

## **FROM KONYA TO NUSANTARA: RUMI'S SUFI DIASPORA IN PIDIE, ACEH, INDONESIA**

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### **Abstract**

*Rumi's sufism has not only flourished in Turkey, where the sufi was born, but also in many other far-flung world regions such as Nusantara. Its worldwide success invites many questions, for example the reasons for its ability to attract both Muslims and non-Muslims. In Pidie, Aceh, Indonesia, one of its popular aspects is the sema ritual dance, which has spread to other Aceh sufi orders (tariqa), especially the Naqshbandi sufi order. This dance is an adaptation of foreign teaching and performance to local context in the location of the study, the village of Lampôh Saka in Pidie. Aceh's sufi orders have succeeded in synthesizing foreign and local culture to create something uniquely their own. This study could offer an example of how to develop harmony and peace in Indonesian life, as exemplified by the sema dance, which symbolizes care towards creation while maintaining submission to the Creator.*

**Keywords:** *sema; Rumi; sufi tradition; Pidie; Aceh*

### **Abstrak**

*Sufi Rumi, tidak hanya berkembang di wilayah Turki sebagai tempat asal lahirnya sufi Rumi, melainkan sudah merambah dan menjalar ke sebagian besar dunia termasuk wilayah Nusantara juga yang letaknya cukup berjauhan. Penyebaran ini tentu banyak mengandung rahasia di dalamnya sehingga ia dapat menarik perhatian penduduk dunia yang tidak hanya Muslim melainkan non-Muslim. Di Indonesia, salah satu aspek dari Sufi Rumi yang berkembang di Indonesia khususnya Aceh adalah praktek ritual tari sema yang telah berbaur dengan kaum tarekat dan menjadi milik masyarakat sufi di Aceh, khususnya tarekat Naqshabandiyah. Penelitian ini telah menemukan peleburan pengamalan ajaran sufi Rumi dalam bentuk ritual tari sema dalam tradisi sufi yang berkembang di Nusantara khususnya Pidie, Aceh. Adopsi ajaran dan penampilan dikombinasikan dengan tradisi lokal sehingga membentuk model tersendiri untuk praktek ritual tari sema di wilayah lokus penelitian di Lampôh Saka Pidie. Hal ini tentu tidak bisa lepas dari sniergitas sejarah dan budaya setempat, sehingga membangun kesepakatan baru dan dijadikan sebagai tradisi bagi kaum penganut tarekat. Penelitian ini tentu berharap agar dapat menjadi bahan pertimbangan daam membangun keharmonisan dan kerukunan dalam hidup berbangsa dan bertanah air sesuai dengan ajaran Rumi yang dituangkan dalam tradisi sema yang mengandung symbol kepedulian kepada makhluk dengan tetap taat kepada Tuhan sang pencipta.*

**Kata kunci:** *Sema; Rumi; tradisi Sufi; Pidie; Aceh*

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### مستخلص

رومي صوفي، لم يتم تطوير رومي صوفي في تركيا فقط باعتباره المكان الذي وُلد فيه رومي صوفي، ولكنه توغل وانتشر في الأرخيبيل الواقع بعيداً تماماً. يحتوي هذا الانتشار بالتأكيد على الكثير من الأسرار التي يمكن أن تجذب انتباه سكان العالم الذين ليسوا مسلمين فحسب بل غير مسلمين. في إندونيسيا، يتمثل أحد مظاهر صوفي الرومي التي نشأت في إندونيسيا، وخاصة آتشييه، في ممارسة طقوس رقص سما (Sema) التي اختلطت بال طريقة (tarekat) وتنتمي إلى مجتمع الصوفية في آتشييه، وخاصة طريقة النقشبندية. اكتشف هذا البحث اندماج تعاليم الرومي الصوفية في شكل طقوس رقص سما (Sema) في تقاليد الصوفية التي تطورت في الأرخيبيل، خاصة في بيدي (Pidie)، آتشييه. اعتماد تعاليم وعروض مقترنة بالتقاليد المحلية وبالتالي تشكيل نموذج خاص بها لممارسة طقوس رقص سما (Sema) في مكان البحث في لامبوه ساكا بيدي (Lampôh Saka Pidie). بالتأكيد لا يمكن فصل هذا عن الحزنون من التاريخ والثقافة المحلية، لذلك بناء اتفاقات جديدة وتصحيح تقليداً لأتباع طريقة (tarekat). من المؤكد أن هذا البحث يأمل أن يؤخذ في الاعتبار في بناء الوثام والانسجام في حياة الأمة وسقي الأرض وفقاً لتعاليم الرومي كما هو موضح في تقليد سما (Sema) والذي يحتوي على رمز للقلق من مخلص من خلال ملازمة الطاعة مطيعاً لله الخالق.

الكلمات الرئيسية: سيما؛ الرومي؛ التقاليد الصوفية؛ بيدي؛ وأتشييه

## A. INTRODUCTION

Despite the distance between them, the relationship between Turkey and Aceh has existed for a long time. Historical records in the form of Ottoman archive from the 16th to the 19th century testify to this relationship,<sup>1, 2, 3</sup> which began with trade and diplomatic interaction. Then, global political dynamic was not favorable to Muslim polities, as European states raced to conquer much of the world, including those areas ruled by Muslims. This condition caused Turkey, then in its Ottoman form, to seek the support of other Muslim rulers to counter the disadvantage of its location, which was wedged between European states.

The relationship expanded from politics and trade to religion and culture. As the largest Muslim polity, Ottoman religious and cultural influence could be seen clearly in Indonesia, such as in the architecture of mosques and their minarets in Sulawesi. The physical influence was also accompanied with spiritual influence in the form of Rumi's sufism.

<sup>1</sup> Baiquni Baiquni, *Relasi Kerajaan Aceh Darussalam Dan Kerajaan Utsmani* (LSAMA, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Baiquni (ed), *Turki Usmani-Indonesia* (Istanbul, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Ugur Unal, "Shelter of the World Humanitarian Diplomacy From The Ottoman Period to The Present," in *Osmanli'dan Günümüze İnsanî Diplomasi Cihan-Penâh*, ed. Muzaffer; Atik Vahdettin Albayrak ( Istanbul: T.C. Basbakanlik Devlet Arsivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 2016).

## **FROM KONYA TO NUSANTARA: RUMI'S SUFI DIASPORA IN PIDIE, ACEH, INDONESIA**

Founded by Jalaluddin Rumi, who was born in Persia but later resided with his family in Konya, now in the southern Turkey region, this sufism becomes prevalent in Aceh.

One of the famous practices in Rumi's sufi tradition is the *sema* dance ritual which is intended to bring its practitioners closer to God. The Konya people imbibed Rumi's teaching and made it integral to their life in the form of Mevlavi sufi order (Ira Friedlander 1975). Konya local government even provides a special place for adherents of Rumi's sufism as a form of acknowledging his legacy. This legacy was only briefly interrupted during the early Attatürk regime, which was hostile to Islam.

In this region, Nusantara, even though Rumi's sufism is seldom mentioned by name, it has essentially become a model for the region. This could be seen from the practice of Haqqani Naqshbandi tariqa, the largest in this region, which often involves the ecstatic *sema* dance.

Several studies have shown that the *zikr* (remembrance of God) used in Naqshbandi sufi order rituals in this region generally integrates Rumi's *zikr* with Naqshbandi's. An example is the *sema* dance. Agung Dwi Putra<sup>4</sup> (2017) studied the practice of *sema* dance among the Naqshbandi sufi order followers in Jakarta, as was Nila Sari<sup>5</sup> (2013) in Jepara, and Ahmad Raisul Falah<sup>6</sup> (2015) in Semarang, Central Java. However, no such studies have been conducted in Aceh, even though the Naqshbandi sufi order has existed there since the 19th century, and became popular through the prominent sufi figure named Mudawali.

This study aims to fill this lacuna and examines the past connection between Konya and Nusantara. It intends to uncover similarities and differences between sufi rituals in these regions, especially on the practice of *sema* dance ritual. A larger aim of this paper is to analyze the link between *tasawwuf* (Islamic spirituality) in Persia, Ottoman (Turkey), and Nusantara, especially Pidie as one of districts in Aceh, Indonesia. Qualitative method with historical, philological, and anthropological approaches was used. Primary data took the form of manuscripts related to the study topic, and on-location in-depth interviews with *sema* practitioners in Pidie. Rumi's mosque and museum in Konya (Turkey) were visited on April 2018 to obtain primary data on Rumi's sufism and *sema* dance.

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<sup>4</sup> Agung Dwi Putra, "Estetika Sema dalam Tarekat Sufi Naqsybandi Haqqani Jakarta sebagai Media Penanaman Pendidikan Tauhid," *Gondang: Jurnal Seni dan Budaya* 1, no. 1 (December 4, 2017): 26–39, <https://doi.org/10.24114/gondang.v1i1.7919>.

<sup>5</sup> Nila Sari, "Keberadaan Tari Sema Jalaluddin Rumi Pada Kelompok Tari Sufi Jepara Di Desa Kriyan, Kecamatan Kalinyamatan, Kabupaten Jepara, Jawa Tengah" (skripsi, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, 2013), <https://eprints.uny.ac.id/20848/>.

<sup>6</sup> Ahmad Raisul Falah, "Makna Tarian Sufi Jalaluddin Rumi Di Pondok Pesantren Roudlotun Ni'mah Kalicari Semarang" (Semarang, Fakultas Ushuluddin dan Humaniora Universitas Islam negeri Semarang, 2015).

There are two assumptions in this study. One, Aceh's sufi order members interact culturally with foreigners, resulting in cultural modification. Robert Berkhofer<sup>7</sup> (1969) and Donald Horowitz<sup>8</sup> (1975) have written extensively on this modification. Two, local sufi rituals were modified to increase spiritual intensity, as can be seen in *sema* dance adoption. The rituals helped to drive the sharing of action and knowledge in the *tariqa*.

Ritual participation increases self-awareness, cognitive process, and brain function, forming a new attitude within ritual participants. The sharing of action and knowledge between individuals makes religious concepts easy to understand.<sup>9</sup> In the context of sufi ritual, the action of *sema* dance increases the faith of its practitioners. Rumi stated that sufi experience lies beyond earthly worries, akin to a flying bird, far above the tree, but still within the sky.<sup>10</sup>

As a note, in the following sections, Turkey is equated with its Ottoman predecessor.

## B. DISCUSSION

### 1. An Overview on the Relationship between Turkey and Nusantara

Turkey and Nusantara have well relationship since long time ago. It started in 16<sup>th</sup> century, Turkey institutionally built relationship with Aceh. In various sides, it can be revealed to see the existence of Turkey and its work in the archipelago, such as social, economic, and religious interaction.<sup>11</sup> Many evidences came up both in the manuscripts collected in Nusantara and Turkey, and researches performed by many scholars. Anthony Reid has examined the relationship between Rum (Turkey) and Java.<sup>12</sup> Vladimir Braginsky also widened the examination to Turkey and Nusantara using manuscript analysis. More than

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<sup>7</sup> Robert F Berkhofer, *A Behavioral Approach to Historical Analysis* (New York: Free Press, 1971).

<sup>8</sup> Donald Horowitz, "Ethnic Identity," in *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, ed. Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan (Harvard University Press, 1975).

<sup>9</sup> Ikka Pyysiäinen, "Believing and Doing: How Ritual Action Enhances Religious Belief," in *Religious Narrative, Cognition and Culture: Image and Word in the Mind of Narrative*, ed. Armin W. Geertz and Jeppe Sinding Jensen (UK: Equinox Publishing Ltd, 2011), 147–62.

<sup>10</sup> Shems Friedlander, *Rumi and the Whirling Dervishes*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Albany: State University of New York, 1992), 20.

<sup>11</sup> Turkey is a country that has respectful to other countries including Indonesia and hold them as friends and relatives. Until nowadays, they still collect and keep Indonesian heritages in their museum. The manuscripts of Aceh, Batavia, Makassar, West Sumatera are kept and conserved well in Turkey's archive like Osmanli Arsivi Daire Baskanligi. (A direct observation was performed in this institution in April 2018).

<sup>12</sup> Anthony Reid, "Rum and Jawa: The Vicissitudes of Documenting a Long-Distance Relationship," in *From Anatolia to Aceh: Ottomans, Turks, and Southeast Asia*, ed. Andrew Peacock and Annabel Teh Gallop, 1st ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 2015), 25–46, <https://doi.org/10.5871/bacad/9780197265819.001.0001>.

## FROM KONYA TO NUSANTARA: RUMI'S SUFI DIASPORA IN PIDIE, ACEH, INDONESIA

40 ancient manuscripts were discovered mentioning the name for Turkish people and kings, no less than 600 times. Pasai was even once ruled by the Turks.<sup>13</sup>

The Acehnese remember fondly when Turkey helped them against the Portuguese in the 16th century. The term of *meuriam lada sicupak*, military cannons given by the Turkish Sultan to the Acehnese, then the Acehnese ruler also gave to the Turkish Sultan handful peppers as a form of gratitude, is still well-known today. In one of Aceh's ancient manuscripts kept and preserved in Leiden University Library (famous name is called UB = Universiteit Bibliotheek), The Netherlands, with Cod. Or. 8194a<sup>14</sup>, it was described that the ruler of the world was from Rum or Turkey, who was kind enough to allow for marriages to occur between the kingdoms' populations. Further studies should be conducted to trace Acehnese lineage to Turkey<sup>15</sup>.

There was also contact between Turkey and other regions in Nusantara. In *Hikayat Indranata*, it was stated that in addition to political relationship, the Turks also married local people.<sup>16</sup> This strand of relationship deserves further study.

### 2. About Rumi's Sufism

Jalaluddin Rumi or so-called Rumi as a famous name is a very well-known sufi figure at international level. Born in Persian region (b. 604H/1207CE - d. in 672H/1273CE), he travelled to Anatolia (Turkey) in his later years. The last name of Rumi was taken from a province (Rum) in Anatolia, which capital was Konya.

Rumi's sufism was initiated by his family. His father was also a well-known sufi in Persia, leading the Kubrevi sufi order. Rumi developed his spiritual teaching to his followers. Further, Mevlevi<sup>17</sup> sufi order referred to him was named after his public form of address. His unique invention was the dance of *sema* (root word *sima'i* = listen). This dance became a

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<sup>13</sup> Vladimir Braginsky, "Representation of the Turkic-Turkish Theme in Traditional Malay Literature, with Special Reference to the Works of the Fourteenth to Mid-Seventeenth Centuries," in *From Anatolia to Aceh: Ottomans, Turks, and Southeast Asia*, ed. Andrew Peacock and Annabel Teh Gallop, 1st ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 2015), 263–64, 267, <https://doi.org/10.5871/bacad/9780197265819.001.0001>.

<sup>14</sup> There are almost more than ten thousand Indonesian manuscripts collected and preserved in Leiden University Library. (Direct observation from July to September 2018). The Dutch colonials were succeeded to bring Indonesian heritage to their country. On the one hand, their action is preferable because the Indonesian manuscripts are able to be preserved well. Nevertheless, on the other hand the Dutch had stolen Indonesian treasures produced in the past by its prominent figures.

<sup>15</sup> This Manuscript was written in Acehnese language entitled *Hikayat Esetamu*.

<sup>16</sup> Muhamad Fanani, *Hikayat Indranata* (Jakarta: Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa, Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1996).

<sup>17</sup> According to Sait Halman, Mevlavi sufi order has initiated by Rumi's son and started to apply it after the death of Rumi. Therefore, in fact, this sufi order is not owned by Rumi. (Sait Halman, Talat 1983).

ritual tradition for him and his followers. It consists of remembering God by circling around for a period of time.

Rumi became a true sufi at the age of 48 years old, mature in his thoughts. He is also a madrasa teacher. In this occasion, he was encouraged by his teacher Shams Tabrizi to become immersed fully in *tasawwuf*. It was stated that he even forgot to work for teaching his students as he was practicing *tasawwuf* full time with his teacher.

Rumi's writings<sup>18</sup> became a guideline for his followers, such as the *Masnawi*. Comprised of six volumes and 20.700 lines of poetry, this work teaches deep spirituality in the form of apologia, fable, legends, and anecdotes. Another work is *Ruba'iyat* (1600 four-line stanzas), *Fhi Mafhi* (in prose form, a compilation of his sermon on *tasawwuf*), and *Maktubat* (a compilation of his letters to friends and followers).<sup>19, 20</sup> Generally, these works were completed when he was separated from his spiritually inspiring teacher.

The content of Rumi's work transcends time, space, and religion, attracting scholars from all over the world to study it. Rumi emphasizes the love of God without any boundary, stating that humans who limits themselves to reason would not be able to reach God's love. In *Ma'nawi*, he described a universal love towards God. Love does not only belong to humans, but the entire universe. Love could reach and uncover the veil of this universe.<sup>21</sup>

### 3. Sema Dance Ritual Tradition in Konya

*Sema* dance was performed by Rumi and his followers since the 13th century in Konya (Turkey). To date, many people visited this city to witness this unique dance in person.

The dance begins with a religious sermon, followed by the ritual of asking permission from a spiritual teacher to perform it. Then follows a circling movement, accompanied by a distinct music out of the sound of *ney* (a flute-like instrument). The combination of music, dance and spirituality allows for an immersion and exploration of spiritual meaning. Audience are inwardly asked to contemplate the fleeting life and the eternal hereafter, where they would meet God.<sup>22</sup>

Music for sufi who performs *sema* ritual is like faith during prayers, necessary to open the doors of heaven. A criterion for success in this ritual is the calmness of heart such that it

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<sup>18</sup> He wrote his works by hand and now it become manuscripts.

<sup>19</sup> Annemarie Schimmel, *I Am Wind You Are Fire: The Life and Work of Rumi*, Later prt. edition (Boston and London: Shambhala Pubns, 1992).

<sup>20</sup> Chindi Andriyani, *Jejak Langkah Sang Sufi Jalaluddin Rumi* (Yogyakarta: Mueeza, 2017), 110–40.

<sup>21</sup> Rizqa Ahmadi, "Jejak Sang Penyair Persia: Corak Sastra Sufistik Jalaluddin Muhammad Maulavi Dalam Karyanya 'Matsnawi,'" *Jurnal CMES* 6, no. 2 (2013): 221–29, <https://doi.org/10.20961/cmcs.6.2.11718>.

<sup>22</sup> Direct observation in Konya, on April 2018.

## FROM KONYA TO NUSANTARA: RUMI'S SUFI DIASPORA IN PIDIE, ACEH, INDONESIA

reaches a tranquil state as it draws ever closer to God. Physical dancing in circles ceases to have any effect, only the spiritual aspect deepens.<sup>23</sup>

This ritual contains of symbols articulated as follows:

*“We receive from God, we give out to the people. We never keep any possessions. We soar to the sky, we pour on the ground. Our soul on the way to God’s mercy”.*<sup>24</sup>

This phrase symbolizes what is performed and expected in *sema* ritual. Because for Rumi, *sema* has a specific and distinct concept different from common sufi practice of *zikr*.

In *zikr*, God is remembered by reciting His name repeatedly accompanied by breathing and physical movements. The mind is still in its conscious state. In *sema*, the state of ecstasy is reached, as the body circles and music carry the emotion or spirit to unite with God. A sufi’s self-consciousness would disappear even though his body still follows the rhythm of *ney*.<sup>25</sup> As Rumi stated that:

*“dancing is not rising to your fee painlessly like a speck dust blown around in the wind. Dancing is when you rise above both worlds, tearing your heart to pieces and giving up your soul”.*<sup>26</sup>

Every year, a *sema* festival is held in Konya to commemorate the death of Rumi between the 2nd to the 17th of December. Visitors come in increasing numbers to see this esoteric ritual, as well as visit Rumi’s and his child’s graves. Rumi’s gravestone bears an important inscription. This epitaph is;

*When we are dead, seek not our tomb in the earth,  
But find it in the heart of men.*<sup>27</sup>

The inscription has a deep meaning. When a person can reach another’s heart, he or she would be remembered forever by that person. Hence, it is important to spread love and kindness to one another. This recommendation by Rumi is suitable for every believer, as they need to relate well with both God and humans.

However, not everyone agrees with the *sema* ritual. Some sufi, like Hujruwi, stated that dancing brings no benefit and has no legal or spiritual foundation. Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) agreed with him, stating that spiritual ecstasy is beyond the remit of the *sharia*. Other ulama also forbids *sema*.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Talat Said Halman, “Love Is All: Mevlana’s Poetry and Philosophy,” in *Mevlana Celeleddin Rumi and the Whirling Dervishes*, ed. Talat Said Halman, 2nd edition ( Istanbul: Dost, 1992), 41.

<sup>24</sup> Halman, 63.

<sup>25</sup> Metin And, “The Spiritual Concert of the Mevlevis,” in *Mevlana Celeleddin Rumi and The Whirling Dervishes* (Istanbul: Dost Yavinlari, 1983), 58.

<sup>26</sup> And, 63.

<sup>27</sup> And, 72.

<sup>28</sup> And, 51–53.

#### 4. Rumi in Nusantara: Aceh

As in other parts of the world, Rumi is well-known in Nusantara, especially Indonesia. Equal to Ibn Arabi, Rumi is also studied by scholars and ulama here. Many books, including in Indonesian translation, on both figures are published in Indonesia. In universities, academics are used to studying Rumi. Many ulama also teach Rumi's tradition to their followers. There is a Java manuscript collected by Leiden University Library with Cod. Or. 5604 consisted of information on Rumi's teaching and the way of Rumi met his teacher, Syekh Syamsu Tabriz. The text glorified Rumi and his teacher as the sufi teacher.<sup>29</sup>

In Aceh, the name Rumi is also well-known. One ulama is even called Baba Rumi, despite there being no connection between his teaching and Rumi's. Baba Rumi is the student of Abdurrauf Singkil, a follower of the Shattari *tariqa* which has Madinan roots, unconnected to the Mevlevi *tariqa* of Rumi.

Baba Rumi does have an Anatolian lineage. Azra stated that was a Turkish military officer who sailed to Aceh.<sup>30</sup> However, this statement was challenged by Wan Sahgir Abdullah, who offered that the ulama has sufi origin, based on the name of his grandfather, Ismail Rumi. The latter Rumi was most probably a follower of Qadiri *tariqa* from Turkey.<sup>31</sup> Both *tariqas* preach tolerance. Abdurrauf al-Fansuri and some Shattari notables forbid their students to excommunicate others, as can be seen in the manuscript *Tanbih al-Masyi* and *Mi'rajus Salikin* by Khatib Langgien. This is similar to Rumi's *Masnavi*, where the meaning of God is unbounded, like an open ocean.<sup>32</sup> All religion could understand God. A similar understanding can also be found in Indonesian national philosophy, Pancasila, in which One God is admitted, notwithstanding the existence of different religions.<sup>33</sup>

##### a. Sema Ritual Tradition in Pidie

Pidie has always been a popular place for well-known sufis, such as Teungku Khatib Langgien and Teungku Muhammad Ali Teupin Raya. These sufis left behind

<sup>29</sup> This manuscript was written in Pegon Javanese script. The condition is not well anymore. See <https://alif.id/read/nur-ahmad/manuskrip-rumi-di-jawa-b221478p/>

<sup>30</sup> Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern 'Ulama in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 258.

<sup>31</sup> Mehmet Özyay, "'Rumi' Networks of al-Sink 1 : A Biography of B ba D wud," *Studia Islamika* 24, no. 2 (August 31, 2017): 247–70, <https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v24i2.4441>.

<sup>32</sup> <https://bafadal.com/2008/02/16/a-night-with-rumi/>

<sup>33</sup> Sulaiman Sulaiman, "Membaca Pancasila: Perspektif Kearifan Sufi Jalall Al-Dinn Rummi," *IBDA` : Jurnal Kajian Islam dan Budaya* 13, no. 1 (2015): 134–48, <https://doi.org/10.24090/ibda.v13i1.498>.



## FROM KONYA TO NUSANTARA: RUMI'S SUFI DIASPORA IN PIDIE, ACEH, INDONESIA

many valuable works for their students, which are still in use to date. Rumi's sufism is also popular here, albeit with local modification.

The *sema* ritual in Lampoh Saka village, Bambi District, Pidie Regency, has been practiced since 2012. Most of its participants are youths of the village and its surrounding area.

The founders of the *tariqa* in Pidie are Tami and Sofyan from the Lampoh Saka village itself. They are the students of Shaykh Zamuri of Lambuk, Aceh Besar, of the Naqshbandi *tariqa*. Both study the *tariqa* long before the Aceh tsunami of 2004. Tami travelled to Jakarta to deepen his knowledge and acquire Naqshbandi *ijaza*. While there, he also learnt the *sema* ritual in Café Rumi. After he obtained the *ijaza*, he returned to the village and preached to the youth to join the *tariqa* through *zikr* and *sema*.<sup>34</sup>

The *tariqa* combines Naqshbandi and Mevlevi traditions, as practiced by Shaykh Nazim, the Naqshbandi world-figure. It turns out that the Shaykh's father adheres to the former *tariqa* and his mother adheres to the latter. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Naqshbandi ritual taught by the Shaykh contains the *sema* dance of the Mevlevi.

In Indonesia, the Naqshbandi *tariqa* has many followers in Jakarta, Jepara (Central Java) and Aceh. In Aceh, the *tariqa* can be found in Aceh Besar, Pidie, and Aceh Timur, especially among the Tamiang people. Tami himself witnessed the Tamiang people performed the *sema* ritual in 2015.<sup>35</sup>

The uniqueness of *sema* ritual in Pidie is the combination with *zikr* of the Rifa'i, Alawi, and Mevlevi *tariqas*. This combination was intended to attract people's attention, especially the youth. When they became interested with *sema*, the meaning of movements and recitations performed during the ritual were taught.

If in Konya, *sema* dance is accompanied by the instrument *ney*, in Lampoh Saka, it is accompanied by the instrument *rapa'i* (tambourine-like instrument). This versatile instrument is used by the locals to accompany many rituals. There is even a *rapa'i* dance performed in religious and traditional events. *Rapa'i* is often used in Rifa'i *tariqa*, which was introduced by ar-Raniry in the 17th century.

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<sup>34</sup> Interview with Sofyan and Tami, a leaders and followers of Naqshabandi Nazim Haqqani sufi order in Guci Rumpung, Lampoh Saka, Pidie, Aceh, 18 June 2018. The followers of this order in this area reach 70 people derived from many places.

<sup>35</sup> Tami, a leader of Naqshabandi Nazim Haqqani sufi order in Guci Rumpung, Lampoh Saka, Pidie, describes and gives the explanation to me as a researcher during the interview and discussion, held in 18 June 2018.

## FAKHRIATI

*Zikr* uttered in the dance is modified from the original *sema*. Loudly performed, one of the *zikr* contents is the prophetic invocation *salawat dalail al khairat*.<sup>36</sup> It proceeds from the *zikr* of *awwal, musta'id, muftadi*, and ends with *dalail al khairat*. A probable reason for the *salawat* addition is al-Jazuli's praise of *zikr* in spiritual acts.

Physically, the headgear used in the dance symbolizes gravestones, which reminds their participant of their afterlife. Similarly, the clothes worn is shroud-like, as if the dancers were already in their graves. One hand points up and the other down indicating the connection between God and the earth.<sup>37</sup> They pray to God for blessings to all humanity.

A requirement in performing the dance is to have an unbroken connection between the *murshid* (teacher) and the *murid* (student). Otherwise, there is a possibility of evil disruption, breaking the intention of total surrender to God. Dizziness may ensue, which can even cause vomiting.<sup>38</sup>

### *b. Sema Dance Practice in Other Nusantara Regions*

*Sema* has also been practiced in Kriyan village, Kalinyamatan district, Jepara regency, Central Java province since 2010. The practitioners are members of the Naqshbandi Kabbani *tariqa*. Like in Pidie, local instrument is also used, which is *rebana* (tambourine). *Rebana* is deemed more calming than flute-like instrument, such as *ney* even if the latter sounds more beautiful. Local or Javanese culture is really dominant here.<sup>39</sup>

Another area where *sema* is practiced is Café Rumi, Jakarta, where Rumi admirers from all over Indonesia gather, including from Aceh. The cafe was founded in 2007 by a group of Naqshbandi *tariqa* members to serve spiritual nourishment for anyone who needs it in Jakarta. Officiated by Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, the Naqshbandi world-figure,

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<sup>36</sup> *Salawat dalail al khairat* is a famous *salawat* uttered by sufis in the world. It was produced by Moroccan sufi named al-Juzuli in 15<sup>th</sup> century. This *salawat* is also well known in almost each area in Nusantara, including Aceh and Pidie. There are bulks of *dalail al khairat* manuscripts can be found in each region in Nusantara and also in other Muslim countries. Leiden University Library collected 37 manuscripts of *dalail al khairat*. In England, especially British library has collected the manuscripts more than 46 manuscripts of *dalail al khairat*. Many other libraries in the world also keep the manuscripts much more. Besides, the society like Aceh also keep the manuscripts. (Direct observation is done during being a participant in the Drewes fellowship in Leiden University Library from July to September 2018).

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Sofyan and the followers of Naqshbandi sufi order who perform *sema* dance ritual in each Friday night in Gampong Guci Rumpung, Lampoh Saka, Pidie, Aceh on June 2018.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Tami and the followers of Naqshbandi sufi order in Gampong Guci Rumpung, Lampoh Saka, Pidie, Aceh on June 2018.

<sup>39</sup> Sari, "Keberadaan Tari Sema Jalaluddin Rumi Pada Kelompok Tari Sufi Jepara Di Desa Kriyan, Kecamatan Kalinyamatan, Kabupaten Jepara, Jawa Tengah."

## **FROM KONYA TO NUSANTARA: RUMI'S SUFI DIASPORA IN PIDIE, ACEH, INDONESIA**

the Cafe is attended by people who admired Naqshbandi's teaching. *Zikr* is accompanied by *sema*, showing assimilation with Mevlevi's *tariqa*.<sup>40</sup>

### **C. CONCLUSION**

Rumi's *sema* ritual has been adapted by Indonesian sufi traditions, resulting in several unique modifications. In Pidie, Aceh, performing *sema* dance is combined with *rapa'i*, and the content of *salawat Dala'il al Khairat* also uttered as *zikr*. Also, the practice of several sufi orders is combined. This combination is the result of Pidie's people creativity in mixing and matching different spiritual traditions.

The seriousness in which the *sema* ritual is performed has resulted in the increase of sufi understanding, which in essence is to love God and His creations. Rumi taught his followers to care for each other and all creations through symbolic actions in *sema* dance. This is a seed for peace and harmony in the world.

To note, this is a preliminary study of Rumi's sufism, focusing on the *sema* dance ritual, in Pidie, Aceh. There are many other sides to Rumi, which needs to be examined to discover the richness of Indonesia's sufi culture. An example is analyzing Rumi's manuscripts read by his followers and admirers in Nusantara. These efforts are necessary as Rumi is an example of how religious traditions could inspire people to create a better world, one where humans love one another as well as other creations. In the midst of today's humanitarian and environmental crisis, nothing is more urgent than how to create peace and harmony among the society in Nusantara and around the world.

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<sup>40</sup> Putra, "Estetika Sema dalam Tarekat Sufi Naqsybandi Haqqani Jakarta sebagai Media Penanaman Pendidikan Tauhid."

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**FROM KONYA TO NUSANTARA:  
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