

THE DEBATE OF ORTHODOX SUFISM AND PHILOSOPHICAL SUFISM

The Study of *Maqāmāt* in the *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn* of Shaykh Iḥsān Jampes

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Abstract

This article discusses the mystical view of Shaykh Iḥsān Jampes Kediri, East Java. He is known as a muslim jurist as well as a practical Sunnī Sufi of Nusantara (Indonesia), with a worldwide reputation. The main reason for his reputation originates from his monumental work Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn a voluminous commentary of al-Ghazālī work, Minhāj al-'Ābidīn, which had successfully reaffirmed orthodox Sunnī sufism that built and developed by al-Ghazālī. The sufism attitudes and ways of Shaykh Iḥsān in the journey were as if dealing with a sufi group which had philosophical pattern. Additionally, Shaykh Iḥsān Jampes in Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn reviewed the sufistic core stages which are called maqāmāt by many sufis, but Shaykh Iḥsān calls them steep road ('aqabah) consisting of seven steep stages. These differences bring some consequences not only on the number of steps/stairs/maqām and the final destination of his mystical journey, namely gnosis and deification; but also question the limit of human being who physically cannot be united with God. On the other hand, God could have chosen to be invited to unite in accordance with His will. These seven 'aqabah are to deliver a traveller towards ma'rifatullāh (gnosis) as the ultimate mystical journey.

[Artikel ini membahas pandangan sufistik Syaykh Iḥsān Jampes Kediri Jawa Timur. Ia adalah ahli hukum Islam yang juga sebagai praktisi sufi sunni yang terkenal di nusantara kala itu. Alasan utama yang membuatnya

diperhitungkan adalah karyanya Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn yang berupa komentar terhadap Minhāj al-'Ābidīn karya al-Ghazālī. Sikap dan jalan sufi Shaykh Iḥsān Jampes tampaknya bersepakat dengan pola sufistik falsafati. Dalam karyanya tersebut ia membahas tingkatan yang oleh para sufi biasa disebut maqāmāt, dimana ia sendiri menyebutnya dengan jalan terjal ('aqabah) yang terdiri dari 7 tingkatan. Perbedaan ini tidak hanya membawa perbedaan konsekuensi jumlah tangga dan tujuan akhir (gnosis dan deification), tapi juga soal batasan kemampuan fisik manusia untuk menyatu dengan Tuhan. Di sisi lain, Tuhan dapat juga mengundang untuk bersatu berdasarkan kehendakNya. Tujub tingkatan 'aqabah inilah yang akan membawa para musafir menuju ma'rifatullāh sebagai puncak perjalanan spiritual.]

Keywords: Syaykh Iḥsān Jampes, *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn*, sufism, *maqāmāt*, seven 'aqabah

A. Introduction

This article is written to answer a fundamental question about the differences that occur throughout the history of the Islamic mysticism among the sufi authors in articulating the stages/paths pursued by sufis to reach their final goal, God. It is important to discuss this first thing first because in its long history, the sufis did not have an agreement to define technical terms used or the number of stages/paths required to achieve their mystical goal. This different conception would bring some consequences to different achievement that became the final goal of their spiritual journey.

Some Sufis, such as al-Qushayrī, al-Ṭūsī, and al-Ghazālī argue that the ultimate mystical peak of a *sālik* (sufi traveller) in their mystical journey is *maqām ridha* (satisfaction stage). Some sufis, including Rabā'at al-'Adawiyah, believe that the pinnacle of mystical stage/*maqām* is *maḥabbat Allāh* (gnosis). Some others, including Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī, said that the mystical peak is in mortal stage/*fanā'* (the passing away) and *baqā'* (union with divine life). Other sufis believe that the ultimate goal of the mystical journey is being united and together with God in form of can take the *ittihād* (identification of the divine and human natures), *ḥulūl* (infusion of the divine essence), and *wiḥdat al-wujūd* or *manunggaling kawulo Gusti* (The unity of Being). This latter view is believed by al-Biṣṭāmī, Ibn 'Arabī,

al-Ḥallāj, Hamzah al-Fanṣūrī, Shams al-Dīn al-Sumateranī, and Shaykh Siti Jenar. Of these opinions, Shaykh¹ Iḥsān Jampes Kediri believes that the ultimate mystical experience is gnosis.

Such differences have affected the striking dichotomous claim in sufism. On one side, sufism is claimed to remain on the right track to maintain its orthodoxy (*Sunnī*), because they always cling to the integral relationship among *aqīdah-sharā'at-tasawuf* that is based on the Qur'an and the Sunna of the Prophet. The views of this group that later was claimed to hold to the teaching and practice of *Sunnī* sufism or orthodox sufism. On the other hand, the sufism teaching has been practiced by certain Sufis by incorporating philosophical elements at their reasoning and mystical practices. According to them, sufism is a doctrine that is always alive and prone to foreign influences. Consequently, their mystical view might have adopted philosophical and empirical arguments. In a further development, this kind of sufism is called 'philosophical sufism'² or pantheistic sufism. Therefore, they were regarded heterodox Sufism by *Sunnī* sufi groups because these philosophical Sufism has diverged from the boundary of the *sharī'at* grip.

The two modes of sufism were a consequence of a conception built by two sufi groups. Both departed from different teachings and practices of sufism, so that their consequences were also different. The core of sufism teachings concerns the process of achieving the highest happiness—the process is commonly referred to as *maqam* (stages), which can be

¹ The term shaykh, in Indonesian literature, is often used with different spellings; 'syaikh, syekh, syeikh and shaykh'. The author in this article will use the word 'shaykh' in order to maintain consistency.

² Actually, the dichotomy of *Sunnī-Falsafī sufi* can be found in its development, there had been a difference/disagreement among sufism students. For example, Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) explained by taking the example of Sunan Wali Songo or in addition to following their *Sunnī* sufism, they also keep within themselves to follow Falsafī sufism of reincarnation, for example, Ibn 'Arabi. It becomes clear why Wali Songo used the word 'wali'. Because according to Gus Dur, a guardian is someone who can be accepted by both *Sunnī* and *Falsafī sufi*. See Abdurrahman Wahid, "Pengantar: Antara Tasawuf *Sunnī* dan Tasawuf Falsafī", in *Islam Sufistik: 'Islam Pertama' dan Pengaruhnya hingga Kini di Indonesia*, 1st edition (Bandung: Mizan, 2001), pp. xiii–xix. Likewise Said Agil Siradj disagreed the division and contention. According to him, if there is such a distinction, it is supposed that there is 'Irfanī-Falsafī sufism and *Sunnī-ghairu Sunnī*. Said Agil Siradj, interview (29 Aug 2005).

met, even by uniting with the lover, which is God Himself. This then becomes the crucial problem among the community of sufis; the *maqām* conceived by each sufi will bring some impacts to the human reality, just as a servant of Allah, who has certain limits; in communicating, meeting, and *'ashīq-ma'shūq* (intimacy) with his or her Lord. Meanwhile, another sufi mystic argues that a sufi not only can communicate with God, but also can be united with God.

In this context, the conception of Shaykh Iḥsān's sufism has been articulated into his magnum opus; *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn*, a commentary of *Minhāj al-'Ābidīn* by al-Imām al-Ghazālī. Shaykh Iḥsān's work is not only a reference of sufism in *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) in Indonesia,³ but it also receive appreciation from great scholars of the Middle East. *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn* has become one of the standard works (*mu'tabarab*) in al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt, in parallel with other *mu'tabarab* treatises.

Even the more interesting thing was that the Shaykh Iḥsān no longer used the term *'maqāmāt'* — as always termed by sufis before—, instead, he Iḥsān called employed the term *'aqabat* (steep road towards the cliff). Shaykh Iḥsān argued that the term *'aqabat* used specifically in the book *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn* is to show that the paths to God are not like paths that are usual easy ridden by ordinary people. Instead, they are ladders to another upward ladder above. Thus, they require prudence, seriousness (*mujābahah*), exercise (*riyābah*), and consistency (*istiqāmah*). The next argument is that the concept of *'aqabat* tried to put a servant before God is fixed as a servant of God (*'abd Allāh*), so that between a man and God is still a sharp distance. Contrary to the view of sufi philosopher who believe that a servant (human) can be fused / merged with God. Herein the significance of this study lies.

Subsequently, the article will analyze and elaborate the sharp

³ Hadi Murtadho considers Shaykh Iḥsān Jampes as three leading author clerics (*muallif*) of Nusantara, the most productive and high spiritual power, in addition to Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantānī and Shaykh Mahfūz al-Termāsī. Surely Murtadho Hadi also does not deny the other scholars by considering highly productive in their performance areas, such as Ḥadratus Shaykh Hāshim Ash'ārī (d. 1947 CE), Shaykh Arsyad al-Banjārī (d. 1812 CE), Shaykh Mohammad Nafis al-Banjārī (Born 1148 H 1735 AD), Shaykh Aḥmad Khātīb al-Sambāsī (d. 1875 CE), K̄yai Abdul Hamid Pasuruan (d. 1985 CE), and others. See Murtado Hadi, *Jejak Spiritual Kiai Jampes* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pesantren, 2008), pp. 1–6.

contrast between the two thoughts, and contextualize in spiritual lives of contemporary Muslims. In addition, it will also showcase implications that resulted from these two approaches, especially the implication of religious practices of the opinions of Shaykh Iḥsān towards his students and Muslims community under his tutelage until today. It is because his *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn* is still considered as a main reference for many *pesantrens* (Islamic boarding schools) in studying al-Ghazālī's Sufism.

B. The Debate Regarding *Maqāmāt* among the Sufis

Maqāmāt is the plural form of *maqām*, which literally means rank or degree and stations or stages. Meanwhile, according to the sufism terms, *maqāmāt* is the position of a servant in front of the God, which is obtained through worshipping, *mujāhadah* (effort) and others, as well as spiritual exercises to develop continual relation with God. Technically, *maqāmāt* also means the activity and outmost effort done by a sufi to improve the quality of his or her spiritual and position (*maqām*) in front of God by practicing specific deeds until attaining direction to concentrate on a particular deed which has greater spiritual values in front of God.

Maqāmāt is usually paired with the term *aḥwāl*. *Aḥwāl* is the plural form of the word *ḥāl*, which literally means the states or conditions. Meanwhile, according to sufism term (*ʿind al-mutaṣawwifīn*), *ḥāl* means feelings that influences the heart caused by purification of *dhikr* (recollection). Al-Junaid al-Baghdādī said, *ḥāl* is a natural condition of heart and one should not attempt to get it so it is transient. *Aḥwāl* is not equal to *maqāmāt*, since *ḥāl* is obtained not because of outmost effort of *al-mujāhadah* (spiritual struggle), *al-riyāḍah* and worship. Although the content and the practices in *maqāmāt*, or in *aḥwāl* is already known a long with the familiar teachings of Islam itself, the terminology of *maqāmāt* and *aḥwāl* is currently used and first discussed by Dhun Nūn al-Miṣrī.

In Arabic, terms used to refer to people who did specific deeds are *isim fāʿil* (actor) of those deeds, for examples *tawwābīn*, *ʿubbād*, *ḥubbād*, and so on. According to ʿAbd al-Karim al-Qushayrī, these two terms is different. While, *ḥāl* acquired by chance without any efforts and its come in its form and ones who get *ḥāl* usually influenced by certain condition

such as sad, nervous, love, longing, and so on,⁴ *maqāmāt* is acquired through devoted effort. Those who are in *maqāmāt* might be in that stage for a long term. It is also said that *aḥwāl* is like lightening if it is in one's heart. It will affect someone's feeling to be in such special condition and this effect would vanish as soon as possible when the *aḥwāl* was absent from his soul.⁵

Among sufis there is a difference of vision for seeing *maqāmāt* discourse, either in the determining the amount of *maqāmāt* or the technical terms. In the sufism perspective, and most commonly used by the sufis there are at least seven illustrious *maqāmāt* experienced by the sufis. Those seven *maqāmāt*s, of course, should be done well, right, and continual. Thus, for the beginner in sufism, *the first* thing he needs to do is *tawbah* (repentance). A sufi should repent his or her sins with the promise that it will not be repeated. *Second*, to reinforce repentance, a Sufi must relinquish all desires (*ḥubud*). He or she began to relinquish himself or herself from the materials and the bustle of the world. He or she alienates himself or herself to a secluded place to worship, fasting, praying, reading the Qur'an and *dhikr*, little sleep and seeks to only spiritual happiness and closeness to God. *The third* stage is *wara'* (watchfulness). He or she avoids himself or herself from doing deeds which lies between the prohibited (*ḥarām*) and the permitted (*ḥalāl*), namely *shubhat* (unclear). *The fourth* is *faqr* (poverty). A sufi must only own what is sufficient to sustain his or her soul. In addition, he or she does not ask to anyone except in order to be able to carry out his religious obligations. *The fifth* is *ṣabr* (patience). It is not only about the obedience to do the difficult commandment of God and His restrictions, but also to be patient in accepting all trials

⁴ It is difficult to limit the number of *ḥāl*. It can take any form and color and its types are difficult to count. However, Abū Nasr al-Sarrāj al-Ṭūsī (w. 378 H.), in his book *al-Luma'* lists one by one the ten steps of soul (*aḥwāl*): concentration (*murāqabah*), closeness (*qurb*), love (*maḥabbah*), fearness (*khaūf*), hopes (*rajā'*), longing (*shauq*), intimate (*'uns*), composure (*iṭmi'nān*), contemplation (*mushāhadah*), and trust (*yaqīn*), see *Ibid.*; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Living Sufism* (London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1980), p. 64. However, there are several scholars who define *aḥwāl* as *maqāmāt*. For example, al-Ghazālī claimed that *maḥabbah* is the highest *maqāmāt* among other *maqāmāt*, it is not a type of *ḥāl*, as it is said by al-Ṭūsī. According to al-Ghazālī, there is other followed *maqāmāt*: *shauq*, *'uns* and *riḍwā* though. See Imām al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, vol. 4 (Surabaya: Al-Hidayah), p. 286.

⁵ Harun Nasution, *Falsafat dan Mistisisme dalam Islam* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1973), p. 63.

from God. He or she must be patient in suffering. *The sixth* is *tawakkul* (trust in God). A sufi should show complete trust in God and surrender to His will. *The seventh* is *ridhā* (satisfaction). A sufi must not argue to the trials from God but accepts them gracefully. There is no hate feeling in his or her heart except happiness and love to God.

Paths and stages (*maqāmāt*) passed by sufis will be different one to another. It is because they have different experiences, which makes them possess different stages and limitations. Therefore, the process of self-purification should be started from *tawbah*, the repentance of sins. That is why the first station of sufism is *tawbah*. A prospective sufi should repent from all great sins committed. If he or she succeeds in this stage, he or she will repent for minor sins, then avoid reprehensible acts (*makrūh*) after that followed by avoiding unclear (*shubhat*) acts. The repentance here refers to *tawbat al-naṣūḥā*, which requires one to regret sins and keep a promise that it would not be repeated even for the smallest sins.

It takes, of course, a long time to complete the *tawbah* stage. To reinforce repentance, a sufi should move to the second station, which is *ẓuhd*. In this station, a sufi relinquishes his or her desires on materials and the bustle of the world. He or she confines himself or herself into an isolated place to focus on worshipping, fasting, praying, reading Qur'an, and doing *dhikr*. Fasting will weaken desires and make him or her endure the hunger and thirst. A sufi eats and drinks just to sustain life. He or she sleep a little and does lots of worship. The clothing is humble. A sufi becomes *ẓābid* (apostate) of the world, a person who is no longer tempted by worldly pleasures and delights of the material. He or she seek for spiritual happiness, and it is achieved through fasting, praying, reading the Qur'an and doing *dhikr*.

If the pleasures and delights of the material could not tease him or her anymore, he or she come out of from the isolation and back to the world. He or she keep doing fasting, praying, reading the Qur'an, *dhikr*, and pilgrimage. Here he or she has arrived at the station *wara'*. At the station, God keeps him or her out from doubtful deeds (*shubhat*). In the literature of sufism, it is mentioned, that al-Muḥāsibī refused food, because in it was doubtful of its permissibility (not clear whether it is *halaḥ*). Likewise, Bishr al-Ḥāfi did not accept food that contains doubtfulness. From the station *wara'*, a sufi traveler moves to station *faqr*

(poverty). In this station, he or she lives in poverty. His or her needs just a little in order to be able to carry out his religious obligations. He or she does not ask people, but accepts the God's gift though. After passing the station *faqr*, a sufi arrives at the station *ṣabr*. He or she is not only patient in performing commandment from God and avoiding His restrictions, which are full of temptations, but also patient in enduring all trials from the God. A sufi does not ask and expect the help of God. He or she is patient in suffering.

Next, a sufi traveler moves to station *tawakkul* as he or she completely trusts in God and surrenders to His will. He or she does not think about tomorrow, what he or she gets today is enough. Even if a sufi traveler has nothing, he or she remains grateful. When he or she has something to eat, he will not eat it if there is other person in need. A sufi traveler is like a dead man. Furthermore, he or she moves to station *ridhā*. From this station, he or she is satisfied with the trials given by God and accepts it gracefully. He does not ask for heaven or saved from hell. There is only love in his or her heart, no hatred. When a sufi traveler experiences hardship, he or she will accept it gracefully. In this stage, he or she feels really close to God and almost be able to see God by heart and then to unite with Him. Those stations (*maqāmāt*) are only the stages for self-purification for ones who experiences sufism. He or she has not become a sufi yet but only become the prospective sufi or sufi traveler (*sālik*). A sufi traveler will be a sufi after reaching the next station (*maqām*) and experiencing sufism experiences.⁶

The different views of the sufis on the stages or *maqāmāt* can be mentioned here, for example, al-Kalābādzī in his book, *al-Ta'arruf li Madzhabī Abl al-Tasawwuf* said that the stations are ten: *al-tawbah*, *al-zuhd*, *al-ṣabr*, *al-faqr*, *al-tawādlu'*, *al-taqwā*, *al-tawakkul*, *al-ridlā*, *al-maḥabbah*, and *al-ma'rifaḥ*.⁷ While al-Sarrāj al-Ṭūsī in his book, *al-Luma'* said that the numbers of *maqāmāt* are seven: *al-tawbah*, *al-wara'*, *al-zuhd*, *al-faqr*, *al-ṣabr*, *al-tawakkul*, and *al-ridlā*.⁸ While al-Ghazālī says there are eight: *al-tawbah*,

⁶ See Syamsun Ni'am, "Maqāmāt dalam Manthiq Al-Thayr Al-Attār", *Kanz Philosophia: A Journal for Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2015), pp. 64–6.

⁷ See Abī Bakr Muḥammad ibn Ishāq al-Kalābādzī, *al-Ta'arruf li Madzhab Abl al-Tasawwuf* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1993).

⁸ al-Ṭūsī, *al-Luma'*, pp. 66–80.

*al-ṣabr, al-faqr, al-ḥud, al-tawakkul, al-maḥabbah, al-ma'rifah, and al-ridlā.*⁹ Then Abu Sa'īd ibn Abi al-Khair, mentions 40 *maqāmāt*, namely: *niyyat, inābat, tanbat, irādat, mujābahadab, murāqabat, taslīm, tawakkul, ḥud, 'ibādat, wara', ikhlās, siddiq, khaūf, rajā', fanā', baqā', 'ilm al-yaqīn, haqq al-yaqīn, wilāyat, maḥabbah, wajd, qurb, tafakkur, wiṣāl, kasyf, khidmat, tajrīd, tafrīd, inbisāt, taḥqīq, nihāyat, and taṣawwuf.* As for al-Qushayri in his book, *al-Risālat al-Qushairiyyah* mentions there are 45 *maqām*.¹⁰ While Achmad Siddiq, a contemporary Indonesian Sufi divided acknowledges only three stages; *al-istiqāmah, al-ḥud, and al-faqr.*¹¹ Khaujah 'Abdullah al-Ansari in his book; *Hundred Field of Spiritual*, he mentions there are 100 stations.¹²

The differences above then have implications in positioning of human before God. For example, regarding the relationship between human as a servant of God and God as the Creator there must be certain limits. According to orthodox Sufism, that relationship should maintain this status; there must be distance between human as servant of God and God as the Creator. While philosophical sufism has different views, in which a human being has a very intimate relationship with God, even can be united with Him. This difference in view is as a result of the experience of sufism practiced by each sufis through the different processes.

When related to a broader context—especially contemporary context, a bias understanding will emerge, wherein Muslims who believe in *Sunni* orthodox sufism will be more extreme in understanding and living their religion than those who observe philosophical sufism. In another words, the observers of orthodox sufism tend to be more exclusive. In contrast, practitioners of philosophical sufism display a more inclusive attitude. That is proven from the lives of sufi personalities throughout history.

Shaykh Iḥsān in this context, is the observers of orthodox sufism, but he was respectful of philosophical sufi personalities who had different thought than his, such as Jalal al-Din Rumi, Manshur al-Ḥallāj, Muḥḥy al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, Hamzah Fansuri, and Syamsuddin al-Sumaterani.

⁹ See al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*.

¹⁰ See Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd al-Karīm Al-Qushairī, *al-Risālat al-Qushairiyyah fī 'Ilm al-Taṣawwuf* (Beirut: Dār al-Khair, 1988).

¹¹ See Ni'am, "Maqāmāt dalam Manthiq Al-Thayr Al-Attār", pp. 119–30.

¹² See Nasr, *Living Sufism*, pp. 64–7.

Therefore, Shaykh Iḥsān was more inclusive and tolerant. His thought will be elaborated in the following discussion.

C. Shaykh Iḥsān: A Sufi from Jampes Kediri Indonesia

Shaykh Iḥsān, which had a childhood nickname Bakri,¹³ was born in 1901 CE. His father was K.H. Dahlan and his mother was Nyai Artimah. K.H. Dahlan, Shaykh Iḥsān's father, was a popular figure in his era. He founded Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) at Jampes Kediri Indonesia¹⁴ in 1886 CE. K.H. Dahlan, is son of K.H. Saleh, a Kyai coming from Bogor, West Java, whose ancestors still have kinship with Sunan Gunung Jati (Syarif Hidayatullah) Cirebon. Related to his patronymic, Shaykh Iḥsān grandmother's (mother of K.H. Dahlan) name was Nyai Isti'anah.¹⁵ She played important roles in the process of character and personality building of Shaykh Iḥsān. She was a daughter of a well known figure, K.H. Mesir Trenggalek, the son of K.H. Yahuda, who was very popular for his supernatural power at Lorog Pacitan. Nyai Isti'anah is the grand daughter of Kyai Hasan Besari, a well known figure from Tegalsari Ponorogo, who still had family relationship to Sunan Ampel Surabaya. Furthermore, if his patronymic drawn further, he still related to Panembahan Senopati, the founder of Islamic Mataram Kingdom in the 16th century CE.¹⁶

However, it is not much can be explained about the patronymic

¹³ Hadi, *Jejak Spiritual Kiai Jampes*, p. 22.

¹⁴ Jampes is a name of a village in Gampengrejo, Kediri, in East Java, Indonesia. Jampes village is about 7 kilometer from the north of Kediri.

¹⁵ Muhammad Al-Fitra Haqiqi, *50 Ulama' Agung Nusantara: Potret Keteladanan & Ketokohan bagi Umat dan Bangsa* (Jombang: Darul Hikmah, 2014), p. 88.

¹⁶ Murtadho Hadi describes Shaykh Iḥsān Jampes as a great sufism figure which has a close relationship to two other great sufi: Kyai Hasan Besari (w. 1773 CE) and Ronggowarsito (w. 1873 CE). Although they live in different era, but they have close relationship. Ny. Isti'anah (Kyai Hasan's grandmother) is the grand grandson of Kyai Hasan Besari, meanwhile Ronggowarsito is the student of Kyai Hasan Besari. Besides, they also have emotional and family relationship. Shaykh Iḥsān and Ronggowarsito have same childhood characteristics. They are naughty when he was young, like to stay all night, watching a puppet show, art, and other entertainment. However, they have same intelligence and excellent memory. These things then make a connection among Kyai Hasan Besari, Ronggowarsito, and Shaykh Iḥsān Jampes. Detail can be read in Hadi, *Jejak Spiritual Kiai Jampes*, pp. 19–30.

of Shaykh Iḥsān from his maternal lines, Nyai Artimah. She was the daughter of K.H. Sholeh Banjarmelati Kediri. K.H. Sholeh was a close friend of K.H. Dahlan when they were studying at an Islamic boarding school Sepanjang, Sidoarjo. Unfortunately, the marriage life of K.H. Dahlan and Nyai Artimah did not last long because they divorced after having four children: a daughter who died when she was child, Bakri (Shaykh Iḥsān), Dasuki Jasem Mojo Kediri (died in 1964), dan Marzuki who later became a caregiver of the Islamic boarding school Lirboyo Kediri (died in 1975).

For education, the young Bakri studied in lots of Islamic boarding schools: he learnt *ilm al-‘arudl* (Arabic prosody) at Gondanglegi Islamic boarding school, studied at Bendo Pare Kediri Islamic boarding school under tutelage of K.H. Khozin who was his uncle, learnt *ilm al-falak* (Islamic astronomy) from Jamsaren Solo Islamic boarding school. Other Islamic boarding schools that he had studied, including a Islamic boarding school lead by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan Semarang, Mangkang Semarang Islamic boarding school, Punduh Magelang Islamic boarding school, and a Islamic boarding school at Bangkalan Madura under instruction of which lead by K.H. Kholil, who was recognized as the teacher of prominent traditional Islamic clerics (*‘ulama*) of Java and Madura at that time in which Shaykh Iḥsān learnt *Alfiyah* (a treatise on advanced Arabic Grammar), written by ibn Mālik.¹⁷ M. Zuhul Qabili even mentioned Bakri (Shaykh Iḥsān) as a generation of students who had an intellectual chain (*sanad*) from Shaykh Maḥfūz al-Termasī,¹⁸ who was a student of Kyai Sholeh Darat (Ṣāliḥ ibn Umar al-Samarānī).¹⁹ Shaykh Maḥfūz al-Termasī was mentioned by Ali Mas’ud as the most senior student of Kyai Sholeh Darat, who became his student around the 1870s CE.²⁰

What made unique of his intellectual journey was that he had

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁸ M. Zuhul Qabili, *Review terhadap Pemikiran Fiqh Shaykh Maḥfūz Termas dalam Kitab Ḥashīyah al-Tarmāsī*, Coursework Paper (Yogyakarta: Universitas Islam Indonesia, 2018).

¹⁹ Kambali Zutas, “Literacy Tradition in Islamic Education in Colonial Period (Sheikh Nawawi al Bantani, Kiai Sholeh Darat, and KH Hasyim Asy’ari)”, *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2017), p. 27.

²⁰ Ali Mas’ud Kholqillah, *Pemikiran Tasawuf K.H. Saleh Darat al-Samarani: Maha Guru Para Ulama Nusantara* (Surabaya: Pustaka Idea, 2018), p. 101.

never spent much time to study at those Islamic boarding schools. He learnt *Alfiyah*, for example, just for two months. He learnt astronomy from K.H. Ahmad Dahlan Semarang for 20 days and he just stayed at Jamsaren Islamic boarding school for a month. Although it seemed too short, he could excellently gain and master knowledge from those teachers. Another unique thing is that in every place he stayed to study, he always acted as ordinary people. He did not want to be recognized as a 'Gus' A tribute calling for sons of *kyai* in Java²¹ He did not want people treated him as the son of a well known figure, K.H. Dahlan Jampes Kediri. Indeed, when many people knew his real identity as the son of well known figure and other students started to recognize him as a 'Gus' from Jampes, he would leave that Islamic boarding school immediately and moved to other Islamic boarding school.

Shaykh Iḥsān, whose childhood nickname was Bakri, in his search of knowledge was different compared to other students. In the way of learning, he combined two techniques for learning: *kasbī* and *sima'ī*.²² These models of learning were different from the common models practically used in the formal education. By using this learning model, he actively involved his reasoning ability, intelligence, and feeling in learning so that in a short time he could learn while understand the characters of his teachers such as *zuhd*, *warā'*, and *tabaḥḥur fillāh* (the purpose of doing everything is only God).

Since he was fifteen until thirty years old, Shaykh Iḥsān had been taught to sharpen his reasoning ability, intelligence, feeling, and *'irfān* (spiritual instinct) through intelligent and reasoning training. He wrote the book *Tasrīḥal-Ibārāt* when he was twenty-nine. This book was written

²¹ 'Gus' is the shorthand form of 'Agus'. An honour nickname is given to sons or descents of Islamic scholar family who has an Islamic boarding house (*pesantren*) in Java, Indonesia. In Madura it is called as 'Lora/Mas'. For the daughter or girls, it is called 'Neng'. See Martin van Bruinessen, *NU: Tradisi, Relasi-relasi Kuasa dan Pencarian Wacana Baru* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 1999), p. 157.

²² *Kasbī* is a kind of active learning which involves both teacher and students. Through this way, a continual communication between teacher and students is developed. Discussion is a kind of technique used in this model of learning. Through this technique, teacher can give feedback on student's mistakes. Meanwhile, *sima'ī* is listening to the teacher to grab his explanation. This technique requires students to love their teacher, communicate with him, sit near him, and ask for his explanation.

not only by using his sharp brain alone but also through praying and doing spiritual endeavor (*tirakat*). Then, two years later, when he was thirty-one, he wrote his monumental work: *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn*,²³ which was a commentary of al-Ghazālī's *Minhāj al-ʿĀbidīn* after his wife passed away.²⁴

On Monday, 25 Dzulhijjah 1371 H (September, 1952 CE), when he was fifty-one, he passed away. He left thousands of students, a wife, and eight children. He left many intellectual heritages; especially literature which was invaluable, either it was written on papers (*ṣutūr*) or kept in his student's memory (*ṣudūr*). Some of his students inherited and continued his effort to spread Islam in Islamic boarding school, such as: Kyai Soim, the leader of an Islamic boarding school in Tangir Tuban; K.H. Zubaidi in Mantenani Blitar; K.H. Mustholih in Kesugihan Cilacap; K.H. Busyairi in Sampang Madura; Kyai Hambali in Plumbon Cirebon; and Kyai Khazin in Tegal.

Many Middle East and Indonesia scholars recognized and admired the quality of Shaykh Iḥsān Jampes' works. It is due to the fact that his *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn* has been published by a reputable publisher in Egypt, Muṣṭafā al-Bāb al-Ḥalābī. However, among Shaykh Iḥsān's works, it is only *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn* which has been printed, whereas his other works are still in form of manuscripts and has not been printed nor translated yet into Indonesian or other languages. Although those works had been published, it is very difficult to obtain the new version.

Here are several works of Shaykh Iḥsān:

Tasrīḥ al-ʿIbārāt (Review of the book *Natījat al-Miqāt*, written by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan Semarang), had been published in 1929 consisting of 48 pages. This book is about the study of astronomy.²⁵

Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn (a commentary of al-Ghazālī's *Minhāj al-ʿĀbidīn*). It has been published by an Egyptian publisher, Muṣṭafā al-Bāb al-Ḥalābī, in 1932. It consisted of two volumes with about 800 pages. This book specifically reviewed the sufism aspect. New edition has been published by al-Hidayah publisher from Surabaya, which consisted of two volumes with 1098 pages.

²³ Hadi, *Jejak Spiritual Kiai Jampes*, pp. 31–2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

²⁵ Wasid, *Tasawuf Nusantara Kiai Ihsan Jampes: Menggapai Jalan Ma'rifat, Menjaga Harmoni Umat* (Surabaya: Pustaka Idea, 2016), p. 46.

Manābij al-Imdād, is a commentary of *Irshād al-'Ibād*, written by Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn al-Malībārī. This book also discussed about sufism. This book writing was finished on Thursday, *Jumad al-Tsānī*, 1360 H. This book has just already published by Shaykh Iḥsān's family in 2005. It contained 1088 pages.²⁶

Manẓūmat Irshād al-Ikbān li Bayān Shurb al-Qahwah wa al-Dukhān (a commentary of the book *Taẓkīrat al-Ikbwān fī Bayāni al-Qahwah wa al-Dukhān*, written by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan Semarang). This book discussed the issue of the legality of smoking and drinking coffee.²⁷ It has been published by al-Iḥsān Jampes Kediri Islamic boarding school. This book consists of 48 pages.

In addition, there is a finding by Wasid that Shaykh Iḥsān has one additional work, which is *Nūr al-Iḥsān fī Tafṣīr al-Qur'ān*. This claim was found in the book *al-'Aqd al-Farīd min Jawābir al-Asānid*, written by Shaykh Muhammad 'Isā al-Fadānī al-Makkī. However, this claim remains as a controversial issue whether or not this book is one of Shaykh Iḥsān works.²⁸ Therefore, it is no exaggeration if the scholars and researchers of Nusantara ulama such as Azyumardi Azra, Martin van Bruinessen, Drewes, and others – as quoted by Muhammad Abdullah— put Shaykh Iḥsān at the same level as the ulama who had a major influence in Nusantara through his works, such as Shaykh 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī, Shaykh 'Abd al-Rauf al-Singkilī, Shaykh Yūsuf al-Makassarī, Shaykh Hamzah al-Fansūrī, Shaykh Shams al-Dīn al-Samatranī, Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānirī, Shaykh Muḥammad Arshad al-Banjari, Shaykh Nawāwī al-Bantānī, Shaykh Iḥsān Jampes Kediri, Kyai Saleh Darat (Ṣaliḥ ibn Umar al-Samarānī, w. 1321 H/1903 CE), K.H. Bisri Mustofa, K.H. Muslikh from Mranggen (Muslikh ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Maraqī, w. 1981 CE),

²⁶ Hadi, *Jejak Spiritual Kiai Jampes*, p. 55.

²⁷ The book *Irshād al-Ikbwān* has been translated into Indonesian language entitled *Kitab Kopi dan Rokok* consisted of xxv+110 pages, and was acknowledged by Badrun (the owner of a coffee stall 'Blandongan'); See Shaykh Iḥsān Jampes, *Kitab Kopi dan Rokok: Untuk para Pecandu Rokok dan Penikmat Kopi Berat*, trans. by Ali Murtadho and Mahbub Dje (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pesantren, 2009); Haqiqi, *50 Ulama' Agung Nusantara*, pp. 91–2.

²⁸ Wasid, *Tasawuf Nusantara Kiai Ihsan Jampes*, pp. 58–9.

and Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Qandālī from Kendal, Central Java.²⁹

As other prominent ulama in Indonesia who are known from their place of residence, Shaykh Iḥsān was recognized as Kyai or Shaykh Iḥsān Jampes. He is a well-known sufi who is hospitable to all people from all walks of life. There are three conditions as the characteristics of good sufi director (*mursbid*), who are able to show the right path to his students. Those are: (1) having wide insight as scholar, (2) having divine wisdom as *al-‘arīf billāh* (those who close to Allah), and (3) knowing the political strategy of the stakeholders.

In this context, Shaykh Iḥsān always accepted guests who come to his house without considering who they are, where they come from, and when they come. It was told that at the wedding of one his children in pre independence period, the guests came not only those who were the national movement organizations but also a Dutch officer. Nevertheless, Shaykh Iḥsān knew that the arrival of the Dutch officer was because there were certain political agenda amidst the wedding party. Here the populist-sufism view held by Shaykh Iḥsān could clearly be seen when the community and his students’ interest were not degraded, he accepted all the guests gracefully. This view is very specific and always become features of sufis.³⁰ According to sufism view, the artificial outlook will not affect the view of the world. This view is in accordance with the view that everyone in front of God is equal. Things distinguish from one to another based on their hearts and obedience to God. That Shaykh Iḥsān’s view influences other sufi afterward, for example Kyai Abdul Hamid Pasuruan, known as a sufi who always welcomed every guest that visited, even if they are not Muslims. Furthermore, Even if they asked for his prayer, Kyai Abdul Hamid Pasuruan never refused.³¹

D. The Overview of *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn*

If we see the four works of Shaykh Iḥsān, such *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn*, a commentary of *Minhāj al-‘Ābidīn* by al-Ghazālī; *Tasrīḥ al-Tbārāt*,

²⁹ Muhammad Abdullah, “Makna Seksualitas dalam Naskah Sastra Pesantren”, *NUSA*, vol. 12, no. 3 (2017), pp. 63–4.

³⁰ Hadi, *Jejak Spiritual Kiai Jampes*, pp. 35–7.

³¹ Detail can be seen at Hamid Ahmad, *Uswatun Hasanah: Biografi Keteladanan Kiai Hamid* (Pasuruan: Yayasan Ma’had Salafiyah, 2001).

a commentary of *Natijat al-Miqat* written by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan Semarang; *Manahij al-Imdad*, a commentary of *Irshad al-Ibad* written by Shaykh Zain al-Din al-Malibari; and *Irshad al-Ikhwān*, a commentary of *Tadzkiirat al-Ikhwān* written by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan Semarang, we could conclude that Shaykh Ihsan specializes in book commentary. Shaykh Ihsan completed his *Siraj al-Talibin*, a commentary of *Minhaj al-'Abidin* by al-Ghazali for less than eight months. This work was finished on Tuesday, 29th Sya'ban 1351 H. or 27th Desember 1932 CE at his house, Jampes Kediri, East Java, Indonesia.³²

Considering *Minhaj al-'Abidin* consists of only 97 pages,³³ Shaykh Ihsan's commentary which is *Siraj al-Talibin*, is considerably voluminous. It consists of two volumes with total of 1098 pages. The first volume is 544 pages including 2 cover pages, 532 content pages, and 10 references pages. The second volume is also 544 pages, including 2 cover pages, 534 content pages, and 8 references pages. The book *Siraj al-Talibin* has been published by Al-Hidayah Publisher Surabaya. The first publication of this book had been done by an Egypt-based publisher, namely Muṣṭafā al-Bāb al-Ḥalābī in 1932, which consisted of 800 pages in one volume.

Although *Siraj al-Talibin* is *sharah* (commentary) of *Minhaj al-'Abidin* by al-Ghazali, it is clear that the Shaykh Ihsan's expertise and competence are visible from his direct academic explanation given to the work. Therefore, it is not a few Middle East scholars conveying an appreciation for his works by giving a predicate as al-Ghazali al-ṣaghīr (the young al-Ghazali).³⁴ Even scholars of Islamic studies in Europe also appreciate Shaykh Ihsan and his work *Siraj al-Talibin*.³⁵

The charm of Shaykh Ihsan in explaining the doctrines of sufi by al-Ghazali in *Siraj al-Talibin* is very entrancing, so that King Faruk (the last King of Egypt in 1936-1952) also had to send a messenger to come to Jampes Islamic boarding house with the intention of asking Shaykh Ihsan to be a professor or at least a guest lecturer at the University of

³² Read Shaykh Ihsan Jampes, *Siraj al-Talibin*, vol. 1 (Surabaya: Tabā'ala Nafaqah Maktabah wa Maṭba'at al-Hidayah), p. 542.

³³ See Imām al-Ghazali, *Sharah Minhaj al-'Abidin* (Semarang: Maktabah wa Maṭba'ah Karya Taha Putra).

³⁴ Haqiqi, *50 Ulama' Agung Nusantara*, p. 90.

³⁵ Hadi, *Jejak Spiritual Kiai Jampes*, p. 53.

al-Azhar, Cairo, Egypt. However, this offer was rejected because he was more inclined to teach the students in his Islamic boarding school.³⁶ Later, of *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn* is used as the compulsory reference of examining sufis material in various Muslim countries as well as western countries when studying al-Ghazālī's thought.³⁷

In fact, according to K.H. Said Agil Siraj, the chairman of Nahdlatul Ulama (PBNU), when he visited Mali, West Africa, he witnessed the recitation of sufi gathering at a Friday night in a mosque using *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn*. In fact, some Mali people assumed that the name 'al-Kadīrī' attached at the end of Shaykh Iḥsān's name written in the cover of *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn* is associated with an area in Baghdad, Iraq. In fact, 'al-Kadīrī' (Kediri) is the name of regency in East Java, Indonesia, which is the birthplace of Shaykh Iḥsān.³⁸

The appreciation toward *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn* does not only come from the Islamic scholars of the Middle East, but also from the Islamic scholars in Indonesia. It is proven by their remarks to the work of *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn* at the end of the book. It is precisely stated at the end of juz 2. Such appreciations came from Ḥaḍratuṣ Shaykh Hāsyim Asy'ārī, Jombang; K.H. 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Abd al-Karīm, Nganjuk; K.H. Muhammad Yūnus 'Abdullāh, Kediri; K.H. Muhammad Khazīn ibn Šāliḥ, Benda Pare Kediri; K.H. Muhammad Ma'rūf ibn 'Abd al-Majīd, Kedunglo Kediri; and K.H. 'Abd al-Karīm Lirboyo Kediri.³⁹ K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid, as quoted by Zaini Dahlan, also commented on Shaykh Iḥsān and his work *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn*, saying that Shaykh Iḥsān was a *pesantren* scholar who became an extraordinary intellectual role model because he is a prolific writer. This also shows Shaykh Iḥsān's expertise in articulating sufism through his works and then practicing it thoroughly.⁴⁰

Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn is written with a direct language and deep discussion.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 52–3.

³⁷ Wasid, *Tasawuf Nusantara Kiai Ihsan Jampes*, p. 51.

³⁸ *Ibid.* Anotasion 38.

³⁹ Jampes, *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn*, 1: 543–4.

⁴⁰ Zaini Dahlan, "Khazanah Kitab Kuning: Membangun Sebuah Apresiasi Kritis", *ANSIRU PAI: Pengembangan Profesi Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam*, vol. 2, no. 1 (2018), p. 14; Abdurrahman Wahid, "Asal-Usul Tradisi Keilmuan di Pesantren" *Pesantren*, no. 1 (1984), pp. 4–11.

Shaykh Iḥsān starts it with *muqaddimah* (preface), then he continues it with an explanation of the basis of sufism, Shaykh Iḥsān proceeds to provide—still on *muqaddimah*—a long interpretation about the word *basmalah* in *bismillāhirraḥmānirraḥīm*,⁴¹ the meaning and characteristics of a fiqh expert who is pious⁴² and *zābid*.⁴³ Of course, Shaykh Iḥsān always refers to the great scholar of *Minhāj al-‘Ābidīn*, Imam al-Ghazālī in giving the explanations. Shaykh Iḥsān also frequently cites the opinions of famous Islamic scholars, especially in the field of sufism, to strengthen and enrich the information.

In the subsequent discussion, Shaykh Iḥsān strongly emphasizes the importance of the culture of reading and writing. Because by reading and writing, someone will be grateful for the blessings given by God. Shaykh Iḥsān said, “people who write are basically people who have put their minds on the others’ level and dignity”.⁴⁴

The content of discussion in *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn* essentially boils down to a seven-stage in taking a spiritual purpose that will deliver human to God (*al-wuṣūl ilā Allāh*). Shaykh Iḥsān called this stage as *‘aqabah*. It, of course, refers to *Minhāj al-‘Ābidīn*, which also has mentioned *‘aqabah* which means a steep road on a cliff. Meanwhile other sufis often use

⁴¹ Shaykh Iḥsān elaborates this by giving a literal meaning about the *lafadz bismi* in a sentence *basmalah*. The letter *bā’* stands for *bahūllāh* (The Great Allah), letter *sīn* stands for *sanāullāh* (The Dignity of Allah), and letter *mīm* stands for *maḥabbatullāh* (the love Allah). According to Shaykh Iḥsān, some give opinions that the letter *bā’* stands for *buka al-tā’ibīn* (the crying of repentant people), the letter *sīn* refers to *sabw al-ghāfilīn* (the careless of the forgetful), and the letter *mīm* is *maghfiratubū li al-mudḥḥibīn* (the mercy of Allah). Shaykh Iḥsān continues that based in sufi, the sentence *Allah* on *bismillāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* is aimed to sufi, the sentence *al-Raḥmān* is aimed to *abli wafā* (people who obey Allah’s order), and the sentence *al-Raḥīm* is aimed to *abli jafā* (the special people loved by Allah SWT). See Jampes, *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn*, 1: p. 5.

⁴² Shaykh Iḥsān, in this case, explains that the experts of *fiqh* are they who comprehend and understand the knowledge of *sharī‘ah* absolutely. Meanwhile *ṣāliḥ* is a person who is always *istiqāmah* in behaving to Allah SWT and obey all His order or conduct his order based on Allah’s rights and the human rights. In other words, he will spend much time in life for Allah and use his wealthy in the path shown by Allah SWT. *Ibid.*, 1: pp. 5–6.

⁴³ *Zābid*, in the prespective of Shaykh Iḥsān, is *zuhud* conducted by people who achieve *ma’rifat* degree to Allah (*zuhd al-‘arīfīn*). *Ibid.*, 1: p. 6.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1: p. 10.

the term *maqām/maqāmāt* to describe it. Those ‘*aqabah*’s can be stated as follows: 1) ‘*Aqabat al-’ilmi* (the stage of knowledge), 2) ‘*aqabat al-tawbah* (the stage of repentance), 3) ‘*aqabat al-’awāiq* (the stage of removing barriers). These first three stages (*aqabat*) are described within the *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn* volume I. The next stages are: 4) ‘*Aqabat al-’awāridl* (the stage of concerning hurdles), 5) ‘*aqabat al-bawāits* (the stage of getting a rid of *aghyār*, something except Allah), 6) ‘*aqabat al-Qawādih* (the stage to attain the purity of soul), and 7) ‘*aqabat al-ḥamdi wa al-shukri* (the stage of praise and gratitude). The fourth last stages are described in *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn* volume II.

That is the summary of *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn* written by Shaykh Iḥsān, which became his great narrative. It will specifically and comprehensively describe at the following sub-discussion. ‘*Aqabah*’ discourse constructed by Shaykh Iḥsān seems to follow al-Ghazālī (Ghazalian), which locates human being in a position of His creation and slave who is always in need God Almighty and obeys Him. Still, Shaykh Iḥsān also acknowledges that human being in certain condition is able to reach perfect status with God in form of spiritual unification of being. This status can be shown, for instance, in the seventh stage of *al-ḥamd* dan *al-shukr*. In this stage, actually Shayk Ihsan has reached beyond the stages of his predecessors.

E. ‘*Aqabah*’ in *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn* of Shaykh Iḥsān Vis a vis *Maqāmāt* of Philosophical Sufis

As described above, there are some differences among the sufis in articulating and describing the stages or *maqām*, in regards of technical aspects as well as the terms used. It is due to spiritual experiences of each sufi in approaching God.⁴⁵ Therefore, each sufi does not have the same view in determining the number of stages. Similarly, there are sharp differences among sufis in determining the final of the crowning achievement of the mystical experience. Thus, the practice of sufism has brought consequences to the existence of a *sālik* to relate to his or her Lord, if he or she is at the peak stage of *al-ridhā*, *al-faqr*, *maḥabbah*, *ma’rifah*; or whether he is at the peak of mystical experience; *ittihād*, *ḥulūl*, *wiḥdat al-wujūd* or *manunggaling kawulo Gusti*.

⁴⁵ Syamsun Ni`am, *Tasawuf Studies: Pengantar Belajar Tasawuf* (Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2014), p. 141.

Shaykh Iḥsān has a different view in elaborating stages taken by a *sālik* towards God, either concerning the technical terms used, essence of stages taken by a *sālik* to God, or about the final attainable goal of the stages conceived by Shaykh Iḥsān. Shaykh Iḥsān called the stages with the term *'aqabah*. *'Aqabah* originally means 'the steep road on the hill'.⁴⁶ The Qur'an mentions the word *'aqabah* with "hike and difficult road" in Qur'an, 90: 12 (And what will explain to the the path that is steep?). The verse is actually continuation of the previous paragraph, which is a choice in selecting the two streets (*najdain*) on *wa hadaynahu al-najdayn*, ie the 'virtues' (hike) and the 'crimes' (down).

Shaykh Iḥsān chooses *'aqabah* in his *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn* by following Imam al-Ghazālī's term in *Minhāj al-'Ābidīn*. The word *'aqabah* is used by the two sufis because it describes a sheer road, hard to pass through because it is in the hill. It shows the articulation and symbolization of how hard a *sālik* to walk on and finally arrive at destination. In the way to reach the top of the hill he or she finds various obstacles, threats, obstructions, and hard tests. It is the reason, as mentioned before, that a *sālik* who finally becomes a sufi, needs much time to reach this. Therefore, every sufi experiences different journey. It is possible that a sufi needs years to arrive at a next stage. Thus, the use of term *'aqabah* at the expense of term *maqām* by Shaykh Iḥsān is relevant.

Shaykh Iḥsān in his *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn* has articulated *'aqabah* as 'sincerity' in an effort to approach God by practicing *sulūk* (travel to God), such as *dhikr*, *qiyām al-layl*, *tirakat*, and hunger. Interestingly, – as told by Murtadho Hadi— every Islamic scholar from the east part of Java (Madura) to the west (Banten), gives the same meaning for the word the terms of *'aqabah*, that is *jungkung ngibadah*, or total dedication to worship God. Therefore, in this context, a sufi is a person whose only purpose is God. That is how the term *maqām* is used, as it represents a *salik*'s true devotion to God.⁴⁷

Related to this, Imām al-Ghazālī once said that in fact, the human beings just temporarily live in this world. They live as a traveler who are thirsty in their journey, then stop for a while till the thirst has gone. They

⁴⁶ Adib Bisri and Munnawir A. Fatah, *Kamus al-Bisri: Indonesia-Arab, Arab-Indonesia* (Surabaya: Pustaka Progressif, 1999), p. 509.

⁴⁷ Hadi, *Jejak Spiritual Kiai Jampes*, pp. 40–1.

will not stay for long there. This world is illustrated as a stage or market in which traveler stop by during their journey to their destination. In this transit camp, they prepare themselves with stocks for continuing the journey.⁴⁸ It is how al-Ghazālī gives the imagery about the practice of life in this world.

The next journey mentioned by al-Ghazālī as “the other place” is the journey to the *baqāʾ*, a realm which has no ending as the last place for the human beings. In that realm, human will be investigated about all their deeds in the world by the Creator, Allah SWT. In this case, everyone who behaves well in the world will get rewards, and those who do evil will be punished. Allah SWT ensures it with in the Qur’an, 98: 7 and 8: *fa man yaʿmal mitsqāla ẓarratin kbairan yarabū (7) wa man yaʿmal mitsqāla ẓarratin sbarran yarabū (8)*. In this world, the human beings are demanded to do good deeds in their life to achieve happiness in the hereafter.

This goal to achieve happiness is also believed by the *sāliks* who wish to take their mystical journeys. It clearly refers to the eternal spiritual happiness. It is also acknowledged that the journey to get there is not easy. It is stated that a *sālik* will face tests, obstacles and temptations. He or she is expected to be patient, keen, *istiqāmah* (consistent) and never giving up hope. There are many steps that a *sālik* has to roam to achieve his or her true goal and intention.⁴⁹

Meanwhile, *maqāmāt* which is mentioned by Shaykh Iḥsān with seven sheer roads on the hill (*ʿaqabah*) are described as follows:

The first is *aqabat al-ʿilm*. Knowledge is the first and the main factor to worship God. Someone who is praying without knowledge is considered doing nothing. Shaykh Iḥsān says that knowledge and praying are never apart. According to Shaykh Iḥsān, knowledge is like a

⁴⁸ Imām al-Ghazālī, *Kimia Kebahagiaan*, trans. by Haidar Baqir (Bandung: Mizan, 1995), p. 39.

⁴⁹ The goal of sufi journeys conducted by a *sālik* is to re-attract people to their *asfala sāfilin* condition so that they go back their pass which is in a perfect condition *aḥsanu taqwim*, where they meet everything witnessed coming up from themselves, they become one with God, so that they are regardless devoid. Nasr, *Living Sufism*, p. 21. In other words, sufism is not about to find the thruth, but to be a servant of Allah SWT (*ʿabdullāh*). There is no other level higher than *ʿabdīyyāt* to Allah SWT. See Muhammad Abdul Haq Ansari, *Sufism and Shariʿah: A Study of Shaykh Ahmad Sirbindi’s Effort to Reform Sufism* (London: The Islamic Foundation, 1986), p. 173.

pearl and much more meaningful than worship. Nevertheless, worship is something crucial and must be done in the basis of knowledge.⁵⁰ Al-Ghazālī symbolizes the relationship between knowledge and worship as a tree and its fruits. Knowledge is like a tree and worship is the fruits. In other words, worship without any basis of knowledge will disappear as dust blown by wind.⁵¹ Thus, both knowledge and worship are means to approach God. Shaykh Iḥsān gives an illustration by citing a hadith of Prophet Mohammad related by al-Turmudzi and Ibn Mājah from Ibn 'Abbās; "that is for *shayṭān* (devil), one fiqh expert is much harder to deal with than a thousand worshippers without knowledge".⁵² Therefore, the knowledge in the Shaykh Iḥsān perspective became the main foundation in seeing God with all His creation both in the world and the hereafter.⁵³

The second, *'aqabat al-tawbah*. Most of the sufis put this stage as the first stair before going up to the next stage. Shaykh Iḥsān lies the stage of repentance as the second stage, since he thinks that the first thing should be possessed by a *sālik* is knowledge with its various derivations (physical knowledge as well as spiritual knowledge). Knowledge is believed to guide, support and show a person to meet and arrive at his or her destination.

At first, a sufi candidate must repent from all major sins he made. If he has succeeded this, he or she should also stop doing minor sins. Finally, he or she must abandon *makrūh* and *shubhat*. The repentance meant in this case is *tawbat al-nasūhā*, which a type of repentance in which the person feel guilty for what he did in the past and will not do that anymore. Of course, it takes a lot of time. For the case, Syaikh Iḥsān requires this repentance into four conditions, that are: 1) leaving sins wholeheartedly and having strong intention not to repeat it; 2) stopping doing the same

⁵⁰ Jampes, *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn*, 1: pp. 72–3.

⁵¹ al-Ghazālī, *Sharah Minhāj al-'Ābidīn*, p. 6.

⁵² Jampes, *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn*, 1: pp. 73–4.

⁵³ In this connection, a study was found specifically discussing Shaykh Iḥsān in interpreting the ḥadīth of the Prophet about seeing Allah SWT (*ru'yatullāh*) in *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn*; the research of Rofiatul Adamiyah, "Interpretasi Sufistik Hadis tentang Ru'yatullāh fi al-Ākhirah dalam Pandangan Ulama Nusantara: Studi Kitab Sir.aj al-Ṭālibīn Karya Kyai Iḥsān Jampes", BA Thesis (Surabaya: UIN Sunan Ampel, 2018). The results of the study said, according to Shaykh Iḥsān, seeing God is certainly a bias for believers in the world and the hereafter. Seeing Allah (*ru'yatullāh*) is certainly specific to certain people who have indeed been chosen by Allah SWT himself.

sins which have been committed before; 3) the sins have been done before must be equal with the sins left now; and 4) the motivation to repentance is done only for God, not other intentions.⁵⁴

The repentance done by laymen (*tawbat al-'awām*) is about to run from *ma'siyah* (evil doing). Meanwhile the sufi's repentance (*tawbat al-šūfī*) is about to run away from looking at themselves (*ru'yat al-nafsī*),⁵⁵ it is done to enable true worship to God.⁵⁶ Therefore, al-Ghazālī gives an explanation that the aim of repentance is based on two things. The first is to obey God. Committing sins will distract people to obey God, compromise the unity of God (*tawḥīd*), distance themselves from God, and prevent people from behaving properly. The second is for our worship to be accepted by God, repentance is the key. Thus, worship is only complementary.⁵⁷

The third is, *'aqabat al-awā'iq*, that is a steep road full of temptation. Once a *sālik* succeeds in overcoming the obstacles, he or she will worship in an *istiqāmah* (perpetual) manner. *Istiqāmah* in this regard, by Shaykh Iḥsān is elaborated into *istiqāmah aqwāl* (utterance) by leaving verbal abuse (*tark al-ghībah*); *istiqāmah af'āl* (deeds) by renouncing innovation (*nafy al-bidh'ab*); *istiqāmah a'māl* (performance) by abandoning existing weaknesses (*nafy al-fatrah*); and *istiqāmah aḥwāl* (behavior) by setting off the veiling that blocks the divine face (*nafy al-ḥujbah*).⁵⁸ These are very difficult to conduct by a *sālik*, so that it requires seriousness and persistence in fighting obstacles.

In this regard, Imam al-Ghazālī in *Minḥāj al-'Ābidīn*, classifies temptation (*'awā'iq*) that hinder from reaching God into four categories. The first is the earthly concerns and its contents. It can be a barrier and posing against a *sālik* to be close to God; second, creature. Most of the creatures has turned a person away from worshipping and serving God; Third, *Shayṭān*. *Shayṭān* (devil) is the main enemy who always prevent a *sālik* to reach God. He always looks for opportunities to tease a *sālik* and

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 148–51. Compare to al-Ghazālī, *Sharḥ Minḥāj al-'Ābidīn*, p. 10.

⁵⁵ Related to this, other utterance says: *tawbat al-'awām min al-dzunūb wa tawbat al-šūfī min al-ghaflah* (repent done by common people is a sin and repent done sufi is the omission of Allah SWT).

⁵⁶ Hadi, *Jejak Spiritual Kiai Jampes*, p. 42.

⁵⁷ al-Ghazālī, *Sharḥ Minḥāj al-'Ābidīn*, pp. 9–10.

⁵⁸ Jampes, *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn*, 1: p. 187.

then plunges him or her into the valley of sin, all of which turning away a *sālik* from God; and fourth, lower self (*nafs*). *Nafs* is the internal enemy that is difficult to deal with. Therefore, if a *sālik* can not control his own *nafs*, then he or she could be easily tempted and fall to disobedience.⁵⁹

The fourth is '*aqabah al-'awāridh*'. This stage must be completed by abandoning all permissible things which turn away a *sālik* from the journey to God. There are four hurdles that must be resolved in order to fully worship to God. 1) The problems related to *riḥḥ* (portion, livelihood) and the drive of lust. Both can be resolved with trust in God (*tawakkul*). *Tawakkul* is a trust of God's glorious mercy towards all of creature. Such a trust must be an absolute trust to God that a *sālik* does not expect or rely on creature for livelihood;⁶⁰ 2) problems related to the dangers which are connected to the main dangers. The solution is to full surrender (*tafwiḍh*) to God; 3) problems related to destiny. To overcome this problem is by being *ikhlās* (unadulterated purity and sincerity of religious actions) for whatever happens. This is important to do, because by doing *ikhlās*, then people will focus on worship God any given time; and 4) the problems in the form of hardships and disasters. One way to resolve this problem is by being steadfast and patient (*ṣabr*). By this way, the problem will be solved easily as well as encourage a *sālik* to worship to God quickly. In addition, being patient will deliver felicity for us in this world and the hereafter.⁶¹

Thus, the effective key to overcome all obstacles (*'awāridh*) to be able to worship God well –according to Shaykh Iḥsān — is by showing our trust to Him, staying away from all worries and conducting a total surrender (*tafwiḍh*) to Allah SWT, acting patiently in the face of hardships and disasters, and being satisfied with all Go's decision and destiny.⁶²

The fifth, '*aqabah al-bawāits*', is a steep road which should be overcome so that all hurdles will be distanced. Since the ultimate goal of a *sālik* is God and only God, his or her hurdles is *aghyār* (everything other than God). If these hurdles are well taken care of, It will stimulates the

⁵⁹ al-Ghazālī, *Sharah Minhāj al-'Ābidīn*, pp. 15–24.

⁶⁰ Shaykh Iḥsān Jampes, *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn*, vol. 2 (Surabaya: Taba' 'ala Nafaqah Maktabah wa Maṭba'at al-Hidayah), p. 66.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 2: p. 152.

⁶² Hadi, *Jejak Spiritual Kiai Jampes*, p. 44.

deep longing to God since there is nothing else but God in his or her mind. Through *kehanf* (apprehensive of God's punishment) and *raja'* (hope for God's mercy), a *sālik* should get away from the domain of trial and deception (*'an dār al-ghurūr*) heading to the domain of eternity (*ilā dār al-kebulūd*) as soon as possible.⁶³

Al-Ghazālī said that a *sālik* must be equipped with *kehanf* attitude for two reasons. Firstly, it is in order to prevent bad acts. *Nafs* always invites people to evil and always teases. With the existence of fear and threats, a *sālik* will not be easily lured. Basically, *nafs* does not have a good character, but on the contrary. This lust character is illustrated by a poem: A stubborn person can be beaten with a stick, but a good person, just needs words. Secondly, it is in order to avoid vanity (*keibr*) when performing worships, because vanity upon the worship of God will result in damnation.⁶⁴

Furthermore, hope (*raja'*) is crucially needed in order to obediently worship God. Hope should be done for two reasons. First is to encourage the obedience to God. It seems that doing something good is very hard because *shaytān* always tries to prevent it. As it happens to *nafs* which always directs to evil. Meanwhile, the rewards of obedience cannot be captured by the eyes. Second is to avoid the exhausting, distressing, and fatigue during the worship. By knowing the merit from that obedience, the process of fighting will feel lighter.⁶⁵

Thus, the fruit of *'aqabat al-bawāits* is enthusiasm for worship to God as well as the growth of a deep longing (*shauq*) to God. Shaykh Iḥsān said that worship is the fruit of knowledge (*tsamrat al-'ilmi*). In addition, the purpose of life is for worshipping God (*faidat al-'umri*). People, who do not prepare themselves quickly on this road (by worshipping God), are considered as fool and fooled.⁶⁶

The sixth, *'aqabat al-qawādih* is a total effort conducted by a *sālik* in attaining purity of soul and *maqām* 'purity'. What should be done in this stage is sincerely worshipping God always remembering gifts of God. At

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁶⁴ Jampes, *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn*, 2: pp. 227–8; al-Ghazālī, *Sharah Minhāj al-'Ābidīn*, pp. 62–3.

⁶⁵ al-Ghazālī, *Sharah Minhāj al-'Ābidīn*, p. 63; Jampes, *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn*, 2: p. 231.

⁶⁶ Hadi, *Jejak Spiritual Kiai Jampes*, p. 45.

the same time, a *sālik* should avoid himself *riyā'* (showing off). The act of *riyā'* could destroy the value of worship. *Riyā'* is the opposite of *ikhblās*. *Riyā'* is divided into two, namely special *riyā'* (*riyā' maḥḍh*), preoccupation about the world without considering salvation, and mix *riyā'* (*riyā' takhlīt*), minding both worldly and hereafter goals.⁶⁷

In addition, *riyā'* needs to be thrown away to reach '*aqabat al-qanādih*. In doing so, a *sālik* must avoid '*ujub*. '*Ujub* is a self-exalted character or assuming great of what has been done. Therefore, '*ujub* can hinder the *tanfīq* (guidance) from God so that people who have this disease will be easily hurt. There is a Hadith says: 'There are three cases that can cause someone's misfortune, they are the obedient rasp, obeying *nafs* and '*ujub*.⁶⁸

The seventh, '*aqabat al-ḥamd wa al-shukr*, is the final *maqām* of the seven steep roads that must be passed by a *sālik*. At this stage, a *sālik* is expected to arrive at the level of *maqāmal-'arīf billāh* (gnosis). '*Aqabat al-ḥamdi wa al-shukri* is a struggle to take the steep road for praising God in a truly way that can be grateful for the gifts given by God. A person must be grateful for two reasons. First is that gratitude necessary in order to enjoy an eternal pleasure. If a *sālik* is not grateful, God will take the pleasure away. Second, if a *sālik* is grateful, God will add the gifts to him or her.⁶⁹

Two terms, *al-ḥamd* and *al-shukr*, on '*aqabat al-ḥamdi wa al-shukri* are two different things in terms of meaning and consequences. *Al-ḥamd* (praise) can be either by chanting *tasbīḥ* (*subḥāna Allah*) or chanting *tahlīl* (*lā ilāha illā Allah*). Thus, *al-ḥamd* is an act of physical worship. *Al-ḥamdu* can also prevent from insult from others. Meanwhile, *al-shukr* (gratitude) can be either *sabr* or *tafīwīdh* (submission) to God. Thus, gratitude is the kind of deeds that is more about state of mind. Gratitude is also regarded as an antidote of the character and behavior of *kufr* (ingratitude, in a sense that it is opposite of *shukr*). Therefore, *al-ḥamd* (praise) is more general and more in numbers (*a'ammu wa aktsaru*). Meanwhile, *al-shukr* (gratitude)

⁶⁷ al-Ghazālī, *Sharah Minhaj al-'Abidin*, p. 72; Jampes, *Siraj al-Talibin*, 2: pp. 379–86.

⁶⁸ al-Ghazālī, *Sharah Minhaj al-'Abidin*, p. 74; Jampes, *Siraj al-Talibin*, 2: pp. 379–86.

⁶⁹ al-Ghazālī, *Sharah Minhaj al-'Abidin*, pp. 62–3; Jampes, *Siraj al-Talibin*, 2: pp. 227–8.

is less in number and more specific (*aqallu wa akhāṣu*).⁷⁰ As God says; *wa qalilun min 'ibādiy al-shakūr* (and few of My servants are grateful)” to God.⁷¹

Shaikh Iḥsān further explains about the relationship between *al-ḥamd* and the *al-shukr*. Shaykh Iḥsān said that *al-ḥamd* and *al-shukr* are two things that cannot be separated. It is because when we recite *al-ḥamd* (praise), *al-shukr* (gratitude) will immediately follow. Likewise, when *al-shukr* is recited then *al-ḥamd* will be promptly followed. It is because *al-shukr* is always reflected through the entire body, and *al-ḥamd* is reflected through word of mouth.⁷² Thus, *al-ḥamd* and *al-shukr* are like two sides of a coin, that if one of them is abandoned, then its value will be useless. This ‘*aqabat al-ḥamdi wa al-shukri* is a steep road to reach top of spiritual joy. Meanwhile, the ultimate spiritual joy yearned by every *sālik* is to able to approach, then get to know, meet, and even be united with his or her Lord. According to Shaykh Iḥsān, if this seventh ‘*aqabah* can be achieved by a *sālik*, and then he or she has already been at the peak of mystical stage.

Shaykh Iḥsān is different from other mystics in conceptualizing the stages which Shaykh Iḥsān called them ‘*aqabah*. Not only different in naming the term and its amount, but also different in determining the final stage of *sālik*'s spiritual journey. The views of some sufis who were different from Shaykh Iḥsān concerning the stages of *Maqāmāt* have been mentioned in previous section.

The question is why Shaykh Iḥsān limited the stages (‘*aqabah*) only at 7 ‘*aqabah*, and the peak of his mystical journey was only in ‘*aqabat al-ḥamd wa al-Shukr*. The Conception of Shaykh Iḥsān's stages or *Maqāmāt* was different from the stages conceived by most sufis, ie *al-Kalābādżī*, *al-Ṭūsī*, *al-Ghazālī*, *al-Qushayrī*, *Ibn 'Arabī*, *al-Biṣṭāmī*, *al-Ḥallāj*, *Rabī'at al-'Adawiyah*, *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī*, Abū Sa'īd ibn Abī al-Khair, Khaujah 'Abdullāh al-Anṣārī, and other mystics. Shaykh Iḥsān, in the seven ‘*aqabah*, is different from other sufis about *maqāmal-tawbah*, where Shaykh Iḥsān puts ‘*aqabat al-tawbah* in the second ‘*aqabah* of the seven *aqabah*, where this stage (*tawbat*) by most other sufis places as the first stage, so *tawbat* is regarded as a very important stage because of its position on the first

⁷⁰ al-Ghazālī, *Sharah Minḥāj al-'Ābidīn*, p. 84; Jampes, *Sirāj al-Ṭalībīn*, 2: p. 462.

⁷¹ Qur'an, 34: 13.

⁷² Jampes, *Sirāj al-Ṭalībīn*, 2: p. 451.

ladder. While Shaykh Iḥsān puts the *al-tawbah* on the second sequence after '*aqabat al-'ilmi*.

In this context, there are several arguments that can be raised, Firstly, stages or '*aqabah* lived and conceived by Shaykh Iḥsān is a mystical experience (spiritual) that is very private and individual, so that the given expression is an expression based on the performer's feeling (*dẓauq*). Secondly, even if Shaykh Iḥsān experiences and feels the stages or '*aqabah* only up to the 7th stage; '*aqabat al-ḥamd wa al-shukr*, Shaykh Iḥsān actually tries to put a *sālik* in a position vis-à-vis God's transcendence, so that it keeps a distance between man and God. Thirdly, Shaykh Iḥsān is a Sunnī sufi scholar who tries to be consistent to develop orthodox sufism. His standpoint is clearly visible on the stages or '*aqabah* conception that are built in *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn*. Fourth, Shaykh Iḥsān looks completely against the philosophical sufism, because according to him, this sufism deviates from the grip of Islamic orthodoxy as it has departed from the '*aqidab-shari'*at-tasawwuf pattern.⁷³ Therefore, the philosophical sufism based on mystical union is considered heretical (heterodox) by a group of orthodox Sufism in which Shaykh Iḥsān and al-Ghazālī are affiliated with. Fifth, Shaykh Iḥsān actually continues the pattern of sufism which first developed by al-Ghazālī. Therefore, Shaykh Iḥsān is considered a Ghazalian sufi cleric (transmitter of al-Ghazālī's orthodoxy in sufism); and as the result, he is dubbed as al-Ghazālī al-Ṣaghīr (the Young al-Ghazālī) by the Middle East scholars and Western scholars.⁷⁴

⁷³ Dialectic and integrative relationship can be explained by al-Qushairī, which is considered to represent a group of Sunnī orthodoxy sufism, by saying: "*shari'at* is an order to carry out worship, while *ḥaqīqat* is to live the greatness of God (in worship). Each *shari'at* unboosted by *ḥaqīqat* can not be accepted; and any *ḥaqīqat* that is not associated with *shari'at*, it would not produce anything. *Shari'at* comes up with the tasks of the Deity, while *ḥaqīqat* is the implementation of God's truth. *Shari'at* is to worship Him, *ḥaqīqat* is to witness Him. *Shari'at* means doing which he commanded, *ḥaqīqat* means witnessing His *qadā'* and *qadr*, either hidden or visible. See Al-Qushairī, *al-Risālat al-Qushairiyyah fī 'Ilm al-Tasawwuf*, pp. 82–3.

⁷⁴ Shaykh Iḥsān is called as Ghazalian, not only through his work *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn*, but also can be seen from his habit of reading al-Ghazālī's works; *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* in the presence of the students in his pesantren. Even after finishing reciting the recitation, Shaykh Iḥsān ended it with the tradition of *kbataman* (salvation: *selametan*). Akh Yunan Atho'illah, "Etika Bisnis Kaum Santri: Studi Konsep Akhlaq Muamalah Pendidikan Pesantren dalam Kajian Kitab Iḥyā' Ulūm al-Dīn", *Oeconomicus: Journal of Economics*,

Thus, it can be understood that the stages conceived by Shaykh Iḥsān in his work *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn* are certainly not the sustainability or adoption of the predecessor sufi masters, but it is rather his experience, which was then perceived by Shaykh Iḥsān from his long journey through the mystical path. It is here that then he raises a different perception among the sufis in articulating and defining the stages (*maqāmāt*). Even if Shaykh Iḥsān stipulates that the pinnacle stage in sufism is only to *'aqabat al-ḥamd wa al-shukr*, he actually wants to put the *sālik* in a concrete state of himself or herself and acknowledges the transcendence of God. Thus, there is still a distance between man and God. In other words, between a *Makhlūq* (creature, servant) and *Khāliq* (God) there is always a real distance that cannot be bridged. They cannot be united. Likewise, there is no any union between a servant and *Khāliq*. Thus, it is only mystical (spiritual) union-allegory, which is also very personal and emotional. Consequently, whatever effect of a sufi's mystical behavior is no longer a human affair, it becomes a private matter between the sufi and God. Therefore, it is no longer a public consumption.

If it is drawn to the broader context, Shaykh Iḥsān actually wants to articulate his highly personal spiritual experience into a wider and real life. According to Shaykh Iḥsān, an individual *sālik* has not been considered enough without being balanced with social *sālik*. For example, it can be seen from his association with various groups, without seeing the differences; either tribes, religions, races, ethnicities or religious groups of the time, before and after being a *santri* (disciple) to become a *'ulama-sufi* who was famous in his day, as well as his attitude to the various problems of life faced by the *ummah* at the time. It is saved to categorize Shaykh Iḥsān as a populist-sufi cleric because of his inclusiveness.⁷⁵ Such a view becomes something very urgent and valuable amid waning self-awareness that results from disharmony and mental-spiritual instability, leading to a loss of humanity in the digital age.⁷⁶ Shaykh Iḥsān with his experience

vol. 1, no. 1 (2016), p. 108.

⁷⁵ The detailed description related to Shaykh Ihsan's association with various groups, so-called sufi populist figure, can be read on Syamsun Ni'am, "Merawat Keberagamaan di Balik Perdebatan Kopi dan Rokok", *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan*, vol. 13, no. 2 (2015), pp. 533–54.

⁷⁶ Shokhibul Mighfar, "Menggagas Pendidikan Humanis Religius: Belajar dari Model Pendidikan Pesantren", *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Indonesia*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2018), p. 165.

and mystical views becomes a role model in solving the current unstable, diverse, and religious problems.

F. Concluding Remarks

The debate about the ways, stages, *maqāmāt* (which are called by Shaykh Iḥsān with '*aqabah*') has raised once again a long lingering dichotomy of two opposing mystical approaches in Islam. The first group of orthodox sufism or Sunni sufism, which clings to the orthodoxy of '*aqīdah-sharī'at-tasawuf*' track, argues that there is a firm gap between human and God, Lord is positioned on His transcendence. While the second group was the philosophical Sufism, that believes that the stage/stairs/*maqām* could deliver a human being as a servant of God to meet and even unite with God, whether through a union (*ittihād/wiḥdat al-wujūd/manunggaling kawulo Gusti*), incarnation (*ḥulūl, fanā'* (the passing away) and *baqā'* (union with divine life), or in other ways where it is considered by *Sunnī* sufis as having deviated from the orthodoxy of '*aqīdah-sharī'at-tasawuf*' pattern. Thus, philosophical Sufi is then deemed to have diverged/ astray (heterodox) from this orthodox Sufism perspective.

In this regard, Shaykh Iḥsān Jampes Kediri has chosen to be part of the first group; the *Sunnī* sufi, following his great master, al-Ghazālī. Shaykh Iḥsān's standpoint can be seen through the form of spiritual stages formulated in his monumental work, *Sirāj al-Ṭālibīn* (a commentary to al-Ghazālī's *Minhāj al-'Ābidīn*), as described above, it shows that every *sālik* in reaching the final destination/primary to immediately meet God is not easy and full of twists. This is what made Shaykh Iḥsān calls the spiritual stage with '*aqabah* (a steep road towards the cliffs)'. The Steep road ('*aqabah*') is meant by Shaykh Iḥsān is as follows: '*Aqabat al-'ilmi, 'aqabat al-tambah, 'aqabat al-awa'iq, 'aqabat al-awāridh, 'aqabat al-bawāith, 'aqabat al-qawādiḥ, and 'aqabat al-ḥamd wa al-shukr. A Sālik* should roam these '*aqabāh* to reach his or her God (*al-wuṣūl ilā Allāh* and *ma'rifatullāh*)

Thus, Shaykh Iḥsān seems to have confirmed that he was a consistent adherent and implementer of orthodox sufism because it can be seen from '*aqabah* that has been formulated above, Shaykh Iḥsān actually tries to say that the relationship between a man as a servant of God ('*abdullāh*') and God remains creating distance. They cannot be put together physically, but can be united spiritually. This view is different

from the view of philosophical pantheistic sufism that believes that the relationship between man and God can be very intimate, not only mystical (spiritual), but also physically though. According to Shaykh Iḥsān, a very important thing for a sufi is his or her articulation in real life, his or her closeness to God must be manifested into a more empirical life.

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