Globethics Repository



Hamka (1908-1981)

This page was generated automatically upon download from the Globethics Repository. More information on Globethics see https://www.globethics.net. Data and content policy of Globethics Repository see https://repository.globethics.net/pages/policy.

Item Type	Thesis
Authors	Ihsan, Nur Hadi
Publisher	International Islamic University Malaysia
Rights	With permission of the license/copyright holder
Download date	2026-11-07 04:58:20
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/222761



الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية ماليزيا
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA
يونيورسيتي إسلام انتارابغسا ملايسيا

HAMKA (1908-1981): A STUDY OF SOME ASPECTS OF HIS SUFI THOUGHT

BY

NUR HADI IHSAN

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

FEBRUARY 1997

HAMKA (1908-1981): A STUDY OF SOME ASPECT OF HIS SUFI THOUGHT

BY
NUR HADI IHSAN

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF
ISLAMIC REVEALED KNOWLEDGE AND HERITAGE

KULLIYYAH OF
ISLAMIC REVEALED KNOWLEDGE AND HUMAN
SCIENCES
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
MALSYSIA

FEBRUARY 1997

ABSTRACT

The present work is an attempt to expound some aspects of Sufistic ideas and teachings of a great Indonesian Muslim scholar in modern time, Hamka (1908-1981). Hamka was born and brought up in a family whose genealogy indicated that his ancestors were Sufis of some renown. Hamka's ancestors were leaders and instructors of the Naqshabandiyyah order, the order with the greatest number of followers in the region. Even though Hamka's father was a fiery critic against Sufism, it did not show that the latter broke with the Sufistic tradition of the family. For what he criticized were those doctrines and practices in Sufism which he deemed to be in contrast to the true teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and in fact Hamka himself describes his father as a true devoted Sufi.

Hamka's attitude toward Sufism is obvious, he is a bold proponent, but the image of Sufism which Hamka presents is significantly different from that which is commonly put forward by many other scholars of Sufism in the country. Hamka combines between Sufism and activism; struggle, sacrifice, and hard work, one which he believes to be the true spirit of Islam. Hamka is of the view that Sufism is important to attain direct access to God and having His good pleasure. In this regard, Hamka maintains that the pursuit of this goal must not entail distraction from this worldly life, for the world as such is not evil. It is its abuse which deserves condemnation and its pursuit insofar as it distracts a person from attaining the above goal which is the true evil. Hamka, therefore, believes that a person can still keep in touch with the world; to earn wealth, to have family, to serve people, to have position, and to hold any worldly profession and yet remains a true devoted Sufi.

ãáÎøÕ ÇáÈÍÍË

åÐÇ ÇáÈÍÍË ÏÑÇÓÉ Úä ÈÚÖ ÇáÌæÇäÈ ÇáÕæÝíÉ ãä ÃÝßÇÑ ÍÇãßÇ (1908-1981) ÃÍÏ ÇáÔÎÕíÇÊ ÇáÈÇÑÒíä Ýí ÊÇÑíÎ ÇáÝßÑ ÇáÅÓáÇãí ÇáãÚÇÕÑ ÈÅäÏæäíÓíÇ. æáÏ ÍÇãßÇ æÊÑÈì Ýí ÃÓÑÉ ÚÑíÞÉ ÐÇÊ ÇáäÒÚÉ ÇáÕæÝíÉ. ÝßÇä ãä ÂÈÇÆå ÔíæÎÇ ááØÑíÞÉ ÇáäÞÔÈäÏíÉ æåí ÃßËÑ ÇáØÑÞ ÃÊÈÇÚÇ Ýí ÇáãäØÞÉ. æÑÛã Ãä æÇáÏ ÍÇãßÇ ÇáÏßÊæÑ ÚÈÏ ÇáßÑíã ÃãÑ Çááå ãÚÑæÝ ÈÍÏøÉ äÞÏå æ ÔÏøÉ ÑÏøå Úáì ÈÚÖ ÇáÊÚÇáíã ÇáÕæÝíÉ áßäø Ðáß áÇ íÕáÍ Ãä íßæä ÏáíáÇ Úáì ãæÞÝ ÇáæÇáÏ ÖÏø ÇáäÒÚÉ ÇáÕæÝíÉ. æÐáß áÃäø ÇáÊÚÇáíã ÇáÕæÝíÉ ÇáÊí ÇäÊÞÏåÇ ÇáÏßÊæÑ ÚÈÏ ÇáßÑíã ÝÞØ ãä ÇáÃãæÑ ÇáÊí ßÇä íÑÇåÇ ÎÇÑÌÉ Úä ÊÚÇáíã ÇáßÊÇÈ æÇáÓäÉ ÇáÕÍíÉ æãäÇÞÖÉ áåÇ¡ Èá æÞÏ ßÇä ÇáæÇáÏ äÝÓå ÕæÝíÇ ÈãÚäì ÇáßáãÉ ßãÇ æÕÝå ÇÈäå ÈÐáß.

æãä ÇáæÇÖÍ Ãäø ãæÞÝ ÍÇãßÇ ãä ÇáÊÕæÝ ãæÞÝ ãÏÇÝÚ ãÊÍãøÓ ÅáÇ Ãäø ÕæÑÉ ÇáÊÕæøÝ ÇáÊí íÞÏãåÇ ÊÎÊáÝ Úä ÕæÑ ÇáÊÕæÝ ÇáÊí íÊãÓøß ÈåÇ ßËíÑ ãä ÚáãÇÁ ÇáÊÕæøÝ Ýí ÚÕÑå. æÞÏ æÝøÞ ÍÇãßÇ Èíä ÇáÊÕæøÝ æ ÇáäÔÇØ ÇáÍÑßíø¡ æÑÃì Ãäø ÇáÇäÏãÇÌ Èíäååã åæ ÑæÍ ÇáÅÓáÇã ÇáÍÞíÞí. æÇáÊÕæøÝ Ýí äÙÑ ÍÇãßÇ ãä Ãåãø ÇáØÑÞ Åáì ãÚÑÝÉ Çáåå æäíá ÑÖÇå¡ æãÚ åÐÇ Ýåæ íÑì Ãäø ÇáÓÚí ááæÕæá Åáì åÐÇ ÇáåÏÝ áÇíÚäí ÇáÇäÕÑÇÝ Úä ÇáÍíÇÉ ÇáÏäíæíøÉ æ ÐãøåÇ áÃäø ÇáÏäíÇ ÐÇÊåÇ áíÓÊ ÔÑøÇ. ÅäãÇ ÇáÔÑø Ýí ÓæÁ ÇáÊÚÇãá ãÚåÇ æ ÇáÍÑÕ Úáíåß æ ÌÚáåÇ ãØáÈÇ åÇãøÇ ÈÛíÑ ÍÞø ÍÊì íáåì ÇáäÇÓ Úä ÇáæÕæá Åáì ãÚÑÝÉ Çáåå æ ÇÈÊÛÇÁ ÑÖÇå ÊÚÇáì. æ áÐáß íÑì ÍÇãßÇ Ãäøå áíÓ áåÅäÓÇä Ãíø ÈÃÓ ãä Ãä íßÓÈ ÇáãÇ¡ æ íØáÈ Ãíø ãäÕÈ Ãæ æÙíÝÉ Ýí

åÐå ÇáÍíÇÉ¡ æÓíáÉ áäíá ÇáÍÓäÉ Ýí ÇáÂÎÑÉ. æÈÐáß íÕÈÍ ÇáÅäÓÇä ÑÛã ãäÇÑÓÊå ááæÙíÝÉ ÇáÏäíæíÉ Ýí ãÙåÑå¡ áßää ÃíÖÇ Ýí ÇáæÞÊ äÝÓå íÚÏø ãä ÇáÕæÝíÉ ÇáÍÞíÞíä.

APPROVAL

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage.

_____

Name
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage.

_____

Name
Examiner

This thesis was submitted to the Department of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage and is accepted as partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage.

_____

Name
Head, Department of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage.

This thesis was submitted to the Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences and is accepted as partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage.

_____

Name
Dean, Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed
Knowledge and Human Sciences.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references and a bibliography is appended.

Name_____

Signature_____ Date_____

© Copyright by Nur Hadi Ihsan and

International Islamic University Malaysia

To my parents, my wife, and my daughter

(Haninah az-Zahra)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Wan Mohd. Azam Mohd. Amin, thesis's supervisor, for his advice, assistance, and important suggestions throughout my research; I shall always remember his kindness and friendship.

I wish also to express my gratitude to Prof. Dr. Abdul Majid Muhammad Mackeen, thesis's second reader, for his enlightened insight and advice and illuminated suggestions and comments which inspired me so much to accomplish this thesis.

I am grateful to Institut Pendidikan Darussalam (now Institut Studi Islam Darussalam), Pondok Modern Gontor, Indonesia and Department of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage, International Islamic University Malaysia for their encouragement and support during my study at International Islamic University Malaysia.

I am also grateful to all friends and colleagues who helped me in the completion of this research. I am also grateful to Verna Taylor for her help in editing this work.

My sincere thanks are also extended to my parents and my wife for their patience, love, and understanding.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract (English)..... ii
Abstract (Arabic)..... iii
Approval Page..... iv
Declaration..... v
Copyright..... vi
Dedication..... vii
Acknowledgements..... viii
System of Transliteration..... x

CHAPTER1 : INTRODUCTION..... 1

CHAPTER 2: THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF HAMKA..... 12
A. Minangkabau and Sufism..... 12
B. Hamka's Life and Works..... 24
1. Hamka's Ancestors..... 24
2. Hamka's Education and Activity..... 28
3. Hamka's Works..... 35

CHAPTER 3: HAMKA'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS SUFISM..... 39
A. Quest for God..... 39
1. The Way of Artist..... 39
2. The Way of Philosopher..... 42
3. The Way of Sufi..... 43
B. Hamka's View of *Tariqah*..... 50
1. The Absolute Authority of *Shaykh*..... 52
2. *Rabitah* and *Tawassul*..... 54

CHAPTER 4: HAMKA'S DOCTRINE OF SUFISM..... 65
A. *Zuhd* (Renunciation)..... 69
B. *Tawakkul* (Trust in God)..... 82

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION..... 95

BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 101

SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION

System of transliteration used in this thesis is as follows: ‘ (*hamzah*), b, t, th, j, h, kh, d, dh, r, z, s, sh, s, d, t, z, `, gh, f, q, k, l, m, n, h, w, y.

The short vowels are a, i, u.

The long vowels are a, i, u.

In the construct state the *ta’ marbutah* is changed from -*ah* to -*at.* In pausal form, the *ta’ marbutah* is -*ah.*

The vowel before *hamzah al-wasl* is not elided; Abu al-`Abbas rather than Abu ‘l-`Abbas.

The diphthongs are -*aw* and -*ay.*

The *nisbah* is written -*i* and *iyyah*.

The definite article is -*al* before lunar and solar letters.

The use of Arabic words is italized except for words that are widely used in English, such as Qur'an, Sunnah, Hadith, or tawhid.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

A. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

In his foreword[1] to the book *Hamka di Mata Hati Umat* (Hamka in the Mind's Eye of Ummah), Abdurrahman Wahid notes that Hamka (an acronym of his full name, Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah) was a great Indonesian Muslim scholar whose knowledge of Islamic sciences was profound and complete. This brought him some prestigious achievements: Firstly, he could accomplish his monumental work *Tafsir al-Azhar* (30 volumes of Qur'anic Commentary) in which he displayed his comprehensive knowledge of almost all disciplines in Islamic sciences. Secondly, Hamka successfully retrieved some epistemological basis of Sufism that escaped the attention of Muslim modernist group to which he belonged. Abdurrahman states further that as an object of an intellectual discourse, Sufism once became a specter for that group especially in the first quarter of this century. This was due to the fact that there were many teachings and practices of Sufi orders' adherents which the modernists deemed as misguided and even against the teachings of Islam. Hamka's work *Tasauf Modern* (Modern Sufism) represents a timely effort to recon-

---

[1] See Abdurrahman Wahid, Benarkah Buya Hamka seorang besar?: sebuah pengantar, in Nasir Tamara, Buntaran Sanusi, and Vincent Djauhari (edit.). *Hamka di mata hati Umat,* Sinar Harapan, Jakarta, 1983, pp. 30-31.

sider that modernists' attitude and even by this work Hamka succeeded in restoring Sufism to its

rightful position.[2]

Even though Hamka himself realised that there were (and are) many people trying to defile Sufism, which resulted in many frustrated and helpless people who were unable to distinguish the true and pure Sufism from the false and impure one, and there were also others who, for some reason, were disgusted to speak about or deal with Sufism, he openly declared his attitude towards Sufism in his words:

> That is not my position. I am still passionately fond of Sufism. I love Sufism still. I am still eager to make its teachings a way of self-discipline (*riyadah*) so that I may attain direct contact with God in my way of seeking after Him.[3]

For Hamka, Sufism is a way pursued for the purpose of attaining direct access to God by means of getting rid of the veils that hinder oneself from attaining that goal. In order to arrive at this goal, a Sufi must embark on many stages of journey, the first of which is to purify the heart from lower self, one that is generally described as *takhalli*; the second is to equip (oneself) with good manners or qualities, that is t*ahalli*; and the last is *tajalli* which

---

[2] Ibid.

[3] Hamka, *Pandangan hidup Muslim,* Bulan Bintang, Jakarta, 1992, p. 45.

means manifestation of divine attributes in the heart of Sufi in such a way that the self ascends to a higher level of spiritual attainment. [4]

Observing Hamka's elaboration of his doctrines, one will not fail to learn that he followed in the footsteps of al-Ghazali (d. 505/1111). His teachings were in conformity and represented the continuity of al-Ghazali's thought in the sense that both strictly maintained a thorough balance between *Shari`ah* and *Haqiqah* (Sufism). But Hamka did differ from the latter in some points. Consider for example the point of seclusion (*khalwah*). According to al-Ghazali, in order to proximate with God the heart of Sufi must be set free for adoration and reflection and silent communing with God. This could only be attained through a distraction from worldly affairs and human companionship, and withdrawal into seclusion was al-Ghazali's prescription for securing such distraction.[5] Hamka did not prescribe seclusion as did al-Ghazali, and would rather emphasise on the involvement of Sufi in social life, for society needs his spiritual guidance. Hamka believed that a Sufi is not one who runs away from the wave of life or flees into the jungle to secure his own salvation.[6] The genuine Sufi will step forward as a leader when the world suffers from moral and spiritual decadence.[7]

---

[4] Ibid., pp.53-55.

[5] See Margaret Smith, *Al-Ghazali the mystic,* Lahore, Kazi Publication, 1983, pp.168-9. See also, Majid Fakhry, *Ethical theories in Islam,* E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1991, pp.221-2.

[6] Hamka, *Pandangan hidup Muslim*, p.49.

[7] Ibid., p.28.

The true Sufi, therefore, always keeps in touch with social life in order to play his role in this moral and spiritual reconstruction of the society.[8]

For the sake of having a clear picture of Hamka's doctrines in Sufism, the present work shall attempt to expound some aspects of Hamka's doctrines in Sufism.

B. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As already pointed out earlier, this study will discuss some aspects of Hamka's ideas and teachings in Sufism. In the following the thesis will present a brief review of the most importance of Hamka's works in this field which will become its primary sources and then will be followed by a review of works undertaken by researchers in this matter.

The first and yet the most significant book of Hamka in Sufism is *Tasauf Modern* (Modern Sufism). The book gives a well formulation of Hamka's ideas in Sufism; including his doctrine about happiness that is the very goal of any practices in Sufism. Hamka dedicates half of the book (more than 150 pages) to discuss about happiness from different points of view ranging from the views of philosophers to artist, both Muslim and non-Muslim, of ancient Greek as well as of modern time. The other half exhaustively elaborates happiness and the way to it from the perspective of Sufi. In this part Hamka also discusses his doctrine about *zuhd* (renunciation), *tawakkul* (trust in God), *sabr* (patience), *shukr* (gratitude),

[8] Ibid., p.49.

qana'ah (contentment), and *rida* (satisfaction) which he deems as the very important way to happiness.

Tasauf : Perkembangan dan Pemurniannya (Sufism: Its Development and Authentication). This book deals with the history of Sufism from early period of its growth beginning from the era of the Prophet and his companions to the era of decay of Sufism in 18th century onwards. It also gives important information about the development of as well as efforts to reform Sufism in Indonesia. The book is the first and yet the most comprehensive exposition of the history of Sufism written in the Malay-Indonesian language.

Pandangan Hidup Muslim (Muslim's Way of Life). The book does not deal with Sufism in a specific manner, it comprises 25 chapters covering various questions and issues in about 300 pages. The significance of this work lies in its elaboration of metaphysical basis of Hamka's doctrine in Sufism which is noticeable, for example, in his discussion about the quest of Him (God), the true Unity, and the belief in God. Notwithstanding the above important of the book, it has not received due attention from the part researchers in Hamka's doctrine of Sufism.

Pelajaran Agama Islam (Lesson on Islam). The work is a philosophical exposition of the Islamic belief system. However, in the discussion of certain topics in this subject the question of some doctrines and practices in Sufism are also carried out. Consider for

example the discussion about the way of Sufi, *tawassul* (taking intercessor with God), *wali* (saint) and *karamah* (miraculous power), and veneration of saint's tomb.

Tafsir al-Azhar. As mentioned earlier this work (30 volumes of Qur'anic commentary) displays Hamka's comprehensive knowledge of almost all of the disciplines in Islamic sciences including Sufism which can be seen, for example, in certain parts of this thesis.

To the best of the writer's knowledge, there are only a few works have been undertaken by researchers regarding this subject, and there is only one which specifically discusses Hamka's doctrines in Sufism, the rest only touches the issue in a very brief manner. A study of Hamka's doctrines of Sufism by M. Yunan Yusuf entitled *Hamka dan Ajaran Tasaufnya* (Hamka and His Doctrine of Sufism*)*,[9] was the only work to expose the Sufistic ideas and teachings of Hamka in a specific manner. In this work Yunan tries to show Hamka's efforts to purify Sufism and bring it back to its original inspiration within the context of the development of Sufism in Indonesia. In addition Yunan also discloses Hamka's concept of Sufism, his view on the goal of Sufism, and the way to happiness. At this point we will see some similar issues that are discussed in Yunan's work and in ours, notably the issue of Hamka's concept of *zuhd* (renunciation). At this juncture, although Yunan's work has given a good exposition of the matter, it is rather brief and limited that it needs further elaboration

[9] See M. Yunan Yusuf, *Hamka dan ajaran Tasaufnya,* Institut Agama Islam Negeri [IAIN] "Syarif Hidayatullah", Jakarta, 1985.

in order to have a comprehensive understanding of Hamka's ideas of *zuhd*. Our present work, it is hoped, will carry out this task.

The following are the works that briefly deal with Hamka's thought in Sufism:

Steenbrink, in his article "Hamka (1908-1981) and the Integration of the Islamic *Ummah* of Indonesia,"[10] notes that Hamka ruled out the system of *tariqah* organisation, but, Steenbrink says further, did not give it too much attention and did not start a polemic. Pertaining to this point the present study shall endeavour to clarify the nature of Hamka's rejection of *tariqah* when discussing his attitude towards Sufism. Steenbrink also comments on Hamka's *Tasauf Modern* saying that the general trend indicated by the book reveals a type of Sufism, as practised in the first centuries of Islam, during which the idea of *zuhd* was stressed.[11]

In his latest work, entitled *Islam Agama Peradaban, Membangun Makna dan Relevansi Dakwah Islam Dalam Sejarah,* Nurcholis Madjid also briefly discusses Hamka's thought in Sufism. He mentions that in *Tasauf Modern* Hamka laid down the foundations of new Sufism (neo-Sufism) in Indonesia. Hamka's teachings in Sufism represents the continuity of the teachings of al-Ghazali particularly in maintaining a balance between *Shari`ah* and Sufism. But Hamka's emphasis on keeping constant involvement in social life distinguishes him from al-Ghazali and places him in the line of the trend of Sufism which was

---

[10] See Karel Steenbrink, Hamka (1908-1981) and the integration of the Islamic *Ummah* of Indonesia, *Studia Islamika*, vol. 1, no. 3 (1994): pp.119-147.

[11] Ibid.

championed by Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 A.H./1327 CE) and Ibn Qayyim who supported the type of Sufism that is in full conformity with the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, with an emphasis on the active involvement in the life affairs of society.[12]

There are other several works written about Hamka, but none--except the said works--is related to his ideas and teachings in Sufism. The following are, to name a few, the works about Hamka in this respect:

Corak Pemikiran Kalam Tafsir al-Azhar (Theological Trend of Tafsir al-Azhar) is an important work about theological aspect of Hamka's *Tafsir* written by M. Yunan Yusuf. In this work, which is a doctoral dissertation at State Institute for Islamic Studies, Jakarta, Yunan expounds the character and trend of theology of Hamka in his Qur'anic commentary *Tafsir al-Azhar*. Yunan concludes[13] that the trend of Hamka's theology is more rational (such as that of Mu`tazilite and Maturidite of Samarkand) rather than traditional (which is supported by Ash`arite and Maturidite of Bukhara). Out of the eight problems analyzed only in the problems of reason and revelation had Hamka found in agreement with that traditional school while in the rest six issues Hamka was rational. Yunan, for example, notes that with respect to the question of free will and predestination Hamka is of the view that man possesses power over his action or in other words he has freedom in his will. This is, to

---

[12] Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam Agama peradaban, membangun makna dan relevansi dakwah Islam dalam sejarah*, Paramadina, Jakarta, 1995, pp.92-3.

[13] See, M. Yunan Yusuf, *Corak pemikiran Kalam Tafsir al-Azhar,* Pustaka Panjimas, Jakarta, 1990, pp.172-3.

Hamka, due to the fact that God has granted man reason by which he recognize the difference between good and bad and between useful and harmful.[14] Hence a man in Hamka's theology is dynamic not fatalistic.[15] This dynamism of man is also maintained by Hamka in his ideas and teachings in Sufism as will be made clear in our present work.

The other work on *Tafsir al-Azhar* is a doctoral dissertation by M. Roem Rowie, submitted to al-Azhar University, Egypt. The dissertation studies the methodology of *Tafsir al-Azhar*.[16]

In literature, Ali Audah writes that Hamka was the only Indonesian `*ulama*' who was actively involved in dealing with literary issues.[17] In his article "Dalam Karya Sastra pun Berdakwah dan Berkhotbah," S. I. Poeradisastra notes that to Hamka his involvement in the field of literature was also a kind of *'ibadah* or service to God. This made him successful in inserting the elements of *da`wah* into his literary works.[18]

---

[14] This is a common view of the Mu`tazilite, the bold proponent of rational school in theology. But, Hamka, even though he followed the rational trend in theology, he is not always in agreement with the view of Mu`tazilite (see, Ibid., p.172).

[15] Ibid.

[16] So far the writer could not have access to the work.

[17] See Ali Audah, Satu segi dengan Hamka, in Solihin Salam (edit.), *Kenang-Kenangan 70 tahun Buya Hamka*, Nurul Islam, Jakarta, 1978, pp.204-7.

[18] S. I. Poeradisastra, Dalam karya sastra pun berdakwah dan berkhotbah, in Nasir Tamara, Buntaran Sanusi and Vincent Djauhari (edit.), *Hamka di mata hati Umat*, Sinar Harapan, Jakarta, 1983, pp.121-136.

Hamka dan Masyarakat Islam Indonesia: Catatan Pendahuluan Riwayat dan Perjuangannya (Hamka and Indonesian Islamic society: A Preliminary Note on His Life and Struggle), by Fachry Ali is the other work written about Hamka. Fachry concludes that in the process of modernisation, Hamka was considered as an avant-garde Islamic scholar in the modern Islamic society of Indonesia.[19]

C. SCOPE AND SIGNIFICANCE

The thesis is a study about Hamka's ideas and teachings in Sufism. It, however, will only confine to certain aspects of his doctrines in Sufism which covers his attitude towards Sufism as well as some aspects of his thought in this field.

Even though Indonesia is a state with the largest Muslim population, there is still little aspect about Islam in this country known to the international world. This is partly due to the fact that most works written about Islam in Indonesia are not (available) in international language, particularly English. The present study seeks to fill this gap by bringing to light the Sufistic aspect of Islam in Indonesia, which is notably among the chief characteristics of Islam in the region, by using English as the medium of writing.

Although there has been a considerable amount of research carried out in the field of Sufism in Indonesia, most are concerned only with the study of the doctrines of Sufi figures who

[19] Fachry Ali, Hamka dan masyarakat Islam Indonesia: catatan pendahuluan riwayat dan perjuangannya, *Prisma* (February 1983).

lived around 17th century, rather than that of the later one. It is hoped that this work will become a humble exposition of the ideas and teachings of Sufi of modern time in Indonesia.

D. METHODOLOGY

This thesis employs the general method applied in textual scholarship, namely commentary. In this study, the method will mean that the exposition of the ideas and teachings of a Sufi is largely guided by comparison with similar ideas and teachings found in the writings of earlier Sufis, and perhaps even linking them as sources of origin.[20]

The data regarding Hamka's attitude towards Sufism and some aspects of his thought in Sufism will be collected from primary sources; they are Hamka's own works in this field, the most important of which are: *Tasauf Modern* (Modern Sufism), *Tasauf: Perkembangan dan Pemurniannya* (Tasawuf: Its Development and Authentication), *Pandangan Hidup Muslim* (Muslim's Way of Life*), Pelajaran Agama Islam* (Lesson on Islam), and *Tafsir al-Azhar*. In addition, the work will also seek data from secondary sources in this field for the purpose of elaboration, commentary, or comparison.

Pertaining to the data about Hamka's biography and Sufism in the Minangkabau (Hamka's hometown) the work will also benefit from Hamka's own works, such as *Ayahku* (My

[20] Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *The mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri,* University of Malaya Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1970, p.xiv.

Father) and *Kenang-Kenangan Hidup* (Memoirs). The data about these issues will also be collected from secondary sources in the form of others' works on the subject.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF HAMKA

A. MINANGKABAU AND SUFISM

According to a local *tambo* (pseudo-historical tradition), Minangkabau was created from *Nur Muhammad* (the light of Muhammad). The tambo tells that in the beginning there was only *Nur Muhammad* through which God created the Universe and the first human being and within which the Minangkabau world, together with the other two worlds: China and Ruhum (Asia Minor), existed.[21] The other *tambo* narrates a tale of *Cindur Mato* that informed about *Bunda Kandung*; a ruler of the region who possessed attributes of "self-subsisting" and "self-manifesting".[22] These *tambo*s indicate the prevailing influence of Sufism in the life of the people in the region.

The conception of the creation of the universe through *Nur Muhammad* is an idea in Sufism deeply rooted in its history traceable to the era of Abu `Abdillah Sahl al-Tustari (d. 283

[21] See Datuk Sangguno Dirajo, *Mustiko adat Alam Minangkabau,* Kementrian PP&K, Djakarta, 1955; and Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and politics: the Kaum Muda movement in West Sumatra (1927-1933),* Monograph Series, Cornell Modern Indonesian Project Southeast Asian Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1971, p.1.

[22] Hamka, *Dari perbendaharaan lama,* Madju, Medan, 1963, p.154.