

Hamzah Fansuri's Philosophical Sufism: *Wujūdiyyah*, the Metaphysics of Creation, and Mystical *Taraqqī* as an Integrated System of Thought

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Abstract: This article explores the philosophical Sufism of Hamzah Fansuri by examining the internal coherence of his thought rather than treating its elements as isolated doctrines. The discussion focuses on three interrelated dimensions that structure his intellectual system: *wujūdiyyah* as an ontological foundation, the metaphysics of creation as a cosmological framework, and mystical *taraqqī* as the process of spiritual realization. Using a qualitative library-based method, this study analyzes Hamzah Fansuri's prose and poetic writings alongside relevant contemporary scholarship through thematic content analysis. The findings suggest that Hamzah Fansuri consistently affirms God as the only Absolute Being, while the universe and humanity are understood as dependent manifestations of divine reality. Creation is not described as a detached, dualistic act, but as a graded process of manifestation (*ta'ayyun*) that preserves divine transcendence. Within this framework, mystical *taraqqī* represents an inward transformation of human consciousness through the stages of *sharī'a*, *ṭarīqa*, *ḥaqīqa*, and *ma'rifa*. This study argues that Hamzah Fansuri's philosophical Sufism constitutes a systematic and coherent worldview. Interpreting debates on *wujūdiyyah* as epistemological differences rather than doctrinal conflicts allows for a more balanced understanding of his position within Southeast Asian Islamic thought.

Keywords: Philosophical Sufism; *Wujūdiyyah*; Metaphysics of Creation; Mystical *Taraqqī*; Hamzah Fansuri

Abstrak: Artikel ini mengkaji tasawuf filosofis Hamzah Fansuri dengan menekankan koherensi internal pemikirannya, alih-alih memperlakukan unsur-unsurnya sebagai doktrin yang terpisah. Pembahasan difokuskan pada tiga dimensi yang saling berkaitan dan membentuk sistem intelektualnya, yaitu *wujūdiyyah* sebagai landasan ontologis, metafisika penciptaan sebagai kerangka kosmologis, serta *taraqqī* mistikal sebagai proses realisasi spiritual. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif berbasis studi kepustakaan dengan menganalisis karya-karya Hamzah Fansuri, baik dalam bentuk prosa maupun puisi, serta literatur ilmiah kontemporer yang relevan melalui analisis tematik. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa Hamzah Fansuri secara konsisten menegaskan Tuhan sebagai satu-satunya Wujud Mutlak, sementara alam semesta dan manusia dipahami sebagai manifestasi yang bergantung sepenuhnya pada realitas Ilahi. Penciptaan tidak dipahami sebagai tindakan dualistik yang terpisah, melainkan sebagai proses manifestasi bertingkat (*ta'ayyun*) yang tetap menjaga transendensi Tuhan. Dalam kerangka ini, *taraqqī* mistikal merepresentasikan transformasi batin kesadaran manusia melalui tahapan

sharī'a, *ṭarīqa*, *ḥaqīqa*, dan *ma'rifa*. Artikel ini menegaskan bahwa tasawuf filosofis Hamzah Fansuri merupakan suatu pandangan dunia yang sistematis dan koheren. Dengan memandang perdebatan tentang *wujūdiyyah* sebagai perbedaan epistemologis, bukan pertentangan doktrinal, kajian ini menawarkan pemahaman yang lebih seimbang mengenai posisi Hamzah Fansuri dalam tradisi pemikiran Islam Asia Tenggara.

Kata kunci: *Tasawuf filosofis; Wujūdiyyah; Metafisika penciptaan; Taraqqī mistikal; Hamzah Fansuri*

Introduction

Sufism is an important part of the history of Islamic thought. Positive law and normative theology can't fully explain religious experience on their own.¹ Sufism started to grow as a spiritual path in the early days of Islam.² Sufism emphasizes the cultivation of the inner self, the discipline of personal desires, and a constant awareness of the divine presence permeating all aspects of existence. Beyond ascetic practice alone, it offers a perspective through which individuals come to understand their position within the divine order and the broader structure of the universe.³ Over the course of Islamic intellectual history, Sufism gradually developed into a more systematic and structured body of thought.⁴ This led to complicated metaphysical and epistemological ideas that made it a spiritual and intellectual tradition with its own theoretical framework.

People who study Sufism today usually split it into two main groups: practical Sufism (*taṣawwuf 'amalī*) and intellectual Sufism (*taṣawwuf falsafī*).⁵ The spiritual path of practical Sufism is predicated on ethical development, adherence to Islamic law, and the execution of rituals. Philosophical Sufism, on the other hand, uses the language of metaphysics and conceptual symbols to try to explain mystical experiences that are unique and intuitive.⁶ This difference applies not only to different spiritual practices, but it also shows that there are many ways of knowing that can be used to understand religious experiences and talk about them in a logical way.

Philosophical Sufism brings together mystical intuition and philosophical reasoning in a way that makes sense. But when its symbolic language is taken too literally, it makes it hard to know things. Sufism's metaphysical language isn't meant to be a strict religious doctrine or just a way to talk about reality based on what we see. It shouldn't be used as a way to say things that regular language can't. People often see philosophical Sufism as a challenge to traditional theology, but they don't realize that it works within a very different way of knowing.⁷

The idea of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, which is very important to philosophical Sufism, best shows this conflict.⁸ A lot of people who read about *waḥdat al-wujūd* get it wrong and think it means

¹ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The Metaphysical Foundations of Islamic Spirituality," *Islamic Studies* 37, no. 3 (1998): 261–263.

² Alexander Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 44–47.

³ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The Metaphysical Foundations of Islamic Spirituality," *Islamic Studies* 37, no. 3 (1998): 265.

⁴ Carl W. Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1985), 12–16.

⁵ Abdul Hadi W.M., *Tasawuf yang Tertindas* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2001), 21–23.

⁶ Carl W. Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1985), 18–20.

⁷ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Philosophy from Its Origin to the Present* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), 98–101.

⁸ Henry Corbin, "Mystical Experience and Symbolic Language in Islam," *Temenos* 7 (1971): 9–12.

that God and creation are the same thing.⁹ In the realm of intellectual sufism, this belief shows that God is the one true and ultimate being, while the universe and humanity are in a state of dependence and contingency, completely relying on the Absolute Being. People often make these kinds of mistakes because they don't look at the main ideas behind Sufi metaphysical language; they take it too literally.¹⁰

Hamzah Fansuri (16th–17th century) is an important figure in the history of Islam in the Malay–Indonesian region because he was the first to systematically develop philosophical Sufism. Through his writings and Sufi poetry, Hamzah Fansuri brought the idea of *wahdat al-wujūd* into the Malay–Islamic intellectual world. He accomplished this by employing a style replete with symbols, analogies, and comparisons.¹¹ His presence marks a key time in the intellectual history of Islam in Southeast Asia, when Sufism changed from a simple spiritual practice to a clearly defined and structured way of thinking. Hamzah Fansuri didn't just choose his writing style at random; he did it so he could write about experiences that are hard to put into words. He uses symbols and comparisons in his Sufi poetry to make people think about things that aren't real. This is how Hamzah Fansuri was more than just a mystic. He was also a scholar who helped come up with the ideas that led to philosophical Sufism in the Malay-Indonesian culture.¹²

Hamzah Fansuri's *wujūdiyyah* says that God is the center of everything. People and the universe are seen as manifestations (*tajallī*) of this Being, which means that everything that exists is always thought of as being dependent on God. This model gives us a new way to look at the universe and humanity. It doesn't see existence as a bunch of separate things, but as a web of ontological connections that lead to the One. A lot of research backs up this idea, and you can't just call it pantheism in any religious setting.¹³ From this point of view, *wujūdiyyah* works as both a cosmological framework for figuring out where things came from and an ontological philosophy. People don't think of the cosmos as a separate thing; they see it as the gradual appearance of the Absolute Being.¹⁴ This idea has a big effect on how Sufism sees the beginning of the universe and the link between God and creation. Because of this, the metaphysics of creation in philosophical Sufism is closely related to the basic ontological idea of being.

A lot of Hamzah Fansuri's intellectual Sufism, especially in his Sufi poetry, is based on symbolic language. You can use symbols, metaphors, and analogies to suggest truths about the universe that simple words can't fully explain. People who want to read Hamzah Fansuri's work should be careful not to make wrong theological assumptions based on how they read the symbols. When *Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī* spoke out against Hamzah Fansuri's *wujūdiyyah* ideas, the arguments got the most heated.¹⁵ Some people say that these criticisms show a split between orthodox and heterodox views. But looking at history shows that this argument was shaped by a number of

⁹ Mohammed Arkoun, "Reason and Revelation in Islamic Thought," *Arabica* 40, no. 3 (1993): 350–352.

¹⁰ William C. Chittick, "Rethinking *Wahdat al-Wujūd*," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* 36 (2004): 5–7.

¹¹ William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), 79–82.

¹² Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *The Mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1970), 3–6.

¹³ Miswari and Abdul Hadi W.M., "Hamzah Fansuri's Contextual Analogies," *Teosofia* 11, no. 1 (2022): 18–21.

¹⁴ Teuku Raja Idin, "Falsafah Wujūdiyyah," *Kanz Philosophia* 8, no. 1 (2018): 42–45.

¹⁵ Sajjad H. Rizvi, "Time, Creation and the Problem of *Creatio Ex Nihilo*," *Journal of Islamic Philosophy* 4 (2008): 4–7.

different ways of knowing and the social and political situation in Aceh in the 1600s.¹⁶ From this point of view, the problem is better described as a disagreement over how ideas have been talked about in the past in Islam in Southeast Asia.¹⁷

More and more people want to know how to understand Hamzah Fansuri's works now that more and more research has been done on him. Textual, hermeneutical, and thematic content analyses have helped a lot to make clear how complicated symbolic language is and how Sufism's philosophical ideas are shown in his writing. These methodologies enable scholars to distinguish between symbolic expression and doctrinal assertions, while situating Hamzah Fansuri's ideas within the relevant intellectual framework.

Scholars have analyzed Hamzah Fansuri from various viewpoints, encompassing ontological, literary, historical, and methodological dimensions. But a big part of this investigation is still not finished. Because of this, no one has looked at the systematic link between wujūdiyyah, the metaphysics of creation, and the idea of spiritual elevation (mystical taraqqī) all at once.¹⁸

In the philosophical Sufi tradition, the search for divine understanding and the search for the beginning of the universe are deeply connected to the search for existence. This essay will carefully look at Hamzah Fansuri's philosophical Sufism by looking at how waḥdat al-wujūd, the metaphysics of creation, and mystical taraqqī are all related. This could help you understand Hamzah Fansuri's ideas better.

Research Method

This study uses a qualitative approach in the form of library-based research because it is looking at ideas, concepts, and the intellectual structure of Hamzah Fansuri's philosophical Sufism as it is written down. This methodology is employed to facilitate a comprehensive examination of the ontological, cosmological, and spiritual frameworks in Hamzah Fansuri's philosophy, unimpeded by quantitative empirical constraints. Library research is regarded as the most suitable approach for the examination of classical Islamic thought and Sufism, as the central emphasis of the study pertains to the interpretation of meaning, conceptual relationships, and the internal coherence of ideas.

The data used in this study are drawn from two main categories: primary and secondary sources. The primary sources consist of Hamzah Fansuri's writings that convey his philosophical Sufi teachings, expressed in both prose and poetic forms, as discussed and interpreted within contemporary academic scholarship. These texts are approached not merely as literary works, but as conceptual expressions of philosophical Sufism encompassing ontological perspectives (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), cosmological views (the metaphysics of creation), and epistemological dimensions related to spiritual ascent or mystical *taraqqī*.

Secondary sources include peer-reviewed academic journal articles that address Hamzah Fansuri's thought, the doctrine of *wujūdiyyah*, philosophical Sufism in the Malay–Indonesian context, theological debates in seventeenth-century Aceh, and methodological approaches to the study of Sufism. All secondary materials are selected on the basis of academic reliability and clear

¹⁶ Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 63–66.

¹⁷ Sudrajat, "Pemikiran Wujudiyah Hamzah Fansuri," *Humanika* 17, no. 1 (2017): 3–6.

¹⁸ Widodo et al., "Syair Hamzah Fansuri," *Sutasoma* 11, no. 2 (2023): 183–186.

traceability to authoritative sources. These works serve to contextualize the analysis, strengthen the theoretical framework, and provide critical reference points for interpreting the primary texts.

Data collection is carried out through a systematic review of relevant literature, focusing on three central themes: *wahdat al-wujūd*, the metaphysics of creation, and mystical *taraqqī*. Each text is examined by identifying key concepts, symbolic expressions, and conceptual relationships that together form an integrated system of thought. Rather than merely extracting quotations, the analysis seeks to clarify the internal structure of ideas and the philosophical implications embedded within them.

The data are analyzed using content analysis within a thematic–conceptual framework. This process involves three main stages: first, reducing the data by selecting the most significant concepts in Hamzah Fansuri’s thought; second, organizing the data according to the three analytical axes of the study *wujūdiyyah* ontology, the metaphysics of creation, and spiritual ascent; and third, conducting relational interpretation to demonstrate how these dimensions are systematically interconnected. Through this approach, Hamzah Fansuri’s thought is presented as a coherent and unified framework of philosophical Sufism, rather than a collection of fragmented doctrines.

To ensure the validity and objectivity of the analysis, this study applies source triangulation by comparing interpretations derived from Hamzah Fansuri’s texts with those proposed by contemporary scholars. The methodological framework is further evaluated based on the coherence of arguments and the consistency between data, analysis, and conclusions. Through this procedure, the research aims to produce a conceptual mapping that is systematic, credible, and academically rigorous.

Results and Discussion

1. *Wujūdiyyah* as the Ontological Foundation of Hamzah Fansuri’s Philosophical Sufism

Through the examination of both primary and secondary literature, it becomes apparent that the idea of *wujūdiyyah* possesses a significant amount of significance within the greater framework of Hamzah Fansuri’s philosophical Sufism paradigm. Not only is it not sufficient to assert that *Wujūdiyyah* is merely a philosophical concept pertaining to existence, but it is also an ontological framework that has a significant influence on Hamzah Fansuri’s perspective toward God, the cosmos, and humanity in general.¹⁹ From this perspective, God is considered to be the Absolute Being (*al-wujūd al-ḥaqq*), whereas all else, apart from God, possesses a contingent and derived existence that is dependent upon Him.²⁰

Hamzah Fansuri’s ontology of *wujūdiyyah* expressly rejects, by a considerable margin, a dualistic worldview that divides God and the universe into distinct entities. This perspective is fundamentally rejected. On the other hand, this lack of acceptance does not necessarily mean that there is no such thing as divine transcendence. Hamzah Fansuri, on the other hand, is of the idea that the world is a manifestation or self-disclosure (*tajallī*) of divine truth.²¹ These individuals are of the belief that only God possesses true and absolute existence. On the contrary, people do not

¹⁹ Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *The Mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1970), 3–6.

²⁰ Abdul Hadi W.M., *Tasawuf yang Tertindas: Kajian Hermeneutik terhadap Karya-karya Hamzah Fansuri* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2001), 95–98.

²¹ Chittick, “Rethinking *Wahdat al-Wujūd*,” *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society* 36 (2004): 6–8.

view the relationship between God and the world to be one of ontological identity; rather, they consider it to be one of ontological dependency.²²

It is possible to discern a strong structural connection between this ontological approach and the philosophical tradition of Sufism, which Ibn 'Arabī believed in and was a part of. Not only does Hamzah Fansuri replicate the conceptual framework of Ibn 'Arabī, but it also surpasses that framework.²³ As a result of his utilization of language, symbolism, and culture, he brings about a modification to the ontology of wujūdiyyah within the historical context of Malay and Islam at the same time. This is demonstrated by an analysis of the writings of Hamzah Fansuri, which indicates that the concept of wujūdiyyah is not explained by means of abstract philosophical principles, but rather by means of cosmic metaphors and poetic symbols that highlight the unity of creation and the ultimate purpose of existence. According to the meaning of this term, the concept of wujūdiyyah in Hamzah Fansuri's philosophy extends beyond a straightforward comprehension of metaphysics; rather, it is an embodiment of spirituality.

When considered from this perspective, the human being occupies a position in the cosmos that is distinct from any other. However, people do not regard themselves to be separate from God; rather, they consider themselves to be beings whose existence best illustrates what God is like in all of the forms that he has created. The flip side of the coin is that this reflection is inherently contingent and never reaches a level of equivalence with the absolute knowledge that God possesses. The first step in Hamzah Fansuri's spiritual path is to realize this ontological relationship. This is the beginning of his journey within the framework of Sufism.

It is possible to draw the conclusion, on the basis of the findings of this study, that Hamzah Fansuri's wujūdiyyah has been frequently mistaken with pantheism, particularly in the context of the theological disputes that took place in Aceh throughout the entirety of the seventeenth century.²⁴ Hamzah Fansuri is able to differentiate between the Absolute Being and its manifestations in a consistent manner, according to the findings of a more in-depth analysis of its ontological framework. As opposed to being regarded as the material manifestation of God's existence, the universe is regarded as the manifestation of God's existence. In other words, when persons argue that Hamzah Fansuri's wujūdiyyah is pantheism, they are talking to the manner in which individuals hold knowledge, rather than the real essence of things.²⁵

In Hamzah Fansuri's philosophical Sufism, there are two essential qualities that are founded on wujūdiyyah, which serves as the ontological foundation for both of these aspects. These features will be discussed more below. Both the metaphysics of creation and the concept of spiritual elevation, which is known as religious taraqqī, are aspects that are included in this category. In the event that you do not possess an understanding of wujūdiyyah, which is the underlying ontology, these dimensions could appear fragmented and challenging to comprehend in their whole. The results obtained from this study offer evidence that wujūdiyyah is not merely a singular notion amid a multitude of others; rather, it is the driving force that pulls together all of Hamzah Fansuri's philosophical Sufism.

²² Alexander Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 272–275.

²³ Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-'Arabī's Cosmology* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1998), 317–320.

²⁴ Hakiki, "Tasawuf Wujūdiyyat: Tinjauan Ulang Polemik Penyesatan Hamzah Fansūrī oleh Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī," *Theologia* 29, no. 1 (2018): 28–31.

²⁵ Miswari, "Reconstruction of the History of Hamzah Fansuri's Life and Recognition of His Works," *Kanz Philosophia* 9, no. 2 (2023): 140–143.

2. *The Metaphysics of Creation within Hamzah Fansuri's Wujūdiyyah*

In order to get a comprehensive grasp of Hamzah Fansuri's account of creation, it is of the utmost importance to possess a strong comprehension of the ontological framework of wujūdiyyah, which serves as the foundation of his philosophical Sufism. When we examine creation, we do not regard it to be a discrete temporal event that leads to an ontologically independent cosmos. Instead, we consider it to be a graded process of manifestation (*ta'ayyun*) of the Absolute Being.²⁶ When viewed from this particular viewpoint, it becomes evident that God, in His absolute actuality (*lā ta'ayyun*), exceeds all concerns pertaining to determination and relationality. On the other hand, the cosmos is being produced by a series of processes of determination, and this does not in any way imply that the divine nature is being changed or lessened in any manner. This particular formulation of metaphysics provides an explanation for the intelligibility of created reality as dependent manifestation, while at the same time preserving the transcendence of the divine.²⁷

On the other hand, when Hamzah Fansuri's metaphysics of creation is interpreted in this manner, it deviates from a rigidly dualistic understanding of *creatio ex nihilo*, which is typically emphasized in *kalām*, which is the theory of creation. On the other hand, this does not in any way render the Islamic concept of creation obsolete in any manner. It reframes creation in a philosophical form that lays more of an emphasis on ontological dependency than it does on temporal causality.²⁸ This is the alternative to the traditional view of creation. Putting it another way, it recasts the act of creation as a type of philosophical inquiry. On the contrary, the cosmos is not an entity that is accountable for its own existence; rather, it is a reality that is perpetually rooted in the Absolute.²⁹ The nature of the cosmos is as described above. In spite of the fact that Hamzah Fansuri is structurally aligned with broader currents of philosophical Sufism, particularly those associated with Ibn 'Arabī, it nonetheless manages to maintain its distinctiveness in terms of its literary and symbolic articulation within the setting of the Malay–Islamic milieu. The work was conceptualized, and this is the consequence of that conceptualization.

When it comes to the realm of mediating between divine transcendence and cosmic plurality, the concept of *ta'ayyun* has a position that is not only significant but also crucial. When examined through this lens, the concept of multiplicity is understood not as a competitor to divine unity, but rather as the differentiated self-disclosure of the One existent throughout the sphere of manifestation.³⁰ Through the utilization of this framework, Hamzah Fansuri is able to avoid both the pantheistic identification of God with the world as well as the rigid separation that renders creation ontologically obscure. Specifically, this is due to the fact that Hamzah Fansuri is able to circumvent both of these ideas. Due to the fact that this is the situation, creation is portrayed as a meaningful universe that is straightforward to comprehend, well-organized, and orientated toward its metaphysical basis.³¹

²⁶ William C. Chittick, "The Five Divine Presences: From al-Qūnawī to al-Qayṣarī," *The Muslim World* 72, no. 2 (1982): 107–128.

²⁷ Sajjad H. Rizvi, "Time, Creation and the Problem of *Creatio Ex Nihilo* in Islamic Philosophy," *Journal of Islamic Philosophy* 4 (2008): 1–14.

²⁸ Toby Mayer, "Ibn 'Arabī and Islamic Metaphysics," *Philosophy East and West* 59, no. 3 (2009): 375–393.

²⁹ William C. Chittick, "Creation and the Timeless Order of Things," *Religious Studies* 17, no. 2 (1981): 205–217.

³⁰ Alexander Knysh, "Ibn 'Arabī in the Later Islamic Tradition," *Studia Islamica* 98 (2004): 5–40.

³¹ Chodkiewicz, M. The Vision of God According to Ibn 'Arabī. *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* 1, 7–22 (1982).

A dynamic relationship is created between the cosmic process of decline, which is referred to as *tanazzul*, and the spiritual ascent of human awareness, which is referred to as *taraqqī*. This interaction falls under the purview of the metaphysics of creation.³² The human being's spiritual journey is a representation of a return to the origin of being through the process of recognition and realization. This is accomplished through the journey of the human being. If the formation of the universe is a manifestation of divine descent, then the spiritual journey of the human person is a picture of this return through the process of spiritual development. Taking this perspective into consideration, the concepts of creation and spiritual ascent are not distinct doctrines; rather, they are complimentary motions that take place within a single metaphysical framework in which they coexist. In light of this, Hamzah Fansuri's cosmology serves not only as a theoretical foundation for metaphysics, but it also serves as a conceptual framework for spiritual orientation and ethical obligation.³³ Furthermore, it operates as a foundation for metaphysics. Consequently, the metaphysics of creation in Hamzah Fansuri's philosophical Sufism acts as an essential link between *wujūdiyyah*, which is a principle of ontological significance, and *taraqqī*, which is a practice of spirituality. Because of this cosmic mediation, it would be impossible for his Sufi system to have total internal coherence across the board. This would be the case if it were not for this mediation.

3. Mystical Taraqqī as the Return Movement toward the Absolute Being

The results of the study indicate that the idea of spiritual elevation, which is referred to as mystical *taraqqī* in Hamzah Fansuri's philosophical framework, may be logically deduced from the ontology of *wujūdiyyah* and the metaphysics of creation that were thoroughly examined earlier. In the event that the act of creation is regarded as a descend (*tanazzul*) of divine existence into the realm of cosmic reality, then the spiritual ascent of mankind might be interpreted as a return movement (*taraqqī*) within the direction of acknowledging the existence of the Absolute. Consequently, it is not possible to comprehend *taraqqī* as a self-sufficient spiritual practice; rather, it functions as an essential element within the intellectual framework of Hamzah Fansuri's philosophical Sufism ideology.

Within the context of this theory, the human being holds a significant position due to the fact that it is capable of recognizing its own ontological origin. On the other hand, despite the fact that individuals are considered to be the most comprehensive manifestation of God's existence among all living creatures, this comprehensiveness is not quite apparent from the beginning. In order to accomplish this, you will need to go through a graduated spiritual process. This process is referred to by Hamzah Fansuri as "*taraqqī*," which indicates that consciousness progresses from the most fundamental level of existence to the most higher level of comprehending metaphysics.³⁴ *Sharī'a*, *ṭarīqa*, *ḥaqīqa*, and *ma'rifa* are the phases that are used to describe the progression of spiritual elevation in Hamzah Fansuri's Sufism tradition. The stages are not regarded as distinct groups in this context; rather, they are regarded as a process that alters the way in which individuals perceive the world that surrounds them. In the realms of ethics and rituals, *sharī'a* serves as the fundamental framework that governs the exterior existence of individuals at the same time. On the contrary, *ṭarīqa* is a term that has been used to denote the process of incorporating *sharī'a* into one's own being by adhering to a rigorous spiritual framework. In the absence of these

³² Winkel, E. Cosmology and Symbolism in Ibn 'Arabī. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 123, 313–329 (2003).

³³ Ian Richard Netton, "Myth, Metaphor and Meaning in Ibn 'Arabī's Cosmology," *Religion* 16, no. 3 (1986): 249–264.

³⁴ Ian Richard Netton, "Stages of the Sufi Path," *Religion* 19, no. 3 (1989): 227–239.

underpinnings, the pursuit of ḥaqīqa and maʿrifa is not considered to be an equitable or lawful endeavor.³⁵

When someone who is looking for spiritual enlightenment achieves the level of ḥaqīqa, they start to realize the underlying ontological reality of the events that are visible to the outside world. The awareness that nothing exists on its own is the foundation upon which this concept is built. Instead, everything is wholly dependent on the Absolute Being. At this point in time, wujūdiyyah goes beyond the realm of theoretical abstraction, manifesting itself as an experiential phenomenon that alters the individual's vision of themselves as well as their comprehension of the cosmos at large. Taking into consideration this perspective, the idea of Ḥaqīqa serves as a connection between the intellectual comprehension and the spiritual truth of the fundamental nature of existence.

Regarding the Sufi tradition, Hamzah Fansuri asserts that the level of maʿrifa represents the pinnacle of spiritual development. The one who is seeking will, at some point in time, arrive at a position where they will directly know God as the one and only Absolute Reality. The fact that people are increasingly conscious of how fully they are dependent on God is a consequence of this awareness, even though it does not imply that God and humanity have an ontological relationship. Rather than the elimination of the distinction between the Creator and the creative process, it is stated that maʿrifa represents the pinnacle of existential tawḥīd. This viewpoint is based on observations made by the author. It is further demonstrated by this research that the concept of mystical taraqqī, which is a part of Hamzah Fansuri's philosophical framework, incorporates a significant ethical component. The goal of spiritual ascent comprises the accomplishment of transformation on both the moral and spiritual levels, and it goes beyond the realization of metaphysical experiences as its primary outcome. A heightened awareness of one's dependence on God may foster greater self-discipline, humility, and a reduced attachment to worldly concerns. On this basis, *taraqqī* cannot be separated from ethical practice grounded in the observance of *sharīʿa*. The notion of *taraqqī* as articulated by Hamzah Fansuri has, at times, been misinterpreted in theological polemics as legitimizing the neglect of *sharīʿa*, even though such a reading does not align with the internal structure of his spiritual framework.

A closer examination of the structure of Hamzah Fansuri's spiritual path reveals evidence that challenges this underlying assumption. Within his framework, spiritual experiences are regarded as invalid when they are not grounded in adherence to *sharīʿa*. Rather than being marginalized, Islamic law occupies an increasingly central role in the process of spiritual formation. One of the primary reasons that individuals have attacked Hamzah Fansuri's way of thinking is because there has been a misunderstanding on this particular matter. The primary objective of the mystical taraqqī is to establish a connection between the realms of spirituality and the realms of cosmic action. The term "spiritual ascent" refers to the process by which human awareness is elevated toward the source of existence, if creation is the manifestation of the divine in the wider cosmos. Tanazzul and taraqqī engage in a dialectical interplay, which is the source of the dynamic coherence that Hamzah Fansuri's philosophical Sufism as a unified system possesses. Not only does taraqqī serve as a supplement to the ontology of wujūdiyyah and the metaphysics of creation, but it also displays these principles within the framework of experiential spiritual absorption. This is because taraqqī is a form of experience. Without first gaining a concept of the mystical taraqqī, which acts as the way that goes back to the Absolute Being, it is impossible to fully comprehend the thoughts that Hamzah Fansuri has presented.

³⁵ Carl W. Ernst, "Sharīʿa and Spiritual Discipline in Sufism," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 63, no. 3 (1995): 401–419.

Conclusion

It is demonstrated in this article that Hamzah Fansuri's philosophical Sufism is an integral and coherent system of thought that is built upon three interrelated pillars. These pillars are wujūdiyyah, which serves as its ontological foundation, the metaphysics of creation, which serves as its cosmological explanation, and mystical taraqqī, which serves as the mode of spiritual actualization. These three dimensions do not exist in isolation; rather, they are mutually dependent on one another and come together to form a cohesive conceptual framework. If any of these pillars are not given the respect they deserve, then the thought of Hamzah Fansuri runs the risk of being read in a manner that is both partial and ahistorical.

First, in Hamzah Fansuri's system of thought, wujūdiyyah serves as an ontological framework that confirms God as the only Absolute Being. At the same time, the cosmos and humans are seen to be contingent manifestations of divine being. This discovery provides more evidence that Hamzah Fansuri's wujūdiyyah cannot be reduced to pantheism. Rather, it ought to be seen as an expression of existential tawḥīd within the framework of philosophical Sufism. His entire intellectual system is built upon this ontological concept, which serves as its foundation. Second, Hamzah Fansuri's metaphysics of creation is expressed as a graded process of manifestation (ta'ayyun) that originates from the Absolute Being. This is in contrast to the dualistic relationship that exists between God and the world. A downward migration (tanazzul) of divine being into cosmic reality lies at the heart of the concept of creation. This movement does not deny the existence of divine unity or transcendence. From this perspective, the existence of the universe is derived from its ontological dependence on God, while at the same time, the universe continues to maintain its dependent character.

A direct consequence of this ontological and cosmological framework is the emergence of the doctrine of mystical taraqqī, which is the third point. Harī'a, tarīqa, ḥaqīqa, and ma'rifa are the stages that are considered to be part of the human spiritual ascent. This climb is thought to be a return movement towards consciousness of the Absolute Being. Taraqqī is not regarded of as a mystical experience that disregards sharī'a; rather, it is conceived of as a transformation of consciousness that is rooted in acceptable ethical and spiritual activity. That is to say, mystical taraqqī is the means by which wujūdiyyah is brought into being within the realm of human existence.

This article aims to offer a conceptual contribution to the study of Sufism in the Malay–Indonesian context by outlining the systematic relationship between *wujūdiyyah*, the metaphysics of creation, and mystical *taraqqī*. By adopting this approach, the study moves beyond reductive interpretations of Hamzah Fansuri's philosophy and instead presents his thought as an internally coherent intellectual framework. The analysis indicates that debates surrounding *wujūdiyyah* largely stem from differences in epistemological perspectives rather than from substantive contradictions within Hamzah Fansuri's teachings themselves. For this reason, the article underscores the importance of understanding Hamzah Fansuri's philosophical Sufism as an integrated system of thought, rather than as a loose assemblage of metaphysical ideas or literary expressions.

At the same time, this research acknowledges its primary limitation in its textual and conceptual orientation. Future studies may therefore expand upon this work through comparative analyses across different Sufi traditions or through historical investigations into the reception and practical influence of Hamzah Fansuri's ideas within the religious life of the Malay–Indonesian world. Nevertheless, through its emphasis on conceptual mapping, this study is expected to

contribute to ongoing scholarly discussions on philosophical Sufism and to situate Hamzah Fansuri more accurately within the broader history of Islamic intellectual thought.

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