



## SUFISTICS OF THE SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION ERA (Deconstruction of Jalaluddin Rakhmat's Thought)

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to describe: characteristics of the era of social transformation in general and the deconstruction of Sufistic Jalaluddin Rachmat's thought in the social transformation era, so that misunderstanding of Sufism can be overcome by displaying Sufism's simple teachings without reducing the meaning of its substance, so that it is easily practiced by all groups. The approach used is a philosophical and sociological approach. This type of research is classified as library research with processing methods and data analysis which is qualitative. Data is collected by quoting, adapting and analyzing the literature that is representative and has relevance to the problem discussed, then reviews and concludes it. After holding a discussion on the thinking of Sufistic Jalaluddin Rachmat by emphasizing Sufistic thinking in the era of social transformation, as a result Jalaluddin Rachmat divided Sufism into three mahzab, i.e. morality mahzab, ma'rifat mahzab and essence mahzab. Implication of this research is to minimize the occurrence of various forms of deviation both individual and social. In addition, this research also calls on the readers or the public to continue to preserve the teachings of Sufism by deconstructing the teachings of other Sufism so that it is always fresh and can be transformed in accordance with the rate of development of the times.

**Keywords:** *Jalaluddin Rakhmat, social transformation, sufistic*

Abstrak: Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan tentang: Karakteristik era transformasi sosial secara umum dan dekonstruksi pemikiran Sufistik Jalaluddin Rakhmat pada era transformasi sosial, agar kesalahpahaman terhadap tasawuf bisa ditanggulangi dengan menampilkan ajaran-ajaran tasawuf yang sederhana tanpa mengurangi makna substansinya, sehingga mudah dipraktikkan oleh semua kalangan. Berdasarkan permasalahan tersebut, maka pendekatan yang dipakai adalah pendekatan filosofis dan sosiologis. Jenis penelitian ini tergolong penelitian kepustakaan dengan metode pengolahan dan analisis data yang bersifat kualitatif. Data dikumpulkan dengan mengutip, menyadur dan menganalisis terhadap literatur yang representatif dan mempunyai relevansi dengan masalah yang dibahas, kemudian mengulas dan menyimpulkannya. Setelah mengadakan pembahasan tentang pemikiran sufistik Jalaluddin Rakhmat dengan menitikberatkan pada pemikiran sufistik pada era transformasi sosial, maka sebagai hasilnya adalah Jalaluddin Rakhmat membagi tasawuf dalam tiga mazhab, yakni sebagai mazhab akhlak, mazhab ma'rifat dan sebagai mazhab hakikat. Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah meminimalisir terjadinya berbagai bentuk penyimpangan baik yang bersifat individu maupun sosial. Selain itu dengan penelitian ini juga menghimbau kepada para pembaca atau masyarakat agar tetap melestarikan ajaran-ajaran tasawuf dengan melakukan dekonstruksi pada ajaran tasawuf lainnya agar selalu fresh dan bisa ditransformasikan sesuai dengan laju perkembangan zaman.

**Kata kunci:** *Jalaluddin Rakhmat, sufistik, transformasi sosial*

### Introduction

Humans are social creatures that have two dimensions, namely the spirit and the body. Both have different needs, which must be met in a balanced way. If one of the two is not fulfilled, the consequences will be fatal. Physical needs that are not met will result in death and if spiritual needs are not met then it will cause confusion, mental turmoil and can even make someone commit suicide. This has been the greatest disaster as well as the challenges of modern humans. In terms of material facilities are met but inner emptiness, so that today many are looking for certain paths to fulfill inner satisfaction.

In terms of creation, humans are the most perfect creatures when compared to others because humans are granted five senses, mind and heart. According to Ibn Khaldun, the three potentials owned by humans must be clean, healthy, efficient and able to work together in harmony (Nata, 2009). With these potentials, humans can create, manage, and change the surrounding environment for the better.

Every human being would want his life in a state of good, prosperous and happy. Many people do not know that to achieve these goals is required system of thought in accordance with the nature of human and the nature of his life. Humans will lose some of their lives if not or without the system of thought used in the purpose of life so that their lives will experience lameness, then they will experience

life disappointment (Achmadi, 2010). For this reason, it is necessary to have views of life system in which there is harmony between the nature of the human person and things needed to achieve prosperity, happiness and peace.

Human civilization in the 21st century, which is often referred to as the era of globalization and transformation, characterized by two main things, namely the rapid development of science as a sign of human intellectual progress and the use of technology as a product of the results of human intellectuals in various aspects of life. Therefore, modern humans are often idealized as humans who are able to think logically and also capable of using various advanced technologies to improve the quality of their lives (Monib & Mulyana, 2009).

The impact of intellectual intelligence which then produces a variety of knowledge and new discoveries in technology should make modern humans wiser in living their lives. However, the progress of science and technology does not always along with the quality of humanity in everyone. As a result, psychiatric disorders often affect humans. The modern age is a century of technocracy that ignores the dignity of humanity. The most serious flaw of this modern age is that which concerns the most profound humanity, the spiritual field (Madjid, 1994). In line with this opinion according to Azyumardi Azra, modernism has failed to provide a more meaningful life for humans. Modernization and modernism have failed to remove the role of religion from public life. The awakening of the Sufism's spirit is a strict rejection of blind belief in science and technology (Azra, 1999).

This does not mean that humans are forbidden to participate in social change, because change is a necessity and basically people experience changes every day, although sometimes not realized. Neither with the community, always trying to make changes that can lead to progress and prosperity, so as not to become a society that is left behind by the times.

Jalaluddin Rakhmat in one of his opus said that the system will develop in a better direction if it is shaken by change. This is an introduction to a more sophisticated structure when faced with a turmoil. Before reaching a new order, the system must experience disorder. The universe is a system that keeps renewing itself (self renewing system), with shocks, chaos, disorder, chaos, typhoons and storms (Rakhmat, 1999). That's the illustration of a life process in the world. Shock can produce thoughts that try to perfect things for the better, by filling in the gaps with things that can improve the order of people's lives.

Sufism studies also often experience shocks in the midst of modern society. Moreover, the tendency of some people this time is to prioritize the ratio, making it difficult to accept Sufism based on intuition or feeling. This is the responsibility of Sufism activist / sufistic to develop Sufism teachings so that it can be accepted by all groups. The impact of this shock has resulted in contemporary Sufism activists who tried to reform the teachings of Sufism based on modern, one of which is Jalaluddin Rakhmat and many other figures who participated in coloring Islamic thought amidst the swift currents of change and the development of science and technology, especially in Indonesia.

The era of social transformation has made the world full of competition, on the one hand it challenges humans to be more creative and innovative, but on the other hand it creates jealousy for those who cannot meet expensive needs and a sense of wanting to meet unlimited needs that are not halal and haram. As a result, current social changes must be accompanied by strengthening spiritual values and moral education to maintain human nature *hanif* so as not to be affected by negative changes. For this reason, conceptual thinking is needed to create a superior person and be able to survive in the midst of modernization.

The negative portrait of modernity is one of the factors that foster the desire for Sufism as a response to modernity which has given birth to spiritual aridity (Siradj, 2006). However, the use of Sufism in overcoming a number of problems requires a new interpretation of the terms Sufism so that it is always contextual and not the cause of the Islam's weakening.

One of prominent figure of Indonesian Muslim who glanced a lot about Sufism in the era of social transformation was Jalaluddin Rachmat. In his book "Reformasi Sufistik" he said that, "shake your brain to increase intelligence, cause turmoil in your heart to approach holiness, face chaos in the organization so that there is development and see riots as a vehicle for progress" (Rakhmat, 1999).

This indicates that to approach holiness, one way is preceded by causing turmoil in the heart. When the heart starts to flare up, it will cause anxiety in a human being to meet the thirst for spiritual needs. Because human nature is holiness which always leads to ultimate truth. Although in plain view all the needs in modern times can be met with a variety of technological sophistication that is fast paced and versatile, but the longing for something that is mystical, which can provide inner strength and mental health, sooner or later comes to human life.

Considering Sufism has an important role in social life, in addition to enhancing spirituality it also strengthens the existence of humanity to overcome a number of problems in this modern era. So it is interesting to make Sufism / Sufitic in the era of social transformation as research material, especially on the thinking of Jalaluddin Rachmat as a sufistic. He offers Sufism that is practical and elegant for all people.

### A. Life Portrait of Jalaluddin Rachmat

Jalaluddin Rakhmat was born in Bandung (Rancaekek) on August 29, 1949 (Rakhmat, 1988). The nickname is Jalal or more often called Kang Jalal. He was born in the Nahdhatul Ulama (NU) family. He was born from the couple of Haji Rachmat and Sadja'ah. His mother is an active person in teaching the Islam doctrine in his village. His father was a religious leader and a public figure.

Jalaluddin Rakhmat started his formal education from elementary school in his village. Then continue school at SMP Muslimin III, Bandung. He continued his education in SMA II Bandung and he had joined the Islamic Union (PERSIS). Subsequently Jalal continued his studies at the Universitas Padjajaran (UNPAD) Faculty of Publicisism. While still in college, Jalal also entered SLP teacher education with a major in English. In addition, he also briefly joined Muhammadiyah and was educated at Darul Arqam Muhamaddiyah (Rakhmat, 2015).

In 1980-1982, when Jalal was a lecturer, he then received a Fulbright scholarship and continued his studies at Iowa State University, United States with the same majors, communication and psychology to successfully obtain academic title, Master of Science. He graduated with *magna cum laude*. Furthermore, he also continued his education at the Australian National University in Camberra in 1994-1995 (Rakhmat, 2015). In 2014, Jalaluddin Rakhmat successfully completed his doctoral program at Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar, with the title of dissertation is *Asal-Usul Sunnah Sababat (Studi Historiografis atas Tarikh Tasyri)* in the "Pemikiran Islam" Study Program. At present he also serves as a member of the Republic Indonesia Parliament for the 2014-2019 period (Rakhmat, 2014).

Jalaluddin Rachmat has a long and diverse intellectual journey. He has served in the Muhammadiyah Council for Education, teaching and culture in Bandung and the Muhammadiyah Tabligh Council in the West Java region. And while in America, Jalal was also active in coaching recitation at the Darul Arqam mosque, Ames Iowa, with Dr. Imanuddin Abdurrahim. In addition he also actively teaches on several campuses such as at ITB and IAIN with Islamic Ethics and Religion courses, as well as designing curriculum in the faculty of communication at UNPAD and actively fostering students at several other campuses, also teaching courses in Communication Science, Philosophy of Science and Research Methods (Rakhmat, 2015). In particular he also fostered Mysticism (Irfan / Tasawuf) at the Islamic College for Advanced Studies (ICAS) Universitas Paramadina, which he co-founded with Prof. Dr. Nurholis Madjid, Dr. Haidar Bagir, and Dr. Muwahidi since 2002 (Rakhmat, 2004).

As a scientist, Jalal became a member of several professional organizations. As a preacher, he was busy filling several studies, and as an activist, he became chairman of the shura council for IJABI (Ikatan Jamaah Ahlul Bait Indonesia) (Rakhmat, 2015). His hope as a missionary is to be able to maintain the teachings of the Rasulullah SAW, assuming that if the Prophet's companions repeat the prophet's message to be heard by people who are geographically close. So Jalaluddin Rakhmat also conveyed the Prophet's message to those who were close to him in time and space. In addition, Jalaluddin Rachmat is also actively preaching and fostering worshipers in mosques, slums and homeless places. As a form of concern for the poor, he established a free school, namely SMP Plus Mutahhari in Cicalengka, Bandung, which is specifically for poor students.

Jalaluddin Rachmat is identical with the development of urban Sufism. In fact, it is arguably he who pioneered studies of Sufism targeting the urban middle class, namely business people, officials, politicians, celebrities, and professionals from various fields that are on average well educated (Rakhmat, 2010).

As proof of Jalaluddin Rachmat's interest in Sufism, he founded Pusat Kajian Tasawuf (PKT): Tazkia Sejati, OASE-Bayt Aqila, Islamic College for Advanced Studies (ICAS-Paramadina), Islamic Cultural Center (ICC) in Jakarta, PKT Misykat in Bandung. In these institutions, the son of Kiai Haji Rakhmat and a communications expert graduated from Iowa State University, USA, intensively delivered his religious studies or lectures to the urban community who were thirsty for the splendor of Islamic spirituality. His ideas and thoughts are recognized by many observers as participating in coloring the discourse of contemporary Islamic thought in Indonesia since the 1980s (Rakhmat, 1998). But many also consider his thoughts quite controversial. Many of them oppose the idea of Jalaluddin Rachmat, one of the reasons for this is his tendency towards Syi'ah Mahzab.

## **B. General Review Of Sufistics And Social Transformation**

Sufistik comes from the word "Sufi" means someone who is dressed in wool (Esposito, 2002). Then the word "sufi" gets affixed to be sufistic (adjective) which means have the quality of Sufi (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2008). In terminology sufistic interpreted varied by experts. For example, according to Ali al-Husain ibn Ali Abi Talib argued that Sufism is a noble character; whoever has good morals is a good Sufi (Ali, 2008). While Mustafa Zahri said that Sufism is a science that explains how to purify the soul, how to improve morals, and how to foster physical and spiritual well-being for eternal happiness (Zahri, 1976). Meanwhile, according to Hamka, Sufism is to cleanse the soul, educate and enhance the degree of mind, suppress all trials, greed and power, to fight lust that is more than the need for self-centeredness (Hamka, 1990). Based on some of these descriptions it can be understood that Sufism is an attempt to explain and teach about how one's mental attitude in getting closer to God.

The word transformation is defined as a change in form, form on a large scale (Tim Penyusun, 2002). Transformation can also mean the transformation process. Meanwhile social transformation is a total change in the form of appearance, nature, character and so on in the interrelationship between humans as individuals and groups. Social transformation is also interpreted the same as social change. Important factors that are commonly involved in social change are population, technology, cultural values and social movements. Some things that cause social change such as contact with other cultures, heterogeneous population, social chaos and social change itself (Ensiklopedia Nasional Indonesia, 1997).

Based on the history of the development of Sufism in Islam, experts classify Sufism into two, namely Sufism that is biased towards behavioral theories or also referred to as Akhlaki Sufism and Sufism which is more inclined to complex theories that require a deep understanding (Falsafi Sufism). Meanwhile there is also a division of Sufism into three, i.e. Akhlaki Sufism, Falsafi Sufism and Amali Sufism (Syukur & Masyharuddi, 2002). And the attainment of perfection and purity of the soul must be through education and mental training that is formulated in the form of correct mental attitude regulation and strict discipline of behavior.

The essence of the Sufism's teaching as understood mysticism in other religions, aims to obtain a direct and conscious relationship with God, so that someone feels with his awareness that is in presence of god. This effort is carried out by contemplation, breaking away from the ever-changing and temporary temporal trap of the world. In addition Sufism also aims to train humans to have subtle inner acuity and character. Inner attitude and subtlety of character give encouragement to humans so that they always give priority to humanity considerations in every problem encountered (Yunus, 2011). Based on the various opinions that have been stated above, the ultimate goal of a Sufi is to get closer to Allah. By always remembering God who can deliver his mind to be calm and as if he felt the presence of God. So that a Sufi has inner wealth.

### C. Deconstruction of Sufistic Jalaluddin Rahmat's Thought in The Social Transformation Era

Jalaluddin Rakhmat invites people to return to human nature, namely by reviving the love that has been neglected because of busyness and greed in the pursuit of the world. It is time to approach God, whose presence is sometimes forgotten. The fire of lust that has been blazing within must be combined with the light of God's love so that its light can extinguish the fire of lust that often leads to losing (Rakhmat, 1999). One way to approach God is through the Sufistic path or Sufism. Basically Jalaluddin Rachmat classifies Sufism in three mahzab, namely as Moral Mahzab, Ma'rifat (Sufism as ma'rifat madzhab, or a way to attain knowledge) and as Hakikat Mahzab (directing his life only to Allah SWT). The moral Mahzab means that in Sufism there are teachings or a series of morals which must be carried out by humans or anyone who wants to draw closer to Allah. The moral referred to here is the character of Sufism (good character).

The most basic morals in the teachings of Sufism that must be practiced by a Sufi, both classical and modern Sufi, among others, is always behave in a manner of *zuhud*, *wara'* and patience. These three important points are often highlighted by contemporary thinkers, because of the era development which is very practical, the teachings of Sufism should also be reconstructed so that it can still be practiced by all groups. So Jalaluddin Rachmat as a contemporary thinker has its own concepts of *zuhud*, *wara'* and patience, in order to present a sufistic face that is in accordance with the times. The details will be explained as follows:

#### 1. *Zuhud*

According to Jalaluddin Rachmat, *zuhud* did not leave the world, but did not put his heart on it. *Zuhud* also did not avoid worldly pleasures, but did not place a high value on it. Something that is in the hands of a human who lives in the world, such as home, vehicles, gardens, children, friends, careers, power, wealth and other material things. Sooner or later all of that will change and will definitely be left behind. Then everything that is on Allah's side is His mercy which encompasses everything, His infinite grace and His vast forgiveness. Based on that verse, Jalaluddin Rachmat concluded that "the people of *zahid* are people who live in the world but do not put their hearts in the world, and they work in the world for the hereafter.

Concrete description of a wealthy person who is able to implement the values of Sufism (*zuhud*) in his life, has been told in the Al Qur'an, the Prophet Sulaiman as. He was a Prophet who was endowed with incomparable power and luxury. The palace is glamorous, built on glass. Once, Queen Balqis from Yemen was invited to his palace. While walking Queen Balqis lifted her skirt for fear of getting wet. Because he thinks it's like walking on water. In short, the Prophet Sulaiman asked Queen Balqis to return out of the palace while carrying a glass of water on a horse. The Prophet Sulaiman advised that the water did not spill a drop. Then Queen Balqis did it. After returning to meet the Prophet Sulaiman, Queen Balqis was asked about what she saw when he returned to bring the water. Ratu Balqis replied that she did not see anything. The Prophet Sulaiman explained that so he with his luxurious palace. As Queen Balqis's heart only rests on the water she carries so it does not spill, so that she does not see all the luxury around her. Likewise the heart of the Prophet Sulaiman always remembers God and maintains not to deviate from His guidance, so that the palace does not affect his attitude and behavior (Wahid, 2014). The wisdom of this story is that entrepreneurs, officials, or intellectuals do not need to leave their businesses and professions by entering into the life of an Islamic spirituality.

#### 2. *Wara'*

*Wara'* literally means to refrain, be careful, or keep yourself from falling into an accident. According to Jalaluddin Rachmat, *wara'* is the value of self purity. Muslims measure the importance of the meaning or validity of ideas and actions from the extent to which they process self-purification. The word *wara'* does not exist in the Al Qur'an, but the command to purify oneself is explained in the Al Qur'an, as in Q.S al-Syams / 91: 9-10.

This verse contains Allah's emphasis on anyone who purifies the soul by following the guidance of Allah and the Apostle and controlling his desires, so they are among those who are fortunate. As for the losers are those who hide the sanctity of their souls by following the seduction of lust (the

temptations of the devil) or hinder the soul from achieving perfection and purity by committing crimes that can pollute the soul.

Jalaluddin Rachmat considers wara' as a first step, a small step for God's lover, but a big step for beginners. The stages in wara' are to avoid evil and increase in goodness. The essence of avoiding bad deeds is to protect yourself from physical and psychological damage, it can also help in increasing goodness. Because if someone often makes mistakes, ugliness, or sin, it will cause feelings of guilt. So that makes the soul uneasy, anxious and eventually cause other physical illnesses.

### 3. Patience

Facing the problems of modern society today, in addition to the wara' behavior, it is also very important to always be patient in dealing with life's problems. The importance of the role of patience is described by Jalaluddin Rachmat in one of his books that patience is a vehicle for human life. With the reason that life is a journey that requires a vehicle to arrive at a destination. Patience comes from *ṣād*, *ba* and *ra* means prison (detain) and exalting something. Imprison or restrain passions so as not to be free out of the provisions of religious teachings, so as to enhance self-defense. Lexically patient means being steadfast and not complaining even if you get a very large ordeal (Darwis, 2013).

Patience is always related to exams. Someone said to be patient if he still chooses what is desired by religion with suppressing or controlling the insistence of lust. Be patient is not only a suggestion but has reached the stage of necessity, for the sake of one's mental health. Patience will lead to sincerity. Jalaluddin Rachmat views sincerity as an act carried out either accompanied by a sense of happiness or in which there is a feeling of being forced or unwell, but still doing righteous deeds such as alms or giving (Rakhmat, 1998).

Deconstruction carried out by Jalaluddin Rachmat on Sufism can be seen in the concepts of *zuhud*, *wara'* and patience. Using a comparison between general opinions about the teachings of Sufism with the opinion of Jalaluddin Rachmat, so that it is easier to understand the teachings of Sufism that have been deconstructed by Jalaluddin Rachmat. The three concept is an embodiment of remembrance if viewed from the moral aspects in human life.

In the theory of deconstruction, a thought that seeks to dismantle the understandings of the general public which has been believed to be hereditary, in the context of purifying meaning, by releasing thoughts that bind a word or object. In accordance with this theory, Jalaluddin Rachmat appeared to deconstruct the meaning of the word Sufism which is still guided by the Al Qur'an and then adjusts to the current era of transformation. As a result, Sufism which was considered to be practicable only by certain groups and carried out in special places, can now be easily carried out by all groups of people.

### Conclusion

Social transformation basically refers to social change which assumes progress in society which is characterized by the characteristics of modern society which tends to be rational, secular and materialistic, has a high work ethic, respects individual freedom and tends to progress. The deconstruction of Sufistic Jalaluddin Rakhmat's thought is focused on the teachings of Sufism which are urgent to be practiced in daily life, adapted to the development and tendencies of modern society, such as *zuhud*, *wara'* and patience. Jalaluddin Rakhmat tried to show the face of Sufism in accordance with the times without disparaging social aspects.

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