

MYSTICISM IN JAVANESE SHAMANS Morality toward God

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Abstract: This article explains the mystical practices of Javanese shamans (*dukun*) called *wong pinter* and analyzes different types of these practices by comparing definitions, actions, and mystical features discussed in various studies. This article uses field studies and in-depth interviews, the data were analyzed based on theories of mysticism. The study shows that the *wong pinter* also practices mysticism rooted in Islam and manifests in history especially the history of Islamic mysticism in Indonesia in general and in Java in particular. The study finds that the characteristics of shamans mysticism are substantive, non-formalist, and altruistic. This finding supports the view that shamanism is rooted in Islamic mysticism and is open to discourses of mysticism from other religions. This study does not discuss the level of mystical actions nor does it distinguish categories of mystical practices found in many shaman groups.

Keywords: Mysticism, *tarekat*, shaman, Java

Introduction

Belief systems that include a close relationship between human and God are often categorized as mysticism, which means obtaining a direct and conscious relationship between human and God. There is a consciousness to communicate and a dialogue between the human soul and God through seclusion or contemplation.¹ Tracing the existence of one type of Javanese shaman called the *wong pinter* in Temanggung in the dissertation project, is the author found signs of mystical behavior. The author observed the signs of ascetic life seen in the views and actions of kindness that are very similar to the behavior of mystics. From their perspective and behavior, they are very close to God.

¹ Harun Nasution, *Falsafat dan mistisisme dalam Islam* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1995), p. 56.

The term *wong pinter* is often used to identify shamans more generally. The *wong pinter* referred to people with abilities to practice magico-religious specialists, and it is relatively similar to the term *dukun*, which is used by other researchers.² As a type of shaman, it has different names in different locations, such as *pananyaan* among the Sundanese³ and *Ma'sanro* in South Sulawesi.⁴

The terms *wong pinter* and *dukun* are often used interchangeably. In a broad sense, there are various types of *dukun* such as *dukun bayi* (traditional midwife), *dukun calak* (circumciser), *dukun temanten* (specialist in wedding decorations and make-up), *dukun petungan* (expert in numerology), *dukun sibir* (sorcerer, a user of black magic), or *dukun bijas*. These are various names mentioned by researchers such as Khiun⁵ and Geertz.⁶ There are other names for alternative healers who do forms of service as *wong pinter* in Semarang Central Java, namely, *dukun* (traditional practitioner of healing), *tabib* (healers), *abli kebatinan* (mystics), *abli thariqah* (thariqah experts), *Ustadz* (clerics), or *kyai* (religious scholars).⁷ In the city of Demak, people know *dukun* and *kyai* to differ depending on the understanding of the basics of Islam.⁸ The author found that *wong pinter* has a narrower definition, and it is local and special. This is especially true when associated with claims that the term *dukun* is ambiguous and tends to have a negative connotation because it includes economic and social status and it has a dangerous

² Agustinus Sutiono, "The Role of Significance of Wong Pinter, The Javanese Shaman" (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, The University of Leeds-York St. John University, 2014), p. 1.

³ Asep Nahrul Musadad, "Continuity and Change in Sundanese Pananyaan: Contesting an Islamicate Tradition in West Java," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 12, 1 (2018): p. 1, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2018.12.1.1-16>.

⁴ Dian Mirza Togobu, "Gambaran Perilaku Masyarakat Adat Karampuang Dalam Mencari Pengobatan Dukun (Ma'sanro)," *J-Kemas Jurnal Kesehatan Masyarakat* 4, 1 (2018), p. 16.

⁵ Liew Kai Khiun, *Liberalism, Feminism, Popularizing Health Communication* (England: Ashgate Pub. Ltd, 2012), p. 25.

⁶ Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), pp. 86–87.

⁷ Ridin Sofwan, "Peranan Wong Pinter Dalam Pengobatan Alternatif Di Kota Semarang," (Semarang: Lembaga Penelitian IAIN Walisongo, 2010), pp. 1–2.

⁸ Apita Fikri Indrasuari, "Kepercayaan Pedagang Terhadap Wong Pinter Dalam Menunjang Usaha Dagang Di Pasar Bintoro Demak," *Jurnal Solidarity Universitas Negeri Semarang* 1, 1 (2012), p. 17.

force.⁹ It is also different from the *dukun sibir* (sorcerer, a user of black magic) and, what is considered the most important, the *dukun biyasa*, who is considered a general magical specialist who has special powers, including finding missing goods, making future predictions, and implementing black magic.¹⁰

Wong pinter narrowly refers to a person with special abilities, especially relating to communicating with the supernatural, helping others, having good morality, helping to pray, and giving advice to anyone who comes to them. Most people claim that they have virtues and inner efforts¹¹ that affect their proximity to God.¹² Many *wong pinter* have various religious backgrounds, including Islam, Buddhism, Javanese, and even Christianity.¹³ The term *wong pinter* is also likely to be more acceptable than *dukun* and has a positive connotation regarding their morality and discretion,¹⁴ similar to the terms *wong tuwa* or *guru mistik*, which is different from the term *dukun*, which is often associated with the dark forces of black magic.¹⁵

The findings are compatible with sources that explain the relationship between shamanism and mysticism. Edson says, “Shaman’s activities are rooted in mysticism,” and mysticism is rooted or can be found in all religions.¹⁶ But most mysticism, especially in Islam, is related to communities called *tarekat*. These communities are present in many countries and have various names.¹⁷ Then, how can the practices and behaviour of the *wong pinter* be defined as a specific mysticism? How can it be compared to other types of mysticism?

⁹ Mark Woodward, *Java, Indonesia and Islam*, 1st ed, Muslims in Global Societies Series 3 (Dordrecht, New York: Springer, 2011), pp. 70–71.

¹⁰ Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, pp. 86–87.

¹¹ Sartini, “Profil Wong Pinter Menurut Masyarakat Temanggung Jawa Tengah,” *Patrawidya* 16, 2 (2015), p. 281.

¹² Ibid., p. 284.

¹³ Sartini, “Profil Wong Pinter,” p. 284.

¹⁴ Sartini, “Wong Pinter Di Antara Para Penyembuh Tradisional Jawa,” *Patrawidya* 15, 4 (2014): pp. 641–64.

¹⁵ Niels Mulder, *Mysticism in Java: Ideology in Indonesia*, 2nd ed (Yogyakarta: Kanisius Pub. House, 2005), p. 78.

¹⁶ Gary Edson, *Mysticism and Alchemy through the Ages the Quest for Transformation* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, 2012), pp. 56–57.

¹⁷ Sri Mulyati, *Mengenal & memahami tarekat-tarekat muktabarab di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2011), pp. 25–290.

This article argues that the *wong pinter*, as some of Javanese shamans, members of the lay community but not always part of a religious community or leadership, take actions as mystics do. This is a field study that included ethnographic¹⁸ methods but did not use them totally. The goal was to describe the representation of the actual and general conditions of the object,¹⁹ which is a type of thinking that has grown in society, especially among the *wong pinters*.

The research also included in-depth interviews²⁰ with ten Javanese traditional healers called *wong pinter* to obtain a more accurate understanding of the sources. The interviewees were selected based on the results of previous study, which found about 40 *wong pinters*.²¹ Then, ten interviewees were selected based on representation of religion, occupation, and age. The interviews were conducted, readings and interpretations were done to understand the main points of view and actions of the interviewees. The data are then described²². Furthermore, this description is analyzed in relation to the concepts and explanations of mysticism. Based on this analysis, I then suggest the types of mysticism that can be found in Javanese Shamanism.

The Shaman and the History of Mysticism in Java

Fauzan Saleh argues that belief in *dukun* is based on a belief in supernatural powers and the visible world, Satan/demons/jinn, and the spirits of the ancestors.²³ It may include the concept of *dukun* in a broader sense, and that the *wong pinter* as one of the practices of shamanism (with certain characteristics) is influenced by the mysticism developing in Java. Religious backgrounds are not a problem because mysticism can be rooted or found in all religions.²⁴ This view is reinforced by Gill, that although *perdukunan* (shamanism) itself refers to

¹⁸ Mike Crang, *Doing Ethnographies* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2007), p. 1.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 15–25.

²⁰ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd ed (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2009), p. 267.

²¹ Sartini, "Profil Wong Pinter."

²² Anton Bakker and Achmad Charris Zubair, *Metodologi Penelitian Filsafat* (Yogyakarta: Liberty, 1994), p. 54.

²³ Fauzan Saleh, "Modern Trends in Islamic Theological Discourse in 20th Century Indonesia: A Critical Study," *Social, Economic, and Political Studies of the Middle East and Asia* v. 79 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2001), pp. 130–31.

²⁴ Edson, *Mysticism and Alchemy through the Ages the Quest for Transformation*, pp. 56–57.

individual practice and does not refer to a particular religion, it is always in a religious tradition.²⁵ Based on those theories, it can be assumed that inside of the *wong pinter* behavior as a Javanese Shamanism, there are elements of mysticism.

The development of Islam in Indonesia illustrates the influence of mystical traditions. The advent of Islam in Java was influenced by Islam developed in Samudra Passai through the works of Aceh Sufis such as by Hamzah Fansuri, Syamsuddin Passai, and Nuruddin Arraniry.²⁶ The works spread to Cirebon and extended to Java Island, which is indicated by *Suluk* (literary mystique) works and even the political-religious term *manungaling kawulo gusti*, which has replaced the concept of *devaraja* (God-King), which had previously been used in Java.²⁷ The concept of *devaraja* illustrates a way to meet the human desire to be close to God. This type of theology is represented in Hinduism and Islam, and both teachings have developed in Indonesia in *ngelmu tasawwuf*, or mysticism. *Devaraja* teaches that every human being who exercises contemplation and charity will receive the gift of closeness to God, but only the king receives the dignity of this divinity. The people receive blessings. The Divine is symbolized in the names of kings, special dates, and the hierarchy of the king and the people; it is immortalized in the inscriptions, temples, *kekawin*, and ballads; it is embodied in the *gerebeg* ritual, carnivals, and the *Bedhoyo Ketawang* dance; and it is disseminated continuously in leather puppet shows.²⁸ Nevertheless, the development of mysticism in Indonesia did not end at the royal court. It has been proven that Islamic mysticism or Sufism spread among the public, and in *kebatinan* groups such as Subud²⁹ and Sumarah.³⁰ However, the appreciation of mysticism is not always in the form of comprehension of the *kebatinan* group because mysticism is a

²⁵ Sam D. Gill, *Beyond the Primitive: The Religions of Nonliterate Peoples*, The Prentice-Hall Series in World Religions (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1982), p. 90.

²⁶ Nasution, *Falsafat dan mistisisme dalam Islam*, p. 56.

²⁷ Simuh, *Sufisme Jawa Transformasi Tasawwuf Islam Ke Mistik Jawa*, 2nd ed. (Yogyakarta: Benteng Budaya, 1996), p. 42.

²⁸ Rachmat Subagya, *Agama Asli Indonesia*, 1st ed. (Jakarta: Yayasan Cipta Loka Caraka, 1961), pp. 79–83.

²⁹ Antoon Geels, *Subud and the Javanese Mystical Tradition*, Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series, no. 76 (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1997).

³⁰ Paul Stange, *Kejawen Modern Hakekat Dalam Penghayatan Sumarah*, 1st ed. (Yogyakarta: LKIS, 2008).

personal experience. The group practices deep religious understanding and experience in strong social action.

Between Substantive and Formalist Mysticism

In mysticism, the goal for humans is to obtain a direct and conscious relationship with God. This consciousness includes communication and dialogue between the human soul and God through seclusion or contemplation.³¹ Mystics who exercise mysticism properly will feel themselves on the Divine condition.³² In this condition, the mystics assume, feel, touch, and even become united with God.³³ Apart from the view that mysticism may or may not be practiced in a belief, mysticism or Sufism in general can be concluded as an effort to get closer to and communicate with God, as well as an effort to control oneself well to produce good character and behavior and benefit others or the community. How is mysticism practiced by different Muslim individuals in Java? The following passages illustrate the variety of ways of practicing mysticism by Muslim individuals in Java.

Mysticism is part of many religious groups within Islam, including the Muhammadiyah. However, the mystical tradition of Sufism among the Muhammadiyah seems less popular. There is very little information to explain this. One study found that the Muhammadiyah leaders practiced Sufism, and it explained the Sufistic behavior of the leaders of the Muhammadiyah organization.

The four Muhammadiyah figures—Ahmad Dahlan, Hamka, Abdul Rozak Fachruddin, and Abdurrahim Nur—practiced Sufism in everyday life even though they were not affiliated with a particular *tarekat* organization. For example, Ahmad Dahlan worked hard on social efforts such as education, health, economy, and social services; Hamka did self-introspection, improve character and cleanse the heart, do self-contemplation; and others lives simply, patiently, sincerely, willingly accept, but also firm; firmly upholding the Islamic law)⁴⁹. For

³¹ Nasution, *Falsafat dan mistisisme dalam Islam*, p. 56.

³² Swami Akhilananda, “Mysticism and Altruism,” *Journal of Bible and Religion* 16, 2 (1948), p. 89.

³³ Rev. William Philip Downes, “Mysticism,” *The Biblical World* 54, 6 (1920), p. 621.

⁴⁹ Biyanto, “The Typology of Muhammadiyah Sufism: Tracing Its Figures’ Thoughts and Exemplary Lives,” *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 7, 2 (2017): pp. 233–38, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v7i2.221-249>.

Muhammadiyah people, Sufism is also important. For the however, Sufism must be looked at from its substantive dimension. Mysticism is not only understood as a theoretical lesson. It is more importantly an action to be practiced in everyday life. As a daily practice, Muhammadiyah does not recognize the cultures of a cult, including individual cults. Muhammadiyah teaches moderate Sufism,⁵⁰ which means that Sufism is a noble behavior, but it does not recognize formalized Sufi culture, and there is no cult of certain figures. Muhammadiyah teaches its followers to worship according to the rules of the Qur'an and Hadith. Muhammadiyah criticized the Sufi tradition of religious practices developed among Sufis based on certain spiritual teachers and certain groups or tarekat,⁵¹ and this view aligns with the view that rejects mysticism as the teachings of Islam but agrees that mysticism is a noble and commendable way and moral of life.

Unlike the aforementioned “substantive mysticism”, the term “formalist mysticism” needs to be referred to here to distinguish that the latter emphasizes content or purpose, while the former refers to the form. While there is also substance in the formal, structure, format, and procedures become very important. There is a specific standardization applied to all forms of Sufism. In Indonesia, the authority to validate Sufism is at the hand of the Nahdhatul Ulama called *tarekat*.⁵² The *tarekat* is usually associated with the founder of the organization, and the lineage of its leaders greatly determines the position of a *tarekat* or members of the tarekat legally. The leadership of the *tarekat* is often called the Shaykh. The *tarekat* usually also has procedures for inner cleansing, kinship, respective ritual ceremonies, and social awareness activities. The pedigree of leadership and the relationship between teacher and student also become an important element.⁵³ One important function of a teacher in the *tarekat* is as a guide and intermediary for disciples who want to become closer with God. Even teachers are considered to have full authority both materially and spiritually.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 246.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 231.

⁵² Martin van Bruinessen et al., *Urban sufism* (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat, 2008), pp. v–vii.

⁵³ Sri Mulyati, *Mengenal & memahami tarekat-tarekat muktabarab di Indonesia*, pp. 6–11.

⁵⁴ Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi pesantren: studi pandangan hidup kyai dan visinya mengenai masa depan Indonesia* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2011), pp. 216–17.

The conditions for accepting a *tarekat* by the Muslim community, especially among Nahdhatul Ulama, are important. Wahidiyah and Siddiqiyah are *tarekat* that have not been included in the *mu'tabarab tarekat* (ratified) because some conditions are not fulfilled. For example, the genealogy is broken or it contains elements of philosophical Sufism that are opposed.⁵⁵ Variations of Sufism also sometimes do not fit into a general category, and even in Java some congregations (*tarekat*) are fully aligned with the Qur'an and hadiths and some congregations are suspected to be incompatible with both⁵⁶. The *tarekat* organizations that practice Sufism have rules determined by the leadership of the organizations.⁵⁷ Many congregations have developed in Indonesia, India, Turkey, Persia, and North Africa.⁵⁸

The *tarekat* is categorized into two forms, namely, the *tarekat* that is practiced according to the ways of the organization, and the *tarekat* that is practiced outside of organizational procedures.⁵⁹ Despite differences, the practice must follow the basic doctrine of the practice of the tarekat in the *pesantren*, which must align with *Islam*, the *Iman*, and the *Ihsan*. The *Ihsan* as the highest Islamic teachings is often equated with a sincere character. The first level of sincerity includes carrying out religious obligations because there is an order. The second level of sincerity, carrying out the practices of worship, is not done solely out of obligation but because it has become a necessity of life. The third level of sincerity is a Muslim performing religious and social rituals solely to be close to God.⁶⁰

It can be concluded that the formal implementation of Islamic mysticism (Sufism) is done in the *tarekat* organization corridor. The procedures strongly emphasize the elemental genealogy (genealogy) of the founder, leadership, and teacher-student relations. Substantively, Sufism is a form of sincerity in carrying out the teachings of *Islam*, *Iman*, and *Ihsan*, submission to God, and the high regard for noble deeds that are represented in high social care.

⁵⁵ Huda, *Tasawuf Kultural*, pp. 7–8.

⁵⁶ Dhofier, *Tradisi pesantren*, p. 215.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 212.

⁵⁸ Sri Mulyati, *Mengenal & memahami tarekat-tarekat muktabarah di Indonesia*, pp. 25–290.

⁵⁹ Dhofier, *Tradisi pesantren*, p. 213.

⁶⁰ Dhofier, pp. 225–26.

Closeness to God as Experienced by *Wong Pinter*

There are different views among informants, but the core of all is that humans can approach God with limitations. God's entity is still a question for the informants; in fact, it is the unseen God, creatures coming from God or other supernatural beings like genies, ancestral spirits, or other beings. In this section, mysticism will be understood as human closeness with God or The Invisible because although *wong pinter* direct prayers to God and the name of the Lord, they cannot be sure whether those who communicate, meet, come, or help is God, a messenger of God, or other creatures.

According to Choirul Anam, the relationship between man and God is like "*Adoh ra pisaban, cepak ra senggolan*," meaning that people can feel the presence of God nearby though, in fact, they cannot contact the agency. In the framework of this closeness, a Muslim must pray with humility, do Ramadan fasting, do *Sunnah sholat*, and conduct *Sunnah* fasting such as fasting on Mondays and Thursdays. At a young age, to sharpen his spiritual sensitivity, Choirul often conducted *laku pribadi*, such as Javanese fasts, to pray that those who come asking for help be recovered (*waras*), and avoid oversleeping (*melek*). For him, the efficacy of prayer (*mandi*) is determined by the stability of heart (*mantep*), a belief (*yakin*) that is serious in approaching and asking for something to God. Nevertheless, it should also be clear what is required, and the person praying must be steady and confident that their prayers will be accepted. Choirul also said that belief of the people who ask for help is important to get a blessing from God.

Choirul Anam's view is similar to Ento's. "The God is close," he said. If a man prays, asking God, it will provide a placebo effect for recovery. However, how does one approach God? He said to do *sholat*, ask God (*nyuwun marang Gusti*), do Ramadan fasting, do *Sunnah* prayings such as the *Tahajud* prayer, and reduce sleep. He also suggested reading *wirid* by saying Basmallah and the intention to ask God. Ento suggested people pray at night because not many people pray at night. The more people ask, the bigger chance they have to be blessed. People should pray continuously and consistently, and if they do that, he believed that their prayers will be blessed.

Zamari approaches God in prayer by *megeng* (holding breath) and reading the *rapal* (prayer) in Javanese. His belief is that the creatures should know who created them (*titah kudu ngerti Gusti Allah*). He also

uses water that prayer is blown into, then people who need help drink the water for recovery and goodness.

Mudah has had a different experience. His closeness to God is achieved by *laku prihatin* such as *Ngebleng* fasting, *usaha*, *tirakat*, *melek*, and *nyuwun*. He meditates by holding his breath, and the answer can then be found. Although he does various Javanese fasting, he also reads the *shabada* (testimony to the oneness of God and Muhammad as the messenger of God). He also made a pilgrimage to the Tomb of Kyai Trengono Kusumo in Muneng Candirot as devotion (*bekti*) to ancestors (*pepundhen*), but his prayer (*nyuwun*) remains in God (*Sing Gawe Urip*). God has the authority to bless the prayers. When there are sick people asking for help, the important things to do are identify the illness and the healing efforts. By reading *Basmallah*, the *shabada*, Surah *An Nas*, praying for health, devoting to the unseen beings such as ancestor spirits or *Danyang*, and asking God (the highest), with the permission of God, the patients will be healed just by touching them. Mudah holds a principle that he cannot reject people who come to him. The prayer is a means, and God gives the verdict. He thinks that devotion to ancestors, asking God with efforts and *laku prihatin*, doing good deeds, and being faithful and honest are important.

Mudah illustrated how he feels that his prayer is blessed. A person asked him for help because his business was not successful. He did a type of meditation that included silence and concentration, then “the occult” came to tell him something, e.g., to put prayer water in the left side of the door, to place water in the corner of the stall, or to make white porridge. Furthermore, he prayed to God asking for the success of the person who came to him. Mudah fully concentrates when praying and usually enters a special room. Although there are many guests in the front room, Mudah is used to it. He prepares the water in the cup. When he concentrates, holds his breath and prays, “the occult” comes. Mudah feels and sees “the supernatural” (he uses term “*wonge*,” meaning a person) drop into the water. Mudah does not understand whether it is God, the light of God, the jinn, or other creatures who come. Although the unseen is difficult to prove, he says he can communicate. Sometimes the occult falls in the form of an uncatchable shadow. He claims to have the ability to see the invisible (*Gadhab Travangan*), and he is convinced that the one who falls into prayer water is a truth because when the water is used to heal or solve problems, the prayers will be blessed.

According to Gudik's experience, becoming close to God or the supernatural can be done with a lot of *prihatin*, less sleeping, and less eating to understand the self. We do not think about the flaws of people and do not disturb others. Everybody can do that, and *wong pinter* as *wong tetulung* is one medium to help deliver prayers. Gudik usually prays directly for other illnesses and problems, but in the case of arranged marriage or inharmonious family issues, people who ask for help are usually invited to pilgrimage to the tomb of Mbah Danyang Kawat. The media are flowers, incense, cigarettes, *kanthil* flower, and prayers. The prayer is given in Javanese or the praying is done alone in accordance with the wish. They must pray directly to the *Danyang* because Gudik does not have the power to solve the problems. Gudik said that the *Danyang* will help to "deliver" the partner (*jodoh*). The inhaled cigarettes are believed to repair the family relationship or to bring the *jodoh* closer. The best time to pray depends on the best time to concentrate. Gudik can immediately understand and communicate with the supernatural powers. When praying, Gudik feels something help him. A voice comes and tell him the people's problems, what to do, and so forth. Gudik does not understand the origin of the voice, whether it is from God, jinn, or other creatures. Gudik can communicate with the occult, but it is hard to study and there is no school for it. Gudik can treat people from a distance and can be in two different places at the same time. Gudik wonders why he has such an ability. Gudik's experience is hard to believe and to understand, so many people consider him abnormal because he has done unbelievable things. However, he is not angry with people's comments. *Wong pinter* delivers prayers with various methods.

Sastro helps patients by praying, and the result is God's power. Yasorejo also believes that his role is only delivering prayers to be blessed by God, which will happen if people do not do bad things like kill, lie, cheat, or drink to excess. Herbs and other property are just means. The power of prayer is obtained by performing *laku prihatin* in the form of fasting such as *mutib* and *ngrowot*.

For M. Nur Amin, praying can be done by everyone by noting its procedure. The procedure of praying is clean, do it after *sholat* time, and face the *Qiblah*. The reason is to prioritize *sholat* before praying to God. The purpose of prayer is to ask for blessing. He believes that the quality of prayer can be different; for example, an ordinary person's prayer is different from a religious leaders's prayer. If anyone comes

asking for help, then Amin will offer a prayer. Amin and patients will both pray because he is uncertain whose prayers are answered. According to Amin, it is important during prayer to have humility and belief. People must believe in what is requested. He believes one Hadit Qudsi, which says that the prayer should be directed to Gusti Allah, and the request must be clear. Amin compared it to shooting. If people cannot shoot the target precisely, the tool cannot be blamed. People should know how to shoot, but they need training so the birds can be shot accurately. So, if the prayer was not granted, we should know how to pray. Do not blame the prayers and God. The mind must be completely focused on God, similar to concentrating on the target. Amin believes that anyone who asks for prayers with humility and concentration and who is and well-behaved will have his or her prayer accepted by God. Like shooting, if the prayers have not been answered, perhaps the methods are not appropriate. Exercising repeatedly to approach God becomes important. Amin's concept focuses on prayers, not on healing or solving problems.

Unlike Amin, Isro'i uses the *mujabadah* method in healing and illuminating the intricate mind. Isro'i invites people to *Tauhid* (Oneness of God). *Mujabadah* is reading the *wirid* more than a hundred times. Based on remembering and rejoicing in the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, the Ustadz leads the *dzikir*, remembering Allah. This is done by reading *Surah Al Fatebah*, *Surah An Nas*, seven times each and reading *Ayat al Kursi*. *Mujabadah* is conducted for two hours. Reading seven times symbolizes *pitulungan*, or help. By remembering Allah, he hopes the problems will disappear because people are in the zero position, *Wusul*, the connecting position between God and human sense. Worshipers feel closer to God (Sufism), have a sense of unity that cannot be imagined, and move toward peace of mind. Humans feel "los", on the zero position as if he did not exist in the world. *Mujabadah* is emptying the mind. *Mujabadah* worshipers usually cry remembering the sins that have been committed and remembering death. By emptying the mind and drawing closer to God, *mujabadah* serves as a multifunctional media, such as to surrender, smooth business, or be loved by people. Through *mujabadah* it is expected that pilgrims can pray properly and be closer to God. Intention to God and believing that God may grant prayers are important factors. According to Isro'i, all prayer is efficacious, but it depends on the conviction. People who pray must make sure that the pain would be cured or

given the best blessing from God. Isro'i also believes "God depends on the prejudice of His adherents." Then, conviction of people who pray determines the prayers to be answered. Likewise, if the person prays properly, not only understanding the prayers but also understanding the meaning, then indeed it includes the prayer for the good of the world and the hereafter.

Social Morality as Life Obligation

Besides having special understanding and methods to approach God, *wong pinter* thinks it is an obligation to help and serve others in need. *Wong pinter* will not publish their ability, will not tell or show that they can help, but they will serve every person who comes to them and asks for help. There is no promotion. For example, Choirul Anam is used to serving the people who come to complain about their illness and ask for his help. He treats people who complain of dizziness, *panas tis*, people suffering from serious illnesses such as tumors, children who will not stop crying children (*kampiran*), people who lose goods, or those who come about lost family members. For him, *tetulung* or *nulung* (giving a hand to others) is a must.

Ento used to treat patients from children to adults who complained of headaches (*mumet*), dislocated bone (*kecethit*), and burning in the digestive system (*panas dalam*). In addition to massage, for specific complaints Ento usually gives herbs such as *dlingo*, *bengle*, *godhong sangkedan*, *kembang tempayang*, and onions. People come more for massage therapy. Remembering his late father's message, Ento does not consider massage as a profession to make money. Massage is a means to help people. For him, being closer to God has implications for social aspects, and prayer must always be addressed for the benefit for others. His prayer is: "*Cedhak Gusti Allah kuwi wajib tetulung. Nyumun rejeki kang manfaat donya lan akhirat. Mugo-mugo manfaat bisa nulung wong sak Donya.*" ("Being close to God means being obliged to help others. People need to ask for a fortune that is beneficial in this world and the hereafter. Hopefully it is useful to help people in the world.") When people come and ask for help, it is an obligation to help them. People who give alms (usually sugar, tea, or snacks) will get a return with other goods. According to Ento, God will provide, and there is no need to be too hopeful (*ngarep-arep*). People also should feel content with all they have and not need to gossip about others' flaws. For him, realizing the condition is not easy. Nevertheless, the concept of

helping has limitations. Helping others must happen at the right time. Although we may want to help, if the time is not right, we should not do it. While traveling in Magelang, the young Ento saw an accident. The victim seemed to have problems with his bones and required massage. At that time there was someone offering massage but in vain. The young Ento gave a massage and eventually the victim recovered. After returning to his home in Parakan, Ento told his father (Tamrin) about the incident. Not giving a compliment, Tamrin scolded him instead because it was not the right time for him to give massage. According to his father, if he continued to help, it would spread prejudice and become behavior of which he was not yet capable.

Sastro understands that sick people are considered as being rewarded by something bad (*diganjar*) or having problems (*pepeteng*). The person possibly made mistakes (*keklinguan*) in life that need to be addressed and be cleaned. Therefore, some healing prayers are asking for God's forgiveness. Sastro does not feel on the right position to give help but asks for the life-giver (God). Sastro admitted as *wong bodho* (fool) not *wong pinter* (smart), not a teacher nor *dukun*. Sastro also does not intend to be a helper, so his actions must be done unconditionally. According to Sastro, only God determines whether his prayers are granted or not. The important thing is to do good deeds, to ask forgiveness for mistakes, and to ask the patients to recover.

Yasmorejo frequently helps people who come and complain about problems, such as physical illness, an unsuccessful business, or young men or women who married late (*joko/prawan kasep*). Patients come to seek enlightenment. According to Yasmorejo, people should do work sincerely and selflessly. When conducting *laku prihatin* by fasting, he does not tell others. *Tetlung* also must be done unconditionally. Following the instructions of his teacher, when helping people, Mbah Yasmorejo should not ask for money or reward, and should not do bad things to others, such as lying (*goroh*), being arrogant, or cheating (*ngapusi*).

Mudah is often asked to help with various illnesses such as physical, mental, and spiritual ones. Mudah says that he only delivers prayers. His principle is to help people and not harm them. The humans keep trying and the result is God's verdict. Helping should not deviate from God (*Gusti Allah*), and people should never forget to mention His name. Helping others should be sincere and selfless, without hoping for rewards. Mudah criticizes the acronym of *dhukun*,

ora udhu ora rukun, meaning no money no help, and *sepub* or *pinisepub*, which is also related to the unfavorable.

Gudik often helps people who have stomachaches (*padbaran*), headaches (*mumet*), fevers, problems finding a mate, as well as diseases caused by spiritual disturbance. According to Gudik, water becomes a powerful medium because large parts of the human body come from water. He also said that without water, the prayers will not be effective. Gudik exemplified some events related to the importance of water, such as a doctor who was disturbed by spirits because he closed the well in his house and a neighbor who got a stomachache then recovered after drinking water from him. Gudik only helps for good deeds without hoping for rewards, even in black magic cases. Gudik believes that those who spread goodness will harvest goodness.

Nur Amin serves those who come asking for help. He does not know how to heal people with complicated mental issues and family problems or who have had difficulty finding fortune. He must serve those who ask for help; therefore, he gives *wirid* readings obtained from the teacher.

For Isro'i Suyuti, illness comes from God and from ourselves. According to him, high level Sufism lies in the degree of social concern, is not individualistic, and does not prioritize ego. The human task is to help others. The key to heaven is on social action, regardless of religion. The rain will not pick and choose which soil to shower, and when people share love, the kindness of the heavens will drop its own.

The Substantive-altruistic Mysticism of *Wong Pinter*

The *wong pinter* practices substantive mysticism. *Wong pinter* is more concerned with good deeds and social piety, in addition to submission to the power of God, which is different than the Muhammadiyah figures, who perform good behavior as a manifestation of their Islamic faith. Formal conditions such as a good follower of Islam, absolute trust in Islam, and the practice of sharia become the basis to initiate good deeds and the spirit of social charity. This is somewhat reversed by the *wong pinter* because they come from various religions and they prioritize their social care as a life obligation above their personal needs, even including worship.

Wong pinter began his view of life with a noble attitude, good morality, kindness to people and other creatures, generosity, humility, simplicity, tenderness, comfort, fear of sin, and helpful. They give help

to those who ask, but they realize their shortcomings. They cannot refuse people who ask for help. Even when they must help people, they prioritize giving help even though, for example, it is time for worship. They will beg the Almighty and surrender completely to His will. They only try to help with the request, but still ask the person involved to pray because they do not know if the prayer will be answered by God or the Almighty. If only they carry out religious teachings (whatever their religion) properly, it is an obligation as humans to worship God. Helping people in need is an obligation. Doing good to others is also an obligation. Likewise, carrying out religious orders is also a form of obligation. As it is an obligation as a human being, the ascetic behavior does not need to be organized.

Therefore, the substantive actions carried out by the *wong pinter* are more of a personal obligation that influences social altruistic actions. They are very concerned about being able to help people who need it rather than thinking about their own needs.

As an individual obligation as humans, they are not followers of the *tarekat* who carry out mystical actions in certain rituals. Although there are some *wong pinter* who can learn, the structure of the teacher-student relationship is not too strict. There is no certain requirement despite the many findings that their capacity is largely hereditary. They must rely on the Almighty, but it is rarely found that the aim of asceticism is for individual purposes to unite with God. The ascetic action is carried out as a form of submission, consciousness as a low and small creature of the power and holiness of the Almighty. Researchers are not systematic and structured efforts to meet God or the Almighty. His actions are more of a self-awareness of the obligations of life as a human.

This finding clarifies that shamanism is rooted in mysticism and Mulder's view of a good shaman called *wong tuwa* as a mystic which is different from the *dukun* who is often associated with the dark forces of black magic⁶¹. Mulder has not yet fully explained the type or pattern of mystical life the *wong tuwa* or mystic healer practices.

Conclusion

Understanding the closeness to God is not viewed the same way by all informants. Every informant has had different experiences. Nevertheless, all informants emphasized that life must be dedicated to

⁶¹ Mulder, *Mysticism in Java*, p. 78.

helping others sincerely and selflessly. Therefore, they should do good deeds, pray with conviction, and fully concentrate.

There are strong personal and social experience aspects in mysticism wrapped in *wong pinter* practice. Personal experience is used to provide social services, not in the context of a personal mystical satisfaction. It is not appropriate to call it active mysticism because *wong pinter* provide help upon request. It cannot be called passive mysticism either because their ability is utilized actively by public.

The *wong pinter* as lay people behaves mystical actions such as submission to the Almighty and his behavior in doing good and social morals are very strong. Reflectively, it can be assumed that mysticism is also practiced by traditional healers everywhere who have the same characteristics as *wong pinter* in this study. This finding supports the claim that shamanism has a bearing on mysticism and openly discusses mysticism in public.

A further question is whether the practice of mysticism is also carried out on other shaman variations because there are various shaman or shaman variations. It needs to be studied further. []

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