

# The Representation of Sufism Moral Values in The Book *Kiai Nyentrik Membela Pemerintah* Oleh **Abdurrahman Wahid**

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**Abstract:** This research discusses the moral degradation that occurs in modern society. Moral degradation can be seen through various aspects, such as a decrease in ethical values, an increase in individualistic behavior and the misuse of information and communication technology. Many people are more concerned with personal interests than social interests, resulting in a lack of empathy and solidarity. This reality can be overcome with Sufism morality. By implementing the moral values of Sufism, it will make human beings as a person who is refined in soul and polite in their ethics so that they can develop self-awareness and return to noble values so that a more civilized and harmonious social order is created. The purpose of this research is to represent the moral values of Sufism in the book *Kiai Nyentrik Membela Pemerintah* by K.H Abduraahman Wahid. This study uses a descriptive qualitative form with the type of library research and uses content analysis techniques as a form of data analysis. In the book *Kiai Nyentrik Membela Pemerintah* by K.H Abdurrahman Wahid, there are moral values of Sufism that are explained through the behavior of the characters who are the kiai contained in the book. The moral values of Sufism depicted in the book are sincerity, patience, gratitude, tawakkal, compassion, and humility. The book *Kiai Nyentrik Membela Pemerintah* is a collection of essays written by K.H Abdurrahman Wahid and then published by LkiS Yogyakarta. In the book, there is an overview of the behavior of the kiai who implement the moral values of Sufism in their daily lives that can be emulated by today's society

**Keyword:** Representation, Moral, Values, Sufism

## 1. Introduction

Sufism morals are one of the important aspects of Islamic teachings (Salminawati, Nasution, & Napitupulu, 2022). In the process of character building and human behavior, Sufism morals play a significant role (Hamka, 2024). This character building can be done by instilling the values of Sufism morals in education (Samad, 2020). Through the cultivation of Sufism morals, it is hoped that it can form humans as *insan kamil*, namely humans who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also adorned with moral beauty through spiritual teachings (Khoiruddin, 2016).

Indonesia is currently experiencing a moral and ethical crisis (Kompasiana, 2023) such as the rampant corruption cases committed by officials in this country continue to increase (Kompas.com, 2024). In addition, cases of bullying in schools are also still rampant

(Kumparan, 2023). In addition, the issue of suicide is still a choice for some people to end their lives, such as the viral case of a specialist candidate who committed suicide in his boarding room (BBC Indonesia, 2024). Another case is the attitude of rigid religious understanding that does not want to accept differences, such as the case of the ban on joint prayers with Christians in Bekasi (Detik News, 2024). These cases are like an iceberg, meaning that only a small part of them are known, while there are still very many other cases that have not been revealed.

Some cases of juvenile delinquency that occur are increasingly rampant, this is caused by various causal factors. Among them are the influence of a bad environment and the weakening of self-control and social control (Muthohar, 2016). Besides that, it is also caused by a life orientation that prioritizes material by putting aside spiritual aspects, strengthening individual attitudes, weakening social care attitudes and lack of family supervision (Ma'rufah, Khairul, & Kerta, 2020) Social media also contributes to the emergence of moral problems. (Liah, Maulana, Aulia, Syahira, & Nurhaliza, 2023). This reality is an important problem to research and find solutions. Because if not, it will have an impact on increasing social and moral problems.

Based on previous research, the problem of moral degradation can be overcome by character education, especially in the teachings of Sufism morals. Sufism morals are rooted in deep spiritual and moral principles, which can be a strong foundation in building human character (Samad, 2020). By applying these values, it is hoped that we can create a more ethical society, so that we can deal wisely with the bad influence of outside culture. Olivia's research states that the application of Sufism morals in everyday life can provide peace of mind because it prioritizes the commands of Allah Swt rather than world affairs (Rozi, 2017). Internalization of Sufism moral values in one's life according to M. Arif Khoirudin can make humans wise, wise, and full of spiritual values (Khoiruddin, 2016).

This study aims to reveal the moral values of Sufism in Abdurrahman Wahid's collection of essays entitled *Kiai Nyentrik Membela Pemerintah* as a solution to the problem of moral degradation that is currently plaguing the Indonesian state. An essay is a short piece of writing that discusses an issue from the author's point of view. In other words, an essay is a person's opinion on an issue that is reviewed subjectively from various aspects of life. In the context of education, the collection of essays entitled *Kiai Nyentrik Membela Pemerintah* by Abdurrahman Wahid contains explicit and implicit values that can be used as guidelines in determining one's behavior, which is based on universal Sufism moral education (M Dahlan, 2016).

The moral values of Sufism contained in the collection of essays include sincerity, tawakkal, compassion, humility, husnudzan and wara'. By analyzing the contents of the book of essays *Kiai Nyentrik Membela Pemerintah*, it is hoped that it can actualize the moral values of Sufism contained in it in everyday life so as to reduce problems related to social and moral as often occurs.

## 2. Method

This research is a qualitative study using the literature review method (research study), which is a study that examines literature sources related to the study in the research as the

object of discussion (Creswell, 2015). Data collection techniques are carried out by collecting information from literature relevant to the object of discussion obtained from various sources such as books, documents, magazines, journals and articles related to the research (Suharsimi Arikunto, 1990). Meanwhile, to analyze the data in this study using the content analysis method (Zed, 2004). Content analysis is a method used to reveal messages in a literary work with the intention of making conclusions obtained from the identification and interpretation process (Suwandi Endaswara, 2013). The way to analyze content is through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Huberman, 2014).

### **3. Results and Discussion**

After analyzing the contents of the book *Kiai Nyentrik membela Pemerintah* by Abdurrahman Wahid, researchers found that the book represents the moral values of Sufism both explicitly and implicitly shown by the author through the behavior of the characters who are kiai. The values of moral education are sincerity, tawakkal, compassion, humility, husnudzan and wara'.

#### **3.1. First Finding**

Ikhlas is a concept that refers to sincerity and purity of intention in performing an action, especially in the context of worship and devotion to Allah SWT. In practice, ikhlas means doing something solely for Allah, without expecting rewards, praise, or attention from others (Mahmud Ahmad Mustafa, 2012). Ikhlas is also defined as a form of releasing negative emotions from the soul, causing a person to have sincerity (Faisal Faliyandra, 2019). The following is an example of a quote that represents the value of ikhlas:

"He did not ask for any formal position in the pesantren, did not expect anything in return. This style of kiai is referred to by pesantren circles as a sincere person, sincerely selfless in his service. Perhaps it is because he is sincere that his prayers are more accepted by Allah Swt..." (Abdurrahman Wahid, 1997).

The quote above shows the sincere attitude described by Abdurrahman Wahid through a character named Kiai Sobari. In the quote, Kiai Sobari is told to have a sincere attitude in teaching knowledge at the Tebuireng Islamic boarding school which he has been doing for thirty-three years. The location between Kiai Sobari's house and the cottage is about five kilometers, the distance he traveled every day for decades and he did not expect anything in return, because he had the principle that teaching at the cottage was a form of devotion and a way that could be used to pay the debt of knowledge to the founder of the cottage, namely Kiai Hasyim Asy'ari.

Thanks to Kiai Sobari's sincere attitude, many people come to him with the aim of being prayed for and also asking to be given solutions to various problems, be it the problem of diseases caused by the interference of spirits or other diseases. In addition, Kiai Sobari also has a place in the hearts of the community, the proof is that many people respect and love him. Kiai Sobari's sincere attitude is an example of how to deal with life in order to remain happy even though sometimes reality is not always the same as expectations.

### **3.2. Second Finding**

Patience is an attitude to restrain oneself to remain calm in the face of tests, challenges, difficulties and unpleasant circumstances. By having an attitude of patience, a person can avoid despicable actions, with a patient attitude, a person will also get a noble place (Ulya Ali Ubaid, 2012). Here is an example of a quote that represents the value of patience:

"All of the above outward manifestations are the result of Kiai Zainal's difficult life. He had to follow a disciplined pattern of study and physical sanctions if he did not show the memorization quota set by the teacher from a very young age, six years old. Not allowed to enjoy a youth full of sensory pleasures, but had to follow a pattern of life harmonized with the laws of fiqh and taa cara laid down in the ancient religious books. Furthermore, he had to study for a long time in Makkah: far from relatives, often faced with shortages of basic necessities and had to undergo a lot of tirakat to acquire the expected religious knowledge" (Abdurrahman Wahid, 1997).

The quote above shows the patient attitude described by Abdurrahman Wahid through a character named Kiai Zainal Abidin Usman. His patient attitude is the result of the reality of the past life that Kiai Zainal has practiced since the age of six in order to seek knowledge. Kiai Zainal was patient, giving up his youth which was generally full of worldly pleasures, but he spent his youth seeking knowledge. Apart from patience, discipline is also the main value that must be upheld, otherwise Kiai Zainal is prepared to receive corporal punishment.

Not only that, Kiai Zainal's patience in seeking knowledge was also realized when he sought knowledge in a very far place, namely in Makkah. This fact requires Kiai Zainal to be patient because he has to be separated from his relatives. Kiai Zainal is also required to be patient because being overseas, it is not uncommon to experience a lack of money to shop for his basic daily needs. It is well known in pesantren circles that in order to gain knowledge and glory, sometimes a person must undergo a practice of tirakat prihatin such as fasting on Monday and Thursday, praying tahajud, keeping wudhu and so on. These things require patience in practicing them.

### **3.3. Third Finding**

Affection is a form of feeling love, care and understanding for others that makes someone do good and give them support. Affection can be in the form of empathy, care, and sacrifice. Affection is the basis for building harmonious relationships, namely mutual respect, tolerance and understanding both in the family, society and other broader contexts (Rahmatullah, 2017). The following quotation illustrates the attitude of compassion:

"Everywhere he explained the need for kebatinan people like Pak Damin to also be supported if they died. People who are not santri must also be treated well and respectfully in the association of life, if they need compensation" (Abdurrahman Wahid, 1997).

The quote above shows the attitude of affection described through a character named Kiai Iskandar. He is a kiai who graduated from the Lirboyo pesantren in East Java who lives in the countryside. Because of this, he is forced to follow the pattern of life of rural communities, including ostracizing people who are not santri.

Until one day there was a community that suddenly died, whose background was unknown. Incidentally, the time of death was Friday night, so then Kiai Iskandar thought the person was a good person. It was not long before it was discovered that the person who died was not a santri, in fact the person was an adherent of kebatinan. At first the community refused to take care of the body, but Kiai Iskandar taught the community to take care of the body. After taking care of the body, Kiai Iskandar gave lessons to his community to love all people without discriminating.

### **3.4. Fourth Finding**

Humility is an attitude that reflects the laughter and simplicity of a person who does not consider himself better or more noble than others. A humble attitude makes a person realize his limitations so that it will be easy to appreciate the advantages of others. People who have a humble character will be far from arrogant attitudes such as arrogance, prejudice, and looking down on others (Sapiyah, 2021). The following quote illustrates a humble attitude:

"That's all Kiai, nothing else?" "There are others, even many other books, but I have forgotten". The Kiai replied defensively. The prohibition of showing off intelligence is part of his life. (Abdurrahman Wahid, 1997).

The quote above shows a humble attitude described through a character named Kiai Adlan. He is an alumni of the Tebu Ireng pesantren founded by Kiai Hasyim Asy'ari. When asked by someone about what we had learned while studying at Tebu Ireng, he answered only to the Taqrib book, which is a basic-intermediate fiqh book that is often found in many pesantren. In fact, the books studied were very many, but Kiai Adlan only admitted that the books studied were limited to the Taqrib book, this was because Kiai Adlan had a humble attitude and did not want to show off his knowledge.

In contrast to most people when asked about what knowledge has been learned, it will be answered sometimes more than what has actually been learned, the goal is to be considered a person with a lot of knowledge. It is also realized in the following quote:

"His gestures are subtle, his greetings are friendly, his voice is not loud, and he always listens to what people say rather than speaking himself. His behavior is modest, in accordance with the morals formulated in the ancient books. Maybe he rarely eats out, snacks in restaurants, and so on, because according to the book Ta'liimul Muta'allim, such food lacks the blessing. So humble in attitude and so gentle in communication..." (Abdurrahman Wahid, 1997).

The quote above shows a humble attitude shown through a character named Kiai Ali. He is a kiai who is also a member of the House of Representatives in East Java. Kiai Ali is a scholar and an expert in politics, so he entered the ranks of DPR members. Until one day he found a problem, Kiai Ali again referred to the fiqh book called Fathul Mu'in to get a solution to a problem that occurred.

Kiai Ali is described as someone who has a humble attitude, both in behavior and action. Often people see this humble attitude in the smile he portrays in several activities, even his way of speaking when expressing an opinion or answer to a problem shows shade.

In contrast to most people now who when they have knowledge, their attitude becomes arrogant, as if they are the most knowledgeable human being compared to others. The figure of Kiai Ali can be an example of how someone behaves so that many people respect him because of his humility.

### **3.5. Fifth finding**

Husnudzan or good prejudice is a positive attitude towards everything and believes that Allah's decree is the best. The feeling of husnudzon will have an optimistic attitude in living life, because believing that Allah Swt has arranged all his affairs, a person is not easily shaken even though trials often come to him (Tasi' Nugroho, 2024). The following quote illustrates the attitude of husnudzan:

"Because the neighbor died on the Friday night of the fasting month, Kiai Iskandar spontaneously included him in the category of good people, his return to rahmatullah will be well received by Allah SWT. The good prejudice brought about by belief in the words of the Prophet Muhammad encouraged Kiai Iskandar to immediately need to come to the house" (Abdurrahman Wahid, 1997).

The quote above shows the attitude of husnuzon by Kiai Iskandar, this is in line with Faisal Faliyandra's research that husnudzon is the foundation or basis for someone to always think positively about everything that happens (Faisal Faliyandra, 2019). Husnudzon is divided into several types, namely husnudzan to Allah SWT and Husnudzan to fellow humans.

One of the husnudzan attitudes shown by Kiai Iskandar to someone who died on Friday night was to consider him a good person. This is because Kiai Iskandar believes the words of the Prophet Muhammad Saw that the person who died on Friday night was a good person. Because of this good perception, Kiai Iskandar considers Pak Damin as a kebatinan believer to be a good person and his body deserves to be taken care of like the bodies of other good people.

### **3.6. Sixth finding**

Wara' is a trait that shows caution in behavior, namely leaving syubhat things, namely things that are still doubtful about their halal or haram status. People who have a wara' attitude will avoid haram things (Muhammad Sholih Al-Munajjid, 2021). The following quote represents the attitude of wara':

"After all, Kiai Sahal did not lose his relationship with fellow pesantren kiai. This is evidenced by the protection by the elder of the kiai in his own village, Kiai Abdullah Salam. This Kiai leads the Qur'an memorization pesantren with his noble character (who is afraid to accept assistance from the rich or the government for fear of mixing haram goods) giving full approval to the work carried out by Kiai Sahal".

The quote above shows the wara' attitude described by a character named Kiai Sahal Mahfudz. He is a kiai who has a wara' attitude, which is an attitude that is very careful in accepting something, especially when the goods received are still unclear about their status between halal or haram. Like when he was about to receive help from someone, Kiai Sahal did not immediately accept it, but he did consider it in order to avoid shubhat matters.

This attitude should be possessed by people today, namely the attitude of caution in accepting something, it must be absolutely certain whether the status of the item is halal or haram. If the status of the item still cannot be identified, it is better to leave it. This aims to avoid haram things. But of course this is very difficult to do. Sometimes haram things are still accepted, let alone shubhat things whose status is still doubtful. But this is the attitude of Kiai Sahal Mahfudz which not many people may be able to do.

#### 4. Conclusion

The representation of the value of Sufism moral education in the book Kiai Nyentrik Membela Pemerintah by Abdurrahman Wahid is shown through the behavior of the characters described through narration and dialogue in the book. The values of Sufism moral education represented in the book are sincerity, tawakkal, compassion, humility, husnudzan and wara'. The values contained in the book can be an important lesson for readers. The values of Sufism moral education contained in literary works facilitate the process of forming human character, behavior and personality. This is because literature can convey messages without seeming patronizing.

This research has an impact on various related aspects, including theoretical, pedagogical and practical implications. The theoretical implication is to open up the understanding that essay collection books can be used as learning media. Apart from that, this research can also give rise to new research on the values of education in Islam contained in literary works. From a pedagogical perspective, Kiai Nyentrik's book Defending the Government can function as a learning medium, where the contents of this book can be understood and the values of Sufism moral education can be derived from it. In a practical aspect, this research can enrich knowledge regarding the values of Islamic education, especially those related to Sufism morals. For future researchers, it is hoped that they will be able to dig deeper into the values of Sufism moral education which may not have been expressed in the book Kiai Nyentrik Defends the Government, as well as being able to add to the treasures of research on various forms of literary works, such as books, novels, poetry, etc.

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