



The Concept of “Martabat Tujuh” Al-Burhanpuri (Study of the Creation of the Universe in the Perspective of Philosophical Sufism)

Fadli Rahman; Ahmad Dakhoir

State Islamic Institute of Palangka Raya, Indonesia

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Abstract

When discussing the creation of the universe, the discussion will never be separated from the three objects of philosophical study, namely God as the creator, man and the universe as the created object, and at the same time being the object undergoing the process of creation. God, humans and the universe, are three objects that are always interesting to discuss. The manifestation of the existence of the three becomes a perennial study. For philosophers, these three problems become “fertile” areas of thought in the framework of developing true knowledge (correct knowledge) about these three problems. In the realm of Islamic thought, these three objects have always received major attention among Muslim philosophers, including the Sufis. Even in the context of Sufism (Sufism), these three objects become eternal discussions, especially at the level of Sufism which has philosophical nuances, or commonly known as “Falsafi Sufism”. At this level, the concept of “Martabat Tujuh”, a concept that talks about the creation of al-Burhanpuri’s version of the universe, is tried to be presented.

Keywords: *Martabat Tujuh; Universe Creation; Philosophical Sufism*

Introduction

In general, philosophical thought in the Islamic world - or in other terms called Islamic philosophy - is oriented towards three objects of study, namely God, the creation of the universe, and humans (Nasution, 1999: 1-3). In the study of God, these philosophers used a lot of certain arguments in order to prove the existence of God. The arguments referred to, according to Harun Nasution (1985: 51-56) are like ontological, teleological, moral arguments, and so on. Meanwhile, regarding the creation of the universe, Ahmadi Isa (2001: 72) states that in general they try to answer more questions about how and from what nature was created? Is this realm *qadim* (no beginning) and *azaly* (eternal, without being started by something), or are *muhdats* (created from something that does not exist)? Furthermore, in relation to the third object, namely humans, in general their philosophical thinking is oriented towards the discourse on human nature, and their spiritual nature which is considered unique (Isa, 2001: 92). Specifically, among Islamic mysticism or Sufism thinkers, there are variations of opinion regarding the three objects above.

Regarding the first object, related to the existence of God, gave birth to the concept that proof and recognition of God can not only be known through the argumentative realm (both reason and revelation), but can also be known, even directly, by means of *ma'rifat or musyâhadat al. -wujûd*.

Then the discussion about the second object, namely about the universe, again about the creation of the universe, gave birth to certain opinions, such as the theory of *creatio ex nihilio* (created from something that does not exist, this universe is not *qadim*) which was adopted from the Greek philosophers. ; There are also those who put forward the theory of *al-faidh* (emanation), the process of manifesting (*tajalliyyat or wujûdiyyah*) from the Supreme Being (God), which later in its development gave birth to concepts such as “Martabat Tujuh”.

In addition, the third object, which is related to human nature, gave birth to philosophical thoughts about human existence (that it is a combination of *al-rûh, al-nafs, al-aql and al-qalb*) and in fact it is spiritual in nature, until from there the concept of *insân kamîl* was born, and the formulations of the sufistic strata (*maqâmât*) to reach the levels of *ma'rifat, ridhâ'*, and even *wahdat al-wujûd*, which eventually led to “tasting” of mystical tastes (*ahwâl*).

Due to the wide scope of the discussion which is oriented in the world of Sufistic philosophical thought above, on this occasion the author only focuses on the concept of Martabat Tujuh. This means that the discourse of this paper is only related to the segment of the creation of the universe (including humans) only. Even so, this discourse will still have a connection with God and the human substance itself.

Another reason why this theme was chosen is related to the context of learning about Sufism in Indonesia. It is a custom in itself that at every Sufism learning, especially at the level of philosophical Sufism, “Martabat Tujuh” is illustrated by Sufi teachers. But ironically, it is precisely the confusion that is found by the *sâlikîn* as the prosecutor of this knowledge. Hopefully, the presence of this article will be able to eliminate, at least minimize, the confusion in question.

There are two main points that the author wants to present in this paper. First, the form of the Martabat Tujuh concept in the version of Muhammad bin Fadhillah al-Burhanpuri (because this concept is considered to have been systematically structured); Second, the influence of this concept on the thinking of leading Sufis in our country, Indonesia.

Result and Discussion

1. The concept of "Martabat Tujuh" Al-Burhanpuri

Muhammad bin Fadhillah al-Burhanpuri was a great Sufi who was born in Gujarat, India. There is no clarity about when he was born. The data found only refers to the year he died, namely in 1020 Hijriah, or to coincide with 1620 AD. According to M. Laily Mansur (1996: 247), through the writing he left it is known that his thoughts are more inclined towards Ibn ‘Arabi, a well-known Sufi who came from Murcia. But what was unique was that the Sufism style he displayed was more oriented towards Sunni Sufism. Meanwhile, his teachings on the concept of Martabat Tujuh, which are contained in the book *al-Tuhfat al-Mursalâh ilâ Rûh al-Nabiy*, show that he was the inventor and compiler of the systematization of these teachings completely and clearly. Still according to Mansur (1996: 247-248), the teachings of Martabat Tujuh from al-Burhanpuri were actually a development of *Wahdat al-Wujûd's* teachings introduced by Ibn ‘Arabi (died 630 H / 1240 AD), which was further developed by Abd. al-Karim al-Jili (died 811 AH / 1409 AD).

Ibn ‘Arabi, with his concept of *tajalliyyat* (commonly known as *Wahdat al-Wujûd*) stated that this universe is a manifestation of Self (Dhat) which is eternal and without end. The substance of its creation - the version of Ahmadi Isa (2001: 74), Ibrahim Madkour (1983: 73) and Layli Mansur (1992: 75) - is the

tajalli of the Absolute Essence referred to through three dignity (stages / sessions), namely: 1). The dignity of Ahadiyyah (unity), or commonly referred to as the dignity of Dzatiyyat, at which stage (phase) the Absolute God (*al-Ilâh al-Mutlaq*) cannot be understood or imagined imaginatively; 2) Wahidiyyah's dignity. Through this stage, the Essence of God above tajalli (manifests itself) in various attributes and names (*asmâ'*). This is what is called *a'yân al-tsabitah*, namely ideas about something that is in God's mind, the ideal prototype. In fact, sometimes this stage is also called *ta'ayyun al-awwal*, the stage where the beginning of this real form is still only in the form of God; and 3) the dignity of *Tajalli-Syuhûdi* or *ta'ayun al-tsâni*. At this stage, God tajalli or manifests Himself through *asmâ'* and His attributes in empirical (actual) reality. Simply put, this universe, which is a collection of empirical phenomena, is *mazhar* (appearance), *tajalli* (self-appearance) of God in various forms or forms that are never ending ('Arabi, 1999: 32).

Furthermore, aleh Abd al-Karim al-Jilli, he formulated this concept with the concept of *tanazzul* (descending in levels), which also went through 3 (three) stages, namely: 1) Ahadiyyah stage, where God in His absoluteness just came out of *al-'ama* (usually called the tsubût realm or substantive realm); 2) Huwiyyah stage, the stage where God above has not yet seen His form in reality, but this stage is under the Ahadiyyat stage, because God at this stage has the attributes with all attributes and names. It's just that the attributes and *asmâ'* of God are still in a potential form; 3) The Inniyyah stage, the last stage which is the appearance of God through His attributes and *asmâ'* to all of His creation (*makhlûq*) (Isa, 2001: 75-76).

Through the above concepts of Ibn 'Arabi and al-Jilli, al-Burhanpuri then developed his concept of the creation of the universe, which is now known as "Martabat Tujuh" (Johns, 1965: 5). The essence of this concept is that everything in this universe, especially human beings, is an aspect born of a single substance, namely God. God as something absolute cannot be recognized and understood, either by reason or human sense organs. He can only be known after tajalli (appearing) through 7 (seven) dignity, so that the universe and all its contents are created from there, including humans.

The seven digits are: the first is Martabat Ahadiyyah, which is a stage that illustrates the first form, which is simply "*dhat*", without any form (*wujud lâ ta'ayun*). In this phase, there is only (kunhi) God alone. The second dignity is Martabat Wahdah, which is the dignity of ta'ayun or the first phase of appearance, which is called *Haqîqat al-Muhammadiyyah*. In this phase, there is the appearance of God's knowledge about the essence, nature, and *maujûdât* (everything that is manifested) in a *mujmal* (general) manner. The third dignity, namely Wahidiyyah dignity, which is the dignity of *ta'ayun tsâni* (second appearance), where in this phase all of God's knowledge about the essence, nature and *maujûdât* above begins to appear *tafshîl* (in detail). The three dignity (stages or phases) above, namely the dignity of Ahadiyyah, Wahdah and Wahidiyyah, are divine dignity which is abstract (*bathîn*) and *qadim* (beginningless). And from the three digits above, three other dignity emerges which are the outward aspects of the three digits referred to, namely: 1) Dignity of '*Arwâh Realm*', which is the phase of the manifestation of the unorganized and immaterial spiritual realm. This phase is commonly referred to as *Nûr Muhammad*; 2) Dignity '*Mistal Nature*', which is a stage in the realization of nature which is composed of pure and subtle elements. The elements referred to are united in a unified whole and will never be damaged; 3) Dignity '*Alam Ajs*', which is a phase of the realization of the material world (matter), which is composed of coarse elements and can be separated from one element to another, such as the elements of water, wind, earth and fire.

Through the phasing of the three mental dignity (Ahadiyyah, Wahdah and Wahidiyyah), which is then continued with the three birth digits (Realm of Spirit, Realm of Mistal and *Alam of Ajsam*) as a form of perfect *tajalli* (appearance), the final dignity is raised, the seventh dignity, namely: Dignity of '*Insân Realm*', namely the phase of human realization that collects all previous dignity. At this stage, the appearance (*tajalli*) of God is most perfectly illustrated in a separate form, a special prototype, commonly called *Insân Kamîl*, which manifests in the apostles, prophets and saints (Mansur, 1992, 248-249).

According to Simuh (1997: 180), al-Burhanpuri's thoughts, on this side, still seem to be colored by Ibn 'Arabi's *Wahdat al-Wujûd* thinking, and have had a very big influence on the development of post al-Ghazali Sufism. Meanwhile, on the other hand, al-Burhanpuri's own characteristic to uphold the *syari'at* is also seen here. According to him, the effort to get to God as closely as possible (the Sufi way) to arrive at "witness" (*musyahadah*) is through intensifying obligatory worship (*al-farâidh*) and *sunnah* worship (al-Nawâfil) (Mubin, 2002: 4).

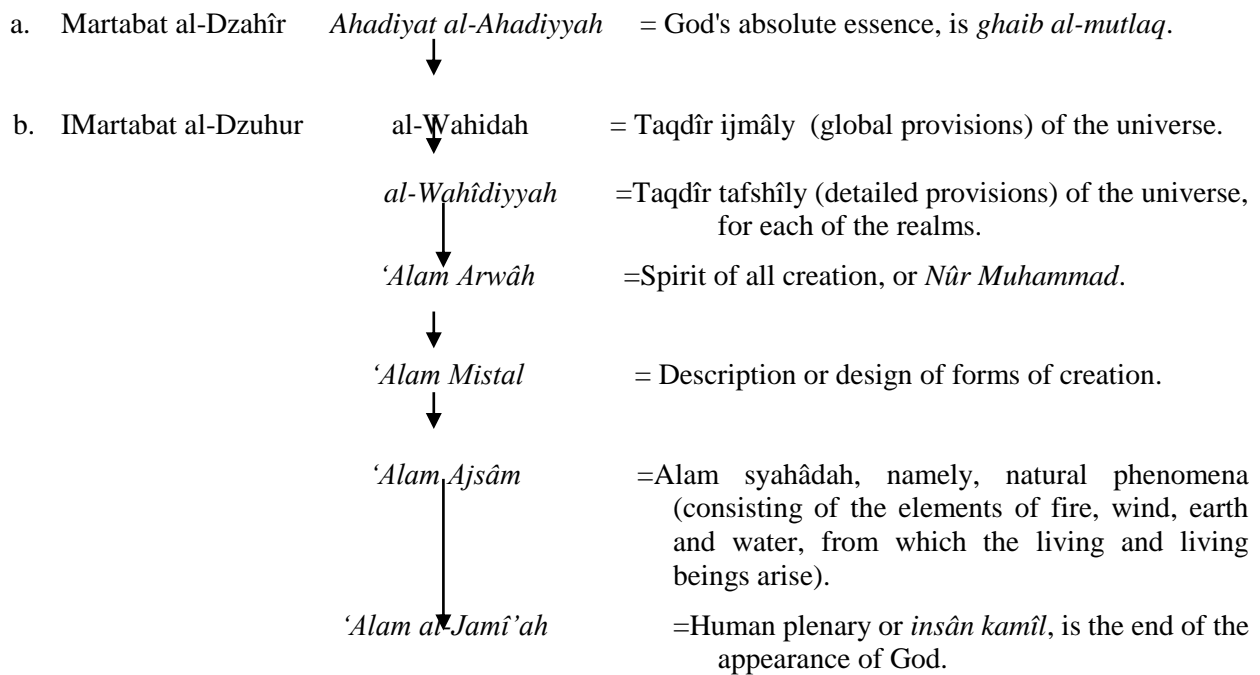
2. The concept of "Martabat Tujuh" in the Thought of Sufi Figures in Indonesia

The teaching of the "concept of universal creation" first entered Indonesia through *al-Jilli's* work, and the greatest influence was through al-Burhanpuri's *Tuhfah* book with his *Martabat Tujuh* concept. The work of this figure from Gujarat turned out to immediately influence the development of Islamic mystical thinking in Aceh and its surroundings. Until the 17th century AD, there were two Sufi figures in Aceh who developed this teaching. They are Hamzah Fansuri and Syamsuddin Pasai (Simuh, 1997: 180, 187). What is their concept? It does not need to be elaborated here, because their view of creation is referred to as returning to the concepts of Ibn 'Arabi and al-Jili, as mentioned earlier, which M. Solihin (2001: 29-33) says is also very thick with *Wahdat al-Wujûd*. Then, in the area of South Sumatra, Sheikh Abd al-Samad al-Palimbani - a close friend of Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari, when they were together studying religious sciences in Mecca and Medina - also studied the book *Tuhfat al-Mursalâh*. al-Burhanpuri's work. Abd al-Samad wrote a major work in the field of Sufism, as well as other works, namely the book *Sair al-Salikin fi Tariqat al-Sadat al-Shufiyyah*, which consists of 4 (four) volumes. The basic idea of writing this book is Abd al-Samad's own desire to combine philosophical Sufism with Sunni Sufism (al-Ghazali), where one of the descriptions in the book is about *Martabat Tujuh*, which can be briefly stated as follows:

- a. The dignity of *Ahadiyah al-Ahadiyyah*, which is also called the dignity of an *la ta'ayun*, the dignity of *ithlâq*, and the dignity of *dzât al-bahts*, which is a phase or stages in which there is only the form of *dzât* (essence) of the One God . At this level, what can be illustrated in the human heart and mind is only the essence of the being of God, without any description of *His attributes, asmâ 'and af'âl*;
- b. The dignity of al-Wahidah, also called the dignity of *al-ta'ayyun al-awwal* or *haqîqat al-muhammadiyah*, which is a phase that illustrates a form of God's knowledge about the form of *His dzât*, all attributes, *asmâ 'and everything that exists (maujûdât)*, in a global form (*ijmâlî*);
- c. The dignity of al-Wahidiyyah, also known as *haqîqat al-insâniyyah* or *al-ta'ayyun al-tsâni*, which is an advanced phase of the previous dignity (stage), where what is in this phase is a form of God's knowledge about the form of *dzât Him*, all attributes, *asmâ 'and everything that exists (maujûdât)*, in a detailed form (specific or *tafshîlî*);
- d. The dignity of 'Arwâh Nature, also called the term *Nûr Muhammad*, is a phase or state of the universe which still consists of something (element) that is subtle (*rûhiyyat*), independent and not different;
- e. Dignity 'Mistal Realm, namely a phase in which the universe (universe) is manifested in a form of certain descriptions, which are composed of pure and subtle elements. The elements referred to are united in a complete unity, do not receive a pen (meaning that they will not be damaged), and do not receive a patch (meaning that they are fixed in quantity, cannot be added);

- f. Dignity 'Alam Ajs', namely a phase or state in which the universe above is then arranged into four elements, namely fire, wind, earth and water. This arrangement consists of the gross and fragmentary elements. From this arrangement are created stones, plants, animals, humans and jinn;
- g. Dignity 'Alam al-Jamî'ah, namely the dignity or state of being able to gather the six previous dignity. This dignity is also called the dignity of *al-insân* or *al-ta'ayyun al-âkhir* or the last appearance, where the most concrete appearance of God takes place, but is in the final position. (al-Palimbani, without year: 101-106)

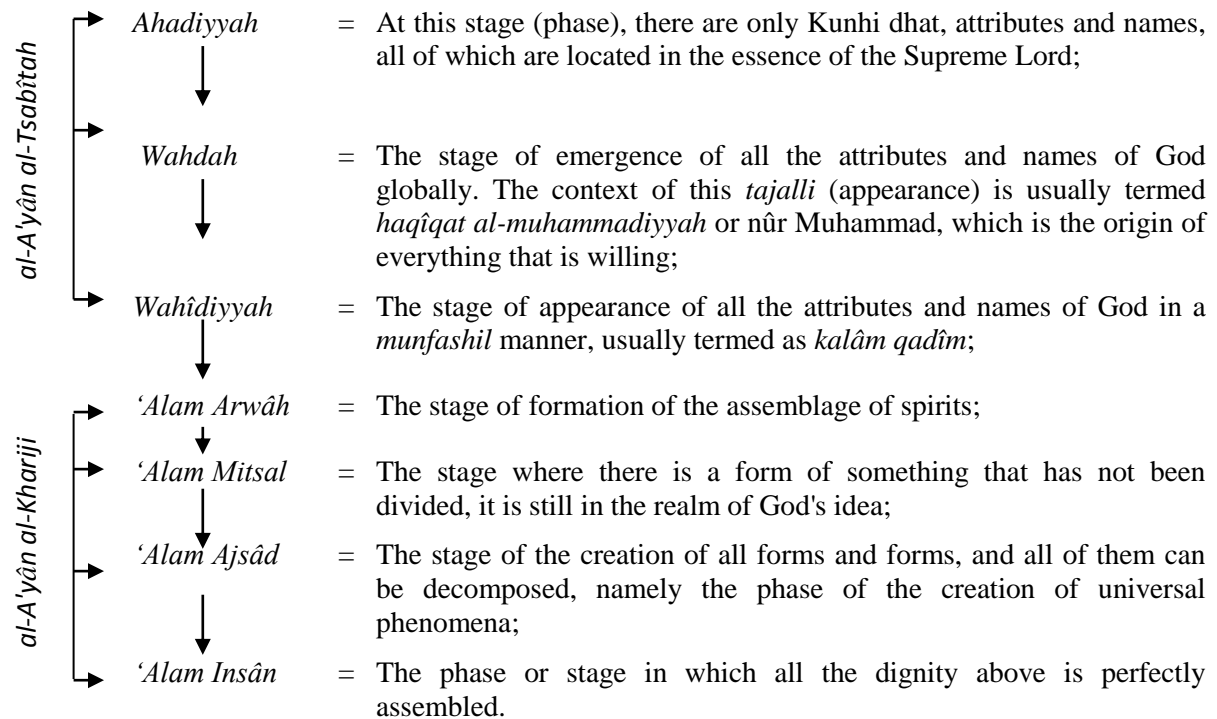
The description of the procession of the creation of this universe can be explained in the following scheme:



In addition, in South Kalimantan there is also a Sufi figure who is in the same age as Sheikh Abd Samad al-Palimbani and Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari, as well as their other friends, who come from Sulawesi and Java. The Sufi figure referred to is Sheikh Muhammad Nafis al-Banjari (born 1148 H / 1735 AD). This figure is famous for his book *al-Durr al-Nafîs fî Bayâni Wahîdat al-Af'âl wa al-Asmâ 'wa al-Dzât Dzât al-Taqdîs* (abbreviated as *al-Durr al-Nafîs* only), which he wrote in 1200 AH / 1785 AD, when he was in Mecca. The big ideas of the thoughts contained in this book are the same as those of al-Palimbani (Isa, 2001: 166-167). Regarding the theory of creation, which is stated in his book *al-Durr al-Nafîs*, he terms Martabat Tujuh as *tajalli* and *tanazzul* dignity, namely as a procession of universal events starting from immaterial form, to material being, as he said:

"Know by you, *O sâlik*, that *tajalli dzat* has seven dignity, then there arises *tanazzul* from *Hadrat al-Sarij*, which is like than mere dhat, than there is no *i'tibar shifât* and *asmâ* ', that is, the nationality of people is broken. than the signal "(Nafis, 21).

Muhammad Nafis' version of the *tajalli* or *tanazzul* (Martabat Tujuh) theory can be summarized in the following scheme:



The first three dignity (*Ahadiyyah*, *Wahdah* and *Wahîdiyyah*) are qadim in nature. The arrangement contained in the levels between the three is just an illustrative picture (*amr i'tibari*), not articulated by the existence of levels according to the scale of time, space and time. These three he called *al-A'yân al-Tsabîtah*, which is something permanent in the knowledge of God the *Qadîm*.

Furthermore, other dignity afterward, namely '*Arwâh Realm*,' *Mistal Realm*, '*Ajsâd Realm and Insân Realm*, he called *tajalli* (appearance) of God's self from a physical perspective, or termed *al-A'yân al-Khariji* (Nafis , 21-23). Muhammad Nafis, explained that the approach in this conception was not *Ittihad* or *Hulûl*, but he called it *Wahdat al-Syuhûd*. In a conception like this, the core formulation used as the benchmark is *shuhûd al-kasrah fi al-wahdah, wa shuhûd al-wahdah fi al-kasrah*. The instrument used in this approach is not the ratio or human sense organs, but the eye of the heart (mind).

Through the instrument (the eye of the heart), high (complex) knowledge can be achieved, as explained by Muhammad Nafis (without years: 2) himself in the preamble of his book. Why is it said to be complicated? According to Mubin (2002: 10) that like Abd al-Samad al-Palimbani, on the one hand, Muhammad Nafis wanted his Sufism to have Sunni nuances, one of which is typically *Wahdat al-Syuhûd* (unity of mystical vision). While on the other hand, the theme he discusses is the context of philosophical Sufism or philosophical Sufism. And because of that, the discussion about Martabat Tujuh always invites a certain interest in ketasawufan assemblies in the country, apart from this level of complexity which is biased on the existence of pros and cons among Islamic scholars, depending on which side they are see it.

Conclusion

The concept of Martabat Tujuh is actually a human effort within the framework of understanding philosophically (radical, systematic, universal) about the substance and procession of the creation of the universe. Through this understanding, it is known that God shows His existence in a *tajalli* or *tanazzul* manner, by creating the universe, that is, something that is considered *madzhar* (empirical and actual phenomena), so that His inner self can be recognized by humans. This universe, namely the universe and

man, is not God, and God is not the same as nature and humans. The universe is a creation from the Creator (God). But even so, in truth, it is precisely in the universe that the substance of the form *af'al* (all actions), *asmâ* '(whole names), *shifât* (all attributes), and *dzât* (essence) of God is reflected. The existence of the universe cannot be separated from the existence of God as its Creator, so that substantive wujud (existence) is actually only the form of God. While the universe does not exist independently, its existence is always supported by the existence of God. This premise is what gave rise to the term *Wahdat al-Wujûd*. It's just that, in this context, Abd al-Samad al-Palimbani and Muhammad Nafis al-Banjari termed him *Wahdat al-Syuhûd* (referring to his spiritual region, and not to his empirical phenomena). *Wa Allahu a'lamu!*

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