



## Studies on *Ulama's* Flow in The Modern Era from an Islamic Perspective

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### ABSTRACT

In the social life of the community, there must be norms that apply as a form of firmness in obeying the rules, so that it creates a sense of security for community members in the social life of the community. These norms are noble values that serve as benchmarks for social behavior. If the behavior that exists in the community is in accordance with the prevailing norms, then the behavior will be well received by the community. And if it applies otherwise, then the behavior is not accepted by the community, because it is deemed to deviate from the prevailing norms, but in fact, even though the times have evolved in this modern era, the existence of local beliefs such as belief in dynamism and animism is still developing. In the life of religious communities, such deviations are often seen in the form of deviant behavior of diversity. Moreover, there is an occult flow that is still developing in modern society. If it continues into the future, then it can change the thinking patterns of modern society into those who are still primitive Kejawen. So that this can lead to deviations from an Islamic perspective.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Man is the main cause of his condition. Therefore, moral and spiritual behavior must be maintained (Baharun, 2017; Pabbajah, Abdullah, Widyanti, Jubba, & Alim, 2020). This is the task of Pakem and the Ministry of Religion, namely in fostering persistence in the worship of official religions because if everyone wants to obey religious orders, life in society will be well established (Tursunovna, 2019). This is the basic thinking about the importance of spiritual and moral behavior which has caused

many inconsistencies between religion and mysticism, as well as between heresy and mysticism (Rubaidi, 2019, 2020).

The theory of mysticism is a theory of magic and it is difficult to draw a clear line between what is mystically permissible and what is considered sinful. Sometimes the behavior of asceticism and meditation (meditation) with the aim of producing well in society, is generally considered permissible, even though such practices are not pure from self-interest (Hefner, 2021). In ancient times, these practices were usually carried out by a king. However, can such a practice be carried out by most people? "Suppose a person uses the power he obtained thanks to mysticism to heal other people, is that permissible?" Some of the major national sects, such as Sapta Darma and Susila Budi Dharma (Subud), are of the opinion that it is indeed an obligation for advanced members to heal people through the practice of mystical submission and prayer (Masaeli & Sneller, 2020). Meanwhile, based on the opinion of other schools, such healing practices are permissible not because the practice is impossible, but because such a thing will bring a great sense of self (Firdaus, 2020). The Puritans and intellectuals of the Paguyupan Ngesti Tunggal (*Pangestu*) also warned about the dangers of interfering with the order of events outlined "divinely" and even forbidding belief in heirlooms containing power and burials (Mustopa, 2021).

Another thing that can cause controversy is whether or not it is permissible to provide predictions, especially lottery numbers. According to popular opinion, to say that number prediction is an abuse of mystical powers because it is so clear that there is a connection between the lottery and greed and money (Madkan & Mumtahana, 2022). Things like that actually cause number prediction to become occult, a practice of black magic. Even so, some gurus reason that helping their followers survive, they do so by exploiting mystical powers, while they themselves have no interest in the number that will come out (MAWANGIR, 2015). Even though one can gain insight into future events, this can be done by practicing tapa and meditation. The spread of such insights, however, is hindered by a mystical rating of pride and complacency.

## 2. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 2.1 Occultism and Mysticism

The occult can be interpreted as something related to belief in things that contain secrets and make no sense (KBRI, 1989:409 ). So many people say that the occult tends to have a negative connotation because it is synonymous with mystical things (Hidayat, 2007; Saifuddin, 2019). This knowledge is the knowledge that is only taught to people whose awareness is mature, this aims to prevent abuse or misinterpretation. Knowledge like this is occult, or in Javanese culture, this knowledge is called old science. Occult knowledge is knowledge of hidden things and this knowledge explains something supernatural. One of the " knowledge " or knowledge that exists in the occult, is religion. Because there are some things in religion that are difficult to test the truth. People who can know the truth are people who have taken knowledge of *makrifat*. The truth of religion is " enough to believe for ordinary people. But don't get it wrong, because it's not certain that a religion like this can lead people astray. Not like that. There are also occult things that aim to improve human welfare (Arberry, 2007; Howell, n.d.; Masaeli & Sneller, 2020). For example the science of Sufism, which is the truth of religion, but cannot be proven because it contains occult. However, in social life, this occult is usually" closely related to shamanic practices, so they are familiarly called occult shamans. In their activities, the shaman uses the help of supernatural powers or other supernatural objects to carry out the treatment (M. D. Huda, 2015).

From various aspects of religious teachings, one of which is belief in things that have supernatural powers. For "*Religious adherents generally tend to accept problems*" related to things that are supernatural rather than rational" as a form of belief that is emotional." Of course, such a thing results in no clear indicators or boundaries, because all of them tend to be emotional and beyond the reach of reason." Therefore, it is often "manipulated into a form that is associated with certain interests. Manipulation through religious beliefs is more accepted by society because religion is closely related to something sacred."

In people's lives, all problems involving occult and sacred religious values also tend to be passed down to certain individuals. This process causes the belief that someone is considered to be able to relate to the supernatural and has extraordinary abilities. In Indonesia, cases like this often occur, one of which is the case of Cut Zahara Fauna which was a national sensation, around the 1970s, when it was believed that Cut Zahara Fauna had a magical baby. He said the baby who was still in her womb was able to speak. The case of this miracle baby shocked the wider community, this was because there were several officials who at that time believed and confirmed it. This belief seems to be associated with religious values, because Cut Zahara Fauna, who was born in Aceh, is identified with Aceh as the porch of Mecca. Fortunately, this case was quickly uncovered, so it has not had time to attract a group of people to become followers. Other cases that are similar to this case are the cases of Embah Suro, magic shamans, and deviant mysticism schools, which are always growing and developing in the community. Such cases are generally always associated with religion to make it easier to attract public sympathy. Moreover, religion concerns human beliefs related to the innermost life. Deviations " religious behavior carried out heresy like this "can be analyzed by " Robert H. Thouless " using the psychological approach of suggestion. Psychologists usually apply this term to " the process observed in some experiments with hypnotism. In his analysis, it proves that Robert H. Thouless gave an example of how a hypnotist can convince someone through the perception he creates (Jung, 2020).

## 2.2 Psychology of the Occult

In social life, there are norms known as a rule. It can be concluded that norms can imply " noble" values which are the standard for measuring behavior in the social aspect. " If what we do is in accordance with the prevailing norms, then our existence will also be recognized by society. But it also applies vice versa, if what we do is not in accordance with the norms that apply in people's lives, then our existence will not be recognized or even rejected. In reality that exists in our society, it is not uncommon for " deviant behavior to occur " and it is carried out both by individuals and groups. " And what was even more surprising, this behavior was considered normal, so they were calm.

Occult flow always appears in every society which is part of a deviant form of religious behavior regardless of the background of the belief. This occult flow is sometimes so strong that it can influence those who believe in it so that they don't want to accept outside influences, even if they are beneficial. As found by Richard Fenn in one of the cases of the Vietnam War. A sorcerer refuses to train America's military media personnel. The refusal, according to the shaman concerned, was based on the *wangsit* (a kind of inner whisper) of the religion he adhered to. But according to Fenn, rejection is more psychological than religious.

This deviant behavior generally results in people closing themselves off from association with the outside world, so these people are difficult to approach. "*That way, they form an exclusive group. " And generally those who are bound in the flow have a strong attachment to the leader.*" Therefore, Robert Thouless sees the relationship between the leader and the followers of this school is not much different from the case of hypnosis. His followers were suggested, to the point of losing the ability to use common sense.

### 2.3 Doctrine and Practice of the occult in Indonesia

Occult practice in Indonesia itself has many forms, and its growth is also considered to be very fertile. From a historical point of view, the emergence of heresies in Indonesia is because Indonesia has many isms or belief systems. Therefore, occult schools in Indonesia can also develop into mystical schools and beliefs. Examples include Animism and Dynamism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and others. According to Dr. Aris Fauzan, (Lecturer in the Islamic Education Psychology Doctoral Program, Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta,) that within the isms themselves there are various schools of belief, such as *Darmo Gandul*, *Gatolotjo*, and others. All of these beliefs are a combination of local culture that has existed since ancient times, with religions that came later. Aris also mentioned that in these beliefs many of whose teachings were indecent were considered sacred by their adherents. The *Darmo Gandul* book, for example, is assessed by Aris as having content similar to the Javanese version of the *Kamasutra*.

Even so, in Java, the *Darmo Gandul* book is considered sacred. Another example is when we see many Hindu statues symbolizing the vital organs of men and women, but all of these are considered sacred by their adherents. Aris said. According to information from several sources, this "group of beliefs and mysticism" used to be a basic member of the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party) which was one of the parties whose existence was banned by Indonesia in 1965. The communists asked for support from the majority of the Indonesian people who still believe in the tradition and culture of animism and dynamism. Because the communists are happy with supporters who are less experienced and less educated.

Following are some of the teachings about the flow of belief and mysticism which are similar to occultism, namely:

#### a. *Pangestu* Single Ngesti Association

The founder of this teaching was R. Soenarto on February 14, 1932, after receiving the pepadang revelation. The main teachings about this flow have been written in a book called *Serat Sasangka Jati*. *Serat Sasangka Jati*, namely "a collection of revelations revealed to R. Soenarto and became the holy book for the followers of the *Pangestu* Association." This book contains various types of regional and foreign languages, in translation, one of which is in English, namely a book entitled "*The Truth Linght*." The contents of the book are about the Principles of belief in God *Pangestu* which consists of three pacets called *Tripurusa*, which include: "Suksma Kawekas" (The Truest God), "True Suksma" (True Role Models, True Panuntun, True Teachers and True Messengers) and the "Holy Spirit' (Holy Man) is the true human soul. One of the other *Pangestu* teachings contains that the will of God *Pangestu* never stops." The intention of God *Pangestu*'s will to never stop, can be observed in the following quote: "Before the world was created, God wanted to send down the Holy Spirit, namely the light of God."

The above quote implies that God *Pangestu* is weak. Therefore, it can be stated that Suksma Kawekas is not the real God, but the God in the imagination of only *Pangestu* followers. Because the real God is a powerful God, not a weak God

#### b. Sumatran Trust

The teachings of the Sumarah Association contain an order to surrender to the will of God Almighty. This association was on December 27, 1897, by R. Ng. Sukirno Hartono. In addition to these teachings, there are also other teachings that belong to this school, namely about the law of karma and Sumarah prostration. In interpreting the law of karma, they firmly believe that something done well will get good results. but on the contrary, if a case is done badly, it will reap bad results as well. Which will be accepted by the perpetrator. Next is about *Sujud Samarah*. This prostration has a ritual performed

by followers of Sumarah which according to them can be classified as worship to God Almighty, with a selfless *pamong* system.

c. Sapto Darmo Association

One of the teachings that belong to the Sapto Darmo community is known as "*Hening Sapto Darmo*." The adherents of this school "can practice silence by calming all the thoughts and thoughts in the heart" with the inner expression: "Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Most Rahim, Allah is the Most Just".

The purpose of the first implementation of Silence is to see and find out the spirits of deceased ancestors, whether they are accepted by God or not. Second, to know the condition of distant relatives, which cannot be reached by the five senses. Third, to find out about haunted places, to get rid of the spookiness, so as not to disturb humans. Fourth, sending and receiving telegrams about taste.

The practice of the occult shows that the perpetrator is lost, he has been driven by a low desire for material things, believes in objects that have powers such as amulets, spells, and so on, and they are also guided by the "world of spiritual darkness." Such practices are seen as endangering the nation and causing unstable social relations so they become illegal. It is Pakem's duty to continue to be vigilant if there is something dangerous in that sect and to investigate the parties involved in occult manipulation among themselves (M. M. Huda, 2021; Na'imah, 2020). However, distinguishing between pure *kebatinan* and occultism is by no means easy. Orthodox Islam considers all mysticism to be heresy and condemns it as heresy. According to Pakem's view, something that is declared as occult is when a practice has the potential to shock the social order. It is within Pakem's authority to continue to investigate, and to make a decision if the practices within that sect harm the body or cause death, or if the group suspected of being communist has influenced them. If that happens, Pakem immediately acts to disband the kebatinan sect and investigate its members (Agung, Mahpur, & Zawawi, 2022; Halim, 2016).

## 2.4 The Psychology of Religion of the Occult in the Islamic Perspective

According to Prof. Dr. Hamka, "this flow arises from the chaos of the mind due to economic, social and political chaos, so that it encourages people to release their minds from the influence of reality, then enter the realm of tasawwuf delusion." They tend to have their own beliefs, not adhere to Islam, Christianity, and not Buddhism (Hamka, 1976:233-234). Meanwhile, according to HM As'ad el Hafidy, in Indonesia alone, there were 156 types of religious beliefs and mysticism until 1977 (HMA's ad el Hafidy 1977:108 -113).

Other factors that also give rise to the development of such a tradition are suffering and spiritual emptiness. People who are low in religious awareness or even have no religion at all, usually these people will lose their way and lack enthusiasm for life (Hakiki, 2011). At times like that, these people become very easy to accept suggestions or new things that are not clearly known. Because in such desperate conditions, they think that the practice of *kebatinan* such as heresies can be promising, they use it as a place of escape in overcoming the turmoil of their hearts (Ma'mun, 2013; Putra & Yahya, 2020; Widjayanti, 2015).

Basically there are also occult types of astrology or astrology (believing in the influence of the stars associated with fate) with various do rampe as conditions with the assumption that in order to be safe from danger, they obey. Yet it is a real evil.

The so-called "science of the stars, horoscopes, zodiac, and constellations" is a science that is included among the practices and predictions of ignorance. Whereas according to Islamic view, this can be categorized as shirk behavior. Because the benefits and harms of these practices depend on other than Allah. For this reason, Islam came to erase this teaching and explain that it includes polytheistic

behavior. The argument that shows this matter is the hadith narrated by Abu Daud in his Sunan book with a shohih sanad from Ibn 'Abbas radhiyallahu 'anhuma that Rasulullah shallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam said, which means:

"Whoever takes astrology, it means he has taken a branch of magic, it will increase and continue to increase." (HR Abu Daud no. 3905, Ibn Majah no. 3726 and Ahmad 1: 311. Shaykh Al Albani said that the hadith is hasan).

Likewise amulets, charms, pellets, charms of mercy, jampejampe/ruqyah counters that are not syar'i, and spells that they still use and believe in. Even though it is shirk, the biggest sin. "Indeed, ruqyah, amulets, and *tiwala* (pellets) are Shirk. But not all ruqyah are prohibited, as long as the ruqyah still uses *syar'i* elements then this is permissible. And conversely, if the *ruqyah* does not contain *syar'i* elements, then this is prohibited by religion because it contains elements of Shirk. More than that, there are still many who believe in tattooyur, the sound of birds and others is considered a sign of bad luck or good luck. Even sorcerers are believed. Even though there has been a threat from the Prophet SAW. ("Not included in our group, for anyone who thinks it's bad luck or justifies people who think it's bad luck, or anyone who does magic or justifies it. or anyone who visits a shaman or fortune-teller or justifies his words.")

In the history of the writer Fathul Majid said that Shaykh 'Abdurrahman bin Hasan Alu Shaykh said, "Anyone who deals with the matters mentioned in the hadith, means Rasulullah SAW. Has gotten away from it. It could be that the things that are done are *shirk* such as assuming bad luck. Disbelief can also be like believing in fortune-tellers (shamans) and practicing magic. Anyone who is pleased and follows these things, then he is punished like the culprit because he accepts and follows wrong things.

### 3. CONCLUSION

The flow of occultism can be interpreted as a mystical science that contains beliefs that don't make sense. This knowledge can also be said to be the practice of black magic. In Javanese culture, this knowledge is known as old knowledge which is hidden and contains things that are supernatural. The perpetrators are often called occult shamans. This occult flow is sometimes so strong that it can influence those who believe in it. As a result, they are reticent to accept outside influences, even if they are beneficial. Several streams of belief and mysticism are similar to occultism and teachings, namely: 1) Single Ngesti Association (*Pangestu*), 2) Sumatran Trust, and 3) Sapto Darmo Association. Other factors that also give rise to the development of such a tradition are suffering and spiritual emptiness. So that with such circumstances, they lose direction, purpose, and zest for life, then use occultism as their escape. From an Islamic perspective, this can be categorized as shirk behavior. Because the benefits and harms of this practice depend on others other than Allah, which can damage the purity of the faith. Likewise, amulets, charms, pellets, charms of mercy, jampejampe/ruqyah counters that are not *syar'i*, and spells that they still use and believe in. Even though it is shirk, the biggest sin.

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