

The Spirituality of *Kawruh Begja* to Achieving the Reality of Life According to Ki Ageng Suryamentaram

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Abstract

This study focuses on analyzing the spirituality of Kawruh Begja for the realization of the authenticity of life based on the life and thoughts of Ki Ageng Suryamentaram. To explore the data used qualitative analysis methods and literature study. This study aims to find aspects of Kawruh Begja's spirituality in the study of cultural philosophy. Sebastian Painadath's thoughts on spirituality and its aspects were used as a framework for collecting data and analyzing it. The result of this research is the discovery of the notion of spirituality and its aspects in Kawruh Begja. In Ki Ageng Suryamentaram's meaning of life movement, Kawruh Begja is a system of philosophy and spirituality that encourages the process of living together to achieve the authenticity of life. Kawruh Begja are also values that are believed and lived which include awareness of the mysteries of life, understanding of life as a whole, personal spiritual experience, spiritual discipline, sensitivity to a harmonious environment, and compassion and concern for living together.

Keywords

Philosophy; science; soul; happiness; harmony; sense of life



I. Introduction

As part of the Asian community, Indonesia has a wealth of religious traditions, culture and local wisdom. It contains noble values (Dicky Sofjan, 2016). The dominant culture or indigenous culture commonly influences the culture of the minority or the immigrant culture, and subsequently, the minority culture is affected by the dominant culture due to the cultural pressures of the culture itself (Pandapotan, 2020). Javanese culture is an important part in the history of the development of Indonesian civilization. The development of Javanese thought and culture cannot be separated from the role of the kingdoms in Surakarta (Kasunanan and Mangkunegaran) and Yogyakarta (Kasultanan and Pakualaman). The tradition of thought was mostly contributed by the figures of the Mangkunegaran of Surakarta and the Sultanate of Yogyakarta.

Javanese traditions and culture have a great influence on the development of Indonesia. Many life wisdom is articulated or spoken verbally as real life guidance. The Javanese language has a very big influence on the development of Indonesian as the language of the Indonesian nation's unity (Muskens, 1979). Of course along with language is a cultural heritage in it. Javanese people are widely distributed throughout Indonesia in search of a livelihood. However, they still maintain the bonds of brotherhood as Javanese. They share cultural ties and ethical principles as well as a *kejawen* identity (Neils Mulder, 1998). *Kejawen* is a cultural awareness that underlies attitudes, behaviors and habits as an affirmation of Javanese identity.

Javanese culture contains a belief in the existence of the material world or the natural world (mortal world) and the inner world (spiritual world) which surrounds the material world. All beings living in this world are connected to each other in the unity of the

material (visible world) and spiritual (invisible world). The two aspects merge. Therefore, Javanese culture inherits a spirituality that underlies mortal life in this world (Neils Mulder, 1998).

One of the Javanese thinkers who shared his thoughts on the unity of the material and spiritual aspects was Ki Ageng Suryamentaram (1892-1962). *Kawruh* or *Ngelmu Begja* (science of Happiness) is an important thought of Ki Ageng Suryamentaram which is still used as the basis for spiritual movements in various parts of Indonesia. As a Kraton figure who develops thought and at the same time a life transformation movement, Ki Ageng Suryamentaram unites teachings with real life that is oriented towards developing the quality and dignity of life in order to achieve the authenticity of life.

This study focuses on efforts to explore and analyze Ki Ageng Suryamentaram's thoughts about *Kawruh Begja* in relation to the process of human life to achieve the authenticity of life. The researcher uses Sebastian Painadath's thoughts on the meaning of holistic-integral spirituality and its aspects as a theoretical framework to collect and analyze data.

II. Review of Literature

Sebastian Painadath explained that spirituality is a universal experience that humans have in the grip of divine power (Sebastian Painadath, 2020). There is a divine power that encourages humans to develop and direct their lives to things that are sublime, holy, and perfect. Spirituality is the breath, vibration and movement of life to fight for human values.

Basically, spirituality is an awareness of the mysteries of life, the connection of life with the ultimate goal and the struggle to make sense of life now in relation to future goals (Sebastian Painadath, 2014). By understanding spirituality as a movement to interpret life in relation to the ultimate goal of the process of living in the world, it can be said that everyone has and lives spirituality.

By understanding the divine as transcendent, human efforts to develop and perfect themselves are referred to as a transcendental process of life. Spirituality is the driving force for the process of self-transcendence or efforts to always develop and perfect life. Considering that everyone is dynamic and in the process of developing themselves because they are driven by noble values as a spirit or motivation from the heart, spirituality is a universal experience that is in everyone's heart. In other words, everyone has spirituality (Sebastian Painadath, 2014; Laurence Lepherd, 2015).

Everyone develops and lives his life in relation to others, divine power and the natural surroundings. The meaning of life and the struggle to develop life is related to the meaning of relationships with others, God and nature. Spirituality is characterized by a person's sensitivity to the presence and role of others, God and the natural surroundings. Respect and devotion to God is an integral part of spirituality even though God's presence is a mystery (Sebastian Painadath, 2014).

As described above, spirituality covers the human experience of divine power or God's involvement in moving human life in relation to others and nature. This divine power becomes the basis and impetus for human life to realize and fight for the integral development of life, build harmonious relations in society, and concern for efforts to preserve the created nature.

What is the difference between spirituality and religion? Spirituality means personal experience of the divine and the process of meaning in life, while religion is the articulation or institutionalization of spirituality in togetherness. Spirituality is the core, content, root, value, power and motor of religion (Sebastian Painadath, 2014; Laurence

Lepherd, 2015). There is a dialectical relationship between spirituality and religion. Religion is the social and cultural face of human spirituality in the midst of society which can be seen in symbolic ritual actions, fraternal bonds in the community, and the movement to transform life together (meaning living together). Education and skills are the main keys in gaining social status in community life (Lubis *et al*, 2019).

Sebastian Painadath points out eight aspects of spirituality that can be found in Asian religions and religious movements (Sebastian Painadath, 2014). The eight aspects are i) awareness of the mysteries of life, ii) complete understanding of human life and the universe iii) use of myths to explain the experience of the divine, iv) personal spiritual experience, v) discipline in improving the quality of spiritual life, vi) awareness of the divine as the goal of life, vii) sensitivity to preserve a harmonious life, viii) and compassion and concern for all creation.

The realization that life is a mystery becomes a spirituality that encourages us to continue to understand and make sense of life. Understanding life in its entirety with all its aspects becomes the basis for a deeper meaning of life. Awareness of the mysteries of life opens a new awareness of divine power that transcends human abilities. Hence, mythological stories arose to help narrate the experience of the divine. Although Asian people tend to live in communities with strong ties, experiences and personal struggles to find meaning and meaning in life in relationships with others and divine power have their own space. This can be seen in various disciplined spiritual activities carried out by each individual. Spiritual practice and the process of interpreting life are directed at the ultimate goal, namely unity with the Transcendent. The more self-aware and aware of the divine power, a person has a strong sensitivity to preserve life and compassion for others and the natural environment.

III. Research Methods

This study uses qualitative analysis methods and literature studies (Sugiyono, 2012; Mary W. George, 2008). The main library data are the writings of Ki Ageng Suryamentaram and Sebastian Painadath. In the literature study, there are two important things that become the focus of research, namely finding new knowledge and things (Mary W. George, 2008). To find knowledge about the meaning of *Kawruh Begja*, the writings of Ki Ageng Suryamentaram became the main source. Sebastian Painadath's writings are a source for understanding the meaning of spirituality and its aspects of spirituality. Understanding spirituality and aspects of spirituality are used as an analytical framework to find new things, namely the idea of spirituality and its aspects contained in Ki Ageng Suryamentaram's thoughts on *Kawruh Begja*. Other library sources are used as a support to enrich the discussion of this research theme.

There are two objectives of this research. *First*, this study aims to find an in-depth understanding of *Kawruh Begja* in relation to the process of human life to achieve the authenticity of life. *Second* objective is to discover the spirituality and spiritual aspects of *Kawruh Begja*. These two findings are expected to be a contribution that enriches the repertoire of cultural philosophy in eastern philosophy.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

Ki Ageng Suryamentaram is one of the figures who developed the Javanese system of thought or Eastern philosophy. Philosophy deals with understanding, understanding and appreciating the nobility or virtue of individual and community life (Vergilius Ferm, 2020). Like the eastern tradition in general, Javanese philosophy emphasizes the process of making life more harmonious and not a matter of systematic thinking. Philosophical thought takes the form *wejangan-pitutur* (teaching and reflection) of life that flows from personal struggles. Ki Ageng Suryamentaram lives life as a pilgrimage process to develop the quality of life of the inner and outer order individually and socially. When compared with the Western philosophical thinking model, Javanese thought is closer to the Pythagorean model of thinking which places philosophy as a way of life.

Science or more precisely knowledgeable (*ngelmu*) is a process of interpreting the pilgrimage of life that is oriented to developing the quality (priority) of personal (individual-social) life. Philosophy of educative character. Philosophy occurs in local communities who periodically meet to cultivate the mind and discuss various issues of living together. The basic virtues that are developed in the process of philosophizing are honesty, justice, and love (*welas asih*) for others, nature and God. The subject and object of philosophy is man in relation to nature, others and God. Humans continue to understand, accept and interpret life in togetherness. The quality of knowledge is measured by improving the quality of the virtues of each individual and the society that is built. Philosophy or knowledge is related to the dynamic human movement to develop individual and social moral life that is driven by holistic-integral spirituality, namely a perspective and life values that encourage dynamic life in relationships with others, nature and God (Heniy Astiyanto, 2012).

The method developed in developing knowledge (practices of human life) is the processing of the heart and feelings (*olah batin*) in a dialogue with others, nature and God. In terms of the mysticism movement with the introspective method, Javanese philosophy is close to Augustine's philosophical model. This method of *olah batin* or Javanese mysticism movement has several general characteristics as well as the mysticism movement of Eastern philosophy. Feeling (inner) is a hidden power that needs to be explored (understood and accepted) to move the goodness of human life (R.P., Suyono, 2009). Philosophy is a life movement in a spiritual community that lives the science of happiness (*Ngelmu/Kawruh Begja*) to always seek, understand and accept the authenticity of life continuously.

The authenticity of life is driven by an honest and noble inner strength for the sake of a just and loving life. The object as well as the focus of philosophy is human life with all its experiences and struggles (John Macquiarrie, 1982). The peculiarity of Ki Ageng Suryamentaram's existentialist style is the social orientation of all philosophical movements. In other words, ki Ageng Suryamentaram's philosophical model has a social-cosmic existentialist pattern. The search for the meaning of happiness in the life of each individual is lived and found in relationships with others and nature in order to realize an honest and noble life. The virtue of being honest and noble is manifested in a just and respectful common life.

Philosophy with existential-social character occurs in a lifelong dynamic process. In this sense, Javanese philosophy is a philosophy of process. This life process is characterized by ethical-eudaimonistic. That is, all of these philosophical struggles with dynamic characteristics lead to the achievement of a happy life. In this sense, Javanese

philosophy is very close to the Greek tradition since the time of Socrates which emphasizes the search for happiness (Richard Tarnas, 1991). Happiness is not determined by the surrounding environment but is found by the state of the soul that is honest and accepts its authenticity in life in society.

4.2 Discussion

Javanese philosophy is existential-social-cosmic-ethical-eudaimonistic. His thinking is existential-social-cosmic because it starts from the inner experience or human soul in dialogue with oneself, others, God Almighty and the universe. Javanese philosophical thought has an ethical-eudaimonistic character because philosophizing means blending with the process or dynamics of life to fight for the goodness and happiness of life in society. In the midst of the challenges of thinking patterns that tend to be rational-instrumentalistic, individualistic, pragmatic, Javanese philosophy helps to understand and live life in an integral way that unites the outer-inner system (physical-spiritual aspects).

The mentality of society that tends to be more individualistic and driven by the spirit of competition is a real obstacle to developing an ascetic spirituality or being selfless. Also, our world exists in a pragmatic, instantaneous and fragmentary trend. This situation is a real challenge to preserve holistic-integral spirituality which is the noble heritage of eastern society. Religious attitudes that uphold togetherness, mutual cooperation and intensive relations with others and nature are faced with real challenges in dealing with the currents of the times that emphasize effectiveness in economic calculations. It is a big challenge to build harmony or harmony in living together which is marked by the concern, compassion and willingness of each individual to prioritize common interests. The big challenge is also to build a dialogue based on awareness and social responsibility to realize justice (Sebastian Painadath, 2014).

With the strengthening of individualism, the image of life as a collective pilgrimage to understand the identity of each person in their relationship with Allah, and the openness to experience His help and guidance for a better and prosperous life is fading (Deenabandhu Manchala, 2014). Human awareness as a pilgrim which is symbolically expressed in various traditional dances and traditional ceremonies is increasingly difficult to implement.

V. Conclusion

The result of this research is the discovery of the notion of spirituality and its aspects in *Kawruh Begja*. In Ki Ageng Suryamentaram's meaning of life movement, *Kawruh Begja* is a system of philosophy and spirituality that encourages the process of living together to achieve the authenticity of life. *Kawruh Begja* are also values that are believed and lived which include awareness of the mysteries of life, understanding of life as a whole, personal spiritual experience, spiritual discipline, sensitivity to a harmonious environment, and compassion and concern for living together.

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