Muhammadiyah, Sufism, and the quest for 'authentic' Islamic spirituality

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Abstract

This current paper explores and analyzes the trend of Sufism discourses and practices among Indonesian Muslim modernist-reformer organizations with special reference to the Muhammadiyah movement. The public tends to categorize Muhammadiyah as an anti-Sufism movement. A close study, however, shows that the existence of Sufism discourse and practices is a clear religious phenomenon among its individual figures and members, although organizationally Muhammadiyah does not recognize the existence of Sufi orders

(tarekat). Based on the data collected from subjective-ethnographic notes of the organization's programs and activities as well as literature studies of the organization documents, this study implements Stephen Katz's philosophical model. It shows that Muhammadiyah is searching for Islamic spirituality by promoting the authenticity of tasawuf aspects, namely *tauḥīd* or monotheism and *akhlāq al-karīmah* or noble characters as reflected in the concept of *iḥsān*. In this regard, Sufism is defined as a system of values and spirituality, not involved in a particular Sufi order. Muhammadiyah interprets Sufism as ethical values and ethos to do virtuous actions in society.

Tulisan ini mengeksplorasi dan menganalisis tren wacana dan praktik tasawuf dalam organisasi Islam modern-pembaharu di Indonesia dengan referensi khusus pada gerakan Muhammadiyah. Masyarakat cenderung mengkategorikan Muhammadiyah secara umum sebagai gerakan anti tasawuf. Namun kajian mendalam menunjukkan bahwa praktik dan wacana tasawuf merupakan fenomena keagamaan yang nyata di kalangan individu tokoh dan anggotanya, meskipun secara organisasi Muhammadiyah tidak mengakui keberadaan tarekat. Berdasarkan data yang dikumpulkan dari catatan etnografi subjektif dari program dan kegiatan organisasi serta studi literatur dokumen organisasi, penelitian ini menerapkan model filosofis Stephen Katz sebagai pisau analisi. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa spiritualitas Islam di mata Muhammadiyah dikonstruksi dengan mengedepankan autentisitas tasawuf itu sendiri, yaitu *iḥsān* dan *akhlāq al-karīmah*. Tasawuf diartikan sebagai suatu sistem nilai dan spiritualitas, bukan keterlibatan dalam tarekat tertentu. Muhammadiyah memaknai tasawuf sebagai nilai etis dan etos untuk melakukan tindakan kebajikan dalam masyarakat.

Keywords: *Iḥsān*; *Islamic Spirituality*; *Modernist Muslim*; *Muhammadiyah*

Introduction

Muhammadiyah is an Islamic movement known for its slogan "calling for enjoining right and forbidding wrong," (*da'wah amar ma'rūf nahī munkar*) which is rooted in the epistemology of Muslim reformers.[1] The basis of

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[1]Haedar Nashir, *Muhammadiyah a Reform Movement*, Surakarta: Muhammadiyah University Press, 2015, 18.

Islamic reform is rational thoughts and its social implementation. Sheerin T. Hunter explained that the reform of the Muslim paradigm is more on the rationalization of belief systems, scriptures, and sources of law to respond to existing social problems.[2] In this context, Muhammadiyah has been a pioneer in developing a rationalist perspective in Indonesia. The rationalization pattern developed by Muhammadiyah became a "model" for the epistemology of Muslim reformers in the Southeast Asian region.[3]

In its contemporary development, Muhammadiyah interacts a lot with wider socio-cultural dynamics. The social dynamics of this reformist paradigm continue to emerge into more complex social contexts. Keith Ward in his book *The Case for Religion* describes that institutionally religion will experience four processes of interaction with its socio-cultural context, namely local, canonical, critical, and global.[4] At the global level, religion will blend and intersect with various contexts of social and cultural progress, even the most extreme ones. The tendency of the rationalist paradigm, as noted by Max Weber, will have implications for institutionalization so that it is more oriented to modes of thought and attitude that are practical, logical, socially involved, and provide answers to social problems.[5]

At glance, such a rationalist paradigm tends to neglect the practices of asceticism, which emphasizes more on inner practices. The intuition-based epistemology developed in the ascetic tradition is not a domain of the rationalist paradigm. Nevertheless, the dynamic development within Muhammadiyah in interacting with various socio-cultural contexts sometimes leads to an "ascetic" tendency orienting to the practice of Sufism in a distinctive way.

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[2]Shireen T. Hunter, ed., *Reformist Voices of Islam: Mediating Islam and Modernity,* New York and London: M.E. Sharpe, 2009, 3.

[3]James L. Peacock, *Muslim Puritans: Reformist Psychology in Southeast Asian Islam*, London: University of California Press, 1978, 19-20.

[4]Keith Ward, *The Case for Religion*, Oxford: One World, 2008.

[5]Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1950.

One of the studies on the phenomenon of Sufism in Muhammadiyah was conducted by Biyanto who has mapped the tendency of Sufism practices in Muhammadiyah. According to Biyanto, the practice of Sufism in Muhammadiyah manifest in several principles, such as based on the purity of monotheism, being in the frame of the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah, the substance of its teachings oriented to the application of good manners (*akhlāq al-karīmah*) and good deed ('*amal shāliḥ*), in line with developments and modernity, innovative and creative in character – not fatalistic, morally patterned and avoiding philosophical debates, not centered on spiritual gurus and unorganized in a particular Sufi order.[6]

The above principles are the main pillars of the structure of Muhammadiyah's identity known as an integration of puritanism and modernity.[7] This principle is recorded in the system of thought, attitude, and behavior for Muhammadiyah members. Thus, the Sufism model in Muhammadiyah is practiced in attitudes and action of ultimate value (*iḥsān*) and good manners (*akhlāq al-karīmah*), not on the institutionalization of attitudes in certain "rites". Such principles underline the concept of Sufism in Muhammadiyah for internalization of *iḥsān* in actions and good manners in accordance with Islamic sharia. In line with this, Herman L. Beck, in his study on the historical account of a century of Muhammadiyah's official positions towards Sufism stated, "... as long as Sufism is *sharīah*-abiding and promotes morality it will be tolerated by the Muhammadiyah, but as soon as it becomes heterodox and heteropraxy it will be challenged." [8]

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[6]Biyanto, "The Typology of Muhammadiyah Sufism: Tracing Its Figures' Thoughts and Exemplary Lives", *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, Volume 7, Number 2 (2017), 221-249, https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v7i2.221-249.

[7]Mitsuo Nakamura, "Prof. H. Abdul Kahar Muzakkir and The Development of Islamic Reformist Movement in Indonesia", *Afkaruna*, Volume 15, Number 2 (2019), 203-225, https://doi.org/10.18196/aiijis.2019.0103.203-225.

[8]Herman L. Beck, "The Contested State of Sufism in Islamic Modernism: The Case of the

Due to the strict and distinctive position of Muhammadiyah toward Sufism, critics said that this Modernist Muslim group is now spiritually dry and arid. The organization is so far known for its anti or at least does not appreciate to Sufism (*tashawuf*) or spiritual dimension of Islam. Such a judgment is based on the following arguments: The *First* is that the image of Muhammadiyah as a modernist Muslim organization, where modern people tend to regard mystical experiences as backwards, traditional expression as well as the barrier of progress and development. The notion that Muhammadiyah is a pioneer of Islamic movement promoting pragmatic rationalization and setting out intellectual and ratio has placed the organization as by definition as anti-Sufism.[9]

The *second* argument is the fact that Muhammadiyah is frequently described as puritan Muslims actively opposing superstition, heresy, and myth (*Takhayul, Bid'ah* and *Churafat* [TBC]) in Islam. Among puritan Muslims, there is a common view that Sufism is a kind of unauthentic Islamic teaching.[10] The last argument is the fact that none of the Sufi order (*tarekat*) affiliates to the Muhammadiyah. This is in contrast to, let's say, Nahdhatul Ulama (NU) that organizationally develops an umbrella organization of Sufi order, the JATMAN (*Jam'iyah Ahli Thariqah al-Mu'tabarah al-Nahdhiyah*), accommodating various authentic (*mu'tabarah*) Sufi orders.[11]

Muhammadiyah Movement in Twentieth-Century Indonesia", *Journal of Sufi Studies*, Volume 3, Issue 2 (2014), https://doi.org/10.1163/22105956-12341269.

[9]Mohamad Ali, "Sufisme dalam Pandangan Muslim Modernis Awal: Telaah Pemikiran Tasawuf Kiai Moechtar Boechari (1899-1926)", *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan*, Volume 17, Number 1 (2019), https://doi.org/10.31291/jlk.v17i1.606.

[10]Abas Sofyan, "Konsep dan Icon Gerakan Muhammadiyah", *Kawasa*, Volume 8, Number 3 (2018).

[11]Rangga Sa'adillah S.A.P., "Spiritualitas Muhammadiyah: Kontekstualisasi Gagasan Sufisme Ahmad Dahlan dalam Masyarakat Postmodern", *El-Banat: Jurnal Pemikiran dan Pendidikan Islam*, Volume 9, Number 1 (2019), 21-34, https://doi.org/10.54180/elbanat.2019.9.1.21-34.

In addition to the above three arguments, scholars of modern movement in Islam also have difficulties tracing back terms of tasawuf as well as tarekat in Muhammadiyah's official documents. The question, therefore, is Muhammadiyah really anti Sufism or Islamic spirituality? Are there any discourses and practices on tasawuf, Sufism and other Islamic spirituality among Muhammadiyah figures and its communities? What kind of Islamic spirituality Muhammadiyah tries to construct?

To answer the above questions, we will explore the dynamic of Sufism thoughts and practices among Muhammadiyah activists. Based on the data gathered from document studies and auto ethnographic notes of the authors as Muhammadiyah activists, we then analyze and reflectively formulate the state of the art of Sufism in Muhammadiyah context from Stephen Katz's philosophical model.

Discourse and practices of Sufism in Muhammadiyah

Generally, the attitude of Muhammadiyah towards Sufism can be classified into three categories. The first are those who totally oppose to, and refuse, Sufism; second are those open to the idea of Sufism, and the third are those accommodating tasawuf. This sub chapter will elaborate the dynamic discourses and practices of Sufism in Muhammadiyah leaders, activists, members and sympathizers as well as that appears in the organization's documents.

Tasawuf, Akhlāq and Iḥsān

Among Muhammadiyah activists in various regents, the quest for official Muhammadiyah's outlook on Sufism still frequently appears.[12] In

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[12]Purmansyah Ariadi, Rulitawati Rulitawati, and Mona Novita, "Pemahaman dan Pengamalan Nilai-nilai Tasawuf di Kalangan Elit Muhammadiyah Sumatera Selatan", *Nur El-Islam : Jurnal Pendidikan dan Sosial Keagamaan*, Volume 8, Number 1 (2021), https://doi.org/10.51311/nuris.v8i1.292.

several Muhammadiyah religious forums and training programs such as in the *Baitul Arqam* and *Darul Arqam,* participants usually asked about Muhammadiyah's attitude towards Sufism. Interestingly, the answers of the speakers of the training programs towards the above questions are not strictly said that Muhammadiyah is anti *tashawuf* or noting that Sufism is *ḥarām* (unlawful) for Muhammadiyah. Novrizal Nawawi, the leader of Muhammadiyah Palembang, for example, said that Muhammadiyah cannot blame tasawuf per se. In fact, Muhammadiyah takes the beneficence of tasawuf in different aspects. Since the core of tasawuf is *akhlāq al-karīmah*, Muhammadiyah therefore elaborates more on the concept and practice of the *akhlāq al-karīmah* rather than the *tarekat* (Sufi order), of which existences differ. Some *tarekat* groups are considered *mu'tabarah* (valid, authentic for it is considered not to contradict *sharī'ah*), and many other groups are classified as *ghairu mu'tabarah* (not valid, due to its contradiction to the shariah principles).

Regarding participants' question as to why Muhammadiyah tends to be allergic to *tashawuf*, another speaker, Ris'an, a Professor of Islamic Studies, member of *Majelis Tarjih of Muhammadiyah* Palembang, acknowledges that he understood that Muhammadiyah is allergic to tasawuf because the organization emphasizes *fiqh*-oriented rituals. Nevertheless, Ris'an asked the audiences not to easily blame Muslims who practice tasawuf teachings.

Ris'an further explained that a number of Muhammadiyah members would probably have been sufficient to be close to God (*taqarrub ilā Allāh*) through the daily ritual of the 'ibādah mahdhah. But the practitioners of tasawuf would say that the *'ibādah mahdhah* is not enough for them. Therefore, they develop another spiritual path to cultivate their *rasa* (inner dimension of religious experience). According to Ris'an, the cultivation of inner spiritual experience, which is dedicated to be close to God, is in line with the concept of *iḥsān.*

K.H. Ahmad Azhar Basyir, the former chief person Central Board of Muhammadiyah, stated that the notion of tasawuf is identical to that of *iḥsān*. One day, Haedar Nashir, when he was at the Educational Bureau of Cadre (*Badan Pendidikan Kader*), asked Pak Azhar, "If Muhammadiyah rejects tasawuf, what is the alternative for it?" Pak Azhar then replied by noting the prophet tradition about *mā huwa al-Islām, mā huwa al-Imān, wa mā huwa al-Iḥsān* (what is Islam, what is Iman, and what is Iḥsān). The *tashawuf*, according to Pak Azhar, is equivalent to *iḥsān*, meaning "you pray to God as if you see Him, if you cannot see Him, God must see you" (*an ta'budallāha ka annaka tarāhu fainlam takun tarāhu fainnahU yarāka*).

However, among other current Muhammadiyah activists, *ihsan* is interpreted in a broader meaning, not only in terms of Islamic spirituality, which refers to the inner dimension of religious experience as it is indicated in the hadis. For instance, one day, in a board member meeting of the Dakwah Council of the Central Board of Muhammadiyah (*Majelis Tabligh PP Muhammadiyah*), one of the board members questioning the need for the council to develop a program that addresses and elaborates *ihsan* dimension in Muhammadiyah. Another board member who presented the paper on the coaching concept for Muhammadiyah members (*Konsep Pembinaan Warga Muhammadiyah*) said that the *iḥsān* dimension is about *tazkiyatu nafs* (purification of self), which has been included in the *tauḥīd* and doctrinal aspect of Islam. Another member added saying that *ihsan* is more about the fruit of *amal shaleh* (good deeds) and morality.

Unlike the above interpretation that tend to frame the *tauḥīd* from the concept of *tauḥīd* and the fruit of morality, the opinion of *Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid* (Council of Islamic Legal Affairs and Reform) board members seems to be more open to discuss the term from a spiritual perspective. When we asked a board member of the *Majelis Tarjih* about the urgency for elaborating the concept of *iḥsān* amid the growing number of urban Islamic

spiritual groups and the need of Muhammadiyah to actively contribute to the discourse of *tashawuf*, he said that Muhammadiyah indeed needs Sufism to mature the religiosity of its members.

Practical Sufism at the grassroots

Muhammadiyah activists, members and sympathizers in grassroots seem to be more open and not allergic to the experiential dimension of Islam. Nakamura's fieldwork at Kotagede Yogyakarta in the 1970s found Sufis elements in local activist and Muhammadiyah leaders, such as the practice of *zikir* and *wirid*, guidance of lust control, as well as nurturing sincere, virtuous, and commendable morals.[13] A huge number of Muhammadiyah people are longing for such inner spiritual experiences. This can be read from the high demand for training that explores spiritual experience such as the ESQ (Emotional and Spiritual Quotinet), Hearth Intelligence, training for *sholat khusyuk* (solemn prayer), and many other Spiritual-development programs.

Amid the growing Islamic spiritual market in printing, music, neo-Sufism classes, as well as the mass congregation of *zikir* in 1990s to 2000s, Muhammadiyah is not fully absent. Among one of the national figures in Giant Zikir (*Zikir Akbar*) frequently aired on television, the late Muhammad Arifin Ilham, is a figure reportedly genetically from the Muhammadiyah family and an alumnus of Muhammadiyah School. Hadad Alwi, a national singer of shalawat songs was an alumnus of Muhammadiyah schools, as well. Emha Ainun Najib, who manages Maiyah forum and Kyai Kanjeng religious music group, is an alumnus of Muhammadiyah High school in Yogyakarta and his families in Jombang are Muhammadyah activists. Din Samsuddin, the 2005 to 2015 chairperson of the Central Board of

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[13]Mitsuo Nakamura. "Unsur Sufi dalam Muhammadiyah", *Prisma* No. 8/Agustus, 1980.

Muhammadiyah, for some moments participated in the mass *zikir*.

In Yogyakarta, corporatized spiritual training centers have developed since the early 2000s, founded and led by figures associated with Muhammadiyah. Two centers worth noting here are Bioenergy and Synergy. The Bionergi was founded by Syaiful M. Maghsri [b.1968], an alumnus Educational Psychology program at the Muhammadiyah Institute for Teacher Training and Pedagogy (*IKIP* [*Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Muhammadiyah*]), currently known as the University of Ahmad Dahlan, Yogykarta. The *Bioenergi* is a centre for training, healing, and business consultation. The motto of the centre is '*Menjadi Akhir Segala Solusi'* [be the final solution] (i.e. of various problems, such as those concerning disease, career, business, and family), and '*sehat*', '*sukses*', '*kaya-raya*', and '*bahagia*' [healthy, successful, rich, and prosperous] are among terms often used in its promotion.[14]

Syaiful claims that what he is doing in his centre is just explaining Sufi teachings, such as *sabar* [Ar. *shabar*, patience], *sukur* [Ar. *shukŪr*, gratitude], *ikhlas* [Ar. *ikhlāsh*, sincere], and *tawakal* [Ar. *tawakkal,* trust], at a practical level, for the direct purpose of achieving this-worldly success. In doing so, he explores the concept of the progressive Sufi spiritual paths of *syariat, tarekat, hakikat,* and *makrifat* [Ar. *sharī'ah, tharīqah, haqīqah, ma'rifah*] by developing a formula he calls '*Pola Kecerdasan Terpadu'* [Integrated Intelligent Model] or '*Bioenergi Quotient*', abbreviated as BQ. The formula, which is a combination of elements of Sufism and neuro-linguistic-programming, incorporates the concept that to be successful and lucky, people should integrate their four brains, namely, *otak kiri* [left brain] which is the base for the *syariat, otak kanan* [right brain] for the *tarekat, otak spiritual* [spiritual brain] for the *hakikat*, and the *otak universal* [universal brain] for the *makrifat*.

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[14]https://bioenergicenter.com/bioenergi/bioenergi-center-adalah/

Syaiful explained the word '*spiritualitas*' [spirituality] is *tasawuf* in its practical meaning. He deliberately does not mention words like '*tasawuf*' or '*Sufism*' and other Islamic terms as part of the name of his centre. However, reading his book '*Pencerahan*' (2006), for example, we can find Sufi teaching in it. In addition to narrating Syaiful's spiritual journey, the book describes modes of enlightenment [*pencerahan*] as an outcome of the cultivation of spirituality and the management of mind and social life. The explanation of spirituality in '*Pencerahan*' draws on *tasawuf* teachings, by referring to Syekh Abdul Qadir Jailani's spiritual stages: *Tobat, Ikhlas, Tawakal, Syukur, Sabar, Yakin, dan Jujur* [repentance, sincerity, trust in God, gratitude, patience, confidence, and honesty].[15]

Another spiritual center is Sinergy, developed by Basuki AR, who was a Muhammadiyah activist in Warung Boto Yogyakarta and a former lecturer at the Ahmad Dahlan University. The Sinergy was founded in 2003 and is branded as a leadership centre with the slogan "My HEART See My GOD" (*Hatiku Melihat Tuhanku*). One of its leading programs is Heart Intelligence Training. In his centre, Basuki offers both in house and on-call training programs for leadership, character building, service excellence, parenting, and many others.[16] Asked about the training contents, Basuki explained that he just elaborated Sufism in the practical levels, such as bringing participants to know and understand God properly, behave to other people nicely, and to express their gratitude rightly to what God has given to them.

Basuki explained that Sufism should be practical. It was true that there are aspects of philosophical Sufism or Sufism teachings such as the concept of *waḥdat al-wujŪd* (mystical union). The concept of *waḥdat al-wujūd* is

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[15]Furher discussion on Bionergi as the representation of hybrid spiritual enterprise can be found in Ahmad Muttaqin, "From Piety to Efficacy: Hybrid Sufism in Secular Landscape", RIMA Review of Indonesian amd Malysian Affairs, Volume 46, Number 2 (2012), 25-46.

[16]http://sinergycenter.blogspot.com/2009/03/program-sinergy-lc.html

one the Sufism teaching, which was usually rejected by shariah-oriented Muslims as well as some Muhammadiyah members and sympathizers. In order to avoid the rejection of Sufism teachings, reinterpretation and contextualization is needed. For example, if the concept of *waḥdat al-wujŪd* is understood as the union between God and man, it is potentially in contradiction to the concept of *tauḥīd*. The mystical union concept therefore should be understood that the union is not between the two *dzāt* (essences) but between the characters. In terms of God and human relation, the characters of God (*Sifat-sifat Tuhan*) enter the human soul and then inspire humans to act accordingly to the God characters. At this stage, human should think, feels, and act based on the 99 of Allah's characters (*asmā` al-ḥusnā*).

Operationally, since the fruit of *tasawuf* is morality (*akhlāq karīmah*), the more appropriate concept is *waḥdatul irādah* (the union of intention), instead of the *waḥdat al-wujūd*. The *waḥda al-irādah* refers to the union between human's will with God will. It means, when God orders human to create peace and harmony in this world, humans should do it. When God forbids humans to break the world, humans intentionally will not create any harm.

At the grassroots level, since the 2010s, there has been a trend of study groups (pengajian) on Sufism among Muhammadiyah communities. In Sidoarjo, East Java, a study group focusing on Sufism was initiated H. Khusni Tauchid, known as Abah Us, the Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Branch (PCM) Sukodono at the al-Ishlah Mosque. In 2020 he died of covid, after completing teaching on Sufi interpretation books, *Kitāb al-Ḥikam* by Ibn Atha'illah al-Sakandari and *Nashā`iḥ al-'Ibād*, every Monday night.

In the last five years, Sufi study group has become also increasingly widespread and developed among Muhammadiyah communities in cities such as Bandung and Yogyakarta. In Bandung, the study of the

Kitāb al-Ḥikam is held routinely every Thursday night entitled "*Dirasah Kitab*" or "*Kajian Kitab Malam Jumat (Kaki Maju),*" supervised by Cecep Taufikurrohman. The program was aired live via YouTube streaming by the Muhammadiyah channel of West Java.

In Yogyakarta, a Sufi study group was organized by Muhmmadiyah Distric of Yogyakarta city, under the topic "*Tazkiyatun Nafs ala K.H. Ahmad Dahlan*" (Self-Purification according to K.H. A Dahlan, the founder of Muhammadiyah). The study was conducted every Saturday night, focusing on *al-Ḥikam* book and supervised by Muhammad Damami Zein, one of Deputy Chairpersons of the Tabligh Assembly, Central Board of Muhammadiyah.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the study of Sufism on Muhammadiyah website also appeared on *mediamu.id*, an official of news channel of the Muhammadiyah Special Territory of Yogyakarta. Among the topics discussed were *insān kāmil, imago dei, waḥdah al-wujUd, ma'rifah, mukāshafah, ta`wīl al-ḥurUf* and so on.

It is worth noting here that although criticisms toward Sufism from the puritan wings continue to appear, a number of Muhammadiyah non-puritan generations are continuing to grow up and are familiar with post-modernism and post-traditionalism discourses and are not hesitatant about dealing with the inner and esoteric dimensions of Islam.

Sufi-nuanced terms in Muhammadiyah's documents

Muhammadiyah has been known so far as a progressive, modernist, and lately, puritan group, so accommodating tasawuf would be difficult although in the level of term. Let's see, for example, a charismatic Muhammadiyah leader, Hamka, who wrote *Tasawuf Modern* (Modern Sufism). He should add "modern" after the "tasawuf" for the recipes and practices of the inner dimension of Islam to be accepted by Muslims

modernists. Hamka's book was part of his project to bring tasawuf back to the right and original meaning, or in Al-Junaid words "as a style of thought and a mode of piety that ought to be in line with the *syariah* and purified from the many external influences" that has led Sufism is more openly accepted by Muhammadiyah communities and Malay world in genaral.[17]

One of Muhammadiyah leaders, K.H. Azhar Basyir, as elaborated in the previous chapter, avoids the term tasawuf and proposed '*iḥsān*.' Other Muhammadiyah figures prefer using "*spiritual*" or "*spiritualitas*" (spirituality), and '*irfānī*.' Referring to the Muhammadiyah documents, we will find a number of terms which are equivalent to Sufism, if the term is interpreted in terms of inner dimension of Islamic expression, such as "*iḥsān*" (in the *Kepribadian Muhammadiyah* – the Character of Muhammadiyah), "*spiritual*" (in the *Matan Keyakinan and Cita-cita Hidup* - Matters of Faith and Life's Aspiration of Muhammadiyah), and "*Spiritualitas*" (in *Manhaj Tarjih dan Pengembangan Pemikiran Islam* – Method of *Tarjih* and the Development of Islamic Thought).

Muhammadiyah prefers to word "*iḥsān*" (literally means good deeds, goodness, virtue, benefaction) than the "*tashawuf*" because it is the word noted definitely by Prophet Muhammad in one of his hadiths. For this reason, Muhammadiyah figures elaborate the concept of *iḥsān* on a practical level. One of the articles in the *Kepribadian Muhammadiyah* notes "*Ihsan Kepada Kemanusian*" (good deeds for the sake of humanity) as part of Muhammadiyah identity, reflecting the importance of maintaining a balance between human-God and human-human relationships. Whereas the notion of "Spiritual" in the MKCH underlines that Islam promotes both spiritual and material prosperity.

After its 43rd Congress in Banda Aceh (1995), the Muhammadiyah introduced a program called *Spiritualisasi Syariat* (spiritualization of

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[17]Khairuddin Al-Junaid, "Reorienting Sufism: Hamka and Islamic Mysticism in the Malay World", *Indonesia*, No. 101, (April 2016), 67-84. DOI: 10.1353/ind.2016.0012

syariah). According to Munir Mulkhan, indeed the first term introduced by the committee was *"Sufistifikasi Shariat"* (Sufistification of the *Sharī'ah*). Furthermore, the *Majelis Tarjih dan Pengembangan Pemikiran* Islam also promoted *"'irfānī"* approaches as one of methods in thinking in addition to the *"bayānī"* (deductive based on text explanation) and *"burhānī"* (inductive, based on empiric evident and ratio). *'Irfānī* is an approach based on the inner experience of hearth and intuition guided by God. In Syiah tradition, *''irfānī* is equivalent to Sufism as that in Sunni tradition.

Far before the official documents were formulated, Kyai Dahlan, the founder of Muhammadiyah, had used terms to connotatively refer to Sufism such as *"hati suci"* (pure heart) and *"akal suci"* (pure/sacred intellect) in his speech at Islamic Congress, in Cirebon (1911) and Muhammadiyah Congress in February 1922. The above terms, according to some observers, reflect Sufi ideas of the Muhammadiyah founding father.

The term *iḥsān* and *tashawuf* were even used by Ki Bagoes Hadikoesoema, the Chairman of Central Board Muhammadiyah (1942-1953). In 1941 Ki Bagoes Hadikoesoema published a book entitled, *Poestaka Ihsan, Tasawoef Haqiqi Hikmah Achlaqiyah,* in Javanese. The description of the book noted: "*Kitab anarengaken piwoelang Tasawoef (Achlaq), wewaton dalil al-Qur'an lan hadits"* (a book on the teaching of Tasawuf [*Akhlaq*], supported by argument of al-Qur'an and Hadits).

Sufism as the neglected tajdīd of Muhammadiyah?

Although we can find many equivalent terms of Sufism in Muhammadiyah official documents, the organizational concept and guideline of Islamic spirituality in Muhammadiyah is still rare. Referring to the hadiths on what is *Islām*, what is *Īmān,* and what is *Iḥsān*, Muhammadiyah so far has been succeeded in institutionalizing "Islam" in the context of *'ibādah mahdhah* (daily routine prayer) through its guidance for the ibadah based

on Muhammad's teaching as it is elaborated in the *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih Muhammadiyah* (Compilation of *Tarjih* Decisions).

The organization has also succeeded in elaborating the principles of *iman* (faith) and religion as in the ideological-organizational principles of the *Khittah Perjuangan* (the footpath of struggle), *Mukaddimah Anggaran Dasar* (the preamble of statutes), *Matan Keyakinan dan Cita-cita Hidup* (Matters of Faith and Life's Aspiration), and *Kepribadian Muhammadiyah* (The Character of Muhammadiyah).

The organization has also succeeded elaborated the concept of *mu'āmalah* based on the principles of Quran and Sunah as in the the Guideline for Islamic Life of Muhammadiyah Community (*Pedoman Hidup Islami Warga Muhamadiyah – PHIWM*) in the organization, education, economic, politic, and social sphere.

However, why does Muhammadiyah seem to hesitate to explore the Sufism aspects and avoiding for institutionalizing and implementing systematically the concept of *iḥsān* as its Islamic Spirituality? The silence of Muhammadiyah to elaborate the dimension of *iḥsān*, in our view, is one of the roots for the notion that Muhammadiyah is spiritually dry and, later on, it stimulates some Muhammadiyah members in at the grassroot level to question their leader about the position of tasawuf in Muhammadiyah.

It is worth noting here again, however, that some Muhammadiyah figures have paid attention to the issue of tasawuf, Sufism, or Islamic Mysticism such as Ki Bagoes Hadikoesoema, who wrote *Poestaka Ihsan* (Reference of Virtues) in 1941; HAMKA wrote *Tasawuf Modern* (Modern Sufism) in 1971; Simuh wrote the *Javanese Mystical Islam of Raden Ngabehi Ronggo Warsito* in 1988; Abdul Munir Mulkhan discerns the spiritual legacy of Shaikh Siti Jenar in 1999, M. Damami explored the Positive Sufism of Hamka in 2000, and many others. There is also a trend to promote Muhammadiyah figures who have reached the quality to be a Sufi. For example, in 2008 Masyitoh in her studied explored the

biografi of AR Fachruddin and attributed him as the figure of Muhammadiyah *shūfi akhlāqī* or moral Sufism. In 2010, the Muhammadiyah region of East Java launched a book entitles *Pergulatan Muhammadiyah Menuju Sufi: Catatan Pemikiran* (The Struggle of Muhammadiyah toward Sufis: Notes of Thought) of ustadz Abdurrahim Nur, the former chief person of Muhammadiyah East Java. Farid Cahyono and Yuliantoro Puryoadi launched Pak AR Fachrudin biografi entitles *Pak AR Sufi yang Memimpin Muhammadiyah* (Pak AR, A Sufi Who Lead Muhammadiyah) in 2010; and in 2018 Biyanto, one of Muhammadiyah leaders in East Java wrote *The Typology of Muhammadiyah Sufism: tracing its figures' thoughts and exemplary lives.*

Nevertheless, on the organizational level, Muhammadiyah is still silent about Sufism. The silence of Muhammadiyah on Sufism discourse is in contradiction to its attribute as a reform movement. Muhammadiyah criticism on the dichotomist approach in education, for example, has led the organization to propose an integrated system serving both secular science and Islamic teaching in its schools. Muhammadiyah criticism of the problem of the poor has led the organization to initiate Islamic philanthropic action for serving the needs by establishing hospitals and orphanages. But, why Muhammadiyah's criticism toward TBC (*Tachayul Bidah Churafat* – Superstition, Heresy, and Myth) is never followed by its concept and action to provide legitimate and authentic spiritual canals? Will Muhammadiyah keep ignoring the spiritual thirstiness of its members? The reluctance of Muhammadiyah to systematically and seriously elaborate on its teaching of authentic Islamic spirituality has led to the stigma that Muhammadiyah is puritan and anti-tasawuf.

The absence of Muhammadiyah in providing official spiritual guidance and canals for its member amid the growth of spiritual markets in the world today is letting its members shop for any spiritual products and services, in which its authenticity is questioned. In fact, there are several members and

sympathizers of Muhammadiyah who were fond of listening to *shalawāt* songs of Hadad Alwi's and Opick's albums, actively attending collective zikir, and healing zikir rituals, practicing pseudo-spiritual-sport of *Yoga* and *Reiki*, participating in the ESQ (Emotional and Spiritual Quotient) training programs, *Shalat Khusuk* training, and other spiritual cultivation either for the shake of self-serenity, success in career and business, or healing.

Authentic Islamic spirituality in Muhammadiyah context

The phenomenon of Sufism appears in Muhammadiyah circles, emerging in two forms, ethics and ethos.[18] The ethical form focuses on the absorption of fundamental elements in Sufism such as monotheism, submission to God, internalization of moral values, and pietism. The ethos form focuses on persistence and orderliness of worship, spirit of hard work to advance society, applying moral values in the individual and social domains, immaculacy and public order. These two forms of Sufism flow in the body of Muhammadiyah movement both personally and institutionally. Interestingly, the values of ethics and ethos are not institutionalized in an organization of Sufi order but become a system of values for Muhammadiyah members and leaders.

This study confirms previous research done by Biyanto, Nakamura, and Herman Beck in terms of availability of Sufism nuance in Muhammadiyah. This study, however, presents specific novelty on authentic Islamic spirituality in Muhammadiyah characterized by piety and affirmative religiosity. These two characters have not been revealed by previous researchers on the phenomenon of Sufism in Muhammadiyah. The piety character describes the elements of piety built among Muhammadiyah members. The character of affirmative religiosity illustrates the high

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[18]Ahmad Najib Burhani, "Pluralism, Liberalism and Islamism: Religious Outlook of Muhammadiyah", *Studia Islamika*, Volume 25, Number 3 (2018), https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v25i3.7765.

enthusiasm of Muhammadiyah members to make breakthroughs progress for the society in social, cultural, educational, art, science, technology, and environmental life. Sufism, then, is not interpreted as merely a religious effort, but also as a way of advancing society based on ethical values.

The implication of the results of this study provides a clear illustration that the phenomenon of Sufism in Muhammadiyah would unite a world view on social reality with the paradigms of *bayānī* (text), *burhānī* (science and technology), and *'irfānī* (appreciation, piety, wisdom) and affirmative theology, a form of theology concerning socio-cultural aspects.[19] This can be seen from several products of Muhammadiyah thought such as *Tafsir at-Tanwir*, *Risalah Akhlak Islami* (Treatise on Islamic Morals), *Pedoman Hidup Islami Warga Muhammadiyah* (Islamic Living Guidelines for Muhammadiyah Members), *Fikih Lingkungan* (Theology of Environment), *Fikih Informasi* (Theology of Information),[20] *Fikih Difabel* (Theology of Difabel), *Fikih Air* (Theology of Water), *Fikih Tata Kelola* (Theology of Good Governance), and *Fikih Anti Korupsi* (Theology of Anti-Corruption).[21]

It seems that, with the above literature products, Muhammadiyah tries to present an alternative to the practices of Sufism which had been trapped in the rites and cults of the Sufi order leadership with minimum attention to social problems. In addition, Muhammadiyah also offers to fill the dryness of the spiritual dimension among activists of the reform movement, which tends to neglect the inner dimension of religion.[22]

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[19]Palahuddin, "The Typology of Religious Thought in Muhammadiyah", *IJISH (International Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities)*, Volume 3, Number 2 (2020), https://doi.org/10.26555/ijish.v3i2.2233.

[20]Niki Alma Febriana Fauzi and Ayub, "Fikih Informasi: Muhammadiyah's Perspective on Guidance in Using Social Media1", *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, Volume 9, Number 2 (2019), https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v9i2.267-293.

[21]Niki Alma Febriana Fauzi, "Nalar Fikih Baru Muhammadiyah: Membangun Paradigma Hukum Islam Yang Holistik", *Afkaruna*, Volume 15, Number 1 (2019).

[22]Syamsul Anwar, "Manhaj Tarjih Muhammadiyah", *Tajdida: Jurnal Pemikiran dan Gerakan Muhammadiyah*, Volume 16, Number 1 (Juni 2018).

An analysis of the mushrooming phenomena of *Kitāb al-Ḥikam* studies among Muhammadiyah members, in which spirit of Sufism in the form of studies of Sufi books of *Kitāb al-Ḥikam*, led to a conclusion that there is a reviving spirit of Sufism in Muhammadiyah that has been shown by Hamka in his *Tasawuf Modern* (Modern Sufism). If the phenomena are analyzed from Stephen Katz's analytical model,[23] which details the phenomena of mysticism in religion into three layers, will lead to the following explanation.

First, the mystical phenomenon is a condition of human consciousness to unite in the midst of God. This mystical phenomenon is actualized into the core awareness of religion. Mircea Eliade sees this phenomenon as an expression of the presence of God in human life that appears in various manifestations (*hierophany*).[24]

Second, the crystallization of mystical values is seen within the framework of religious traditions. According to Reynold Nicholson, the crystallization of this value will form a specific mystical tradition in each religion, which in Islam is called Sufism. Islamic Sufism requires a stage (station, *maqām*) and conditions (*ḥāl*) to actualize mystical values. The actualization of these mystical values will form mystical traditions that refer to certain Sufi figures such as al-Hallaj, Abu Yazid al-Bustami, Ibn 'Arabi. Rabi'ah al-'Adawiyah, Jalal al-Din al-Rumi, and so forth. Each character has their own way (*suluk*) in actualizing their mystical values such as the values of monotheism, morality, and very strict worship.[25]

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[23]Steven T. Katz, ed., *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

[24]Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, New York: Harcourt, Barce & World, Inc., 1987.

[25]Muhammad Iqbal Birsyada, "Sufism Ethics in Javanese Aristocracy: A Historical Perspective", *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, Volume 11, Issue 10 (2020); Atif Khalil, "Sufism and Qur'ānic Ethics", in Lloyd V. J. Ridgeon (ed.), *Routledge Handbook on Sufism*, London & New York: Routledge, 2020: 159-170, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315175348.

Third is the institutionalization of the practice of Sufism into a tareqat tradition that specifically develops the *suluk* practices of certain Sufi figures. Tareqat is more concerned with the institutional aspects as taught by the figures rather than the actualization of mystical values. Institutionally, the tareqat limits itself to its own traditions and almost never teaches traditions from other *tarekats*:[26] for example, the Qadiriyah Tareqat, which refers to the tradition of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani; the Nakshabandiyah Tareqat, which refers to the Sufi tradition of Shaykh Muhammad Baha' al-Din al-Nakshabandi; Tareqat Syattariayah, which refers to the tradition of Shaykh 'Abdullah al-Syattar; and many others such as Chistiyah, Khalwatiyah, and Tijaniyyah. However, some tareqat traditions merge or develop their traditions institutionally, such as the Qadiriyah-Nakshabandiyah and the Nakshabandiyah-Khalidiyah.

What has been described by Stephen Katz about mysticism in religion when applied to capture the phenomenon of Sufism in Muhammadiyah can be illustrated by the following diagram:

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[26]Agus Sholikhin, "Tarekat sebagai Sistem Pendidikan Tasawuf", *Conciencia*, Volume 18, Number 2 (2018): 1-13, https://doi.org/10.19109/conciencia.v18i2.2760.

Figure. 1
Sufism and Muhammadiyah Context
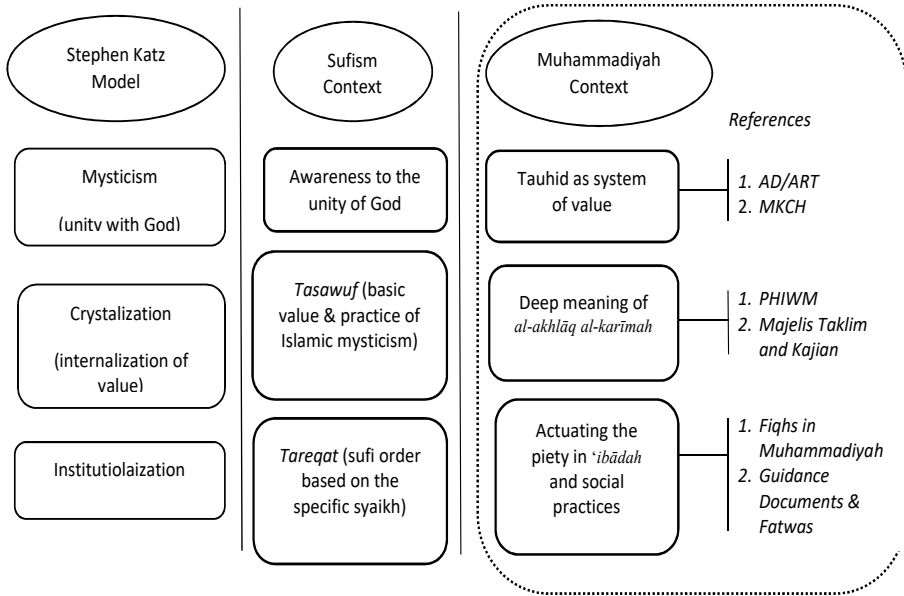
The above diagram illustrates that in the context of Muhammadiyah, the core teaching of Sufism is monotheism, which is used as a value system, not only as a stagnant doctrine. Tawhid, which is understood in Muhammadiyah referring to the formulation contained in the Statutes and Bylaws (*AD/ART*) of Muhammadiyah and the Faith Pledge and Aspiration of Muhammadiyah Life (*Matan Keyakinan dan Cita-Cita Hidup - MKCH* Muhammadiyah), is interpreted as an order of dynamic values and moves others.

In MKCH, on the other hand, it is stated that, "Muhammadiyah works for the establishment of a pure Islamic '*aqīdah*, free from the symptoms of polytheism, *bid'ah* and *khurafāt*, without neglecting the principle of tolerance according to Islamic teachings." This formulation

is an affirmation of the value of monotheism in Muhammadiyah, which is reflected in real actions and their relationships with other entities. Understanding the values of monotheism and the desire to manifest it is a basic awareness of the concept of unity between God and humans (unity of God). This can be said as a phenomenon of worldly *ascetism* (a term introduced by Max Weber to describe a phenomenon in Protestantism) and worldly mysticism.

The values of monotheism are then finally manifested in normative formulations. These values are used as a reference for social action for Muhammadiyah members which are formulated in the Guidelines for Islamic Life of Muhammadiyah Members (*Pedoman Hidup Islami Warga Muhammadiyah* - PHIWM) and are internalized through *pengajian* (religious study circles) as well as *pengkaderan* (cadre training). This formulation is a direct form of crystallization of the value of monotheism into ethical norms.

This direct articulation of the values of monotheism is manifested in various social actions that are framed in various contemporary jurisprudence rules of theology in Muhammadiyah. In addition, there are practical rules and guidelines formulated in various councils and institutions in Muhammadiyah. These various normative rules are direct references for daily socio-cultural activities and actions for Muhammadiyah members, either in the form of individual or institutional actions. The articulation of the values of monotheism and good morals in this practice becomes the core for the practice of Sufism in Muhammadiyah without the need for a Sufi order and a Sufi leader (*shaikh*).

The practice of Sufism in Muhammadiyah become an anti-thesis for the tradition of Sufism in Islam which is almost always framed in a Sufi order that is bound to its specific tradition and the *Shaikh* who are the main reference for its Sufism behavior and actions.[27] Even so, Muhammadiyah

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[27]Hasnan Bachtiar, "Gagasan dan Manifestasi Neo-Sufisme dalam Muhammadiyah:

does not oppose the Sufistic traditions practiced by various *tarekat* except those that are contrary to the values of pure monotheism and good morals. Sufism in Muhammadiyah emphasis on implementing the values of monotheism and morality in daily behavior, both individually and institutionally. The practice of Sufism in Muhammadiyah becomes an enrichment for the Sufism tradition in the Islamic world, more oriented towards inclusive social action rather than individual asceticism for exclusive inner satisfaction.[28]

Conclusion

Based on the above explanation, is it true that Muhammadiyah is anti-Sufism? We would like to say that Muhammadiyah is not anti-Sufism but does not accommodate the Sufis order. Sufism (*tasawuf*) of course differs from Sufis order (*tarekat*). *Tasawuf* is the "content" whereas tarikat is the container and the umbrella organization. Tasawuf is the goal of quality to be reached, whereas *tarekat* is one of ways to reach the quality.

For this reason, any claim that Muhammadiyah is spiritually dry and arid or anti and against Sufism should be revised. Being absent from promoting *tasawuf* word and not providing space for tarekat does not mean that this Modernist Muslim organization rejects an esoteric dimension of Islam. It would be wise to say that Muhammadiyah formulates and practices Sufism in a distinctive way.

Sufism in Muhammadiyah emerges in two forms, ethics and ethos, and flows in the body of the Muhammadiyah movement both personally and institutionally. Ethics focuses on the absorption of fundamental elements

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Sebuah Analisis Teoretik", *Afkaruna*, Volume 11, Number 2 (2015): 157-194, https://doi.org/10.18196/aiijis.2015.0047.157-194.

[28]Samsidar MA, "Persepsi Muhammadiyah dalam Memahami Tasawuf", *Al-Muaddib : Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial & Keislaman*, Volume 2, Number 2 (2017), https://doi.org/10.31604/muaddib.v2i2.278.

in Sufism, such as monotheism, submission to God, internalization of moral values, and pietism. Ethos emphasizes persistence and orderliness of worship, the spirit of hard work to advance society, applying moral values in the individual and social domains, immaculacy, and public order. Both values of ethics and ethos are not institutionalized in an organization of Sufi order but become a system of values for Muhammadiyah leaders and members.

Muhammadiyah tries to formulate an "authentic" Islamic spirituality by the implementation of monotheism values and morality in daily life, both individually and institutionally. Its practice is more oriented towards active and inclusive social action rather than individual asceticism for exclusive inner satisfaction.

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