Sundanese Sufi and Religious Diversity in the Archipelago: The Pluralistic Vision of Haji Hasan Mustapa (1852-1930)

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Abstract

The paper aims to analyze moderate understanding of Haji Hasan Mustapa on religious diversity in the archipelago. He is a greatest Sundanese poet who has studied in Mecca and served as Hoofd Penghulu of Kotaraja Aceh and Bandung in the colonial era. This study is focused on sufism and religious diversity, Mustapa’s scholarship, and on his pluralistic vision, using intertextual studies and semantic analysis. This research argues that Mustapa has tolerance and moderate understanding similarly with Ibn ‘Arabi’s thought. He uses kernel and husk as symbolic images which expressed using natural richness of Sundanese culture for demonstrating his religious conviction that rasa is the kernel of all religions. This study is significant for strengthening the discourse of religious pluralism from sufi perspective in the archipelago which cannot be separated from the chain of Islamic intellectual network. This research has also a significant impact on Chittick’s assumption about the depth of sufi poetry which mostly reveal their tolerance views on religious diversity living in harmony.

Keywords: poetry, sufism, Sunda, religious diversity

A. Introduction

The study of sufism and religious pluralism generally tend to be rooted in the idea of sufis in the Middle East. However, scholars have not been expand the issue of religious pluralism in the context of sufism in Nusantara. It is important to explain that the Nusantara sufi cannot be separated from the sufis tradition in Arab and Persia. Ibn ‘Arabi and Al-Jili’s concept of wahdat al-wujud (the unity of being) for example, has a great influence on sufis tradition in Nusantara.²
Therefore, it is important to explore how Nusantara sufis captured the concept of sufi pluralism in Arab and Persia and put it in their religious diversity life in Nusantara. One of Nusantara sufis who has expressed his respond to the religious diversity issue in the colonial era was Haji Hasan Mustapa (1852-1930). He is the greatest Sundanese poet who wrote many works of Sundanese sufi literature. He is often regarded as a ‘ulama mahuwal (an eccentric ‘ulama). Sayyid ‘Uthman (1822-1914) have been sent a letter of condemnation and accused him of helping the Dutch colonial to convert the Sundanese people. However, his career as a Hoofd Penghulu of Kotaraja Aceh and Bandung made him respected by the Dutch colonial officials, such as K.F. Holle, C. Snouck Hurgronje, Branders, G.A. Hazeu, van Ronkel, Rinkes, and others. He then become one of colonial partners and informants who supplied a lot of information related to socio-religious life in the Dutch East Indies. Based on his closeness of the Dutch colonial officials, it can be understood that Mustapa then tried to express his views on religious diversity in his mystical works.

This study attempts to reinforce sufism argument on religious pluralism. Ibn ‘Arabi and Al-Jili’s concept of wahdat al-wujud has affected Mustapa’s view on pluralistic vision. It is not only can lead to his recognition of the diversity of the Universe as manifestation of God, but also his belief that there is an inner meaning in all religions which can be called as the basic of unity of religions. This research very significant not only to attract Mustapa’s idea in the religious diversity in Indonesia, but also in the context of Sundanese Muslims in West Java who known friendly and obedient. However, this region lately tend to be assumed as one of center points of radicalism and religious intolerance in Indonesia which its subjects mostly are Sundanese.

B. Sufism and Religious Diversity

The sufism acceptance of religious diversity has long been a topic of heated debate among scholars. Many scholars called it transcendental unity of religions (wahdat al-adyan). al-Hallaj (858-922) is regarded as a pioneer of this concept. He believed that all religions were coming from God. These are different in designation and name. This like a tree. The branch of religions grow from the same root. In addition to al-Hallaj, scholars also mentioned role of Ikhwan al-Safa and their works, Rasa’il. They are regarded as a mystics group who have openness view to religious diversity. They describe the truth can be found in all scriptures, beliefs, nations and cultures. All of knowledge have sourced from the unity of principle, cause, world and soul. The openness is the core of their “religion.”
However, compared to Al-Hallaj and Ikhwan al-Safa, Ibn ‘Arabi (1165-1240) is regarded as a greatest mystics. His influence outstretches far into almost all regions in the Islamic world. His view on religious pluralism has been a heated topic of debate. Ibn ‘Arabi argues that God himself is the first problem that makes many differences in this universe from the beginning. The differences is one of many signs that God’s mercy takes precedence over His wrath, leading to the ultimate happiness of all creatures. All creatures are manifestation of God’s self-disclosure (tajalli). God creates the universe to manifest the fullness of His own nature in order to be known. But His manifestation is depending on particular preparedness of individuals in proportion to his/her knowledge capacity. The essence of God is one, but His manifestation in the form of name or symbol is many and varied.12

Ibn ‘Arabi’s concept of tajalli describes his axiomatic understanding of religious diversity as a natural consequence of unlimited emanation of God. Therefore, religious diversity is consequence of individual differences who has received His tajalli in proportion to his knowledge capacity. Although Ibn ‘Arabi never clearly mention the term “unity of religions” (wahdat al-adyan), but his explanation about unity of essence has proved this. Through the doctrine of wahdat al-wujud, Ibn 'Arabi believes that the essence is one. All differences came and lead to Him. Therefore, the essence of all religions derived from God.13 These also will lead to Him. Ibn 'Arabi also a bit much in common with Ibn al-Farid (1181-1235). He is true mystics lovers of Egypt who believes the mystical unity of religions. Based on his love and fana’ (extinction or annihilation in God), Ibn al-Farid describes that religions is one in essence (haqiqa), although these are different name and term literally.14

The doctrine of Ibn ‘Arabi on wahdat al-wujud then developed by al-Jili (1365-1421/1428). He also stated the unity of universal logos in essence. Prophets brought one universal aspect of logos into historical logos. It is then making different with each other treatises.15 Likewise, we cannot ignore Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-1273). His teachings are regarded as a basic argument of religious pluralism. He is a mystic teacher who marked long journey of sufi tradition which well known for round of dervishes. In his great work, Mathnawi, Rumi believes that time and space is manifestation of God. The religious diversity have disguised basic unity of religion. Everything unite with love of God.16 Rumi’s teaching has attracted Americans who clearly hungry for spiritual insights no matter where they may come from, illustrated by the fact that the best selling religious book after the Bible is the poetry of this Persian Sufi.17
The doctrine of unity of being (wahdat al-wujud) which spread in Arab and Persia has been developed in Nusantara sufi tradition for a long time. The influence of Ibn ‘Arabī and Al-Jili can be read in the teaching of Hamzah Fansuri (d. 1590?) and Shamsuddin al-Sumatra’i (1550?-1630). Both Hamzah and Shamsuddin might be regarded as pioneer of wahdat al-wujud in Nusantara. Their teachings have not been widely studied in relation to the doctrine of wahdat al-wujud or wujudiyyah and religious diversity in Nusantara. It is interesting that the critical view of al-Raniri against both Hamzah and Shamsuddin was reflected in Hujjah al-Siddiq li Daf’ al-Zindiq dan Al-Tibyan fi Ma’rifah al-Adyan. Raniri’s works can be regarded as a point of departure to study of Hamzah and Shamsuddin in the discourse of religious pluralism in Nusantara. Haji Hasan Mustapa can be regarded as one of pluralist mystics. He has been influenced by sufism ideas of Ibn ‘Arabī and Al-Jili. Mustapa’s mystical expressions in the form of dangding or guguritan indicate his openness view of religious diversity.

C. The Pluralistic Vision of Haji Hasan Mustapa

Mystical view of Mustapa on religious diversity was based on three important things: his general view of the manifestation of God in the Universe, symbolic images of kernel and husk and his belief in what he called as agama rasa (religion of sense or inner meaning). His view generally is compatible with mystical view of Ibn ‘Arabī and other pluralist mystics. However, the peculiarities of Mustapa is based on his use of symbolic images. He uses symbolic images of Sundanese nature which expressed in metrical poetry as its container.

1. The Plurality of God’s Manifestation

The thought of Mustapa on diversity of being cannot be separated from the doctrine of wahdat al-wujud. The doctrine was developed by Ibn ‘Arabī and Al-Jili. It is interesting that the doctrine then was developed by al-Burhanfuri (1545-1620) into the theory of seven grade of being or martabat tujuh. The theory of martabat tujuh was widely followed by various streams of sufi orders in Nusantara. Mustapa has referred the doctrine of wahdat al-wujud and martabat tujuh to the tradition of Shattariya orders which connected with Sheikh Abdul Muhyi (1640-1715).

The theory of martabat tujuh was used to solve philosophical problem of the relation between the Absolute and the relative, the One and the
many, God and His creatures. The follower of philosophical sufism propose the theory of manifestation of God or tajalli. The theory believes that all creations derive from the manifestation of God. God created His creatures as an object of His love. His creatures were not created from nothing, but they were created through determination of God’s attribute to His essence. Thus, then God can create various kinds of creatures as His manifestation. The manifestation occurs through a hierarchy of being that consists of seven levels of being so-called martabat tujuh (maratib al-sab’ or martabatpitu): ahadiyat, wahdat, wahidiyat, ‘alam arwah}, ‘alam mithal, ‘alam ajsam, dan insan kamil).24

Yahu dat wajibul wujud  
Gusti aing nu sajati  
jangkar pangwedalan  
rasa  
beuti pangbijilan ati  
ayeuna geus katuruban  
ku aya aing pribadi

O who he is a substance of absolute being  
My true Lord  
A source of the manifestation of sense  
An essence of the source of heart  
It was hindering now  
By my self

Sacatur wajibul wujud  
Gusti hiji teu ngabukti  
ana bray ligar ti nyawa  
aya bumi aya langit  
aya ligar mancawarna  
pipinding Gusti sahiji

He was called as wajib al-wujud  
God is one who is not proven  
(but) so open, (He) falls in my soul  
There is earth and heaven  
There is a variety of colors downfall  
It hinders the God’s one

Abdina rasaning tilu  
Gustina rasaning hiji  
abdina rasaning warna  
Gustina rasaning hiji  
nu salah ngarujak eta  
leungit kagustian diri

The servant feel three  
God feel one  
The servant feel multicolored  
God feel one  
It is wrong who has mixed it  
Then lost divinity of self

Therefore, it can be said that the plurality of mankind and the Universe was derived from the diversity of God’s manifestation (tajalli) in
the cosmos since the beginning.\textsuperscript{25} The difference of manifestation is one of many signs that all creatures will be in God’s blessing. All creatures are the manifestation of God. He was known through His manifestation, but His manifestation are dependent on readiness of each creature in proportion of their knowledge. God is one in essence, but His manifestation in the form of symbol or name is unlimited. However, although His name was plural, but basically these are same in language. God as the creator for example, was known as a name of God in all religions. It can be used as a basic argument for a dialogue of religions.\textsuperscript{26}

However, the plurality of His symbol and name in the universe have caused God has hindered from His creations. He is an absolute being or wajib a-wujud who has hindered by the relativity of His creatures. Man has to attempt to pass over the relativity of his name after his creation in the world. He has to find source of his authenticity where he was created in the beginning. Mustapa describes in his dangding of Kinanti Jung Indit deui ti Bandung dan Kinanti nu Pengkukh di Alam Tuhu:

Mustapa, as well as Ibn ‘Arabi, realized that when human was created, he was in the nature of differences. He felt multicolored. It is a difference between him and God. Therefore, he then continually attempts to beyond his difference until reaches God who is source of himself. Mustapa called it nepi ka urut indit (arriving to the point of departing). It can be understood because Mustapa believes that the difference is a consequence of manifestation of God. His manifestations are difference in their realities of creation, but it is one in essence of original source. All essences are one. All differences be based on Him. God is a source of all differences. The differences are in the area of husk, because their essences and original sources are one. Based on his conception of the husk and kernel, Mustapa then describes many symbols of both which borrowed from Sundanese culture and nature.

2. The Symbol of Kernel and Husk

Symbolic images of kernel and husk are used by Mustapa to explains God and Man relations. He believes that Man and the universe are His creatures and regarded as everything other than God. His creatures does not only physical things but also spiritual things. This like kernel and husk. The kernel represents the invisible realm, which domain of divinity aspects (lahut), souls, spirits and angels; the husk represents the human aspects (nasut), visible realm, which domain of sense perception and bodily things. If we look at the universe in relation to God, God is the kernel, and the universe is the husk. In other words, relative to God, both spirits and
bodies are husks. But, if we look at the universe in relation to our own human embodiment, then the physical realm is the husk, the spiritual realm is the kernel, and God is the kernel of the kernel.\(^{27}\)

Mustapa describes these both realm with varieties of symbolic images. In contrast to the Arab and Persian mystics, he describes it with Sundanese symbolic images. Mustapa follows Ibn ‘Arabi who often used symbolic images that evoke emergent associations rather than fixed propositions.\(^{28}\) He uses Sundanese metrical verse or dangding as its container. It is a creation of Sundanese sufi literature to celebrates his search of the self authenticity. Mustapa for example, describes symbolic images of kernel and husk or God and himself in one of his poems, *Kinanti Kidung Pucuk Méga Mendung*:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ti tadi caruluk kawung} & \quad \text{It is palm sugar fruit from earlier} \\
\text{ti tadi salumpit awi} & \quad \text{It is salumpit of bamboo from earlier} \\
\text{ti tadi tongtolang nangka} & \quad \text{It is tongtolang of jackfruit from earlier} \\
\text{ti tadi kembang malatí} & \quad \text{It is a jasmine from earlier} \\
\text{ti tadi hidayatullah} & \quad \text{It is God’s guidance from earlier} \\
\text{ti tadi pastining diri} & \quad \text{It is certainty of self from earlier} \\
\text{Puguh caruluk sakawung} & \quad \text{Sure, caruluk sakawung} \\
\text{puguh salumpit saawi} & \quad \text{Sure, salumpit saawi} \\
\text{puguh tongtolang sanangka} & \quad \text{Sure, tongtolang sanangka} \\
\text{jarami sanumpak jami} & \quad \text{It is straw after harvesting time} \\
\text{pandan ngora dipaudan} & \quad \text{Young pandanus was washed} \\
\text{dijieun samak salipi} & \quad \text{And made kaneron mat} \\
\text{Rarambu tunggal rambu} & \quad \text{Unity of side part} \\
\text{salipi tunggal salipi} & \quad \text{Unity of salipi} \\
\text{lambaran sapapandanan} & \quad \text{A sheet of same pandanus} \\
\text{tunggal kaulaning Gusti} & \quad \text{United God and His servant} \\
\text{tunggal kaulaning sukma} & \quad \text{United soul of the servant} \\
\text{rapih sasamaning ngabdi} & \quad \text{It is neat as same as a servant} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Mustapa in his poetry make a different between God and Man in the context of *wahdat al-wujud*. It is an image of meeting between kernel and
husk, *nasut* and *lahut*, human and divinity aspects. Mustapa expressed it through symbolical images of *caruluk* (palm sugar fruit) and *kawung* (palm tree), *salumpit* (dry layer which circling on bamboo tree) and bamboo, *tongtolang* (young jackfruit) and jackfruit, straw dan *jami* (straw after harvesting time), pandanus leaf and *samak salipi* (mats, kaneron, bags, sacks). The other sufis may be described it with day and night, drunkenness and consciousness, sun and light, boat and sea, wine and glasses, etc.

Mustapa celebrated his effort to achieve the self authenticity through his poetry. He uses Sundane metrical verse or *dangding*. A literary work had been earlier been used to arranged Sundanese tembang with stringed instrument. It is not just read silently. Although the expression of poetic and mystical experiences tend to be different, but both are met in use of symbols. Symbolic images are medium of delivering subtle message of emotions that cannot be understood rationally. Therefore, according to sufis, poetry is a medium in which they could do the best of their capacities. They sing and celebrate it. Chittick called sufi poetry a celebration of love, a hymn of unity and unification, a cheerful song that invites listener to feel the eternal wine.

Mustapa’s *dangding* is similar to Arab sufi poetry such as al-Hallaj, Ibn ‘Arabi, al-Sa’di, Ibn Farid, as well as Persian and Turkey such as Attar and Rumi, and many sufis in other areas. His poetry express the same mystical spiritual feeling. Similarly, the Malay shair of Hamzah and Javanese mysticism literature are demonstrating the influence of sufism narrative which expressed in regional languages in Nusantara. Sufi poetry represents mystical spiritual feeling which experienced by anyone who closed to God. Therefore, it right to say that the poets were the chief disseminators of sufi thought. Throughout the ages, poets and mystics of all nations have perhaps had one fundamental problem in common and that is, how to express the inexpressable; how to speak the unspeakable.

Poetry can represent various meanings deeply through symbolic images. It just shows the word, without explanation. Poetry has magical power of beautiful language, draw many images and rhythm of love. Poetry is created in ecstasy. Hence, it existed in the kernel area, not husk. This is different from the prose. According to sufis, prose is generally used to write about Islamic teaching and ethics. The prose describes God in the description of good, ritual obligations, and guidance of normative behavior. It is more closer to husk.

*Suluk* is search process from husk to kernel, from *nasut* to *lahut*. It is return process of the self to arriving at the point of departing. This like a
cycle. Suluk as a way of sufism attempts to overcome the tension between kernel and husk to attain the kernel of the kernel (God). Man cannot attain his authenticity in the husk area. He had to arise his potential divinity. Everything could be put in its proper place if Man can find his own kernel and increase to the kernel of the kernel.

Perfect Man is full image of the hidden secret of God (al-insan sirri, wa ana sirruhu). Man was created in accordance with all kernels of divinity, both spirit (kernel) and body (husk). It is only Man who can attain the kernel of the kernel (God), the spirit of the spirit. Man derived from God and must return to God. He has to making re-unification of his existence with God (wahdat al-wujud) and to emitting pearl hidden in His existence in the world (kanzanmakhfiyyan), demonstrating His greatness, and carry out the divine attributes. His will has to unite with the will of God. This is a search of divinity aspects (lahut) in human aspects (nasut). It is like a paradoxical logic between kernel and husk, between form and essence. There is human aspects in divinity and divinity aspects in human.37

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Kernel</th>
<th>Husk</th>
<th>Meaning of Symbols</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Kuring/I</td>
<td>Kurung/Container</td>
<td>There is self authenticity which shut in your self body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Aing/I</td>
<td>Anjeun/You</td>
<td>There are human and divinity aspects in human body which have to be united.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Jantung/heart</td>
<td>Cau/banana</td>
<td>Man has to find his authenticity until its heart or kernel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Bune/tadpole</td>
<td>Bangkong/frog</td>
<td>Search process of authenticity is not easy. The beautiful rhythm of authenticity would be achieved when the holy of self met with the Most Holy of God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Angklung</td>
<td>Awi/Bamboo</td>
<td>The authenticity of self can be achieved when the self has changed from the ordinary level ('awam) to the elite level (khawas).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The authenticity of self can be achieved when arriving at the point of departing.

Mystical thought of Mustapa tend to emphasizes what is called as a sufism of reconciliative. He believes that the hidden mystery of God can only be known through His creation. We can also find this in mystical thought of Hamzah Fansuri. Mustapa used symbol images which distinguish between himself and God despite both are identical and cannot be separated. He, in same manner as Ibn ‘Arabi, still emphasizes that God and the Universe are identical and different as well. He emphasizes the immanence (tashbih) and transcendence (tanzih) of God. Following table shows how Mustapa used symbol images of kernel and husk in his dangding which borrowed from Sundanese nature and culture.

Mustapa used various symbol of kernel and husk which rooted in God’s attributes and works. God created kernel and husk, spiritual things and physical things. Man have soul and body. Both need to be maintained and trained continually. God sent prophets to provide guidance in developing it. The prophets bring a variety of practices, rituals, rules and laws to maintain the body and social life in community. They bring wisdom and enlightenment to cultivate the spirit. Various traditions of knowledge in Islam are also referred to these two areas. The knowledge of theological dogma, ritual and social practices are contained in the husk area. Sufis teachings encourage the kernel dimension.

The theology of Islam also describes God in these two bipolar: beauty name (ism jamal) and majesty name (ism jalal) of God, which in Chinese
tradition called as yin and yang. God was merciful and arrogant, gentle and hard, or in more abstract terms, he was tashbih and tanzih, immanent and transcendent. According to Mustapa, drama of human life existed in a tension between the bipolarity of kernel and husk which embodied in both immanence and transcendence of God. That bipolarity sing his immanence and transcendence, his merciful and wrath, drunkenness and consciousness, unification and separation which using symbolic images of carulukkawung, salumpitawi, tongtolang nangka, kembang malati. Salik will accept anything that comes from God, whether unification or separation. Mustapa in his poetry celebrates both, caruluk and kawung were celebrated together. His poetry like a hymn of unity and unification of the kernel and husk. There are no place to divide anything, but this simply to proud in the universal presence of God who has united all elements into the same origins.

In sufi tradition, the kernel is essentially light, life, knowledge and awareness; the husk is essentially darkness, death, ignorance and unconsciousness. The kernel is meaning, the husk is expression and form. The kernel is the domain of unity, sameness, coherence, peace and harmony; the husk is the domain of multiplicity, difference, incoherence, strife and disharmony.

Therefore, it can be understood if sufis tend to easily accept religious diversity. They see the diversity in the context of God’s mercy comprehensively. His mercy precedes His wrath (rahmati yaghlib ghadabi) as Muhammad said. This seems to be happen, because His mercy shows the unity of God’s reality, meanwhile His wrath appears only in terms of diversity of creation. God's mercy, gentleness and His merciful are more real and fundamental to the divine attributes than His wrath and violence. God’s mercy be obtained in His essence as the one, meanwhile God’s wrath only appear in His manifestation after various distinctions was made between various names and attributes of God. Sufi poets generally believed this. There are no final judgment on someone. The final judgment only belongs to God, and He sees on his best time. This according to God’s evaluation, not ours. The only thing that we can be sure of is the unity of God and God’s mercy presedes His wrath.

Sufis invite all creations to return to the mercy of God. This does not mean that sufi poets like Mustapa be liberal, pluralist, tolerant, even relativist in the modern sense. Sufis celebrate the unity of kernel as well as differences and conflicts that exist on the husk. No one could find the kernel, which an area of peace, harmony, sincerity and generosity, without the husk. This means that God’s wrath and anger have a real manifestation
in human life. They are fully aware that no one can get the kernel without the husk which being handled well. They know that this requires the guidance of God as revealed to the prophets. According to sufis, there is no contradiction between pluralism and exclusivism, absolutism and relativism. There is similar element of all religions, but the believer would believe the truth of his own religion.\textsuperscript{43} Pluralism only existed in the kernel and exclusivism existed in the husk. Sufis pluralism believe that there is unity of all mankind in the creative act of God. This is recognized unanimously by all the prophets.

3. Inner Dimension of all Religions

The symbolic images of kernel and husk in mystical thought of Mustapa, carrying him on the inner dimension that unite all religions. According to him, the diversity of creatures are coming from the shape of physical. It can be said that when Man penetrate into inner dimension, they will find the peace. The inner dimension is regarded as religious basic. This represents the kernel, similarities and peace. This innate of Man spirit and soul. All religions emphasize the teaching of inner dimension of divinity aspects. Schuon and Nasr call it esotericism of religion or unity of religious transcendence.\textsuperscript{44} Mustapa calls it \textquote{agamarasa} (religion of sense).

Mustapa describes that the inner dimension of religions converge on what he calls as a search process of self extinction or annihilation in God (\textit{nyiar fana'}). He just follows the sign of his inner meaning which flowing until his sense. Mustapa expressed it in Asmarandana Ngagurit Kaburu Burit (Or. 7876):

\begin{verbatim}
Pangrasa ti barang lilir
Sugriya bangsaning jalma
Teu pilih agama naon
Leungit mukti, nyiar fana
Leungit Allah, nyiar betah
Tepi katutug lagedu
Taya piubareunana
My feeling since I am adult
That every human
Whatever their religions
Missing their adequacy, looking for annihilation
in God
Missing God, looking for immortality
Until finish, perfect
There is no longer a cure
\end{verbatim}

\begin{verbatim}
Piubareunana tadi
Diwarah rasa nyorangan
Kunaonna teu katembong
Jalan warta papaiyan
Nepi tenusing rasa
The cure that had been used
This is educated by his alone feeling
The caused cannot be apperared
Following, flowing news
Until to the sense
\end{verbatim}
Mustapa describes in his poetry that spiritual experience of the people who are aware of their existences will lead to search process of self annihilation in God. The self-consciousness that seeks to unite with God. This reminds us to one of the major themes of sufism on the universality of inner meaning that connects all religions. According to Mustapa, all religious experiences culminate in search process of self annihilation in God. God’s name no longer exist, because there is only a comfort feeling in perfect immortality that still exists.

According to Mustapa, it is not easy to achieve the self annihilation perfectly. He has to burn his self profanity. Mustapa calls it nepi katutug lagedu. The word of lagedu (skin when be blackening) is a symbol that means an effort of hard work to burn his self profanity until finish perfectly. His self perfection was marked by a symbol of black skin which caused by the ray of sun. The effort of annihilation can be achieved through following the sign of inner meaning in his sense. The phrase of nepi katutug lagedu is a proper expression to describes the end of spiritual process in Sundanese. The phrase is an expression of what Corbyn called as a creative imagination in Mustapa’s dangding.

It is interesting that one of mystical thoughts of Mustapa focuses on inner dimension of religions. Mustapa also emphasizes it in his poetry Kinanti nu Pengkuh di Alam Tuhu. He describes that all creatures are different in the external dimension; on the contrary, all creatures are same in the inner dimension.

Bukurna bêda jeung batur
lahirna bêda jeung lahir
rasana bêda jeung rasa
atina bêda jeung ati
tatana bêda jeung tata
budina bêda jeung budi

His proof is different from others
His external dimension is different
His sense is different
His heart is different
His attitude is different
His kindness is different

Tah kitu alaming mahluk
tah kitu alaming abdi
tah kitu alaming dunya

That is a nature of creature
That is a nature of me
That is a nature of world

Nepi ka nyurup ka bayu
Jatnika ludeunganana
Until having rhythm with the wind
It is true courage
tah kitu alaming jisim
That is a nature of body

tah kitu alaming désa
That is a nature of village

tah kitu alaming sisi
That is a nature of side

Bukur teu bédé jeung bukur
Evidence is not different with another evidence
lahir teu bédé jeung lahir
External dimension is not different
rasa teu bédé jeung rasa
Sense is not different
ati teu bédé jeung ati
Heart is not different
tata teu bédé jeung tata
Attitude is not different
budi teu bédé jeung budi
Kindness is not different

Tah kitu alaming tuhu
That is a nature of loyalty

tah kitu alaming Gusti
That is a nature of God

tah kitu alam aherat
That is a nature of hereafter

tah kitu alaming batin
That is a nature of inner meaning

tah kitu alaming sirna
That is a nature of annihilation

tah kitu alaming pasti
That is a nature of absolute

Nu itu geusan di hirup
That is it, its place in life

nu ieu geusan di hurip
That is it, its place in real life

nu itu geusan di basa
That is it, its place in language

nu ieu geusan di eusi
That is it, its place in essence

nu itu geusan keur ngaora
That is it, its place when was young

nu ieu keur aki-aki
This is it, when was old

Bédé-bédana di itu
Its different in that matter

nya cau bédé jeung cai
Banana and water are different

nya gula bédé jeung uyah
Sugar and salt are different

nya panas bédé jeung tiis
Heat and cold are different

nya bulan bédé jeung bén-tang
Moon and stars are different

nya bumi bédé jeung langit
Earth and sky are different

Nya handap bédé jeung
Underside and aboveside are different

luhur
Gusti and his servant are different
nja Gusti béda jeung abdi
Allah béda jeung
Muhammad
nja lahir béda jeung batin
dunya béda jeung ahérat
nja awal béda jeung ahir

Allah and Muhammad are different
Literal and inner meaning are different
The world and the hereafter are different
The beginning and the end are different

//Da ieu mah lain kitu
nja cau tunggaling cai
nja gula tunggaling uyah
nja panas tunggaling tiis
nja bulan tunggaling bén̄tang
nja bumi tunggaling langit

Because this is not like that
Banana united with water
Sugar united with salt
Heat united with cold
Moon united with stars
Earth united with sky

Nya handap tunggaling
luhur
nja Gusti tunggaling abdi
Allah tunggaling
Muhammad
nja lahir tunggaling batin
dunya tunggaling ahérat
nja awal tunggaling ahir

The underside united with the aboveside
Gusti united with his servant
Allah united with Muhammad
The external dimension united with the inner meaning
The world united with the hereafter
The beginning united with the end

Bédana jaizul wujud
tunggalna barina wajib
wajib sadatna-sadatna
jaizna nu lain-lain
wenangna saluar datna
wajibna sadating diri

It is different of ja’izul wujud
Its unity is obligated
Its obligatory is only an essence
Its ja’iz is the others
It might be in external essence
Its obligatory of a self essence

Mustapa illustrates that all realities are different in the nature of creation or external dimension; but these are same in the nature of God or inner meaning. The phrase of Mustapa reminds us of the ideas of Ibn ‘Arabi. He said that the reality is one in essence. The nature of external
dimension is different, but its different referred to God. God is the first problem that makes the difference in this universe from the beginning.

All creatures is manifestation of God’s self-disclosure (tajalli). God, as a hidden mystery, manifested His self through his creation. Hence, He then was known (kuntu kanzan makhfiyyan fakhalaqtu al-khalq liya’rifuni). However, His manifestation is depending on particular preparedness and presupposition of individuals in proportion to his/her knowledge capacity (ana ‘inda zann ‘abdi bi). The essence of God is one, but His manifestation is many and varied.50

The symbol and name of religions are part of diversity in the external dimension. It is a natural consequence of the unlimited emanation and manifestation of God. Every religion is different, but the difference is not absolute. All religions are one in essence and connected each other. Mustapa argued in one of his works that there are similarities between Buddhism and Islam in essence:

88. Question: “If the religion (of Islam) does not come here (in West Java), the holy Qur’an does not come here, the Prophet, the custodian, the believer story does not convey, Islamic faith does not come here, no story on that... the Sundanese people may will be Buddhism. They do not know the truth of religion (Islam)?
Answer: Well, this does not like that, because all religions are innate of Man soul. Every soul has religion, because Man is (more better) than animals. There are some talks in human daily life which more greater their animal lusts. They leave his religion. They can find a true religion when their lusts can be controlled.51

It is interesting that Mustapa in his book of question and answer, no longer focused on the external dimension of religion which always see the others in different. Mustapa has also look at the religion in essence (gnosis, ma’rifat). All religions is difference, but these are united in essence.52 Islam, a religion which comes to West Java after Buddhism, were not be celebrated as only one truth. Islam is not only one truth mission. The Sundanese people have followed Buddhism previously. Both Islam and Buddhism have similar missions in essence. They have followed a religion before Islam. This can be said that all religions are innate of human soul. Hence, every human basically have religion. According to Mustapa, the religious differences were caused by animal lusts of human. Their lusts influenced Man ability to accept the truth of religion. Their lusts can make all religions more colored. There are not only softness and openness in all religions, but also hardness and closedness. These colored dimension would make religions in conflict.
However, every human will be able to talk about the kernel of truth if their lusts can be controlled. They will be clear when talking about the truth of religion.

Mustapa also referred to the lust of human when in other part of his book he was asked about the root of disputes and conflicts among human. The lust of human which regarded as lower grade. Mustapa described it with symbol of kaula (servant) and cacah (lower people). According to him, their employers or lord (Gusti) did not intervene in the dispute of his servant. Furthermore, Mustapa has also answered that he never been fight anyone, although there are people who invite him to fight. This answer shows that Mustapa loved to each other by his inner meaning and heart.

108. Question: “Why do people like to dispute?” Answer: “That is happen between low people and their fellows, fellow servants. They tempted together; their lords did not intervene!”

109. Question: “Have you ever been to fight with someone?” Answer: I have never invite someone to fight! I often invited to fight by someone, they think that I will fight him.

Furthermore, Mustapa also has been asked about the meaning of religion. He said that all religions educate and learn about the inner meaning. It like a Sundanese proverb: there are something sounds, looks and feels by yourself (aya ka nu kadeuleu kadéngé, aya nu karasa ku manéh). Therefore, Islam taught the doctrin of twenty attributes of God as a basic lesson to learn about the inner meaning. Based on the lesson, moslems could feel the presence of God in their hearts:

89. Question: “What is the true meaning of religion? For what?
Answer: the religion, all religions, educate and learn to move (to the sense); as a proverb said, “ninggang terusing rasa” (its goal to achieve the sense or inner meaning); It like another proverb: “there are something sounds, looks and feels by yourself (nyebut aya ka nu kadeuleu kadéngé).” The religion learn you that there is something which feels to you (aya nu karasa ku manéh). Therefore, you learn about twenty attributes of God first, because it is important to your heart or inner meaning. Someday when you talking about being of God, it will be different with your daily talk.

Mustapa holds this religion of sense firmly. His convince on the inner meaning of religion was also expressed in his letter to Snouck. He said that the scriptures of divine religions are result of faith (iman), not Islam.
“My last work is Dawalib al-‘Awalim, entitled Gurinda Alam Dunya Karang Kembang Haji Hasan Mustapa. There are three volumes. Its content is about many terms and customs which changing along with the different of time and space in religion and culture ... the others explained that the scriptures of divine religions are result of faith, not Islamic.  

Mustapa explicitly explains that the scriptures of divine religions are result of faith and creed (iman). He does not attempt to doubt all scriptures, because according to him, all scriptures are result of faith. It is a result of inner meaning of the prophets. Although the prophets and their religions are different historically, but their teachings are same in essence. The religious diversity which brought by the prophets is a direct consequence of the differences of each prophet to receive God’s manifestation (tajalli) in proportion their capacity. Every religion is different in historical logos, but the difference was not absolute, because the universal logos is one in essence. This is the essence of religions, namely the religion of sense.

In other metrical poetry, Mustapa stated that we will not be able to achieve the religious truth in the world. There are many people bow down to wood or stone. They often betray God. Therefore, Mustapa chose the path of Ibrahim. However, this depends on the choice of their own passions for binding promise with their self authenticities. Mustapa attempts to embrace all religions, though his choice on the path of Ibrahim. He has a lot of interaction with non-Muslim, particularly the colonial officials. So he attempts to find a common religious conviction. He believes that the truth of religion cannot be found in this world, in the nature of external meaning. Because the religious choices will be depend on every human lust and passion. The true religion is exist in the kernel of inner meaning.

Piit ngeundeuk-ngeundeuk pasir
jogjog neureuy buah lowa
wawanén tonggeret banén
néangan nu enya-enya
nya moal meunang di dunya
nya sujud ka kayu watu
turnan wisaya berahma

Berahmana ngan Ibrohim
minangka jalan agama

The sparrows shake up the hill
Jogjog swallowedlowa fruit
It is a courage of tonggeretbanen
They are looking for the real
It cannot be achieved in the world
They bowed to wood to stone
Because they follow God’s way

It is only the divinity path of Ibrahim
As a religious path
Therefore, Mustapa does not hold the dichotomy between iman and kufr, believe and unbelieve, moslem or infidel. According to him, this issue is a spiritual discussion, not Islamic jurisprudence area (fiqh). This issue is only exist in inner meaning and sense. Mustapa always take a position in this spiritual circle, the nature of angel (malakut) and divinity aspects (lahut). In his polemical work, Injaz al-Wa’d fi Itfa’ a-Ra’d (to fulfill a promise and to stopped up the thunder), Mustapa expressed his believe on the issue of his position as a moslem or infidel. His work is written as a protest to Sayyid ‘Uthman, an ‘ulama of Betawi, who has called Mustapa “Evil of Bandung.”

The problem of iman and kufr, believe and unbelieve reside in the spiritual discussion. It is not to be compared that a moslem was born by moslem and an infidel can only bear infidel. The spirit of someone who wrote this writing (Mustapa) is not leave from the spiritual circle. He rotated in there. He could not get out of the spiritual area. His spiritual experience continually move toward the high nature of angel and the great nature of divinity.

With the above discussions, Mustapa clearly demonstrated the attitude of his openness to the religious diversity. His pluralistic vision is based on the inner meaning aspect as the kernel of religions. According to Mustapa, the difference of creatures were derived from their external form, not the inner meaning. The sign of inner meaning in all religions are flowing until his sense. He holds the inner meaning in his heart of religion. He found peace there.

The pluralistic vision of Mustapa, in the context of religious studies, simply have compatibility with the “sophia perennis” of Schuon. A concept which refers to esotericism of religions. Hossein Nasr, who representing a moslem, adopted the sophia perennis concept. Nasr then developes the concept based on his knowledge about sufi master teachings, especially Ibn ‘Arabi, Al-Jili and Rumi. The pluralistic vision of Mustapa seems to be in line of the sufis. It is interesting that Mustapa expressed his pluralistic vision through the channel of Sundanese sufi literature. He used many
symbols of Sundanese nature and culture. It is a sufism interpretation that could be called as a transethnic sufism.

E. Closing Remarks

The above discussion provides us that Mustapa captured the concept of sufi pluralism in Arab and Persia and put it in his religious diversity life in West Java. He cannot be separated from the influence of pluralistic vision of previous sufis, such as Ibn ‘Arabi and Al-Jili. He expressed his pluralistic vision of religions in Sundanese nature and culture. Mustapa uses the kernel and husk as symbolic images of the relationship between God and Man. Both symbol of kernel and husk are expressed by borrowing natural richness of Sundanese culture. This shows his religious conviction that *rasa* or inner meaning is a kernel of all religions. Mystical thought of Mustapa reflects and celebrates the similarities. All human have to appear the similarities as a common religious conviction towards living in harmony. This study is significant for strengthening the discourse of religious pluralism from sufi perspective. The pluralistic vision of Mustapa demonstrated the similar vision with other sufis. It is important to underlined that the philosophical sufism can lead to the development of a pluralistic vision of religion. Mustapa’s position is very important in the discourse of religious pluralism in Nusantara.

Endnotes:

1 UIN Sunan Gunung Jati Bandung


8 Sukawarsini Djelantik, “Terrorism in Indonesia: The Emergence of West Javanese Terrorist,” The paper was presented at the 5th East-West Center International Graduate Student Conference, February 16-18, 2006 in Honolulu, Hawaii USA, p. 11.


23 Haji Hasan Mustapa, Kinanti Nu Pengkuh di Alam Tuhu (Or. 7873); Iskandarwassid, Ajip Rosidi, Josep CD., Naskah Karya Haji Hasan Mustapa, p. 80.
29 Haji Hasan Mustapa, Kinanti Kidung Pucuk Mega Mendung (Or. 7878); Iskandarwassid, Ajip Rosidi, Josep CD., Naskah Karya Haji Hasan Mustapa, p. 315 and 344.
41 Alexander Knysh, Islamic Mysticism, p. 167.
42 عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه أن النبي ﷺ قال لما خلق الله الخلق كتب في كتابه فهو عهد فوق العرش إن رحمتي تغلب غضبي وفي رواية إن رحمتي سقطت غضبي (متفق عليه).


48. Henry Corby, Alone with Alone, p. 179.


53. Haji Hasan Mustapa, 144 Patakonan jeung Jawabna, p. 29.


55. Haji Hasan Mustapa, Arabic Letters from Bandung (Correspondence with Snouck Hurgronje), 1911-1923, Cod. Or. 8952, March 9, 1920, UB Leiden University.


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