BOOK REVIEW


By Moch. Djamaluddin Ahmad

Reviewed By
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PRACTICING IHSAN WITH TASAWUF AMALIYAH

As Islam is spread out by the Prophet of Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him: PbUH) for the seeks of becoming the blessing for the universe (raḥmatan lil ‘ālamīn), Islam offers three main pillars namely iman, islam, and ihsan. The first pillar of iman consisting of its principles (rukun) is the manifestation of the belief of a believer which is known as theology (akidah). The second pillar of Islam together with its five principles is the manifestation of the practice of Islamic teaching (syariat). And the third pillar of ihsan is the essence of the practicing of the values of Allah the almighty God and the values of the worshipers as later known as hakikat.

In order to be able to better practice the three pillars of Islam in daily life, every Muslim is obligated to have the required knowledge prior to understanding them including the knowledge of tauhid (iman/akidah), Islamic law or fikih (Islam/syariat), and tasawuf (ihsan/hakikat). The three required kinds of knowledge are supposed to be mastered together so that they may prevent Muslims from miss practices of Islamic teaching as meant by Allah the Almighty and Muhammad His messenger. Imam Malik mentions in his important work that:

“Those who learn the fikih without leaning tasawuf may become a fasik. Those who study tasawuf without studying fikih may become a kafir of zindiq. And those who learn fikih together with tasawuf are those who walk toward hakikat.”

What is meant by Imam Malik is also supported by another great and well-known imam as well, Imam Syafi’i. He mentions that every
Muslim should practice Islam in a comprehensive way or kaffah, not only having understanding of Islam using fikih (syariat) but also studying tasawuf (hakikat) to support their efforts of understanding the teaching.

The book written by Moch. Djamaluddin Ahmad is aimed at becoming a guidance for Muslims in their practice of Islam. The book provides a good guidance to practice ikhsan through tasawuf which is not only offering theories and concepts but also showing the details of how to practice or known as amaliyah. Therefore, the title of the book of Tasawuf Amaliyah is very appropriate as supported by the aims of the book and the intention of the author.

The book consists of 9 chapters. The author provides comprehensive explanations on how to understand the basic tasawuf (Chapter I), steps of practicing tasawuf toward closing to Allah the almighty (Chapter II), building appropriate friendship and the right hospitality of students to their teachers (Chapter III), the genealogy of the prayer or berzikir (Chapter IV), the variety of appropriate hospitality (Chapter V), requirements of becoming the teacher of the leader in Sufism of mursyid (Chapter VI), wali (Chapter VII), nafsu (Chapter VIII), and sufi leaders from time to time (Chapter IX).

Bu quoting Sayyid Abu Bakar Muhammad Syatha ad-Dimyati, the author of the book explain that the knowledge of tasawuf is the knowledge to understand the variety of nafsu and its symptoms, both the positive and negative parts of the nafsu (Page 1). Practicing tasawuf means making efforts to keep human hearts from being contaminated by negative values and habid so that they can transform the good norms into daily practices both physically non physically.

Ihsan, as also being mentioned in the hadist by Abu Hurairah, is being defined as “worshiping to Allah as he can see Him, and if he cannot see Himso he should understand and be aware that Allah sees him.” Practicing ikhsan is impossible without having the knowledge of tasawuf. It is because the knowledge of tasawuf is needed since when someone does the amaliyah he should pray toward Allah the Almighty. This is also found in the Qur’an Q.S. Aż-Żāriyāt (51): 56).

One of the important elements in the knowledge of tasawuf is the politeness and hospitality, especially to Allah, parents, teachers, and to human beings. Sayyid Ali Al-Khawwas mentions that those who misbehave they are like behaving to betray toward the knowledge of


hakikat and the secrets of Allah the Almighty (page 191). Al-Khawwas mentions the important of the politeness and hospitality. What Al-Khawwas means is that all the values are being taught by the Prophet Muhammad to mankind as he said that “I am the messenger of Allah and being sent to you to guide human being to have good behavior.”

Allah the Almighty gives human beings both mind and nafsu. The mind is intended to guide human being to able to control and manage their nafsu. The nafsu is not meant to be removed from human beings since it is impossible to do so. Human beings are expected to control it. The question is how to do so? The book provides the tips in doing so as being done through practicing riyāḍah (practice) and mujāhadah (fight). In order to be able to do so, human beings are required to understand the level and kinds of nafsu within them.

The nafsu is not always being connoted to negative judgment since sometimes it is also positive. The book elaborates carefully about the levels of nafsu consisting of 7 (seven) kinds including ammārah, lawwānah, mulhimah, muṭmainnah, rāḍiyah, mardiyah, and kāmilah (page 255). It is important to understand the variety and level of nafsu carefully so that every Muslim know exactly who is friend and opponent within themselves. The Prophet Muhammad said that the fight against the infidel or kafir is a small war (aṣgar), but the fight against the nafsu is the one being called as the big war (akbar).

In the end of the book the author explain about the important to know the history of the sufi leaders. He provides the profiles and sufi leaders from time to time starting from the second Hijri to the 14th Hijri. The explanation about the sufi leaders is meant to provide knowledge and information for those seeking the knowledge and information about tasawuf so that they can take a lesson (‘ibrah) and good (uswah ḥasanah) from selected people who had been able to improve their quality of life through having great practices of iman, islam, and ihsan. They are the examples that can guide them in doing tasawuf and becoming their role model for sālik (the walk toward Allah the Almighty) in doing the practice required by the teaching of Islam as Allah the Almighty has guided human beings.

As for the scientific responsibilities by the author, the book is also equipped by footnote and bibliography for references (marāji’) from appropriate books of tasawuf of mu’tabarah (standardized). The book is also written in a very careful intention with appropriate diction, words, sentences and paragraph. The author intends to help readers
to understand easily about the *tasawuf*, especially to those who are new in the world of *tasawuf.* (*)

**Profil Reviewer**

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