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Transformative Sufism of KH. Abdurrahman Wahid

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Abstract

This paper observes the idea of Abdurrahman Wahid's Sufism. It is important to study Sufism in the reinforcement of dual morality in Indonesian Muslims. It is to complement the development of contemporary Sufism discourse in the archipelago as well. The research method used in this paper was a literature review. The data used in this paper were the works of Abdurrahman Wahid in the form of a collection of articles, bookkeeping of 'preface', and 'preface' which were scattered in several other people's books as well as other relevant writing sources. The data collected were then analyzed using a qualitative content analysis method, according to the topic of the writing. The results of research revealed that Abdurrahman Wahid's idea of Sufism contributed significantly to the realization of the basic values and teachings of Islam in the life of religion, society, nation, and state. It indicates that Abdurrahman Wahid has transformed the meaning of and actualized Sufism from and for Sufism. Love and compassion play a central role at the core of Sufism actively manifested in social life to fight for human values and principles. This research contributes to academic discourse by offering new perspectives on the integration of Sufism into modern social and political contexts. It highlights the relevance of Wahid's Sufism in addressing contemporary challenges such as interfaith relations, social justice, and national unity.

Keywords: *Actualization, Humanism, Transformative Sufism*

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INTRODUCTION

The history shows the development of the spread of Islam in the archipelago. It was strongly influenced by the role of the Sufis (Howell, 2001, p. 703; Shihab, 2009, p. 21). This success is marked by the use of a Sufistic approach that tends to be more

accommodating to the local culture of the community. The accommodative form can be seen in the da'wah instruments used, such as art, tradition, and other cultural elements adapted to Islamic teachings as did the Wali Sanga. In addition, another aspect used as an instrument to attract people's attention and sympathy is the use of supernatural powers to treat various diseases in society (Mas'ud, 2018, pp. 3–6). After the death of Wali Sanga, Sufism of the archipelago seemed to be more identical with Muslims and scholars outside Java, especially those originating from the Sufistic tradition in Aceh which mostly referred to Hamzah Fansuri and his students Syamsuddin Sumatrani, then Nuruddin al-Raniry. Besides, other Sufism figures outside Aceh and Java are Sheikh Yusuf al-Makassari, Abdus Shamad al-Palimbani, Muhammad Nafis al-Banjari, Ahmad Khatib Sambas (Mas'ud, 2018, pp. 10–12). In this regard, Wasid explained that on the next journey, the Wali Sanga Islamic chain was spread through Islamic boarding schools. The intellectual tradition of pesantren develops with the formation of an independent curriculum but remains within the framework of ahl sunnah wa al-jama'ah. Where is the study of Sufism with Sunni Sufism? (Wasid, 2016, p. 6). This is what strengthens Shihab's perspective that philosophical Sufism has not recorded continuous success because previous scholars were more oriented toward Sunni Sufism (Shihab, 2009, p. 137).

In further developments, the study of Islam with a Sufistic pattern in Java began to attract the attention of researchers. If categorized, the study took certain aspects of Sufism such as, tarekat (Bruinessen, 1992, 1995; Syam, 2013), great influential figures or monumental work (Mas'ud, 2018; Simuh, 2002; Wasid, 2016), Sufism literature and practice (Bruinessen & Howell, 2008; Huda, 2015), and Sufism as counseling and psychotherapy in mental health (Farmawati, Ula, Zaduqisti, 2019). This mapping shows the breadth of the study of Sufism. it is associated with the development of the spiritual awakening of contemporary society at the global level which takes the form of Sufism practices with various styles, such as the phenomenon of the revival of spiritualism in urban communities which is then known as urban Sufism. In Indonesia, the practice of urban Sufism can be seen from the strengthening of various forms of assemblies of dhikr and selawat in urban areas (Zamhari, 2013; Rubaidi, 2018), the role of the kiai as agents of social transformation in the Naqsyabandiyah Haqqani congregation in Pekalongan and the birth of Sufi habits among urban millennial Muslim youth who form Sufi symbols such as piety clothes, turbans, hijabs, robes, and so on. (Nurani, 2018).

The development of Sufism as part of Islamic disciplines is necessary and categorized as a form of the creative tradition of Indonesian thinkers. In developing it, as shown in the results of Mujamil Qomar's research which traced the development of Sufism in Indonesia from 1980 to 2014 found nine kinds of Sufism concept offerings, including social Sufism, Sufism, Positive, Perennial Sufism, Urban Sufism, philosophical Sufism, Irfani Sufism, Contextual Sufism, Javanese Sufism, and Muhammadiyah Sufism (Qomar, 2014, 2019, p. 208, 2021, p. 148). The next concept offered is cultural Sufism. It reveals the phenomenon of local Sufism with a mission of global inclusivism in the teachings and practices of Wahidiyah Selawat (Huda, 2015, p. 287) and the concept of Sufism of diversity as a conceptualization of the teachings and practices of Sufism in the Sufis of the Archipelago which emphasizes respect for various aspects of the diversity of the archipelago so that Sufism is able to respond to various problems of diversity (Ni'am & Nurhayati, 2018, p. 10, 2019).

Another Sufism concept is transformative Sufism. The concept of transformative Sufism is not a completely new thing. Anam et al reported that Muhammad Zuhri had offered the term transformative Sufism. Where Zuhri displays Sufism as a balance between rationality and spirituality (Anam, Syaikhotin, & Asy'ari, 2019, pp. 64–75). Zuhri's transformative Sufism is a form of Sufism that is grounded in the spirit and fundamental values of Sufism which is presented in the context of its time and dialogued. It is according to the problems of the people in facing the dynamics of life (Yulianto, 2014, pp. 56–87). In other words, transformative Sufism is contextual Sufism in the sense of reinterpreting the fundamental teachings of Sufism, providing a philosophical foundation and dialogue with the context of the people's problems in dealing with the dynamics of various dimensions of life (Rofi, Prasetya, & Setiawan, 2019, pp. 316–414). Thus, transformative Sufism is an idea and movement of Sufism that harmonizes the inner and outer aspects (reform of social life) and emphasizes the dimension of justice by basing itself on the active and dynamic movement of the concept of love (mahabbah), it is not Sufism which is passive and isolating.

Seeing the width and variation of the Sufism study, this paper will limit it to one aspect. One of the contemporary Indonesian Islamic figures who is recognized as very multitalented and multi-interpreted is KH. Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur). Efforts to promote Gus Dur's Sufism are not new, but they are still minimal. Therefore, this study is

one of the efforts to enrich the study of Gus Dur's Sufism idea and movement. This paper is based on the argument that Gus Dur's Sufism idea and movement led to the transformation of the meaning of Sufism. The orientation of the Sufism movement is manifested in various forms of social struggle and humanitarian missions. This fact is also reinforced by the opinion of Barton who has long revealed that one of the rarely discussed themes regarding Abdurrahman Wahid is his spiritual orientation. According to Barton, Abdurrahman Wahid is a spiritual figure, namely a mystical figure who in his view the spiritual world is clear like the material world that can be felt with the human senses. (Barton, 1999, pp. xxiii–xxiv).

Ricklefs also expressed a similar opinion while discussing with Abdurrahman Wahid and his younger brother Hasyim Wahid. Abdurrahman Wahid was very deep in various esoteric spiritual ideas and knew a lot about this world, a sophisticated thinker and great politician - introduced me to his younger brother as a Sufi who has a prophetic gift, which is the ability to predict the future (Ricklefs, 2013, pp. 217–218). Thus, there are many legacies of ideas and struggle left, especially those related to fighting for democracy and human rights. According to Alissa Wahid, Gus Dur devoted himself to the people he loved by using the rule "a leader's policy is very dependent on the welfare of his people" as his guide. (Alissa Wahid, 2017). Furthermore, Alissa Wahid also informed that Gus Dur's spirituality entered a prism which then reflected the light into a colorful spectrum, namely his actions in various dimensions of life. (Alissa Wahid, 2012, p. x).

As a study based on library research, the data sources of this paper referred to two data sources. First, the primary data source was Gus Dur's writings on Sufism. Gus Dur did not specifically write a complete book or work on Sufism. Yet, his writings on Sufism could be traced to several of his works which consist of bookkeeping a collection of articles, his writings in the form of a book 'preface', and a collection of forewords that were made into books. Second, secondary data were in the form of scientific works that studied the thoughts of Gus Dur's Sufism, especially those written by close people in the form of journal articles, books, and final assignments (Furchan & Maimun, 2005, p. 54; Harahap, 2011, pp. 48–49, 2014, pp. 48–49). Furthermore, the data that has been obtained were analyzed using a qualitative content analysis method following the focus of this paper, namely how Gus Dur's transformative Sufism thought and movement.

DISCUSSION

1. The Short biography of KH. Abdurrahman Wahid

Abdurrahman Wahid, well-known as Gus Dur, was born on September 7, 1940 in Denanyar, Jombang (Farela, 2018, p. 3). His birth name was Abdurrahman Addakhil which means the conqueror. The word Addakhil was changed to Wahid because the word was less familiar in the community. He is the eldest of six children of the couple KH. Wahid Hasyim and Mrs. Solichah and born in a respected group both socially and religiously, namely the family of the founder of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), KH. Hasyim Asy'ari. Although born in Jombang, Gus Dur received his basic education in Jakarta (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2016, p. 313). Gus Dur started his basic education at KRIS Elementary School in Central Jakarta until the fourth grade. Then, he moved to Matraman Perwari Elementary School, which was located close to their family's new home in Matraman, Central Jakarta. The house was always visited by interesting guests who spoke multiple languages and a private library containing a large number of books, magazines, and newspapers. While in Jakarta, Gus Dur often accompanied his father to various meetings. He had a direct opportunity to witness his father's world which was full of various kinds of people and events as well as his father's life in a simple way (Barton, 2010, pp. 42–43).

In 1954, a year after finishing elementary school and starting the Junior High School of Economics (SMEP), he was forced to repeat grade 1 because he failed an exam. This failure was the result of his passion for football. Thus, he did not have time to do homework. In that year, Gus Dur was sent by his mother to Yogyakarta to continue his education in junior high school. In this city, he lived in the house of his father, Kiai Junaidi who served as a member of the Muhammadiyah Tarjih Council (Barton, 2010, p. 49). Besides, his mother also arranged for him to go to the Al-Munawwir Islamic Boarding School in Krapyak three times a week. Here, he learned Arabic from KH. Ali Ma'shum was known to be very egalitarian. It was in Yogyakarta that his reading ability went better. He devoured many books. After completing SMEP in 1957, Gus Dur began to take full lessons at the *pesantren* at the Tegalrejo Islamic Boarding School in Magelang until 1959 with Kiai Khudori. Here Abdurrahman completed two years of his studies and spent a lot of time outside the classroom reading Western books. In 1959, Gus Dur moved to Jombang to study full-time at the Tambakberas Islamic Boarding School under the

guidance of KH. Wahab Chasbullah until 1963 and during that time he was in constant contact with Kiai Bisri Syansuri (Barton, 2010, pp. 51–53).

In 1963, Gus Dur received a scholarship from the Ministry of Religion to continue his studies at Al-Azhar University in Egypt. Gus Dur was classified as an active student who joined the Association of Indonesian Students and also served as a journalist and editor of the organization's journal. Around 1970, Gus Dur continued his education at the University of Baghdad. In the last two years of his studies in Baghdad, Gus Dur focused on researching the history of Islam in Indonesia by reading all sources from orientalists and Indonesians on the topic (Barton, 2010, p. 111). After graduating, he went to the Netherlands to continue his studies at Leiden University, but this university did not admit his Baghdad University diploma. Disappointed by this, Gus Dur went to Germany for four months then to France for two months, after that, he returned to Java, Indonesia on May 4, 1971 (Barton, 2010, p. 112; Abdurrahman Wahid, 2016, p. 314). A few months later, Gus Dur was invited to participate in the activities of the Institute for the Study of Knowledge, Education, Economics, and Social Affairs (LP3ES) together with Dawam Rahardjo, Adi Sasono, and Aswab Mahasin. An important achievement of this institution is the publication of the *Prisma Journal*, which for many years has become Indonesia's main social science journal. Gus Dur also became a permanent author of this journal. Gus Dur and Nuriyah were only able to hold a wedding reception and began living together in September 1971, after which they lived in Jombang. Gus Dur continued to tour Java. He went to Jakarta regularly once every two weeks to work at the LP3ES office for a few days (Barton, 2010, pp. 114–115).

In this institution inhabited by progressive and moderate Muslim scholars, Gus Dur did a lot of research. Due to frequent visits to villages and knowing that people's lives were still in dire straits, Gus Dur abandoned his intention to pursue further studies at McGill Canada. Furthermore, he gave himself as a journalist for *Tempo Magazine* and *Kompas Daily*. In 1979, Gus Dur moved to Jakarta and started the Ciganjur Islamic Boarding School. From 1974 to 1980, he was appointed general secretary of Pesantren Tebuireng. Four years later, he was elected as Chairman of the PBNU Tanfidz Board by acclamation and was re-inaugurated at the 28th Congress at the Krapyak Islamic Boarding School in Yogyakarta in 1989 and the 29th Conference of Cipasung in 1994. In addition, in 1989 his career also increased by becoming a Member of the MPR RI (People's

Consultative Assembly) until finally became president in 1999 and relinquished his position as General Chair of PBNU (Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2021a). Even though he only held the position for 20 months, his contribution to the Indonesian people was very large, especially regarding the enforcement of human rights. After that, Gus Dur continued to be involved with state, social, and religious issues. His actions in various lines of the nation's life have earned him the nickname of the National Teacher. Gus Dur was also a prolific writer and his works were valuable legacies for the generation of the Indonesian nation (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2016, pp. 314–315). Gus Dur passed away at the age of 69, namely on December 30, 2009, at 18.40 at the RSCM Jakarta (Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2021a).

2. Transformative Sufism of Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur)

When he was asked about Mbah Moeslim as his spiritual teacher, Gus Dur replied that not only Mbah Moeslim but many kiai. One of them was Kiai Hamsad Bangkalan, who wore clogs everywhere. The influence of Kiai Hamsad was enormous. He picked me up at Kamal, at the port, with 2000 motorbikes (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2010b, p. 238). In his adulthood, Gus Dur was still 'nyantr' to a kiai tarekat in Kebumen. He was also very close to many kiai who in the NU world are called khariqul 'adah; kiai were eccentric because, in essence, they were looking at another dimension in life that was not visible from the ordinary perspective (Sobary, 1997, p. x). This means that Gus Dur has many Sufism teachers and continued to study and practiced them. Regarding Sufism, Gus Dur defined Sufism as a bridge. The essence of Sufism can bridge humans with Allah. Thus, Allah wants to save humans. It is your love for God because it will make God love you. Therefore, love and compassion are the most important elements of Sufism, so here, I emphasize the piety of the Sufis, the piety that is not legal formalistic. With Sufism people return to the greatness of God and by not denying the presence of the world that exists today. Sufis say that the verse of the Qur'an is like this "the hereafter is better and more direct, it does not mean the world is not good (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2010b, pp. 140–141).

Gus Dur's definition of Sufism has a deep meaning about the bridge and attainment of God's love (*mahabbah*). Where Sufism has the meaning of clear, clean or clear, and the basic thing that must be cleaned is the heart. A person's heart can become clear when the person no longer has envy and other heart diseases. Only with a clear heart

can one pursue the love of Allah which is manifested by loving all of Allah's creatures. Thus, the Messenger of Allah stated that "A Muslim can guarantee the safety of other Muslims from interference with his tongue and hands"(Admin, 2016). So, loving Allah must be manifested by loving all of Allah's creatures. When the heart is clean, it will open the way to reach Allah's greatness. This means that if a person has not been able to love Allah's creatures, then he is still far from reaching Allah's *mahabbah* because he is hindered by a thicker veil which comes from his heart that is not yet clear. On the other hand, when a person is able to love Allah's creatures, he will find a way to reach Allah's *mahabbah*, then that person is categorized as a true Sufi person or scholar. In this way, it becomes clear why Gus Dur emphasized love and compassion as the most important elements of Sufism. This is also in line with one of his aphorisms or words of wisdom which until now is often quoted, namely "Glorifying humans means glorifying their creators, degrading and humiliating humans means degrading and insulting their creators. (Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2021b)."

The description above indicated that Gus Dur has transformed the meaning of Sufism into a more grounded one by basing it on the concept of *mahabbah*. Because Sufism in his view brings people back to the greatness of God and by not denying the presence of the world (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2010b, p. 141). In other words, this definition and core of Gus Dur's Sufism can be categorized as transformative Sufism which is then actualized in various movements and struggles in fighting for human values and principles, equality, fulfillment of human rights, and the Indonesian democratization process without questioning any background differences. This definition also indicates a conceptual difference between Gus Dur's transformative Sufism and Muhammad Zuhri's transformative Sufism as concluded by Anam, et al who stated that Zuhri's transformative Sufism is a balance between rationality and spirituality (Anam et al., 2019, pp. 64–75). Similarly, the findings of Rofi, et al called transformative Sufism another word for contextual Sufism (Rofi et al., 2019, pp. 316–414). The argument is that Gus Dur transformed the meaning and actualized Sufism from and for Sufism itself. This meaning of Sufism has implications for the active Sufism movement in worldly life to reform social life which refers to the concept of Islamic universalism. In this way, the harmonization of the fulfillment of the outer and inner dimensions of a Sufi will be fulfilled as a way to achieve the greatness of Allah.

Gus Dur's perspective on Sufism seems to have something to do with the writing "God Doesn't Need to be Defended" because this writing has a Sufistic dimension. (Erdianto, 2017). Quoting Al-Hujwiri, Gus Dur stated that "Islam needs to be developed, not to be confronted by people's attacks. God's truth is not diminished in the slightest by people's doubts. So, he was at peace. I no longer feel guilty for being silent. God does not need to be defended, although he does not refuse to be defended either. Whether or not the defense means, we will see in future developments." (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2016, p. 68). This paper reminds Muslims of several things, namely not to be easy, not to be careless in the name of God, and to emphasize the greatness of God who is omnipotent. Therefore, God does not need to be defended, because it could be done in the name of God to defend the views or interests of certain individuals or groups. This paper seems to be very relevant to the current state of religiosity in Indonesia, especially if we take pictures of the various metamorphoses of Islamic movements that emphasize the enforcement of Islamic law. Even the most obvious is when the people's democracy party season such as regional head elections and so on. Where the issue of religion is one of the important elements used to win the contest even though in ways that do not reflect Islam itself, such as hate speech and the like. This fact shows that the development of such a frenzied spirituality does not resonate in the political field (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2006, p. 282). Through this paper, Gus Dur also needed to develop Islam because the core of the scientific tradition embraced by NU was the continuation and integrated organic linking between monotheism, fiqh, and Sufism, which in the long run fosters his intertwined view of the worldly and hereafter dimensions of life. (Abdurrahman Wahid, 1999, p. 157).

Concerning Gus Dur's Sufism, Husein Muhammad relates it to the general view of Gus Dur's ideas which are often considered beyond his time so that they can only be understood at a later date. According to him, this fact can be seen as a fact that it marks the mark of a 'judge' (wise, wise bestari), a Sufi or *wali* as *Wali Sanga* in the Indonesian context. (Muhammad, 2012, p. 2). Furthermore, Muhammad also explained that Gus Dur's excesses of thoughts were often associated with his inconsistency. In fact, Gus Dur's inconsistency was only in particular issues, and this is a normal situation that is always faced by anyone as experienced by Imam Al-Ghazali. The point was the inconsistency occurs because he had to be in dynamic situations, with different audiences, and other things that force him to speak wisely. Even so, Gus Dur was truly consistent in his goal, which was to revive the

world of humanity, through various mechanisms, including the enforcement of Human Rights, Pluralism, Democracy, and the peak is love (Muhammad, 2012, p. 3). Based on Dhakiri, an important part of Gus Dur's attitude and actions was his emphasis on harmony and tolerance, which in Islamic teachings are often practiced by Sufis. In this case, Gus Dur's Sufism can be seen from his sincerity in letting the people he grew up against him (Dhakiri, 2010, pp. 86–87).

This opinion is in line with Muvid's opinion which stated that the Sufistic dimension developed by Gus Dur is more directed towards a tolerant view of life (*tasamuh*) and a pluralist attitude that put forward aspects of substance (essential), not existence (textual only) (Muvid, 2020, p. 281). Therefore, Gus Dur was of the view that Sufism should belong to all Muslims just as they must believe in monotheism and *fiqh*. Thus, Sufism must truly become character-building in dealing with the negative impacts of modernization (Muvid, 2020, p. 282). From these opinions, it can be concluded that Gus Dur's various efforts and struggles in upholding human values and principles with various accompanying attributions are the embodiment of the meaning of his Sufism. As stated by Gus Dur himself, the Sufistic approach can also be used as a tool in overcoming the nation's big problems in the future from these opinions, it can be concluded that Gus Dur's various efforts and struggles in upholding human values and principles with various accompanying attributions are the embodiment of the meaning of his Sufism. As stated by Gus Dur, the Sufistic approach can also be used as a tool in overcoming the nation's big problems in the future (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2008, p. xvi). Therefore, it seems not an exaggeration to conclude that all of Gus Dur's struggles and movements were basically based on his interpretation of Sufism, which positions humans as subjects that must be loved and fought for. It is the bridge that Gus Dur built to reach Allah's blessings.

Gus Dur realized his love for Allah by fighting for the values and principles of humanity which were reflected in the idea and struggle to uphold the concept of Islamic universalism, as explained below.:

“One of the teachings that perfectly displays the universalism of Islam are the five basic guarantees given by the last divine religion (Islam) to members of society, both individually and in groups. The five are scattered in the ancient *al-kutub al-fiqhiyyah* religious law literature, namely *hifdzu an-nafs* (physical safety), *hifdzu ad-din* (safety of religious beliefs), *hifdzu an-nasl* (safety of family and offspring), *hifdzu al-mal* (safety of

family and offspring), safety of property), and *hifdzu al-Aqli* (safety of property and profession) (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2007b, pp. 4–5). Overall, the five basic guarantees show the universality of a complete and unanimous view of life. Government based on law, equality and tolerance for differences of opinion are the main elements of humanity and, as such, represent the universality of Islamic teachings.” (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2007b, p. 8).

The explanation above clearly shows how Gus Dur's hard work in formulating the basic principles of universal humanity is rooted in Islamic teachings. In this regard, Muhammad explained that Gus Dur adopted the idea from the theory of *Usul Fiqh*, namely *al-Kulliyat al-Khams* (five principles of universal humanity) by providing an inclusive, contextual, and broader interpretation. For example, the concept of jihad as one of the implications of the safety of religious beliefs (right to protect religion/belief) which in the conventional view was interpreted identically with militaristic war. Gus Dur interpreted it differently, namely as a struggle for an anti-violent social system, abolition of the death penalty, freedom of religion/belief, respect for innovation, and diverse cultural creations. The commitment shown by Gus Dur was evident in the granting of the right to religious life for Confucianism, proposing the revocation of TAP MPRS XXV in 1966 (Muhammad, 2012, pp. 5–7), and his defense of the Indonesian Ahmadiyya Community (JAI) which contradicted the heretical fatwa produced by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) as a form of defense of human values. Besides, the constitution of the nation and state even though Gus Dur did not agree with the teachings of JAI (Basyir, 2016, pp. 46–48).

In addition, the concept of Islamic universalism also has consequences for the particular culture that surrounds it. This effort then generated a new formulation regarding the relationship between Islam and local culture, namely the concept of Islamic indigenization (Naim, 2016, pp. 423–444). Furthermore, Muhammad stated that from this universal humanitarian premise, Gus Dur's ideas developed from pluralism, tolerance, democracy, human rights, and other humanitarian themes. Gus Dur continued to fight for the upholding of these universal human values in the life of the nation, state, and society. For him, these values are the root of building a just and prosperous society. In the end, it is also a real commitment to upholding the fundamental principles of Islam, monotheism, and the oneness of God. In this way, Gus Dur was *Muwahhid Mukhlis* (a person who

wholeheartedly unites God). If al-Hallaj shouted, I am the Truth, then Abdurrahman might have said, I am Humanity. Gus Dur is a lover of humans as humans with all the meaning of humanity (Muhammad, 2012, pp. 8–9).

All the descriptions above illustrate how Gus Dur's Sufism has a substantive meaning that leads to the harmonization of the fulfillment of the outer and inner needs of a true Sufi. Where his Sufism showed a very sociological dimension in fighting for humans and the principles of humanity which are rooted in the basic teachings of Islam. That is the meaning of Gus Dur's transformative Sufism in achieving the *mahabbah* of Allah which was bridged by his idea and struggles by loving humans and humanity. With this meaning, the values of Sufism become increasingly useful in answering various social problems (Zuhri, 2016), the national problem, as well as responding to the social responsibility of Sufism following the challenges of the times (Pradityas, Hanafi, & Zaduqisti, 2015).

Next is Gus Dur's perspective on the nature of Sufism which can be known from his debate with M. Luqman Hakim in Kompas daily about the nature of Sufism in Indonesia. This debate departed from the question "is it related to the *wibdatul wujud/wibdatul syubud* of Ibn Araby?" Gus Dur's answer to this question was: Islamic boarding schools use this opinion for themselves, while ordinary people use moral education brought by Sunni Sufism (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2002, p. vii). The teachings of *wibdatul* form that are used are mainly *wibdatul syubud*. It is the teaching of knowing something before it happens which is known in Javanese culture as *weruh sedurunge winarah*. This is reinforced by the attitude of the late KH. Hasyim Asy'ari refused to celebrate the anniversary of his death (haul) because he knew very well that one day he would be purified (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2007a, p. 105). Kiai Hasyim used to be against the excesses of the tarekat, not its tarekat. He once argued with Kiai Khalil Rejoso, the founder of the Naqsabandiyah tarekat there, because he accused Kiai Khalil of preaching his guardianship. (Abdurrahman Wahid, 1997, p. 27). Furthermore, Gus Dur also clarified the misunderstanding about the concept of *manunggaling kawula lan Gusti* as follows:

"....it is simply because people do not understand Sufism that causes a misunderstanding of the Javanese vision of *manunggaling kawula lan Gusti*, as if it was a "Javanese" concept of *wahdatul* form of splinter schools of Sufism. In fact, the union of the servant with God is closer and naturally has the insight of *wahdatul syubud* or unity in witnessing. No matter how high the unity between creation and His creator, there remains

an unbridgeable distance between the two. Thus, the possibility of the absorption of the Javanese polytheistic vision into Islam was rejected, as feared by many "santris." (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2011, pp. 72–73).

From this explanation, Gus Dur reminds us of the legend of the death penalty of Sheikh Siti Jenar (Tanah Merah or Lemah Abang) as a person who deviated from Sunni Sufism and was therefore sentenced to death by the Wali Sanga (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2007a, p. 103). Gus Dur rejected this idea because the legend of the death penalty could be interpreted differently. For him, Sheikh Siti Jenar's sin lies were not in her acceptance of *Wibdatul Wujud*, but in her rash attitude in teaching this notion to the common people. Thus, the Sufis always emphasize the importance of carrying out the Shari'a before *tasawwuf* (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2007a, p. 104). In other words, the main problem is that Shaykh Siti Jenar has taught *wibdatul wujud/wibdatul syubud* to ordinary people who have not implemented sharia laws such as prayer. So it's not based on Sunan Kalijaga's rejection of the Sufism school (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2010a, pp. 67–68). Therefore, Gus Dur stated that it was not surprising the sunans or saints, in addition to following Sunni Sufism, also keep within themselves the philosophical Sufism of reincarnation adherents. Therefore, it is very risky to think that Sunni Sufism is the opposite of philosophical Sufism (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2001, p. xxiii).

For Gus Dur, this view showed that the traditionalist ulema did not reject the *wibdatul* form, but forbade its spread rashly. Thus, the *syara* and *kebatinan* (*kejawen*) are different but not contradictory. In other words, there is no principal difference between the *wibdatul wujud* (mysticism/ *kejawen/ kebatinan*) people and the Shari'a people who use fiqh references. This has consequences for the development of the democratization tradition (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2007a, p. 106). It was the debate between Gus Dur and M. Luqman Hakim about the nature of Sufism in Indonesia. This debate then continued until Gus Dur wrote a response article entitled "Nationalism, Sufism, and Democratization." In that article, Gus Dur stated that:

"This is the role of Sufism will be as a bridge that mediates the two notions of Islam and nationalism. In a sense, someone who changes the Islamic Law above about apostasy, but remains a Muslim, through the attitude of Sufism. And this also means the opportunity to theorize about the relationship between Islam and nationalism in terms of

state life, in addition to the practice of life not to question it..”(Abdurrahman Wahid, 2007a, pp. 109–110).

The explanation above shows Gus Dur's consistency in Sufism. If in the initial description of the meaning of Sufism, ideas generated from the manifestation of the achievement of God's *mahabbah* by loving humans and fighting for human principles that rely on the concept of Islamic universalism. So, his explanation of the nature of Sufism can be seen as a development of thought and struggle in harmonizing Islam and the state, namely regarding the relationship between democratization and Islam on the one hand and between mysticism/ *kebatinan/ kejawen* and democratization on the other (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2007a, p. 107). Thus, it is not wrong if Muhammad concluded that Sufism which is manifested in the universal humanitarian principle is none other than the vision of religions, especially Islam, other ideas of Gus Dur flowed (Muhammad, 2012, p. 8). All these descriptions confirm that Gus Dur, transformed the meaning and actualized Sufism from and for Sufism.

CONCLUSION

This paper finds that Gus Dur's Sufism thought and movement can be categorized as a new variant of contemporary Sufism, transformative Sufism. Gus Dur reinterpreted the meaning of Sufism and actualized it from and for Sufism. His Sufism proves that basically, Sufism is active, not passive. His Sufism activism is manifested in various forms of social struggle and a humanitarian vision referring to the basic values of Islam formulated in the concept of Islamic universalism. Thus, Gus Dur's transformative Sufism places various humanitarian struggles referring to the reality of worldly life by loving humans and humanity as well as all creatures as a bridge to reach God's greatness.

The use of research methods and transformative Sufism concept in this paper allows for the exploration of Gus Dur's Sufism thought even though Gus Dur did not specifically write a complete book on his Sufism. The limitation of this study lies in the reference sources, where the references are used only to refer to written sources having been collected so that further studies are needed by involving the enrichment of other references (writings and statements of Gus Dur) that have not been accommodated in this paper and direct experience regarding Gus Dur's spiritual life and practice. This research contributes to academic discourse by offering new perspectives on the integration of Sufism into modern social and political contexts. It highlights the relevance of Wahid's Sufism in addressing contemporary challenges such as interfaith relations, social justice, and national unity. Future research is recommended to explore the practical applications of Wahid's Sufism in policy-making, education, and conflict resolution.

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