

INTOXICATION AND SOBRIETY IN SUFI TRADITION

By :

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(Lecture In Ushuluddin and Dakwah IAIN SMH Banten)

Abstrak :

Masalah ketuhanan selalu menjadi tema perdebatan tiada akhir. Masing-masing membicarakan-Nya dengan perspektifnya sendiri. Ahli Kalam memandang Allah melalui tanzih-Nya, Allah yang tak pernah terjangkau oleh siapapun dan apapun. Sedangkan para sufi memandang Allah selalu dekat dan bisa "dijangkau" oleh manusia.

Meskipun para sufi menyatakan "keterjangkauan" Allah, namun mereka mengekspresikannya secara berbeda. Sebagian sufi memandang Allah bisa dijangkau dengan tetap menjaga keterbatasan dan perbedaan antara manusia dengan Tuhannya melalui jalur penghambaan, Sang Khalik dan makhluk, Yang Hakiki dan yang nisbi. Sedangkan sufi lainnya ada yang menegaskan bahwa Allah omnipresen, imanen, dan dapat menyatu dengan manusia (hulul), atau manusia dapat menyatu dengan Tuhan (ittihad), atau dalam pemikiran imaginal Tuhan dapat dipandang imanen dan hadir dalam segala sesuatu (wahdatul wujud). Karena itu, untuk menerangkan kondisi psikologis tersebut, biasanya para ahli tasawuf menganalisisnya melalui dua kondisi (ahwal) yang dialami para pencari Tuhan (salik), yakni kondisi mabuk (sukr) dan sadar (sahw).

Kata Kunci : *Ahwal, Intoxication, Sobriety, Sufi Tradition*

Preface

Islam's theological axiom, *tawhid*, declares that God is one, but it also asserts that the world is many. All of Islamic theological thinking addresses the issue of how to correlate multiplicity with unity. Those who look more at the divine side of things place greater stress on unity, and those who look more at the world emphasize multiplicity. As a general rule, rational thinking about God focuses on His separation from the world and the world's utter difference from His unique reality, and hence it highlights multiplicity and diversity. In contrast, imagistic or "imaginal" thinking about God tends to see the immanent unity established by God's presence in all things.

The theologians assert that God is utterly "incomparable" (*tanzih*) with all things in the universe, and the sufis respond that all things are

“similar” (*tasybih*) to Him, because they derive all their reality from Him.¹ Within the theory and practice of Sufism itself, a parallel differentiation of perspectives can be observed. Many Sufis vigorously asserted God’s omnipresent and immanent oneness and the possibility of union with Him. Others stressed His absolute transcendence and emphasized the duties of servanthood that arise as soon as we distinguished between Creator and creature, Real and unreal, truth and falsehood, right and wrong.

In order to describe the psychological concomitants of these two standpoints, the Sufis spoke of various pairs of “states” (*ahwal*) experienced by the travelers on the path to God. One of the most instructive of these is “intoxication” (*sukr*) and “sobriety” (*sahw*). Intoxication follows upon being overcome by the presence of God. It designated the joy of the seekers in finding the eternal source of all beauty and love within themselves. The travelers see God in all things and lose the ability to discriminate between Him and creation or to differentiate between correct and incorrect. Intoxication is associated with expansion, hope, and intimacy with God. It is the human response to the divine names that declare God’s compassion, love, kindness, beauty, gentleness, and concern.²

Sukr And Sahw

Sobriety is the return to the senses after absence. Intoxication is absence due to a strong “oncoming.” Intoxication can be greater than absence in one respect. A person who is intoxicated can be “feeling good” (*mabsuth*) without being in a state of complete intoxication and without his heart losing all awareness of things. The first state is that of a would-be intoxicated (*mutasakir*) whose oncoming has not completely taken him over, so that he still has access to his senses. However, the intoxication can intensify to the point that it exceeds absence. Through an intensification of intoxication, the intoxicated can exceed in absence even one who is in the state of absence or the one who is absent can be more completely absent than the intoxicated.³

Intoxication could be viewed as psychic masturbation. Masturbation could be defined as trying to do something when you don’t have everything needed to do it. Contacting the subconscious realms of significance without our full equipment is like making love without a partner. Not only is it less

¹ For a detailed discussion of the Islamic intellectual tradition in terms of the creative tension between *tanzih* and *tasybih*, see Sachiko Murata and W. C. Chittick, *The Vision of Islam* (New York: Paragon House, 1994), part 2

² For detail on discussion about intoxication and sobriety, see J. Nurbakhsh, *Sufism: Fear and Hope, Contraction and Expansion, gathering and Dispersion, Intoxication and Sobriety, Annihilation and Subsistence* (New York: Khaniqah-I Nimatullahi, 1982)

³ Michael A. Sells (ed.), *Early Islamic Mysticism: Sufi, Quran, Mi’raj, Poetic and Theological Writings*, (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1996), p. 124-125

physically satisfying, it bypasses the emotional and spiritual dimensions of relationship. One can understand the many reasons why people do it: loneliness, impatience, narcissism. Like intoxicants, masturbation creates a tension between the fantasy and the actuality. It leaves people askew and ultimately crippled.

Can psychoactive substances ever yield psychological or spiritual benefit? A qualities "yes" suggests itself here. An experience produced by external substances may give enough of a taste of higher being to motivate someone toward awakening that state on a more permanent and stable basis, especially if the person has not already been exposed to the mature spiritual guidance that certain traditions could offer.

It is important to keep in mind, however, that the shift of perspective offered by certain drugs can also be accomplished through various other means, one of which is contact with someone who has attained higher being. While such an experience may be a bit less dramatic than a drug experience, it is less likely to cause psychological imbalance. On the other hand, such imbalances can also be caused by teachers with limited knowledge who induce certain states in their students that may, if indulged in, make them less fit for ordinary life and less capable of reaching completion.

A mature spiritual distinguishes between temporary states on the one hand, and station, or level of being, on the other. Less mature approaches may tend to rely on ecstasogenic techniques, narcotics of the path for the spiritually addicted. Certainly many people from the drug culture have been attracted to spiritual paths because they seems to offer these altered states of consciousness. But mature traditions speak of a sobriety which encompasses and surpasses the ecstasy of intoxication.

Shamsi Tabriz, the teacher of the thirteenth-century Sufi mystic Rumi, said:

Some of our friends find their joy in cannabis. This is the fantasy of the devil. With us, there is no place for the fantasy of the angels. How much less is there a place for the fantasies of the devil! We don't even accept the illusions of the angels, so what can the illusions of the devil be? Why don't our friends take pleasure in that clean and infinite universe of ours? This universe embraces them and makes them drunk without ever making them aware of it. Everyone is in unanimous agreement that this universe is not an illicit substance.⁴

The questions might be asked, "In working with the nervous system alone, isn't one in fact producing the same neurological substances through breathing and meditation exercises that are stimulated through certain drugs? And if this is so, couldn't one say that the person who uses a pill or brain machine in a disciplined way might not also produce the same results but in

⁴ Michael A. Sells (ed.), *Early Islamic Mysticism...* p. 126

much less time?"

This question is a little bit like asking, "If it's possible to stimulate certain states in a laboratory monkey that are similar to the states that the monkey will meet in the jungle, can the monkey of the laboratory achieve the same development and maturity as the monkey who develops in the jungle?" Both may experience "all that a monkey can experience." What is the difference?

According to Sufi understanding, one can experience Truth, Reality, God, in essence or through its attributes. The monkey who matures in the jungle is developing through an experience of the attributes. Because of its relationship with its own natural milieu, the milieu in which its species developed, we may suppose that the jungle monkey, though theoretically experiencing the same states as the laboratory animal, will have more richness of experience, more maturity and understanding.

Let's imagine now that we could raise a human being in a spiritual hothouse, a programmed setting from birth, and give that person all the "meditation" experience it is possible to give, but withhold all the complexity, suffering, and disappointment that ordinary human beings face. This too would be a kind of laboratory enlightenment. How much compassion and understanding would such a person have for the struggles of an ordinary human being? Many attributes of our own essence seem to develop only when we are faced with certain kinds of challenges and difficulties. Sometimes the remedy lies in the poison.

One could also ask whether psychoactive substances have been helpful to certain native peoples using shamanistic practices over the centuries in isolation from other societies. Do we have something to learn from them? Definitely. Should we try to live like them? I don't see how it would be either possible or desirable to apply their solutions to our ecosystem, which is, after, all, the contemporary multicultural technological world.

This is a complex subject. We can consider some principles without getting caught in absolutes. The strongest argument in my own mind against any artificial means of spiritual exploration is that it seems to exact a price. The price is the weakening or disabling of important functions of the mind that could integrate the experience of the expanded states. For this reason, I would rather trust a tradition that offers a gradual approach integrating expanded consciousness with practical, social, and intellectual skills. A second consideration is that seeking "states," through whatever means, is at best an entertainment, and very likely a form of aggrandizing the ego. Can we see the trap involved in looking for some shortcut or high that will do it for us? Does the Beloved, as it were, want a conscious lover or an inebriated one?

A third consideration is an issue of faith, and by faith I mean a

certainty in the existence and support of a beneficent Reality. Can we accept that this equipment we have been furnished with and this life that we face are the best possible conditions for consciously knowing this Reality? Perhaps, if we can surrender to what is, that is where we meet Truth face to face and never separate from ourselves from.

Maybe we are meant to walk out of our prison with all our faculties intact and functioning. Maybe we are given exactly the equipment we need to know the universe. If we do not know how to use the equipment, that is another matter. We can learn. Through conscious work on the nervous system, including purification from chemical and psychological toxins, understanding the finer energy system and the science of breath, we can prepare this physical vehicle for contact with all levels of reality.

Difference Between *Sukr* And *Sahw*

Known that *sukr* (intoxication) as well as *ghalbah* (ecstasy) according to the Sufi *syaikhs* is the intense and overwhelming love of God; and *sahw* (sobriety) is regaining of consciousness after intoxication.⁵ According to the commentary of Bakhsh Rabbani, *sukr* is the result of *fana'* which, as already stated, means the loss of the seeker's being in the Divine Being, while *sahw* is the state of sobriety when the seeker comes out of *fana* and resumes or regains his individual self after intoxication. The Sufi *syaikhs* generally give preference to *sahw* over *sukr* for the reason that the seeker in the permanent state of intoxication is lost to mankind forever, whereas the Sufis of the stage of *sahw* called *baqa bi Allah* or *abdiyat* (bondsmanship) are fully capable of doing their duty to both God and mankind.

Moreover, the seeker of the stage of *sahw* desires to remain as a humble slave of the Divine Lord rather than perpetually living in the state of *fana* where he does not know what he is, where he is, and for what purpose he is created. However, there is the stage above *fana* and *baqa*. It is in fact a combination of both *fana* and *baqa* known as *jam'iyat*. The seeker of this stage is at once *fana fi Allah* and *baqa bi Allah*. He is so strong that no amount of rapture or intoxication can overpower him.⁶

Intoxication is evident when man, while not being entirely unconscious to the things about him, is nevertheless unable to discriminate between them. He is unable to distinguish between what is agreeable and pleasant, and what is the reverse, because of his association with God. The overmastering sense of God's being destroys his capacity to distinguish between what pains him and what gives him pleasure. The tradition of

⁵ Ali bin Uthman al-Hujwiri, *Kasyf al-Mahjub*, translated with special commentary by Maulana Wahid Bakhsh Rabbani, (Malaysia: A.S. Noordeen, 1997), p. 192

⁶ *Ibid.*

Haritsah, who said: "Equal in my sight are its stone and its clay, its gold and its silver." Abdullah ibn Mas'ud said: "I do not care into which of the two states I may fall, whether it be wealth or poverty: for let it be poverty, then I may be patient, or let it be wealth, I will be grateful." He had lost all discrimination between the more congenial and its reverse, for he was overmastered by a sense of what he owed to God, namely, patience and gratitude.⁷

Sobriety, which follows drunkenness, is a states in which a man can discriminate, and knows what is painful from what is pleasant, but deliberately chooses the former, if it be in accordance with God's will: then he feels no pain, but rather pleasure, in his painful experience. It is said that one of the great sufis exclaimed: "if thou should cut me up with affliction piece by piece, I should only feel towards thee the greater love on love."

Abu al-Darda is related to have said: "I love death, for I long for my Lord; I love sickness, for I am submissive to my sin, I love poverty, for I am submissive on my Lord." One of the companions said: "How are the two detested things, death and poverty!" This state is more perfect (than the preceding), for the intoxicated man falls into what is hateful without being aware of it, so that he has no consciousness of a feeling of repulsion; whereas the other prefers pain to pleasure, and then finds pleasure in what pains him, for he is overwhelmed by the presence of Him who causes the pain. The sober man, however, whose attribute is prior to the attribute of intoxication, will sometimes prefer pain to pleasure out of consideration of a reward or in expectation of a compensation: such a man feels pain in pain, and pleasure in pleasure, his attributes are patience and gratitude.⁸

One of the great sufis composed these verses:⁹

If being sober, I
No more descry
Save what is He, what Higher truths a wait
in drunkenness, which is the nobler state?
Now come sobriety,
or let me be
Intoxicated: work out thy design:
Drunken or sober, I am ever thine

He mean that, if the state of discrimination ever causes me to be aware only of what is God's, and to lose sense of what is mine, what will the state of intoxication be like, a state in which discrimination passes away? It is God who controls me in the discharge of my duties, and watches over me in my states. These two states have effect in me, but they really belong to

⁷ Abu Bakr al-Kalabadhi, *Kitab al-Ta'aruf li Madhab ahl al-Tasawuf*, trans. A. J. Arberry (Lahore: S.H. Muhammad Ashraf, 1966), p. 121

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 122

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 122-123

God, and not to me at all: and I continue forever in these two states.

Kinds Of *Sukr*

However, there are two kinds of *sukr*: it is either caused by the wine of riches (*muwaddat*), or by the wine of love (*mahabbat*). The former is the result of selfishness because it is caused by love for material benefits (*ni'mat*) while the latter is the result of selflessness since it is caused by the love for the Benefactor (*mun'im*). Therefore he who goes in for material benefits is selfish as he is the lover of himself, and he who loves the Benefactor is selfless and a true lover of God. For a man of this stage *sukr* and *sahw* make no difference.¹⁰

Kinds Of *Sahw*

Similarly *sahw* is of two kinds. It is either:

- 1) Caused by negligence (*ghaflat*); or
- 2) Caused by love (*mahabbat*)

Sahw born of negligence is the greatest veil (*hijab al-akbar*), while *sahw* caused by love is the greatest revelation (*kasyf al-bayan*). Therefore sobriety caused by negligence is really intoxication (of the worldly people) called arrogance, although it appears to be sobriety, and the intoxication of *awliya Allah* caused by love is sobriety although it appears to be intoxication. This is because when the foundation is sound *sahw* is *sukr* and *sukr* is *sahw*. However when the foundation is precarious i.e. when the relationship with God is not sound, both *sukr* and *sahw* are shaky. In short, the difference between *sahw* and *sukr* exists only when they are based on different foundations. When the sun of Divine Beauty rises *sahw* and *sukr* become one, because their frontiers are contiguous, and the one starts from the point where the other ends. Moreover, the terms like beginning and end are only relative and the difference between them vanishes as soon as the pilgrim becomes one with the One Being.¹¹

Expressions

Expression of sobriety and intoxication often have rhetorical purposes. Sufi wrote for the purpose of edification, and different teachers attempted to inculcate psychological and spiritual attitudes depending upon the needs they perceived in their listeners and readers. Those authors who disregarded rational norms were not necessarily overcome by the divine wine – if they had been, they would hardly have put pen on paper. So also, sober expression of Sufism do not mean that the authors knew nothing of

¹⁰ Ali bin Uthman al-Hujwiri, *Kasyf al-Mahjub*., p. 196

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 197

intoxication. There is a higher sort of sobriety that sees everything in its proper place and is achieved *after* intoxication, not before it.

Drunken expression of Sufism predominate in poetry, which is ideally suited to describe the imaginal realm of unveiled, unitary knowledge. Sober expression find their natural home in prose, which is perfectly suited for the theological abstractions and legal analyses that are the forte of reason. Sufi poetry constantly celebrates God's presence, and Sufi prose tends toward systematic exposition of doctrine and practice, always keeping one eye on the opinions of the jurists and the Kalam experts. Drunken Sufism rarely demonstrates interest in juridical issues or theological debates, whereas sober Sufism offers methodical discussions of all sorts of juridical and theological issues that can quickly prove tiring to any but those trained in the soul and employ the most delicious and enticing imagery. The theoreticians discuss details of practice, behavior, moral development, Qur'anic exegesis, and the nature of God and the world.¹²

Poetic license allows the Sufi poets to convey the experience of God's presence with imagery that shocks the conventionally pious and flies in the face of juridical and theological discourse. In the best examples, such as Ibn al-Farid in Arabic, Attar, Rumi, and Hafidz in Persian, and Yunus Emre in Turkish, simply hearing the poetry – especially when well recited or sung – gives rise to a marvelous joy.¹³ The drunken Sufism of the poets has always been popular among Muslims of all classes and persuasions, and ever the most literal-minded jurists likely to enjoy the poetry's beauty while condemning the ideas.

Sober Sufism tends to attract the more educated practitioners, who are willing to devote long hours to studying texts that are no easier than works on jurisprudence, kalam, or philosophy. I should not be surprising that for many Westerners, whether scholars or would be practitioners, "real" Sufism has been identified with the drunken varieties that ignore the hard-nosed concerns of "orthodox" Islam. It is often forgotten that many of those who express themselves in the daring poetry of union also write the respectful prose of separation and servanthood.

The classic example of the contrast between drunken and sober Sufism is found in the pictures drawn of the tenth century figures Hallaj and Junayd. The first became Sufism's great martyr because of his open avowal of the mysteries of divine union and his disregard for the niceties of syariah propriety. The second, known as the "master of the whole tribe" (*syaykh al-ta'ifa*), kept coolly sober despite achieving the highest degree of union with

¹² William C. Chittick, *Sufism: A Short Introduction*, (Oxford: One World Publication, 2003), p. 27

¹³ For the manner in which poetry and music are employed in a Sufi context today, see Earl H. Waugh, *The Munshidin of Egypt: Their World and Their Song* (Columbus, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1989)

God.¹⁴

Another example can be found in the contrast between the two literary high points of the Sufi tradition, Ibn Arabi and Jalal al-Din Rumi. The former wrote voluminously in Arabic prose and addressed every theoretical issue that arises in the context in the Islamic thought and practice. His works are enormously erudite and exceedingly difficult, and only the most learned of Muslims, those already trained in jurisprudence, Kalam, and other Islamic science, could have hoped to read and understand them. In contrast, Rumi wrote over 70,000 verses of intoxicating poetry in a language that any Persian-speaking Muslim could understand. He sings constantly of the trials of separation from the Beloved and the joys of union with Him. Nonetheless, the contrast between these two authors should not suggest that Rumi was anti-rational or unlearned, or that Ibn Arabi was not a lover of God and a poet. Rather, we are dealing with two modes of human perfection that yield differences in perspective, rhetorical means, and emphasis, despite a unity of purpose. Among Western scholar, Henry Corbin argues forcefully that Rumi and Ibn Arabi belong to the same group of *fideles d'amour*.¹⁵

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¹⁴ William C. Chittick, *Sufism: A Short Introduction*, p. 28

¹⁵ Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn Arabi*, (Princeton: NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 70-71

METODOLOGI PEMIKIRAN MUHAMMAD SYAHRÛR: STUDI ATAS *AL-KITÂB WA AL-QUR'ÂN: QIRÂ'AH MU'ÂSHIRAH*

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Abstrak :

Pada akhir abad ke-20, yakni pada tahun 1990-an, dunia Arab-Islam dikejutkan oleh diterbitkannya buku Al-Kitâb wa al-Qur'ân Qirâ'ah Mu'âshirah karya Muhammad Syahrûr. Sejak diterbitkan, buku itu telah mengundang kontroversi dan penulisnya menuai berbagai tuduhan. Muhammad Syahrûr, penulis buku tersebut, adalah seorang doktor dalam bidang mekanika tanah yang mencoba memasuki wilayah hermeneutika Al-Kitab. Dengan keahliannya dalam bidang teknik dan dipadukan dengan teori-teori linguistik, Syahrûr berhasil memberikan makna-makna baru, sekaligus mengkritik, atas konsep-konsep keagamaan klasik. Melalui eksplorasi atas konsep nubuwah dan risalah ia memberikan sistematika lain bagi al-Kitab¹ serta menawarkan suatu cara mendamaikan yang sakral dengan yang propan. Dalam tulisan ini berusaha memaparkan bagaimana metode Sahrur yang berkaitan dengan Nubuwah-Risalah dan Implikasinya terhadap Sisitematika Al-Kitab dan al-Sunnah

Kata Kunci : *Sahrur, metode, risalah kenabian, sunnah*

Pendahuluan

Dalam berbagai diskusi tentang “penerapan hukum Islam dalam kehidupan berbangsa dan bernegara” atau diskusi tentang “relevansi kitab suci dengan kehidupan modern”, saya sering mendengar pertanyaan *apakah kitab suci harus mengikuti perubahan zaman ataukah realitas yang mesti mengikuti teks kitab suci*. Pertanyaan ini lahir disebabkan adanya kesenjangan antara yang tertulis dalam teks dengan realitas, padahal kita berkewajiban—meminjam istilah Iqbal—untuk mendamaikan kebakaan dengan kefanaan, mendamaikan antara teks dan kebutuhan kemanusiaan.

¹ Syahrûr menyebut al-Qur'an yang kita kenal dengan nama Al-Kitab atau dengan nama al-Mushhaf, al-Dzîkr dan al-Tanzîl al-Hakîm. Penamaan Kitab Suci dengan nama Al-Kitab bisa saja menimbulkan kecurigaan bahwa proyeknya ini merupakan bagian dari proyek kristenisasi atau zionisme sebagaimana kebiasaan menuduh para penyegar pemikiran keagamaan. Di sini, kita tidak perlu terjebak kepada pada pelabelan, yang terpenting bagi kita apakah pemikiran Syahrûr dapat digunakan atau paling tidak dapat membangunkan kita dari “tidur panjang”. Dalam penyebutan atas kitab suci penulis menggunakan nama Al-Kitab (dengan A dan K kapital) semata-mata agar tidak terjadi kerancuan dengan istilah lain yang digunakan Syahrûr.