words and deeds, behaviors, and practices serves as moral instructions and legal guidance (fiqh). The central role of the Prophetic Sunnah, internalized in this legal guidance, is inseparable from the significant contribution of Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i (150 H/767 M – 204 H/820 M). Kecia Ali, *Makers of the Muslim Worlds: Imam Shafi'i - Scholar and Saints* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2011), 1-10.

enlightenment and awareness.¹⁰ Furthermore, in the *Hikayat Sejarah Melayu* and *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai*, there are mentions of Sheikh Ismail and Faqir Muhammad, who began their mission in Samudra (Aceh) in the mid-13th century. In the book *Jami' Kiramatil Awliya* by Sheikh Yusuf An-Nabhani, Sheikh Abdullah Mas'ud bin Abdullah al-Jawi is also recorded.¹¹

The influence of Sufism continued to grow in the 16th century in various places in Indonesia, such as Sumatra and Java. In the 16th and 17th centuries in Sumatra, we encounter early Muslim authors like Hamzah Fansuri, Syamsuddin Pasai, who elaborate on the doctrine of the Seven Stations, adapted from Ibn al-'Arabi's concept of emanation, Nuruddin Al-Raniri, and 'Abd al-Ra'uf Singkel, all of whom practiced a rigorous form of Sufism. Fansuri, for instance, developed ideas of Sufism in the style of *wahdat al-wujud* in prose and poetry, as well as in allegorical forms, although this can appear pantheistic.¹² We will observe the ideological confrontation between this pantheistic idea and Islamic orthodoxy in the 16th century.

Theodore Pigeaud, in *Literature of Java*, points out that the practice of Islamic religiosity was centered around communities of male Muslim traders known as *kaumans* (Arabic: *awm*, meaning 'people'), and devout craftsmen who often gathered around mosques in urban areas—centers of trade—and in villages. This suggests that, in a socio-communal context, Javanese Islam was initially embraced by people from the middle class. The existence of these communities evolved into a social revolution, wherein the role of Muslims in society underwent significant and comprehensive advancement. Religious scholars also emerged from the male Muslims who were part of the *kauman* groups. Historically, the traditions of these communities have continuity with pre-Islamic traditions in Java and Bali.¹³ Martin van Bruinessen supports Pigeaud's view by explaining the existence of traditional institutions called *mandala* and *asyrama*, which indicate the presence of pre-Islamic hermitages that persisted after the arrival of Islam and continued to exist during that time, alongside the establishment of new hermitages.

Bruinessen, while quoting Djajadiningrat, explains that according to the history of Banten, Maulana Hasanuddin, the first Muslim ruler of Banten, established a new

¹⁰ Other Sufi works, such as *Mantiq al-Tayr* by 'Attar, are based on this theosophical method. Ibn 'Arabi even wrote a work whose title includes the word "al-asfar," and he discusses the meaning of its singular form, "safar," in his work *al-Istilahat al-Sufiyyah*. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Sadr al-Din Shirazi and his Transcendent Theosophy: Background, Life and Works* (Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1978), 55-57.

¹¹ Dudung Abdurahman Syaifan Nur, *Sufisme Nusantara: Sejarah Pemikiran dan Gerakan* (Yogyakarta: Ombak [anggota IKAPI], 2018), 18-24.

¹² Martin van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren, dan Tarekat: Tradisi-Tradisi Islam di Indonesia* (Bandung: Misan, 1995), 190-192.

¹³ Theodore Pigeaud, *Literature of Java*, vol. 1: Synopsis of Javanese Literature, 900 – 1900 A.D (Leiden: Springer-Science+Business Media, B.V., 1967), 76-77.

hermitage on Mount Pinang at the suggestion of his father, Sunan Gunung Jati.¹⁴ This indicates that Sufism played a significant role in the spread and development of Islam. Pigeaud notes that the formation of early teaching communities cannot be separated from the influence of the Walis, Sufi figures who conveyed the true message of the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) teachings.¹⁵ They implemented a teaching model based on *fiqhul dakwah* (jurisprudence of preaching) and *fiqhul hikmah* (jurisprudence of wisdom). This form of teaching was conducted in a nomadic manner, using a persuasive approach and the practice of etiquette toward the local communities. The process occurred gradually (*tadriif*) and without causing harm (*'adamul haraj*), with strategic adaptations according to the local societal context. The wisdom of the Walis attracted the community's interest in meeting them and delving into their thoughts. Even followers of older beliefs, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Tantrayana, and indigenous beliefs like Kapitayan, expressed appreciation. This mode of wisdom was adopted by the scholars of the Nusantara in the practice of the pesantren community, both cognitively and practically (in religion, culture, arts, economy, politics, and morality). Within this community, *fithul ahkām* was applied to deeply understand and implement Islamic norms.¹⁶

Furthermore, when Islam began to dominate the religious system in Java, there was an assimilation of Arabic literature into everyday conversation, enriching the Javanese vocabulary with new synonyms. Islamic literature, which was religious and moralistic, acclimatized in Java, and the Arabic language started to be used in daily conversations, coexisting with the ancient Javanese-Hindu religious traditions until it eventually overtook them. A different situation occurred in Bali, where the influence of Islam generally failed to dominate rural areas that remained loyal to the Majapahit king's power.

Nonetheless, small Muslim communities (consisting of immigrants and mixed-heritage Balinese Muslims) continued to survive in North and West Bali. Literature played a crucial role in early Islamic religious practice, especially from the 16th to the 19th century. In the context of the spread of Islam, around the year 1500 CE—or the early 16th century—three distinct streams emerged: the mystical, the legalistic, and the modernist streams. The mystical and orthodox legalistic streams coexisted, while modernism began to gain influence in the late nineteenth century. Islamic mysticism

¹⁴ Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren, dan Tarekat*, 24.

¹⁵ *Wali* refers to Sufi figures who, in this context, are understood as active participants in the works of God through complete obedience. This participatory role positions the “Wali” as someone who guards themselves (*tawali*) to remain obedient to God and consistently fulfill their obligations. As a result, they are called *murīd* (one who desires God) and *murād* (one who is desired by God), *awliyā* (those who are protected), individuals who receive *karāmah* (miracles), *mahfuzh* (preserved from sin and evil), and *ma'shum* (protected from committing sins). Sunyoto, *Atlas Wali Songo*, 42-44; Pigeaud, *Literature of Java*, 83.

¹⁶ Sunyoto, *Atlas Wali Songo* (Tangerang Selatan: Pustaka Iman, 2016), xi-xii.

initially attracted the attention of Javanese neophytes due to its proximity to pre-Islamic religious speculation. This heterodox style was influenced by the pantheism of Muslim communities in areas along the northern coast. The concept of pantheism was debated among scholars who adhered strictly to orthodox monotheistic Islamic teachings.

Heterodox pantheism is based on the doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud* (the unity of existence), which was first formulated by the 13th-century mystic Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi (1165-1240). *Wahdat al-wujud* is a quasi-pantheistic doctrine that asserts the absolute presence of God. It declares the “mystical truth (*haqiqat*) that there is no real separation between God and the Self” or between God and His creation. Ibn ‘Arabi is often credited with providing the first theological explanation of this doctrine. His influence was so strong that it even impacted the ecstatic Sufi Mansur al-Hallaj (d. 922) in the early 10th century, who boldly declared *ana al-Haqq* (“I am the Truth/I am Reality”). This pantheistic expression shocked traditionalist authorities, leading to al-Hallaj’s execution.

In India, this concept flourished due to its conceptual similarities with the pantheistic aspects of Hindu Vedantism. In Aceh, Hamzah Fansuri, and in Java, Syaikh Siti Jenar were Sufis of the pantheistic *wahdat al-wujud* school. Like al-Hallaj, Syaikh Siti Jenar’s pantheism was also rejected, and he was executed because his teachings threatened the monotheistic (*tauhid*) preaching of the *Wali*. His teachings were deemed incompatible with *shari’a* as he promoted *Wihdatul adyan* (the unity of all religions) and were intertwined with the animistic-pantheistic context of Javanese Hinduism.¹⁷ Syaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, with his doctrine of *wahdat al-shuhud* (the unity of perception), critiqued this form of pantheism exemplified by al-Hallaj, asserting that humans are essentially limited, and only God is transcendent, possessing true knowledge of reality.¹⁸ This monotheistic concept was upheld by orthodox groups, although with a contextual implementation. After all, they existed within an animistic and pantheistic Hindu context, which was significantly influenced by the spiritual teachers of Hinduism.

Since the 17th century, orthodox-monotheistic Islamic mysticism has dominated the system of spreading and teaching Islam. Pigeaud notes that, in legendary accounts, during the 17th and 18th centuries, Islamic orthodox mysticism was centered around nine holy men, known as the *Wali*, in the areas along the northern coast (Gresik, Surabaya, Tuban, Kudus, Demak, Cirebon, and their surroundings). These included Sunan Gresik (Maulana Malik Ibrahim), recognized as the first *Wali* in Java and the first proponent of Islamic education in Java; Sunan Ampel (Raden Rahmat), who was the first to establish a *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) in Java; Sunan Bonang (Raden Makhdum

¹⁷ The story of Sheikh Siti Jenar is written in *Babat Tanah Jawi* by Rinkes (1910). Prof. Dr. G. J. W. Drewes discusses this in *Perdebatan Wali Songo: Seputar Makrifatullah*, trans. Wahyudi S. Ag. (Surabaya: ALFIKR, 2002), xiii-xvii.

¹⁸ Khurram Hussain, *Islam as Critique of Modernity? The Traditional Modernisms of Sayyid Ahmad Khan* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc., 2020), 24-25.

Ibrahim, the son of Sunan Ampel); Sunan Drajat (Raden Qasim, the younger brother of Sunan Bonang); Sunan Kudus (Ja'far Shadiq); Sunan Kalijaga (Raden Mas Said); Sunan Muria (Raden Umar Said, the son of Sunan Kalijaga); Sunan Giri (Raden Paku or Prabu Satmata); and Sunan Gunung Jati (Syarif Hidayatullah).¹⁹ The orthodox Islamic thoughts of these *Wali* were compiled in a famous text known as the “Musyawarah Para Wali” (*Musawaratan* or Council of the Wali).²⁰ The subsequent development of *pesantren* cannot be separated from the mystical stream within Javanese Islam that was taught by these Sufis.

The propagation and teaching of Islam were initially delivered orally in Java before being written in Old Javanese script. Serious research into Arabic religious texts, including their translations into Javanese, became a crucial part of Islam's penetration into the intellectuality of Javanese scholars. This included the use of interlinear glosses, where the Arabic text was accompanied by a word-for-word translation into Javanese. This practice was typical of the Coastal Culture period in Java during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. Pigeaud notes that in Dr. Voorhoeve's *Handlist of Arabic Manuscripts* (1957), many Arabic codices were accompanied by Javanese interlinear glosses. Pigeaud refers to this textual tradition as ‘interlinear glosses.’²¹ This textual tradition is more or less related to two Islamic entities within Sufism: *Iman* (faith) in the context of mystical speculation and morality.

Mystical Speculation

Firstly, let us mention texts related to mystical speculation. The manuscripts in question are ancient texts, such as those known in Java during their time, written in Buda and Guna scripts; Arabic texts with paraphrases in Javanese (referred to as Interlinear Glosses: Arabic texts accompanied by word-for-word translations into

¹⁹ An explanation of the Wali in Java can be found in D.A. Rinkes' *Nine Saints of Java* (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute (MSRI), 1996) and Theodore Pigeaud's *Literature of Java*, vol. 1: *Synopsis of Javanese Literature, 900–1900 A.D* (Leiden: Springer-Science+Business Media, B.V., 1967).

²⁰ The Javanese mystical teachers (*Wali*) held diverse views on theology, with the majority emphasizing the importance of Islamic monotheistic theism. However, there were also those with heterodox views, such as Sunan Lemah Abang (Sheikh Siti Jenar), who was influenced by pantheism and was sentenced to death. This was similar to the fate of al-Hallaj, who was executed in Baghdad in 922 AD for his heterodox opinions. Pigeaud, *Literature of Java*, 83-84.

²¹ Information about mystical texts is explained by Pigeaud in *Literature of Java*. Javanese texts on Islam and Muslim mysticism from the early period of Javanese Islamic culture have been of interest to researchers for some time. Some of these were brought to the Netherlands at the end of the sixteenth century by ships returning from the first Dutch voyages to Java. Two of them have been translated into Dutch by scholars such as Dr. Gunning, Professor H. Kraemer, and Professor Drewes. Other texts have been discovered in the Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea in Ferrara, Italy. There are two intriguing books written on bark paper and folded in a manner similar to Indian books. Both, with code 8657 (a photographic copy) and code 11.092 (the original manuscript owned by Professor Drewes), can be compared with other texts in terms of age and content. All these books serve as records containing lessons on mysticism and related subjects. Pigeaud, *Literature of Java*, 80-81.

Javanese); collections of the Wali's opinions on Islamic Orthodoxy (known as *Musawaratan*); *Mustaka Rancan* (notes on Islamic mystical knowledge in poetic form. This *Mustaka* (Pustaka) Rancan became one of the traditions of ancient Javanese poetic literature (*Sastra Jatiswara*, *Cabolan*, and *Centini*). Vagrant Students (students who wander in search of and delve into religious knowledge under the guidance of a teacher) played a crucial role in the development of *Mustaka Rancan*.²²

Bruinessen notes that in *Serat Centhini*, as also explained by Drewes, there was a place akin to an old, renowned *pesantren* (at that time it was not yet called *pesantren* but *paguron*, which referred more to a place of meditation according to the Book of Banten History) called Karang, located near Mount Karang, west of Pandeglang, Banten. In this *Serat Centhini*, it is narrated about Danadarma (an ascetic), Jayengresmi (Among Raga), and Seh Bari Karang (Seh Bari ing Kawis). Danadarma claimed to have studied for three years in Karang under the guidance of "Seh Kadir Jalena"; his practice was to study the knowledge or *ngelmu* associated with the great Sufi 'Abd Al-Qadir Al-Jailani" (a saint who, according to Cirebon tradition, came to Java and played a role in the Islamization of Cirebon. His grave is located on Mount Jati). Jayengresmi studied at Paguron-Karang under the guidance of an Arab teacher named Sheikh Ibrahim bn Abu Bakar (Ki Ageng Karang) and afterward at another *paguron* in East Java, Wanamarta, under the guidance of Ki Baji Panutra. Seh Bari ing Kawis spread the teachings of the Javanese Wali (he wrote the teachings of Seh Bari, one of the oldest Javanese Islamic manuscripts from the 16th century). This data shows that Karang-Banten was one of the oldest centers of orthodox Islamic education alongside the arrival of Islam in Banten in 1527.²³ The next mystical textual tradition is *Suluks* (mystical songs). Vagrant students played a role in spreading the *suluks* genre throughout Java since the 18th century. In the context of Islamic mysticism, *Suluk* was sung by the *santri* in religious gatherings.²⁴

²² Vagrant students played a significant role in the development of literature and arts in Java from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. They reflected the social and cultural dynamics of the time. Although they existed before the arrival of Islam, the advent of Islam opened up more opportunities for them to move freely. This period also witnessed the rise of a new class of Muslim rulers and merchants in Java, who supported the development of romantic literature. The vagrant students served as a link between the communities of scholars and religious experts, facilitating the exchange of ideas and influences across regions, and played a key role in the spread of literature and arts in Java. Figures in the books *Jatiswara*, *Cabolan*, and *Centini* came from the social groups of vagrant students and *kyai* from religious schools. They lived independently of the local temporal rulers, acknowledging the authority of the Kingdom only nominally. *Ibid.*, 227-228.

²³ Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning: Pesantren dan Tarekat*, 25-26.

²⁴ In Javanese tradition, *Suluks* consist of short songs that contain mystical concepts, often incorporating mystical terminology. *Suluks* can also take the form of questions posed by a student to their teacher, a child or grandchild to their father or grandfather, a wife to her husband, and so on, with the answers provided by those who possess mystical knowledge. There are types of *Suluks* written in simple language, but also in more sophisticated literary forms known as *Wasalans*, which are not easily understood by the general public. In the eighteenth century, *Suluks* became an important part of the Sultanate of Cirebon's court. *Suluk Sukarsa* and *Suluk Wujil* are among the oldest types, having been written since the 17th century. Pigeaud, *Literature of Java*, 86-89.

These ancient manuscripts of Islamic mysticism were written during the Pasisir period, starting from the sixteenth century. The authors and editors (who remain unknown) lived in Muslim communities in maritime districts along the northern coast. In this context, in Java during the nineteenth century, Muslim scholars were critical and even reformed traditions, social customs, religious rituals, and even pre-Islamic mystical texts that were considered unorthodox or incompatible with Islamic teachings. Unorthodox Islamic mystical manuscripts were also destroyed and forgotten. However, in remote areas, some manuscripts containing information about the beliefs of Muslim communities from the early centuries of Javanese Islam have been preserved, including those written in *Buda* and *Gunun* script, as previously described.

Faith and Morality in the Textual Tradition of Sufism

Secondly, there are texts related to faith and morality. Drewes provides an explanation of early Islamic texts, which are estimated to have emerged since the 17th century or at least since the early spread of Islam in Java, based on two manuscripts he discovered: the “Kropak Ferrara” and the manuscript coded MS 266, also known as the “Book of Sunan Bonang.”²⁵

The Kropak Ferrara is literary evidence of the activities of Muslim communities before the end of the 16th century. There are two different fragments (the first fragment consists of 8 pages and the second of 15 pages). In the second fragment, there are words based on old Javanese vocabulary, similar to those found in the *Pararaton*. It contains guidelines for Muslim life on *Tauhid* (the oneness of God), condemning idolatry practices (hadits al-Ahd bi al-Islam); a kind of “Muslim code of ethics” intended for new Muslims and for the purposes of Islamic education. Drewes notes that this code of ethics seems to be based on concepts from al-Ghazali, such as the purification of the soul under guidance to achieve closeness to God and obtain His pleasure, as found in *Raudat al-Ulama* by Al-Zandawaisiti and *Bidayat al-Hidayah* (a summary of Ihya’ ‘Ulum al-Din). The concept of Sufism identified by Drewes in the Ferrara Manuscript was studied by its author from the book *Masabih Mafatih* (Mafatih al-Rafa’ fi Shirat Masabih al-Dunya or As-Sunnah), which contains commentary and interpretation by Al-Aquli al-Wasiti (797-394) on guidance for humanity to serve God.²⁶

²⁵ The Ferrara Manuscripts consist of two Javanese-language manuscripts housed in two locations in Italy. The first manuscript is kept in the Ariostea Public Library in Ferrara, Italy. It is made of “lontar” leaves (referred to as “Kropak”), consisting of 23 leaves, measuring 40x3.4 cm. The second manuscript is made of copper plates, comprising 23 pages, and is stored in the Marquis Christino Bevilacqua Museum in Ferrara. At the bottom of these copper plates, it is inscribed: “an unidentified manuscript from a book made of ‘rontal’ (lontar, tal).” Drewes, *Perdebatan Wali Songo*, 1-7.

²⁶ Drewes could not identify the author of the “Ferrara Manuscripts.” According to him, the author might not have been a scholar, but at least more knowledgeable than the average person. It is possible that the author was an outsider, belonging to a particular Islamic school of thought, who studied Islamic religious texts. The author was certainly someone proficient in Arabic, as they were familiar with the works of Al-Ghazali, such as *Bidayat al-Hidayah* (The Beginning of Guidance), *Raudhat al-Ulama*, and *Masabih*

Al-Ghazali, in *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences), provides a rational reflection on religious teachings, morality, and the public sphere of social and political life. In *Kimiya-yi Sa'adat* (The Alchemy of Happiness), he discusses the spiritual journey to achieve happiness and, through self-awareness, moving towards an intimate relationship with God.²⁷ H.A.R. Gibb, in *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, describes this as a mystical awareness, encompassing mystical knowledge of God through personal asceticism and individual intuition according to divine revelation. Through this process, Muslims could establish networks of associations and communities.

The concept of Sufism by Al-Ghazali has had a significant influence since the 16th century in the spread of faith and the teaching of Sufism in Indonesia. *Kitab Kuning* by Martin van Bruinessen elaborates on this influence, noting how Sufism (tasawwuf) from the Wali (Islamic saints) in Indonesia was later internalized in the formation of brotherhood communities (tarekat), such as the Sammaniyah Order. This order is deeply connected with the miraculous stories of the Sheikh and prominent Sufi figures, including Sheikh Muhammad Al-Samman, Abd Al-Samad Al-Palimbani, and Muhammad Nafis Al-Banjari.

Al-Samad was one of the most prolific translators of Al-Ghazali's works and those of other Sufis, focusing on three key aspects of Sufi knowledge:

1. For the novice (*mubtadi'*), those who are just beginning on the path of Sufism, whose hearts are not yet purified (affected by sins, ostentation, arrogance, pride, and uncontrolled anger).
2. For the intermediate (*mutawassith*), those who are midway on the Sufi path, whose hearts have been purified or who have received divine blessings due to their frequent remembrance of Allah, allowing them to view humanity through the light of faith and the 'eye of piety' (commitment and devotion to God).
3. For the advanced (*muntahi*), those who are spiritually enlightened (arifin) or divinely inspired (ladduni). These individuals possess knowledge of the Sharia (outward law), traverse the spiritual path (tariqat), master the knowledge of inner realities (haqiqat), and ultimately reach gnosis (ma'rifat)—a direct and intimate knowledge of God, characterized by deep love and certainty (ainul yaqin and haqqal yaqin).²⁸

Mafatih. Moreover, as Tome Pires mentioned, the author might have been a Maulana who later lived in a small community on the northern coast of Java. Drewes, *Perdebatan Wali Songo*, 9-12.

²⁷ Antony Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought: From the Prophet to the Present*, Second Edition (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2011), 98-110.

²⁸ These three focuses are inspired by the following books: [1] Works by Al-Ghazali, such as *Bidayah Al-Hidayah*, *Minhaj Al-'Abidin*, *Arba'in fi Ushul Al-Din*, and *Mukhtashar Ihya' 'Ulum Al-Din*. There are also other books that align with Al-Ghazali's works in discussing similar Sufi topics, such as *Qutub Al-Qulub* (by Sidi Al-Sheikh Abu Thalib Al-Makki), *Risalah Al-Qushayri* (by Sheikh Abu al-Qasim Al-Qushayri), *Al-Ghunya li Talibi Tariq al-Haqq* (by Sayyid Sheikh Abdul Qadir Al-Jailani), *Al-Futuhat Al-Ilahiyyah* (by Sheikhu Islam Zakariya' Al-Anshari), *Madarij Al-Salikin* (by Sheikh Abdul Wahhab Al-

The foundation of this teaching is the divine revelation of the Qur'an, which contains the will of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet. For, whoever loves Allah must obey His Prophet. The Prophet possesses perfect qualities.²⁹ The primary mission of Prophet Muhammad was the preaching of faith, Tawhid (the oneness of God). Mahmoud M. Ayoub, in *Islam: Faith and History*, emphasizes that this mission of faith was not politically driven but aimed at establishing a socio-communal framework between faith and action within a religious system.³⁰ This religiosity is based on Tawhid but also serves as a dynamic force that transformed the practices of faith and morality in pre-Islamic Arab society during the era of ignorance (Jahiliyyah), as well as throughout the historical process that involved the struggle against the decadence of knowledge, faith, and morality.

In this sense, faith and morality were the primary elements of Prophet Muhammad's mission of *dawah* (preaching). Ayoub explains that *Iman* (faith) vertically expresses total dependence on Allah, who is caring, compassionate (Al-Rahman and Al-Rahim), and just; hence, it aligns with the meaning of Islam (submission) as the total surrender to the will of Allah, which is literally manifested in the mystery of Revelation (the Qur'an) and the Hadith of the Prophet. This mystery of revelation inspires concrete human actions that horizontally manifest in individual and social goodness and moral behavior. It becomes the mission of all Muslims to influence the world through good deeds and proper manners while avoiding evil and indecency (see Q. 3:104, 110, 114; 9:71, 112; and 31:17).³¹

Sha'rani), *Masyariq Anwar al-Qudsiyah fi Bayan al-'Uhud al-Muhammadiyah* (which contains adherence to the covenant of Prophet Muhammad and the Muslim community, by Muhammad al-Sa'igh al-Sabki), *al-Bahr al-Muhit fi al-Mawatsiq wa al-'Uhud* (on jurisprudence and covenants, by Abu Muhammad Abdul Rahman ibn Isma'il al-Qadisi al-Mawardi), and *al-Sair wa al-Suluk ila Malik al-Muluk* (by Abu Nasr Abdullah ibn Ali al-Sarraj al-Tusi), which covers various aspects of Sufism including fundamental concepts such as *ikhlas* (sincerity), *tawakkal* (reliance on Allah), *zuhud* (asceticism), as well as spiritual practices like *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah), meditation, and *tafakkur* (reflection). [2] *Kitab Hikam* (by Sidi Al-Sheikh Ibn 'Atha'llah Al-Iskandari Al-Syadzili), a commentary on the *Aforismes Al-Hikam* about spiritual lessons and wisdom, *tawakkal* (self-surrender), and patience. *Kitab Fath al-Rahman* (by Sidi al-Sheikh Ahmad ibn Mustafa al-'Alawi al-Maliki al-Makki) on teachings, advice, spiritual practices, ethics, and wisdom in Islam, also discussed in *Kitab Fath al-Qudsi*. *Kitab Futuh al-Ghaib* (by Sayyid al-Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jilani) on spiritual teachings and understanding of the unseen reality in Islam. [3] *Kitab Fushush al-Hikam* (by Muhyiddin Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Arabi al-Hatimi at-Tai al-Andalusi, commonly known as Ibn Arabi) on the nature of reality and the relationship between humans and Allah. *Kitab Mawaqif al-Nujum* (by Jalaluddin al-Suyuthi) on astronomical phenomena and their relation to religion and spiritual dimensions. Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning: Pesantren dan Tarekat*, 71-87.

²⁹ H. A. R. Gibb, *Studies on the Civilization of Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962), 29.

³⁰ Mahmoud M. Ayoub, *Islam: Faith and History* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2013), 21.

³¹ The opposite of *imān* is *kufr*, or the rejection of faith. Faith involves knowing the truth, affirming it in the heart, declaring it with the tongue, and manifesting it through acts of goodness and charity. *Kufr*, on the other hand, means knowing the truth but deliberately denying or obscuring it through acts of rebellion against the law of Allah, which Muslims believe is revealed in the Qur'an and proclaimed by the Prophet. Literally, the word *kufir* means "to cover," "to deny," or "to obscure." Between the "believers" (*mu'minūn*) and the "deniers of faith" (*kāfirūn*), according to the Qur'anic perspective, stand the hypocrites (*munāfiqūn*),

Sufism encompasses these qualities of faith while also serving as an institutional framework of values. This is why the “Ferrara Manuscript” is described as a kind of “Muslim code of ethics” primarily aimed at the morality of Muslims, serving as a tool for religious education and the growth of their faith. Drewes mentions several inspirations for the Ferrara text: first, Tawhid (faith in the oneness of Allah) and emulating the Prophet Muhammad. Second, morality (eradicating hypocrisy and disbelief).

In MS 266, the “Book of Sunan Bonang” is interpreted by Drewes as a *Primbon*—a collection of explanations on various important issues based on Islamic law, religion, and philosophy. These texts were written according to their context, as explained by Tome Pires in *Summa Oriental* (completed in 1515, 16th century). According to Pires, the governance in Sedayu had shifted to Islamic rule, but the people in the interior regions were still Hindu. Drewes acknowledges Tome Pires’ view, as it is indeed noted, as confirmed by Pigeaud, that in the 16th century, the northern coast of Java was dominated by Islam, which influenced the interior regions still under the Hindu-Javanese Majapahit rule. However, by the end of 1596—still in the 16th century—many communities in the Banten area were still animist-pantheistic.

Schrieke, in his analysis of the *Kitab Sunan Bonang*, titled *Het Boek van Bonang*, emphasizes what is recorded in this manuscript. Schrieke places the declaration of faith (tauhid) as the first part of the *Kitab Sunan Bonang*. The primary purpose of this declaration is to explain the sanctity of God, that Allah is one (tauhid). God has no rival, no association with other entities, and He is incomparable to any creation because, in His essence, He is eternal; His essence itself explains His sanctity. There is a fundamental difference between God and humans, between the Creator and the creation. Human beings (who are mortal) have no power to deny God's eternal nature; instead, they can only rely on God for their existence: “la ilaha illa Allah, wahdahu la sharika lahu.” Therefore, human existence is a result of Allah’s grace. To deny God’s essence in the form of negation or *ma'dum binafshihi* is wrong. Before anything existed, the essence of the Almighty God already existed, along with His attributes, including as the Creator. He is formless (*liwoeng*) because He is known only to Himself. In humans, there is faith, tauhid, ma’rifat (gnosis), and wajib (obligation).

During their life in this world, humans strive to reach Allah, and thus the most important thing they do from their humanity is to see Allah with their spiritual eye. They strive through *al-ishq* (intense love for Allah through self-sacrifice), embodying the spirit of loving (*ashiq*) in a radical love for God (*ma'shuq*). Quoting Al-Ghazali: “Seeing

who waver between faith and disbelief, thus creating discord and strife within the community. During the Prophet’s rule in Medina, the hypocrites, as described in the Qur’an, were those driven solely by narrow self-interest and therefore lacked the commitment of faith, which often required the sacrifice of wealth and life in the struggle for Islam and its growing community. The Qur’an describes the hypocrites as people who say one thing but hold the opposite belief in their hearts (see Q. 2:8–15 and 61:3). Ayoub, *Islam: Faith and History*, 21.

God and being seen by God ultimately become one, as the vision of the entire world disappears, leaving nothing and no one but God Himself, who alone sees Himself through Himself.”³² Schrieke’s analysis then touches on the fundamental aspects of Sufism. The life of a human being towards Allah passes through various levels of understanding and spiritual experience: from human reality to tauhid (understanding of God’s oneness), and finally to ma’rifah (knowledge and recognition of God). There, one will encounter God, experiencing His presence within himself.³³

The textual traditions explained above aim to demonstrate the existence of Sufism in Indonesia, which has influenced the spread and growth of faith since the early centuries of Islam in the Nusantara-Indonesia, centered in several regions such as Sumatra and Java. In Java, Sufism is closely associated with the teachings of the Wali Songo and is certainly connected to Islamic Sufi teachings like those of Al-Ghazali (Hujjat al-Islam).

The textual tradition of Sufism was later lived and developed within Sufi orders (tarekat) from the 17th century onwards: [1] The Naqshbandi Order - Emphasizes *dhikr khafi* (silent remembrance), focusing on heart purification and self-control. [2] The Qadiriyyah wa Naqshabandiyah Order - Focuses on obedience to Allah and His Messenger, morality, the practice of *dhikr*, and community service. [3] The Shadhiliyyah Order - Strives for a balance between worldly and spiritual life, emphasizing *dhikr* and prayer with a focus on heart purification (*tazkiyah al-nafs*), asceticism, and moral development. [4] The Khalwatiyyah Order - Centers on *dhikr*, spirituality, self-purification, and total devotion to Allah as its main spirit. [5] The Shattariyyah Order - Practices *dhikr jahr* (loud remembrance) and rituals as important orientations. [6] The Tijaniyyah Order - Focuses on an intimate spiritual relationship with Prophet Muhammad through *dhikr* practices, emphasizing self-purification, devotion, and pilgrimage to the tombs of the Wali. [7] The Sammaniyah Order - Employs a collaborative method by incorporating *dhikr* practices from other orders (*dhikr Sammaniyah*), performing *dhikr* with deep concentration, and emphasizing the existence and role of a spiritual guide. [8] The Rifa’iyyah Order - Highlights spirituality through simple living, surrender, and *dhikr*. [9] The Alawiyah Order - Distinguishes itself by its teachings and traditions of the Ahlul Bait (the family of Prophet Muhammad), while also emphasizing noble character, deep love for the Prophet, and participation in social service.³⁴

³² B.J.O. Schrieke, *Het Boek van Bonang*, Exchange Dissertation (Leiden: Leiden University, 1916), pp. 130-137.

³³ Schrieke, *Het Boek van Bonang*, 141.

³⁴ [1] The Naqshbandi Order (Naqshabandiyah, according to the book *Tanwir Qulub*, the word originates from *Naqsh*, meaning carving, image, flag, or large sail) was founded by Sheikh Muhammad Baha’uddin Naqshbandi (1318 CE/717 AH – 1389 CE/791 AH) in the 14th century and was introduced to Indonesia in the 17th century by scholars from the Middle East and Persia. It became popular in regions like West Sumatra, Aceh, and Java. Notable figures include Sheikh Abdul Wahab Rokan. This order emphasizes silent *dhikr* (inner remembrance of God) focusing on purification of the heart and self-control. [2] The Qadiriyyah wa Naqshabandiyah Order was founded by Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani (1077-1166 CE or the

It is important to note that mysticism, faith, and morality are central and powerful elements in all Sufi orders. *Dhikr*, for example, is a common characteristic across all orders; *dhikr* (remembrance) serves as a path toward unity. After achieving *haqiqah* (ultimate truth) and *tariqah* (the spiritual path) based on *shari'ah* (Islamic law), a disciple is guided toward unity with the spiritual guide (*fana' fi as-shaykh*). Through *fana' fi as-shaykh*, the disciple moves toward unity with the Prophet (*fana' fi ar-Rasul*) and ultimately with God (*fana' fi Allah*). *Dhikr* is a ritual prayer derived from the command in the Qur'an, "and remember Allah often" (Surah 62:10), and is recited repeatedly so that the disciple remains constantly mindful of God.

These Sufi orders practice a strict spiritual life, balancing faith and moral qualities, which have a strong influence on the spread of religion, culture, social life, and education. This style of Sufism also influenced the formation of *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) with the characteristic *pir-murid* relationship, where spiritual teachers (shaykhs, saints) provide exemplary teachings, and students show obedience and loyalty in following their teachers' guidance. Matt Stefon, a writer on Sufism, explains that the mystical life of the Sufi was initially limited to the relationship between a spiritual teacher and a few disciples. The foundations of a new monastic system were laid by Abu Sa'd ibn Abi al-Khayr (d. 1049), while the practice of brotherhood communities began to emerge in the 12th century. 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, for instance, was one of the early pioneers in forming these spiritual brotherhood communities. Within these

12th century) and was introduced to Indonesia in the 17th century by scholars from the Middle East and India. A key figure in Indonesia is Sheikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas (1802-1872). [3] The Shattariyah Order was founded by Sheikh Abdullah al-Shattar (d. 1428) in the 15th century and was introduced to Indonesia (West Sumatra and Java) in the 17th century by Indian scholars such as Sheikh Abdurrauf Singkel. [4] The Tijaniyah Order was founded by Sheikh Abu al-Abbas At-Tijani (1737-1815 CE / 1196 AH, late 18th century) in the Sahara region of Algeria, and it was introduced to Indonesia in the 19th century, spreading in West Java. Sheikh Ahmad Sanusi is a well-known figure in this order. [5] The Khalwatiyah Order was founded by Sheikh Zahir al-Din Abu Najib al-Suhrawardi (d. 1168) in the 14th century. The order was further developed by Sheikh Umar al-Khalwati (d. 1397) and was introduced to Indonesia in the 17th century, where it had a significant influence in South Sulawesi. A prominent figure is Sheikh Yusuf al-Makassari (1626-1699). [6] The Sammaniyah Order was founded by Sheikh Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Karim al-Qadiri al-Hasani al-Samman al-Madani (1718-1775 CE) in the 18th century and was introduced to Indonesia also in the 18th century by Middle Eastern scholars such as Sheikh Burhanuddin Ulakan in West Sumatra and Java. [7] The Rifa'iyah Order was founded by Sheikh Ahmad al-Rifa'i (1106-1182) in the 12th century and was introduced to Indonesia in the 19th century by scholars from the Middle East and India. [8] The Alawiyah Order was founded by Sayyid Ahmad bin Isa al-Muhajir (873-956) in the 10th century and was introduced to Indonesia by the *Habib* from Hadramaut, Yemen, in the 18th century. A key figure is Habib Ali Kwatang. [9] The Shadhiliyah Order was founded by Abu Hasan al-Shadhili (1196-1258) in the 13th century and became known in Indonesia in the 18th century through merchants and scholars from the Middle East and North Africa. This order spread in regions such as Java and Sumatra. For further explanation on the spread of Sufi Orders in Indonesia, refer to Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning: Pesantren dan Tarekat*, 247-329.

communities, rigorous spiritual rituals were developed, beginning with the meeting between a disciple and a teacher.³⁵

There is an initiation ceremony to express a pledge of loyalty (*bay'ah*) to the teacher. This is also observed among Vagrant Students in the *Mustaka Rancan* records in Java. Thus, the early model of Islamic Sufism in Indonesia has strong historical foundations rooted in Sufi traditions and mysticism in the Middle East (such as in Arabia and Persia). The relational model within the Sufi community also emphasizes the transmission process that occurs from generation to generation. The investiture with the *khirqah* (the teacher's robe: made of patches and pieces of cloth) during the acceptance of a disciple is seen as a succession of lineage or a chain of mystical transmission.³⁶

It is interesting to note the comments or observations made by Lukens Bull on Dhofier's work, *The Pesantren Tradition: A Study of the Role of the Kyai in the Maintenance of the Traditional Ideology of Islam in Java*. Lukens Bull appreciates the contributions made by Dhofier. According to Dhofier, pesantren and its practices are deeply connected to established Islamic teachings, the Sufism of the Sufis, and emphasize the centrality of classical Arabic texts known as *Kitab Kuning* as the foundation of religious practice in pesantren.³⁷ Its traditional style preserves the textual tradition, which is the result of the reflection of renowned scholars and even Sufis throughout history. This traditional style ensures that the textual transmission is maintained; *Kitab Kuning* (classical Arabic texts) serves as a strong indicator of textual transmission for understanding traditional Islam, encompassing rational and normative ideas, reflections on faith and morality, as well as the character and identity of Islam.

CONCLUSION

Understanding Sufism means recognizing the vertical movement of God that is open to His people through faith (tawhid) and perseverance, but also acknowledging the horizontal movement of Islam as a mercy to all worlds (*rahmatan lil alamin*) for the world and its surroundings. One can encounter this in the Islamic faith tradition within the Sufis and their teaching efforts since the 7th century in the Nusantara region. The massive spread of faith occurred primarily due to loyalty to God (*Wafā' lillāh*) and to the Prophet (*Wafā' li al-rasūl*). This spirituality is manifested in *ma'rifat*, the awareness and knowledge of how to live a moral and ethical life based on Islamic faith. In other words, it involves integrity in faith and knowledge, coupled with morality in practice. Sufism (*tasawuf*) shows us a practical path to understanding Islam through works that may seem complex, with symbolic narratives and esoteric commentaries on the Qur'an

³⁵ Matt Stefon, (ed.), *The Islamic World: Islamic Beliefs and Practices* (New York: Britannica Educational Publishing, 2010), 167.

³⁶ Stefon, *Islamic Beliefs and Practices*.

³⁷ Zamakhsyari Dhofier, "The Pesantren Tradition: A Study of the Role of the Kyai in the Maintenance of the Traditional Ideology of Islam in Java," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 59, No. 04 (November 2000): 1091-1092, DOI:10.2307/2659290.

and Hadith, along with prose letters and mystical poems. However, all these offer teachings in metaphysics (*kashf*) with reasoning (*ta'qqul*), inner knowledge, and guidance for righteous action. Therefore, in the end, we are not merely talking about a literary manuscript but a living work. This is why the textual tradition is akin to a living drama of faith, relevant to the existence of Islam.

The textual tradition of Sufism and the formation of various Sufi orders, along with the Islamic educational communities in Pesantren, serve as indicators of the transition from an exclusive approach to a more inclusive one in various contexts of life and civilization, including in Indonesia. As such, the establishment of educational and training centers made the textual study of Sufism more organized and systematized. In this context, the 17th and 18th centuries were important periods for the transmission of the tradition of faith and knowledge, with the network of scholars serving as an indicator to form an awareness of “Islamic identity.”

However, is the awareness to read and interpret the textual tradition of Sufism still necessary today? This is certainly a recommendatory question for further scholarly study. But it is clear that Islam cannot be separated from its textual tradition, first and foremost the Qur'an and Hadith, as sources of normative law (*fiqh*), followed by the strong reflections of Sufism that remain relevant literarily across time, as long as they exist and relate to central themes such as faith – *tawhid*, and moral values.

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