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**Zuhud Vis A Vis Modernity: The
Resistance of Rural Community to
Modernity**

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Abstrak:

This research aims to reveal the opposition of a rural community at Kedungbanteng, Paguyangan, Brebes in responding to the pace of modernity, which tends to degrade human morality as its main actor. This study used a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. This study uses the interview method with structured interview guidance and participatory observation. A combination of several existing techniques carried out the data collection. Those techniques were observation, interviews, and documentation. Meanwhile, to test the validity of the data, three methods were used: source triangulation, technical triangulation, and time triangulation. It was found that the opposition applied by society in responding to the fundamental changes due to modernization was using *zuhud* behaviour. Specifically, these oppositions were manifested by eliminating materialism, increasing the caution of seeking sustenance (*wirai*), and firmly rejecting the formalist tradition diversity (*fikih* oriented). The *zuhud* movement can be carried out because a charismatic figure initiated it. In addition, what is quite prominent is the tomb pilgrimage to certain tombs believed to be the tombs of local ancestors and *kyai*. Pilgrimage can increase awareness that life exists in the world and in the grave; there is also life in the afterlife. So that someone will be careful and prepare provisions for the next life. The emphasis is on the spiritual practice of religious teachings rather than studying texts. So rarely try to find arguments as the basis of certain practices.

(Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap resistensi kelompok masyarakat di Dusun Kedungbanteng, Desa Paguyangan, Kab. Brebes dalam menanggapi laju modernisasi yang dewasa ini cenderung menurunkan moralitas manusia sebagai aktor utamanya. Jenis penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif dan menggunakan pendekatan fenomenologi transendental. Penelitian ini juga dilengkapi dengan metode wawancara serta pedoman wawancara terstruktur, serta observasi partisipatif. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan menggabungkan beberapa teknik yang ada. Teknik-teknik tersebut adalah observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Sedangkan untuk menguji keabsahan data digunakan tiga metode yaitu triangulasi sumber, triangulasi teknis, dan triangulasi waktu. Dalam penelitian ini ditemukan bahwa resistensi yang dilakukan masyarakat dalam menyikapi perubahan mendasar akibat modernisasi adalah praktik *zuhud*. Lebih khusus lagi, secara praktis resistensi ini dimanifestasikan oleh; menghilangkan paham materialis, meningkatkan kehati-hatian dalam mencari rezeki (*wirai*) dan sangat menentang tradisi agama formalis (berorientasi *fikih*). Gerakan *zuhud* tersebut dapat terlaksana karena diprakarsai oleh sosok yang kharismatik. Selain itu, yang cukup menonjol adalah ziarah makam ke makam-makam tertentu yang diyakini sebagai makam para leluhur dan *kyai* setempat. Ziarah dapat meningkatkan kesadaran bahwa hidup ada di dunia dan di alam kubur; ada juga kehidupan di akhirat. Sehingga seseorang akan berhati-hati dan mempersiapkan bekal untuk kehidupan selanjutnya. Penekanan terdapat pada pengamalan spiritual ajaran agama daripada mempelajari teks. Sehingga jarang mencoba mencari argumentasi sebagai dasar dari praktek-praktek tertentu.)

Kata Kunci:

Resistance, Rural Community, *Zuhud*, Sufism, Modernity

Introduction

Whether we realize it or not, the development of science and technology has changed people's lifestyles and consumption patterns quickly and instantly. Social reality shows that almost every corner of urban and rural areas have adopted modernization's

lifestyle and consumption patterns,¹ such as fashion models, food and beverage consumption patterns, social interactions, interpersonal communication methods, and technology.² Indirectly, the impact of this will lead the community to take action to justify any means to obtain it. That is the true face of modern accounting³, and even corruption has become entrenched—a manifestation of human greed and greed.⁴

The emergence of anxiety is caused by four things: fear of losing what they have (such as wealth and position), fear of an unwelcome future (future imagination trauma), disappointment with unsatisfactory work results, and guilt for their sins committed. So the solution is to return to religious teachings through Sufism. Sufism is a way to fight the absurdity of human life.⁵ To fill the spiritual void, humans need spiritual nutrition. Spiritual nutrition can be related to religious activities, beliefs, or ritual activities. God predestined humans as social beings who need social bonds and interactions with fellow humans. As social beings, humans need to work together with others to fulfill their life needs, both materially and spiritually. Therefore, the phenomenon of Sufism became a foreign phenomenon recorded in the frame of human history, and it has become a kind of trademark in its own right in human history.

Activities related to Sufism are the *sedekah bumi* ceremony and village clean-up. As in Okta Hadi Nurcahyono's research, local residents interpret *sedekah bumi* and clean the village as an expression of gratitude to God Almighty, who has distributed blessings and livelihoods. Through this tradition, residents ask to be kept away from all calamities, given health and a great life. Initially, Islamic studies found in the community, local wisdom used to develop Islamic values, and religious traditions used to communicate international bond traditions.⁶

¹ Modernization is a process of transformation from a direction of change to a more advanced or increasing direction in various aspects of people's lives. This theory was born in the 1950s in the United States, and is an intellectual response to a world war that evolutionists consider an optimistic path to change. Modernization became the most important theoretical discovery of the long journey of capitalism under the leadership of the United States. Ellya Rosana, "Modernisasi Dan Perubahan Sosial," *TAPIS* 7, no. 12 (2011): 2.

² Safuwani, "Gaya Hidup, Konsumerisme Dan Modernitas," *Jurnal SUWA* 5, no. 1 (2007): 38.

³ Nur Alim Bahri and Iwan Triyuwono, "Asset's Concept Based on Zuhud : Reflection Value of Simplicity in Islam," *JURNAL Riset Akuntansi Dan Keuangan Indonesia* 6, no. 2 (2021): 216.

⁴ Michal Wprostkiewics, "Corruption As An Anthropological Problem. Reflections Based On The Papal Document on Transparency, Control And Competition In Public Life," *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 19, no. 57 (2020): 256.

⁵ Tri Wahyu Hidayati, "Perwujudan Sikap Zuhud Dalam Kehidupan," *Millati, Journal of Islamic Studies Dan Humanities* 1, no. 2 (2016): 244, <https://doi.org/10.18326/millati.v1i1.243-258>.

⁶ Devita Wulandari, Okta Hadi Nurcahyono, and Abdul Rahman, "Revisiting Tradition-Religion Relationship in Javanese Tayub Dance : How Local Community Deals with Dilemmas," *Walisono: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan* 29, no. 1 (2021): 123, <https://doi.org/10.21580/ws.29.1.8578>.

Interestingly, although not many are worthy of being called Sufis, their teachings and paradigms have almost penetrated the components of society, especially Islam, today.⁷ There are nearly no villagers who are not influenced by Sufi teachings. Thus, it can be said that the teachings of Sufism are a diversion of the rural community from splendor, property, and rank.⁸

The discussion of resistance leads to poststructuralist scholars such as James Scott (2004). What is meant by resistance here refers to the word resistance, which means the attention paid to a form of the organized protest movement, on a large scale, which appears at certain moments, because they feel there is a threat to the existence of individuals or groups.⁹ In addition, resistance is also interpreted as defending carried out secretly from groups or communities that are structurally and culturally not empowered or subordinated to strong and superior communities.¹⁰ Following Scott's framework, there is a shift in perspective on the theory of resistance, from the attention directed to social movements that are very passionate, colored by angry reactions, and mechanical to a perspective that defines resistance in social action and behavior.¹¹

About resistance, our study bears some resemblance to that of Mukhsin Jamil. The study also discussed the community's resistance to using Kidung Wahyu Kalaseba (KWK) music. Kidung Wahyu Kalaseba is a new literary work that echoes the psycho-cultural resilience of the adverse effects of modernization and religious puritanism. Mukhsin Jamil explained that KWK contains Javanese spiritualism that can face religious challenges and revive cultural values. In contrast to classical literature, KWK spreads through notable musical performances, such as dangdut, gamelan, and mixes.

The revitalization of Javanese spiritualism and local traditions in the modern cyber era is represented in Kidung Wahyu Kalaseba (KWK). KWK describes the vitality of tradition and spiritualism during social change due to modernization and religious purification. Religious puritanism and technological modernization have awakened the mystical life of the Javanese, which is expressed through music and songs. The explosion of songs with religious lyrics is a phenomenon that displays this spiritual passion. Spiritual

⁷ Rubaidi, "Kontekstualisasi Sufisme Bagi Masyarakat Urban," *Jurnal THEOLOGIA* 30, no. 1 (2019): 128, <https://doi.org/10.21580/teo.2019.30.1.3145>.

⁸ Akhiyat, "Tasawuf Dan Akulturasi Budaya: Telaah Tasawuf Dalam Perspektif Culture and Education," *Jurnal As-Salam* 1, no. 1 (2016): 8, <http://jurnal-assalam.org/index.php/JAS/article/view/40>.

⁹ James C. Scott, *Weapon of The Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (London: Yale University Press, 1985), 15.

¹⁰ Misbah Zulfa Elizabeth, "Perlawanan Visual Perempuan Dalam Poster," *JSW: Jurnal Sosiologi Walisongo* 1, no. 2 (2017): 150.

¹¹ Prudensius Maring, "Strategi Perlawanan Berkedok Kolaborasi; Sebuah Tinjauan Antropologi Kasus Penguasaan Hutan," *Partner* 17, no. 1 (2010): 9.

songs that have *dbiker* and *selawat*,¹² for example, are spiritual, social facilities to get closer to God.¹³

In other cases, there is also a spiritual life with resistance. In addition to using music, resistance can also use other media such as pencak silat. In his study of the embodiment of spirituality in pencak silat, he shows that the purpose of the art training in learning institutions is different from that in Islamic boarding schools. Pencak silat, as stated by Pätzold, became a symbol of resistance during the colonial period. A pencak silat teacher led the resistance with high spiritual authority. Pätzold points out that the environmental bond between martial arts and Islamic worldviews and applications is a phenomenon that distinguishes Islam in Southeast Asia from religious applications in South Asia and the Middle East. However, all types of resistance in anthropological research have given rise to severe criticism, as Brown argues. The concept of resistance has become one of anthropology's dominant and influential theoretical concerns. It denounces and hides other aspects of social life and undermines our cultural complexity and creativity description.¹⁴

In our study, the resistance movement is raised by rural community groups. Resistance as a representation of society is often seen as weak both culturally and intellectually against the power of cultural hegemony. In this case, modernity is identified as coming from the West. Modernity supported by advances in science and technology that continues to develop, at least since the renaissance and *aufklärung* period, in addition to having a positive impact, also has a negative impact, such as secularism, hedonism, materialism, individualism, and alienation that plagues humanity. That is due to modernization supported by "science", which leads to excessive rationalism and the trivialization of religion's role in secularism. As a result, modernism has received a lot of

¹² According to Rubaidi research, the phenomenon of Majelis Shalawat is an important proof not only for the ever-increasing growth of urban Sufism or pseudo-Sufism, but also for the awakening of classical Sufism. This phenomenon is called the new pseudo-Sufi order. The rise is marked by the emergence of specific characters of Sufism. Shalawat groups generate new variants of Sufi practice that can be considered as new Sufi order. Rubaidi, "The New Pseudo-Sufi Order of the Majelis Shalawat Among Urban Muslims in East Java," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 14, no. 2 (2020): 431–56, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2020.14.2.431-456>.

¹³ Muhammad Mukhsin Jamil, "Kidung Wahyu Kalaseba: Javanese Spiritualism and Psycho-Cultural Resilience," *Walisono: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan* 29, no. 1 (2021): 4, <https://doi.org/10.21580/ws.29.1.7976>.

¹⁴ Uwe U Pätzold, "5 Self-Defense and Music in Muslim Contexts in West Java," in *Divine Inspirations* (Oxford University Press, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195385410.003.0006>.

criticism and attention.¹⁵ Colonization, for another example, can occur in the form of physical colonization, can be economical, socio-cultural, and even in a state of mind.¹⁶

The rural community movement shown as a form of expression in resistance is taken from a classical tradition in Islamic teachings known as *Zuhud*. Advances in science and technology, which should lead people to think pragmatically as a feature of modern life, actually tend to run to spiritual pursuits (Sufism and *tarekat*), which are representations of religious fundamentalism and spirituality movements. The Prophet Muhammad gave a concrete example of how a Muslim should behave towards the world. The Prophet said: "*Izḥad fi al-dunya yuhibbuka Allah, wa izḥad fi ma fi aydi al-nasi yuhibbuka al-nas*" (HR Ibn Majjah no. 4102). The hadith can be freely translated like this: "keep your distance from the world, don't be greedy then Allah will like you. And keep your distance from something that people like, and they will like you." The behavior that fits the hadith above is not greedy, not ambitious.¹⁷

Behavior in distancing oneself from the world's pleasures to worship is called *zuhud*. Derived from the word *zāhida*, *zāhada*, *zāhuda-zūhdan*, which means leaving and not liking. Then there is the term *zāhida fi al-dunya* which means.¹⁸ The culprit is called *al-zāhid*, which means people who leave life and worldly pleasures and choose the afterlife. *Zuhud* is the level where a person hates or goes the world's life and prefers or hopes for the hereafter. So, it can be said that *zuhud* is one of the stations in Sufism.

As added by Amin Syukur, who commented that the *zuhud* attitude is an early practice¹⁹ in the teachings of Sufism,²⁰ and this behavior can be said to be relevant as a solution to answer the problems of human life which have more or less fallen into the current of modernization as it is today. On the other hand, the tradition of Sufism is considered to have very positive values and can be a powerful weapon for Muslims in dealing with life's problems. In particular, this attitude to life can be a stronghold from

¹⁵ Umar Faruq Thohir, "Tasawuf Sebagai Solusi Bagi Problematika Kemodernan: Studi Pemikiran Tasawuf M. Amin Syukur," *Jurnal THEOLOGIA* 24, no. 2 (2013): 5, <https://doi.org/10.21580/teo.2013.24.2.327>.

¹⁶ Dika Supyandi, Eliana Wulandari, and Iwan Setiawan, "Reviews on Theories and Practices of Modernization: Rural Experience in Indonesia," in *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Rese*, vol. 129 (Atantis Press, 2018), 129, <https://doi.org/10.2991/icsps-17.2018.27>.

¹⁷ Hidayati, "Perwujudan Sikap Zuhud Dalam Kehidupan," 250.

¹⁸ Ahmad Warson Munawir, *Al-Munawwir: Kamus Arab-Indonesia Terlengkap*, ed. KH. Ali Ma'shum and KH. Zainal Abidin Munawwir (Surabaya: Pustaka Progressif, 1997), 626–27.

¹⁹ In the tradition of Sufism, *zuhud* is a station that will determine the continuation of a Sufi's worship. So that almost all Sufism experts put *zuhud* in each of their Sufism concepts, it's just that with a different concept. Moh. Fudholi, "Konsep Zuhud Al-Qushayrī Dalam Risālah Al-Qushayrīyah," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam* 1, no. 1 (2011): 43.

²⁰ "Sufism" (derived from the word Sufi) is as follows: the word Sufi may come from ibn Shauf, who was known since before Islam as the title of a pious Arab boy who always isolated himself near the Kaaba to draw closer to His Lord. It may also come from the verb "shafa" which means clean and pure. It may also be from the word "shuf" which means goat hair, which is usually used as clothing by Christian Sufis from Syria. Abdul Qadir Djaelani, *Koreksi Terhadap Ajaran Tasawuf* (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 1996), 10.

within to face the glitter of material things so that it can strengthen the psychological aspect in dealing with life's difficulties and have the strength to keep going according to religious and social rules.²¹

Sufism teaches that the reality of God cannot be known by logical or rationalist methods, which tend to be exoteric. The reality of God must be approached through love because love leads to the appreciation of divine majesty and grace, through which esoteric feelings of intimacy with Him can be achieved.²² In addition, Amin Syukur also argues the importance of reorienting Sufism in the modern era today because the direction of Sufism studies is not enough to be a theoretical study but must be more practical. This reorientation of Sufism will become teaching with pragmatic, empirical, and functional use-values. In other words, the study of Sufism must touch on real needs. So, Sufism can be a solution in solving various kinds of life problems.²³ Thus, the behavior of *zuhud* has two lessons; namely, it becomes a gateway to approach the creator. *Zuhud* can manifest by living in serenity and simplicity, worshipping Allah a lot, exaggerating in feeling sinful, absolute submission, and surrendering to Him.²⁴

This study aims to reveal the resistance of rural communities in Kedungbanteng, Paguyangan, Brebes in responding to the pace of modernity. Researchers are interested in the phenomena and habits of a society that are rarely found. One of them uses the concept of *zuhud* to resist modernity. The study of *zuhud* practice here is ontologically one of the proofs that religion is an inspiration in concrete problems in society every period.

Research Methods

The type of this research is grounded research with a phenomenological approach. As well as using the interview method, structured interview guidelines, and observation of participation, it was found that the resistance applied by the community in responding to the fundamental changes due to modernization was by practicing *zuhud*. The primary sources in this research are observation, direct interviews and documentation as secondary sources. As well as data from the interviews conducted by researchers face to face with local religious leaders. Thus, the data collection was carried out by combining several existing techniques. Those techniques were observation, interviews, and documentation. Meanwhile, to test the validity of the data, three methods were used: source triangulation, technical triangulation, and time triangulation.

²¹ M. Amin Syukur, "Aplikasi Zuhud Dalam Sorotan Al-Qur'an" (UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 1996), x, <http://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/14488/>.

²² Umar Faruq Thohir and Irma Runtianing Uswatul Hasanah, "A Divine Love of Annemarie Schimmel; A Sufism Study of an Orientalist," *Dialogia* 19, no. 1 (2021): 270.

²³ M. Amin Syukur, *Menggugat Tasawuf* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1999), vi.

²⁴ M. Amin Syukur and Masyharuddin, *Intelektualisme Tasawuf: Studi Intelektualisme Tasawuf Al-Ghazali* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2002), 20.

Research Results and Discussion

Zuhud Movement In Rural Communities

Etymologically *zuhud* comes from Arabic, which comes from the word *al-zuhd*, the root word of *zabada*, which means not liking or not being greedy for the world. *Zuhud* is freeing oneself and taking heart away from worldly things that can make someone less remember God.²⁵ The concept of *zuhud* can also be understood as a method that can avoid them from misguidance and all the tricks of worldly pleasures.²⁶ As previously explained, *zuhud* begins with resistance to the materialistic character. This *zuhud* character arises because of the human character who defies the world. It is stated as asceticism in the Western world, not born of Islam itself.²⁷

In other words, *zuhud* means focusing on the hereafter rather than the world's affairs. World affairs are also important, but it is not the primary concern. Etymologically, modesty (*zuhud*) means *ragaba 'ansyai'in wa tarakabu*, which indicates that the person who has this character is not interested in something that can leave him. *Zabada fi al-dunya* means shunning from enjoyable life to worship. A modest person is called *zahid*, *zuhhad*, or *zahidun*. The plural or *zabidah* is *zuhdan*, which means little.²⁸

Some of the characters in asceticism are (1) based on the teachings of the Qur'an and sunnah, which is to stay away from worldly things to gain rewards and protect oneself from hell. (2) is practical, without any attention to developing a theory of the practices carried out. (3) The motivation for *zuhud* is fear, namely fear that arises from the basis of

²⁵ Bahri and Triyuwono, "Asset's Concept Based on Zuhud : Reflection Value of Simplicity in Islam," 217.

²⁶ Zubaedi et al., "Internalization of Character Values Through Sufistic Approach," *Psychology and Education* 58, no. 2 (2021): 2680, <https://www.archives.palarch.nl/index.php/jae/article/view/6699>.

²⁷ Meanwhile, in philosophy, asceticism is defined as the principle of mortal behavior in order to obtain happiness, moral nobility and the ideals of religious life. Asceticism means strenuous exercise. In popular philosophy Stoa means "to break away from all worldly tendencies to attain unshakable freedom". In the world of the church it is carried out by monks, and in Sufism and Islamic orders it almost resembles *wara* to always draw closer to Allah. Only in this way can one free one's soul to attain goodness and salvation. Asceticism in both senses is equated with monasticism, strictness, modesty, obedience, poverty, fasting, discipline, penance, destruction of limbs, a solitary and contemplative life. The idea and practice of asceticism in the lives of the Israelites arose in their encounter with Eastern religion and Greek culture. The figure who combined Judaism with Greek culture was Philo of Alexandria. Philo introduced a dualism between God and the world which was bridged by the Logos, while the dualism of body and spirit was bridged by a contemplative life, and with that the spirit would be liberated from the body and ascended to a higher level, namely the Divine level. Christianity, which was influenced by Philo and Judaism, began to recognize the concept of dualism, in this dualism concept began to be known as the concept of staying away from the world and asceticism with Eastern characteristics. Because asceticism is a religious sentiment that often appears at certain periods as a sign of alienation from this world, so even though there are similarities in ideas, practices, and interactions between non-Christian asceticism and Christian asceticism, it is clear that it cannot be said that Christian asceticism born of non-Christian asceticism. Mochtar Effendy, *Ensiklopedi Agama Dan Filsafat* (Palembang: Universitas Sriwijaya, 2000), 313.

²⁸ Zubaedi et al., "Internalization of Character Values Through Sufistic Approach," 2684.

religious charity in earnest.²⁹ Amin Syukur explained that *zuhud* could be divided into two as *maqām* and *akhlāq*. As *maqām*, *zuhud* means loss of will, except the will to meet God. The world is considered a barrier (*hijāb*) to meet someone with God, and because of that he is considered something in the opposite direction (dichotomy) with Him. As *akhlāq*, *zuhud* can be realized in a simple, natural, integrative, inclusive, and active life in different lives in this world, as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad and his companions.³⁰

The emergence of *zuhud* life in historical studies generally stems from unconditional political and immoral social conditions. This condition then triggers the emergence of Muslim figures who feel they have a moral obligation to remind the authorities and the people to return to life, as exemplified by the Prophet. Thus, humans had to return to the path they were supposed to follow. That is the way of truth that God has given.³¹ Nurcholish Madjid sharpened this analysis that the birth of the *zuhud* movement was triggered by the unrest of Muslim leaders who could not stand to see life that was not Islamic or no longer like during the time of the Prophet, *Khulafa' al-Rashidin*, causing explosions and criticisms of the authorities so that this would happen. In addition, the *zuhud* movement can also take the form of religious opposition to the ruling regime however, although the *zuhud* movement took the opposition, not in political action but based on a moral movement.

The Muslims who are concerned with morals are then known as *zāhid* figures. The naming of *zāhid* is based on the meaning of the word, namely people who stay away from worldly life intending to influence the rulers not to be too absorbed in the world's glitter. Thus the *zuhud* movement, although the substance is a moral movement, has a significant impact on social life. Famous *Zahid* figures include Hasan al-Basri (d. 728 AD) and al-Muhaisibi (d. 857 AD).³² Besides Hasan al-Basri, many more zealous figures such as Sufyan as-Sauriy (d. 135 H), Malik bin Dinar (d. 171 H), etc.

This teaching does not ask humans to run away from the world problem and does not ask humans to kill their lust. Someone can make this valuable world by controlling the lust that can disturb the stability of the mind and heart. They do not give up on what they want, do not indulge in lust, and do not kill it. They place everything appropriately and proportionally so that they will not be negligent by running their life in balance. This Sufism stream considers that they are free to place Allah as the core of their obsession.

²⁹ Mahfud Junaedi and Mirza Mahbub Wijaya, *Pengembangan Paradigma Keilmuan Perspektif Epistemologi Islam: Dari Perennialisme Hingga Islamisasi, Integrasi-Interkoneksi Dan Unity of Science* (Jakarta: Prenadamedia Group, 2019), 314.

³⁰ M. Amin Syukur, *Zuhud Di Abad Modern* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka pelajar, 1997), v.

³¹ Bahri and Triyuwono, "Asset's Concept Based on Zuhud : Reflection Value of Simplicity in Islam," 217.

³² Fritz Meier, *Sufisme: Merambab Ke Dunia Mistik Islam* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2004), 2.

They are busy being servants who always hold the wisdom relevant to their life's purpose. That argument is the ideal philosophy of life, according to them.³³

Sufism Doctrine in The Village

From the historical excerpt above, it can be understood that the *zuhud* movement born in Kedungbanteng hamlet, Paguyangan village has a common background with the *zuhud* movement that was taken in the past. In the past, the *zuhud* movement emerged due to socio-cultural conditions. Likewise, the movement that emerged among the people of Kedungbanteng is also a response to socio-cultural conditions influenced explicitly by the problems that grow in their environment. Among the factors that are quite dominant is the first, related to the strong materialist view that develops in people's lives. In this case, the material becomes the primary measure of happiness in the social life of society.

The history of Sufism emerged in pious circles as a reaction to worldliness in the early Umayyad period (661–749). Annemarie Schimmel explains the Sufi practice of constantly meditating on the words in the Qur'an (Islamic holy book) about the Day of Judgment. The ascetics practice are known as "those who always weep" and those who consider this world "a hut of sorrow".³⁴

Interestingly, although there are not many who deserve to be called Sufis, their teachings and paradigms have almost penetrated the components of Paguyangan society today. There is hardly a villager who is not influenced by Sufi teachings. Thus, it can be said that the teachings of Sufism are a diversion of rural communities from splendor, wealth, and rank.

According to the early and well-documented Sufi ideal, economic prosperity is not an indicator of spiritual prosperity; it can be an obstacle to experiencing higher states of mind and revelation along the Sufi path. Poverty (*faqr*), therefore, was the preferred value and ideal way of life according to the early Sufi system of thought.³⁵ That argument is essential for withdrawing from the world and being utterly devoted to God and radically dependent on Him. It indicates a person is chosen by God, his need for material pleasures in this world, and his desire for spiritual closeness and enlightenment. These teachings differ from the more contextual versions of modern Sufism by Buya Hamka and M. Amin Syukur.³⁶

³³ Zubaedi et al., "Internalization of Character Values Through Sufistic Approach," 2688.

³⁴ Annemarie Schimmel, "Sufism." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, n.d., <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Sufism>.

³⁵ Arin Salamah-Qudsi, "The Economics of Female Piety in Early Sufism," *Religions*, 2021, 3, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12090760>.

³⁶ Hamka, *Tasawuf Modern: Babagia Itu Dekat Dengan Kita, Ada Dalam Diri Kita* (Jakarta: Republika, 2015); M. Amin Syukur, *Zuhud Di Abad Modern*.

Islam does not deny the pleasures of the world and wealth, it even views poverty as a social disease and a threat that must be eradicated. However, this is not necessarily understood or applied well by Muslims in history. Historical events show that some people live in luxury, forgetting Islamic teachings about modesty and the middle path. Others prefer to live in poverty and withdraw from one of the benefits of the world.

Thus, a group of people called “*zuhhad*” arose, who were influenced mainly by foreign cultures such as Iran and India who advised to stay away from the pleasures of worldly goods. Not long ago, this school of thought created its own place in the field of Sufism and greatly influenced the entire Islamic world. Although Islam teaches its followers to be responsible for matters of divine will, those who accept Sufi descriptions forget this Islamic commandment and maintain passive submission and belief in Allah. They view working in economic activity as an unnecessary effort, only concerned with worldly life without value for the future, and finally prefer the principle of *fakr*, which means absolute poverty in world affairs.³⁷

In conclusion, this causes all Muslims to become backward. Some people write specific chapters in Sufi sources that demean worldly wealth and suggest living in poverty to maintain this lifestyle, as reinforcement, and even more, so making up many hadiths for this purpose. To urge people to worship, Sufi sources make many hadiths that demean the benefits of the world and prosperity, but urge, let alone extol poverty. Sufis use this kind of narrative to maintain their mystical description, including eating less, sleeping less, resting, and becoming less concerned with worldly affairs. Some of the narratives (hadith) used in the works of the Sufis are authentic, the majority of them are fabricated. One of these fabricated narratives is: “Poverty is my honor, and I am proud of it.” “The gift of the believer in the world is poverty.”³⁸

Before the modern age arrived, exoteric humans faced various external problems due to unfulfilled physical needs, such as the absence of electricity, technology, and industry. However, esoterically, pre-modern humans actually have a more spiritual portion. Even their lives are too colored by belief in spiritual (mystical) things and avoid using excessive ratio portions. For pre-modern (classical) society, basing oneself on religion is more important and excessive use of ratios is the beginning of disobedience. Therefore, excessive use of ratios should be avoided.

More clearly, ascetic behavior in the hamlet of Kedungbanteng Paguyangan village was pioneered by a charismatic³⁹ young figure known as Muhammad Zaenun Alim (Kang

³⁷ Osman Güner, “Poverty in Traditional Islamic Thought : Is It Virtue or Captivity ?,” *Studies in Islam and the Middle East [SIME]* 2, no. 1 (2005): 6.

³⁸ Güner, 7.

³⁹ To carry out a movement, an initiator is needed. A charismatic figure is easier to trigger many people to follow him. As Rubaidi's research on the salawat majlis. His emergence as the earliest in the genealogy of

Zaenun). The asceticism movement began in 2004, starting from the experience of studying in search of knowledge in one of the pesantren located in the Sukaraja area under the care of Kiyai Muhammad Hidayat. The Kiyai is a sincere person in worship who is also a saint of the tariqah *naqsabandiyah qadariyah*. Under the guidance of this kiyai, Kang Zaenun was later interested in pursuing asceticism. The manifestation of the first ascetic behavior that is specifically done is by making a pilgrimage to the tombs of the saints.⁴⁰ In addition to their spiritual disciplines, the spiritual obedience of a seeker towards their spiritual leader is among critical traditions within the mystical Islam world. In this case, what a shaikh asks his fellow to do or not will be uncritically followed. In other words, behinds such practice of authority, Sufi tradition can be politically and socially observable.⁴¹

The pilgrimage lasted quite a long time, which was about seven years. During his pilgrimage, Kang Zaenun felt that he had found a form of inner satisfaction capable of bringing his soul to eternal peace. A sense of peace is obtained not only through wealth or materiality but also through the blessings of the prayers offered at the tombs of the saints. After completing this pilgrimage, then return to the land of birth. When he returned to his community, he practiced his *zuhud* behavior. That is to put aside the material in each of its individual affairs. Kang Zaenun's habits were initially considered controversial by the surrounding community, even to having been reported to the authorities as a suspected movement. With his perseverance and enthusiasm, *zuhud* behavior slowly gets support from his family and even the surrounding community. The *zuhud* movement implemented by Kang Zaenun is followed by approximately 25-30 loyal followers.⁴²

Resistance of Rural Communities to Modernization With The Zuhud Movement

The description of the resistance that occurred in Kedungbanteng hamlet against modernization is manifested explicitly in three things which will be explained in detail as follows:

First, Against Materialist Culture. The initial incident recorded was the emergence of disputes over the distribution of inheritance in the family of the pioneer of the *zuhud* movement (Kang Zaenun) himself. This incident became an important reason that led him

these three groups cannot be separated from the central figure of KH. Mohammad Tamyiz, and is well known among his followers as Mbah Tamyiz. To his followers, he is al-waliyy al-mastur (hidden saint). In addition, it is considered the beginning of a chain that connects the dhikr or awrad of the Prophet Muhammad SAW with the Sufis who practice it today. Rubaidi, "The New Pseudo-Sufi Order of the Majelis Shalawat Among Urban Muslims in East Java."

⁴⁰ Interview with Kiyai Fuad Idris, he is the son of Kiyai Muhammad Hidayat Sukaraja who is now the caretaker of his father's boarding school.

⁴¹ Achmad Ubaedillah, "Sufi Islam and the Nation State: Darul Arkam Movement in the Post Suharto Era of Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 5, no. 1 (2015): 83, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v5i1.79-110>.

⁴² Interview with Ustad Subkhi, on July, 26, 2016

to pursue *zuhud* behaviour.⁴³ Because he was embarrassed to see the phenomena in his family environment due to being dissolved in the world's glitter, causing a commotion amid harmonious kinship relations, he made himself aware of how material often becomes a tool that triggers conflict. From there, he felt that the strength of the materialist view could only be countered with a religious approach, namely practicing the teachings of Sufism with *zuhud* behavior. This is very logical considering that religiosity is a primordial aspect that has been embedded in humans since they were born. Thus, the strengthening of religious aspects in humans is considered very realistic.

Sufism also functions as a controlling tool or human controller so that the human dimension is not easily tainted by modernization that leads to moral decadence so that Sufism will lead humans to the achievement of supreme morality (moral excellence). In addition, Sufism also has relevance and significance to modern human problems because Sufism has provided inner coolness and sharia discipline in a balanced way. It can be understood as a shaper of behavior and can quench intellectual thirst, and can be practiced by every Muslim, from any social strata and in any place.⁴⁴

Following the concept of modern society's need for Sufism and the practical use of Sufism teachings above, the *zuhud* movement gradually responded from a group of people. In particular, the people who welcome this *zuhud* movement face serious problems, carrying a heavy burden of life, have experienced life failures such as being in debt, failing to marry, going bankrupt in business and the like. According to them, by applying *zuhud* behavior, they can find peace and forget the problems of life they face. In general, those facing life's problems live there until they feel healed/better. Thus the reality there emphasizes that the concrete application of *zuhud* behavior can benefit the perpetrators, especially in strengthening the psychological dimension.

Furthermore, the representation of the *zuhud* movement as a form of resistance to materialistic culture is also sought by fostering an attitude of generosity. Among the ways to cultivate a generous attitude is to increase the practice of zakat and alms. The worship of zakat and alms is a practice that is highly recommended in Islam, especially related to social life. This is because this worship has excellent benefits to maintain social harmony between the rich and the poor. Even the practice of worship there has an indirect meaning related to social criticism of people who are too proud of the material. The character who applies *zuhud* behavior to a quiet life can carry out zakat and alms worship more than the rich people in his environment. There are different views of society regarding the size of a person's wealth. The size of a person's wealth is not calculated from the amount of wealth but from how much wealth he contributes.

⁴³ Interview with Kang Asif, one of the pioneer families of the *zuhud* movement, on July 26, 2016

⁴⁴ Novi Maria Ulfa and Dwi Istiyani, "Etika Dalam Kehidupan Modern: Studi Pemikiran Sufistik Hamka," *Esoterik: Jurnal Akhlak Dan Tasawuf* 2, no. 1 (2016): 96.

Second, The Lifestyle of Wira'i. The reduced awareness of the community in seeking sustenance also triggers the idea to carry out *zubud* practice. Related to this factor, the author bases Kang Zaenun's statement when criticizing the kiai who make mosques or huts that are magnificent and luxurious but do not pay attention to where the funds come from. So he considered it a sign of the influence of modernity which influenced the perspective of the people there to become materialist and hedonistic. To that end, he built a simple prayer room and a hut (houses made of weeds) with his money and alms from the surrounding community.⁴⁵

The second match taught above represents the *wira'i* lifestyle, which can simply be understood as applying a modest lifestyle. According to him, a simple life is the basis of one's safety in living life. A simple life will withstand various kinds of desires that can plunge a person into actions that deviate from sharia. Related to applying this value, he does not seem to pay much attention to his physical appearance or performance. According to him, the clothes that people need in life are actually only attached to cover the genitals. The physical appearance in his view is not an essential part, instead the appearance from the inner side is the essential part.

In addition, another example related to the development of a simple lifestyle taught to the people there is to wear modest clothes, eat modestly (even according to information, he does not eat living food), make his mosque with a small size (4mx4m) of bamboo and wood, as well as making beds/huts with thatched roofs for the students who stay. This simple lifestyle is nobler because it is made with money and energy from one's sweat. This view is very different from the general villagers who initially tend to like the appearance of a luxurious birth, and the condition is further exacerbated regardless of the capital or money from which it is used to enjoy the luxury.

Third, Changing Religious Orientation From Fikih to Sufism. The resistance carried out above represents anxiety about the practice of worship that is oriented towards *fikih*. This can be seen from his enthusiasm in practicing Islamic teachings with a Sufism approach. The practice of Islam with the Sufism approach is the practice of worship not only paying attention to its outward form (*fikih* dimension) but also its esoteric dimension. Changing the orientation from *fikih* to *tasawuf* does not mean underestimating *fikih*, and this can be applied if the community has finished with the correct understanding of *fikih*. The spirit of practicing Islamic teachings with this Sufism approach can be seen from the daily activities such as sincerity and enthusiasm for Islamic teachings.

Based on researcher observations, the spirit of practicing the teachings of Sufism in can be exemplified as follows: helping orphans, the poor and old widows, giving charity and the like. In addition, what is quite prominent is the tomb pilgrimage to certain tombs,

⁴⁵ Interview with Mrs. Damirah, she is one of the students on August 2, 2016

which are believed to be the tombs of the ancestors and local clerics. Pilgrimage can raise awareness that life is in this world and in the grave; there is also life in the hereafter. So that someone will be careful and prepare provisions for the next life. That is also relevant to practical Sufism, which always focuses on purifying the heart by keeping away from everything that makes Sufis neglect to communicate with their God. That can be done by walking on the right path following the example of the Prophet.⁴⁶

According to the author's interpretation, the emphasis on the meaning and practice of Islamic teachings is more prominent than studying and mastering the text. This concept tends to subordinate the text of the *naqli* argument in the Qur'an and Hadith. So it is rare to try to find arguments as the basis for certain practices.⁴⁷ In addition, the citation of the *naqli* argument has never been heard. In simple terms, the concept of Sufism developed is to practice Islamic teachings in real life. There is no need to discuss too deeply related to Islamic teachings at the theoretical level. The term that is often used is *ngaji urip* (learning religion by living life). As he expressed about the concept of learning: learning to recite the Qur'an is a big risk if it is mispronounced; in terms of recitation, and *mabrojul huruf* will have different meanings. Different means, of course, it will bring sin.

In contrast to the *ngaji urip*, it emphasizes practicing the meanings contained in the Qur'an. The basic concept often conveyed is to achieve the glory of life by choosing the path of *tirakat* (sore). He often quipped about the behavior of people today who do not like penance, namely eating a lot and sleeping a lot. This concept exists in the Qur'an Surah al-Balad 10-16.

وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ (١٠) فَلَا أَفْتَحَمَ الْعُقَبَةَ (١١) وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعُقَبَةُ (١٢) فَكُ رَقَبَةً (١٣)

أَوْ إِطْعَمٌ فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْعَبَةٍ (١٤) يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ (١٥) أَوْ مِسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ (١٦)

And have shown him the two ways? But he has not broken through the difficult pass. And what can make you know what is [breaking through] the difficult pass? It is the freeing of a slave. Or feeding on a day of severe hunger. An orphan of near relationship. Or a needy person in misery.

In line with this concept, he also explained the importance of learning through life experiences. People learn through teachers and formal schools and learn through God's destiny. According to him, Allah SWT always gives lessons/knowledge to humans through His destiny. Every human being must face the problems of life that are different. The life problems faced by each person are essentially knowledge/lessons given by Allah SWT. This is like his expression when advising people facing issues with their naughty children. He explained that Allah SWT deliberately gave the problem with the term *guru tanpo papan*.

⁴⁶ Zubaedi et al., "Internalization of Character Values Through Sufistic Approach," 2684.

⁴⁷ Junaedi and Wijaya, *Pengembangan Paradigma Keilmuan Perspektif Epistemologi Islam: Dari Perennialisme Hingga Islamisasi, Integrasi-Interkoneksi Dan Unity of Science*, 317.

It means that Allah SWT gave the problem as a teacher to learn from the calamities that befell us. Thus learning can be done through life events that we experience ourselves. However, not many people can learn through God's destiny.⁴⁸

However, it is undeniable that the experience of Sufism that he carried out there is still considered controversial. According to the author's analysis, the controversial location of the *zuhud* movement there is caused by two interrelated factors, namely the traditional religious community factor and the separate practice of Sufism. The first factor is related to the characteristics of traditional societies that tend to reject new understandings and practices, which triggers the growth of controversial reactions. The two separate practices of Sufism teachings that are not directly affiliated to a particular *tarekat* have become the reinforcement for the growth of controversy in society. The kiai and religious leaders there often criticize this difference. According to the religious leaders there, the path of Sufism is like a unique path to God. So that to take that path, must be guided by a reliable student to arrive at God safely. A person who takes the path of Sufism without a reliable *mursid* will risk slipping into disobedience.⁴⁹

In addition, the general public perceives the character's behaviour as often confusing and unacceptable to common sense logic. It can happen because someone's behaviour often uses taste. For example, not all guests are directly met when guests visit to convey life problems. It was also felt by the researcher when he visited for the interview. However, this behaviour for his followers is considered normal.

Conclusion

The *zuhud* movement in Kedungbanteng village reflects a moral movement to fight *primordial* problems of humanity due to the rapid pace of modernization. Zuhud's movement is based on the concept of religion which is one of the great potentials in dealing with the problem of modernization. In other words, the potential of religion can be a logical solution in dealing with problems of morality in society. So that the potential for religiosity is one of the great potentials in matters of morality. The *zuhud* movement is specifically applied to fight the problems that grow in its environment, among the pretty dominant traditions, related to the strong materialist view that develops in people's lives. The material becomes the primary measure in the social life of society. Second is the lack of caution in society in seeking sustenance. Third, the religious understanding that develops in society is very strongly *fikih*-oriented. Changing the orientation from *fikih* to *tasawuf* does not mean underestimating *fikih*. This can be applied if the community has finished with the

⁴⁸ According to his students, this view is often conveyed by the character to guests who are facing life problems during an interview on July 3, 2016 with Mr. As'ari, he is one of the students who live there..

⁴⁹ Interview with Kh Hisyam Thontowi, he is a murshid of the syadzilyah sect, on 03-08-2016

correct understanding of *fikih*. The *zuhud* movement can be carried out because a charismatic figure initiated it.

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