

STUDIA ISLAMIKA

INDONESIAN JOURNAL FOR ISLAMIC STUDIES

Volume 3, Number 2, 1996



CHANGING THE IMAGE OF ISLAM AND MUSLIM WORLD:
INDONESIAN EXERCISES
Tarmizi Taher

GOD AND SPIRITUAL BEINGS IN CIREBON-JAVANESE BELIEF SYSTEM:
A RELUCTANT CONTRIBUTION AGAINST THE SYNCRETIC ARGUMENT
A. G. Muhaimin

THE TRAGEDY OF CIMAREME:
THE RESISTANCE OF HAJI HASAN TO THE COLONIAL POWER IN 1919
Chusnul Hajati

THE *KHITTAH* OF 1926 REEXAMINED:
VIEWS OF THE NU IN POST-CIPASUNG CONGRESS
Ali Munhanif

STUDIA ISLAMIKA

Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies

Volume 3, Number 2, 1996

EDITORIAL BOARD:

Harun Nasution
Mastubu
M. Quraish Shibab
A. Aziz Dahlan
M. Satria Effendi
Nabilah Lubis
M. Yunan Yusuf
Komaruddin Hidayat
M. Din Syamsuddin
Muslim Nasution
Wabib Mu'tbi

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:

Azymardi Azra

EDITORS:

Saiful Mujani
Hendro Prasetyo
Joban H. Meuleman
Didin Syafruddin
Ali Munhanif

ASSISTANTS TO THE EDITOR:

Arief Subhan
Heni Nuroni

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ADVISOR:

Judith M. Dent

ARABIC LANGUAGE ADVISOR:

Fuad M. Fachruddin

COVER DESIGNER:

S. Prinka

STUDIA ISLAMIKA (ISSN 0215-0492) is a journal published quarterly by the *Institut Agama Islam Negeri* (IAIN, The State Institute for Islamic Studies) Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta. (STT DEPPEN No. 129/SK/DITJEN/PPG/STT/1976) and sponsored by the Department of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. It specializes in Indonesian Islamic studies, and is intended to communicate original researches and current issues on the subject. This journal warmly welcomes contributions from scholars of related disciplines.

All articles published do not necessarily represent the views of the journal, or other institutions to which it is affiliated. They are solely the views of the authors.

God and Spiritual Beings in the Cirebon-Javanese Belief System: A Reluctant Contribution against the Syncretic Argument

Abstraksi: *Studi tentang Islam Jawa telah melahirkan kontroversi antara mereka yang menolak kuatnya pengaruh Islam terhadap budaya setempat, dan mereka yang memandang sebaliknya. Argumen kelompok pertama banyak didasarkan pada pola pikir historis-deterministis serta rekayasa situasi psikologis masyarakat Jawa. Pola pikir ini semakin melemah sejalan dengan dilakukannya kajian-kajian tentang Islam Jawa yang lebih mendalam dan kritis oleh kelompok kedua. Temuan-temuan kelompok kedua menunjukkan bahwa Islam ternyata memiliki pengaruh kuat dalam akar budaya masyarakat setempat.*

Kelompok pertama menekankan tiga kriteria dalam mengukur pengaruh suatu agama. a) rentang waktu kehadiran agama dalam suatu wilayah; b) sifat utama agama; dan c) kelompok masyarakat yang membawa dan mengadopsi agama. Berdasarkan ketiga kriteria ini, dapat dipastikan bahwa Islam tidak memiliki pengaruh kuat terhadap masyarakat Jawa.

Kelompok pertama berpendapat, kajian historis menunjukkan bahwa animisme dan Hinduisme merupakan dua sistem kepercayaan yang paling lama bercokol di Jawa. Animisme mengakar dalam masyarakat petani, dan merupakan agama pertama yang membentuk tradisi lapisan masyarakat ini. Hinduisme, yang dianut masyarakat Jawa selama lebih dari seribu tahun, terbukti sangat berpengaruh dalam pembentukan budaya Jawa secara keseluruhan. Agama ini berpengaruh kuat dalam membentuk aturan dan pola ketatanegaraan serta pemerintahan setempat. Doktrin tentang kasta, misalnya, turut diadopsi kalangan bangsawan untuk memperkuat kedudukan mereka.

Rentang waktu yang panjang membuat animisme dan Hinduisme muncul sebagai tradisi yang mapan. Sebagai konsekuensinya, Islam tidak bisa begitu saja diadopsi masyarakat Jawa. Sebaliknya, Islam diadopsi melalui kerangka budaya agama lama: animisme dan Hinduisme. Hadirnya Islam pada waktu lebih belakangan memaksa agama ini untuk tidak dapat menyentuh bagian terdalam dari sistem tradisi Jawa. Maka wajah Islam yang diekspresikan masyarakat Jawa menjadi sinkretis.

Argumen kelompok pertama ini memiliki pengaruh kuat di kalangan ahli Indonesia. Namun kajian yang datang lebih kemudian menemukan gambaran yang berbeda. Islam ternyata memiliki pengaruh kuat dalam sistem kepercayaan dan tradisi setempat. Temuan ini tidak saja memberikan gambaran yang berbeda, tetapi juga meruntuhkan asumsi dan cara pendekatan yang dipakai kelompok pertama. Kelompok kedua, termasuk juga penulis, berpandangan bahwa pendekatan historis-deterministis tidak sesuai dipakai memahami Islam di Jawa. Cara yang lebih tepat untuk memahami fenomena tersebut adalah dengan mendudukan praktek setempat dalam keseluruhan tradisi Islam.

Sistem kepercayaan masyarakat Jawa-Cirebon, misalnya, tidak menunjukkan indikasi sinkretisme. Mereka tidak memiliki konsep tentang Tuhan yang berbeda dari Islam. Istilah-istilah yang bukan berasal dari tradisi Islam, seperti sembahyang atau pangeran, memang dapat dijumpai; tetapi tidak menjadi unsur utama dalam bangunan kepercayaan mereka. Sebaliknya, seluruh isi kepercayaan masyarakat setempat memiliki akar dan sejalan dengan tradisi Islam ortopraksi. Hampir semuanya memiliki pendasaran dan pengesahan yang bersumber dari pegangan utama Islam: al-Qur'ân, hadîth dan interpretasi 'ulamâ'.

Selain Tuhan, masyarakat Jawa-Cirebon memang mempercayai adanya makhluk halus. Bahkan tidak semua istilah yang mereka gunakan berasal dari khazanah Islam. Di samping mereka mempercayai malaikat, setan dan iblis sebagai makhluk halus, mereka juga percaya adanya puntianak, wewe gundul, blegedek ireng atau genderuwo. Meskipun demikian, bukan berarti kepercayaan seperti ini bertentangan dengan Islam. Mereka tidak memandang bahwa makhluk halus tersebut berkedudukan sama dengan Tuhan. Mereka adalah makhluk ciptaan Tuhan yang memiliki kedudukan sama dengan manusia atau malaikat. Hal ini menjadi bagian dari sistem ajaran Islam tentang kepercayaan terhadap adanya sesuatu yang bersifat gaib. Berdasarkan temuan ini, pandangan kelompok pertama sulit dipertahankan. Apa yang disebut sebagai praktek sinkretis ternyata memiliki akar dalam tradisi Islam.

الله وعالم الأرواح فى أسلوب عقيدة المجتمع الجاوى -تشيريبون، المساعدة لمعارضة للبرهان التوفيقى

الخلاصة

إن الدراسة عن الإسلام الجاوى قد ولد التعارض بين هؤلاء الذين يرفضون قوة النفوذ الإسلامى إزاء التقاليد المحلية وبين من ينظرون عكس ذلك. وبرهان الفرقة الأولى أكثر ما يعتمد على برنامج الفكرة التاريخية الجبرية وتكوين حالة المجتمع الجاوى النفسى. هذه الحالة الفكرية ما زالت فى تدهور مع قيام الفرقة الثانية بالدروس الإسلامية الجاوية الأكثر عمقا وحزما. فمقابلات الفرقة الثانية تبرهن على أن الإسلام يملك فى الظاهر نفوذا قويا فى جذور تقاليد المجتمع المحلى. أما الفرقة الأولى تتركز على ثلاثة شروط فى إجراء قياس لنفوذ دين ما:

١- مدة حضوره فى ولاية ما

٢- الصبغة الأساسية لهذا الدين

٣- نوعية فرقة المجتمع التى أتت به واعتنقته

بناء على هذه الشروط الثلاثة يمكن التحديد بأن الإسلام لا يملك نفوذا قويا إزاء المجتمع الجاوى. والفرقة الأولى ترى أن الدراسة التاريخية تشير إلى أن الدين الأنيميسى (animisme) والهندوكية (Hinduisme) يعتبران برنامجين من العقيدة الأكثر قدما مكثا فى جاوة. الأنيميسى رسخ فى المجتمع الزراعى وأصبح أول دين

كون تقاليد هذه الطبقة من المجتمع. والهندوكية التي اعتنقها المجتمع الجاوى مدة أكثر من ألف سنة، برهنت على نفوذ أقوى فى تكوين الثقافة الجاوية على وجه الشمول. هذه الديانة لها نفوذ قوى فى تكوين الأنظمة وشكل أحكام الدولة والحكومة المحليين. المذهب الطبقي مثلا، احتضنه بالتبعية الطبقة الاستقرائية لتقوية موقفها.

طيلة المدة الطويلة تلك جعلت الأنيميسم والهندوكية قد ظهرا كتقليد مستقر. كنتيجة لذلك، فالإسلام لا يستطيع تلقائيا أن يعتنقه المجتمع الجاوى. عكس ذلك، فالإسلام إنما اعتنق عن طريق الهيكل الثقافى للدين القديم، الأنيميسم والهندوكية. فإن حضور الإسلام فى وقت أكثر تحلفا اضطره على عدم اللجوء إلى مس الجزء العميق من البرنامج التقليدى الجاوى. فلهذا، فإن وجه الإسلام الذى يتكلم عنه المجتمع الجاوى لم يتفق وحقيقته.

فإن حجة الفرقة الأولى قد مكنتها النفوذ القوى فى وسط المتخصصين فى الدراسة الإندونيسية، بينما الدروس الآتية مؤحرا قد قابلت حالة مغايرة. والإسلام فى واقع أمره يملك نفوذا قويا فى النظام العقائدى والتقليدى المحلى. فهذا اللقاء لا يعطى فقط صورة مخالفة، لكن كذلك حطم الادعاء وطريقة التقرب المستعملة لدى الفرقة الأولى. فالفرقة الثانية -والكاتب من زمرتها- ترى أن تقريب التاريخ الجبرى لا يتفق واستعماله لفهم الإسلام فى جاوة. فالطريقة الأكثر فاعلية لفهم هذه الظاهرة هى بتركيز العملية المحلية فى حيز التقليد الإسلامى الشامل كافة.

برنامج عقيدة المجتمع الجاوى/تشيربون (Cirebon) مثلا لا تظهر علامة عدم التوافق، فهذا المجتمع لا يملك نظرية عن الله المخالفة للإسلام. والمصطلحات التى لم تكن مأخوذة من التقاليد الإسلامية مثل *sembahyang* بجدها، ولكنها لم تكن عنصرا أوليا فى تكوين عقيدتهم. وعكس ذلك فإن كل محتوى عقيدة المجتمع

المحلى يملك جذورا و متمشية مع التقليد الإسلامى . كاد الكل يملك التأسيسية والتصديقية اللتين هما مصدر أساسى إسلامى وهو القرآن والحديث وكتب العلماء .

سوى الله فإن المجتمع الجاوى/تشيربون يؤمن بأن هناك عالم الأرواح بل ليست كل المصطلحات التى يستعملونها من أصل الخزانة الإسلامية . بجانب أنهم يؤمنون بالملائكة والشياطين والأبالسة كمنخلوقات روحية يؤمنون كذلك بوجود المخلوقات الشريرة كالعفاريت والأشباح .

رغم ذلك ليس هذا الاعتقاد مخالفا للإسلام لأنهم لا ينظرون إلى أن هذه المخلوقات لها مكانة مثل الله، ولكنها مخلوقات من خلق الله تملك وصفا مثل الإنسان أو الملائكة . هذه الحالة أصبحت جزءا من برنامج التعاليم الإسلامية فيما يخص بالعقيدة نحو وجود شئ غائب . فبناء على هذا الأمر فمن الصعوبة الدفاع عن نظرية الفرقة الأولى، وما يقال عنه أنه تطبيق نظرية التوفيق بين المعتقدات الدينية له جذور فى التقليد الإسلامى .

Prelude

Poem Quotati;

*a*shhadu an lâ ilâha illa Allâh
 wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan rasûl Allâh.
 isun anakseni kelawan atinिसun,
 setuhune oranana Pengeran anging Allâh.
 lan isun anakseni kelawan atinिसun,
 setuhune Nabi Muhammad iku utusane Allâh.

*tegesi kang aran Pengeran, iku dzat kang agawe,
 langit kelawan bumi, sarta isine kabeh.
 Isun anakseni setuhune Kanjeng Nabi Muhammad,
 iku utusane Gusti Allâh kanggo wong alam kabeh.*

*ashhadu an lâ ilâha illa Allâh,
 wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan rasûl Allâh.*

*I bear witness in my heart,
 that there is no Lord but Allâh.
 and I bear witness in my heart,
 that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allâh.*

*He who is called Lord is the Being who creates
 heaven and earth and the contents thereof.
 I bear witness that the most Excellent Prophet Muhammad
 is the Apostle of Allâh, for mankind throughout the whole world.*

Studies of Indonesian Islam, especially Islam in Java, have fallen into a controversy between those that deny the strong influence of Islam, and those that see otherwise stressing that the influence of Islam in Java is strong. The former mainly come from those who, since the beginning, have been pre-occupied by historical deterministic thinking and the manipulation of Javanese psychology. They mostly espouse animistic/Hindu-Buddhistic syncretic arguments about Javanese Islam. The latter, which insists that Javanese Islam is really Islamic, is being more and more flattered by burgeoning findings from serious studies and objective retrospects. Although this work tends to favor the latter, it is worthwhile briefly recounting former's argument.

One version of the syncretic arguments is championed by Clifford Geertz who devised the *abangan-santri-priyayi* trichotomy for viewing the socio-religious pattern and development of Java.¹ His approach has enjoyed currency among many Indonesianists for the last few decades. Subsequent studies on Javanese socio-religious discourse cannot proceed without reference to him. In appreciation of his suc-

cess, especially in bringing Java into the academy, before examining the subject that I will be dealing with, i.e., the Cirebon-Javanese 'belief system', I would like to start my discussion by first briefly recounting Geertz's approach. Further discussion that tackle the main issues will eventually lead to a consideration of to what extent Islam has influenced socio-religious life on Java.

Geertz's Scheme of Javanese Religious Syncretism

According to Geertz's historical representation, before the advent of Hinduism, the Javanese were animists. In about AD 400, Hinduism, and then Buddhism, began to gain a stronghold. Around AD 1500 Islam came via the expansion of sea trade.² Meanwhile, the psychologically modest Javanese articulated into the notion of essentially tolerant, accommodative and flexible Javanese is taken as another crucial point by which, instead of opposing any incoming religion, the Javanese were thought to have taken everything as necessary ingredients to form a new synthesis, i.e.,

... the village religious system (which) commonly consists of a balanced integration of animistic, Hinduistic, and Islamic elements, a basic Javanese syncretism ... the island's true folk tradition, the basic stratum of its civilization;³

The extent to which each religion has contributed to this syncretism was accounted for in a threefold manner: (1) the sequence and the time span of its presence in Java, (2) the basic nature of the religion; and (3) the group of people who initially brought and adopted the religion. As animism was the first religion on Java that had long become an established tradition, it is argued accordingly that animism has made a major contribution. As animism is essentially a religion adopted by commoners, it must have had a stronghold among the village peasants and must have shaped their syncretism. Hinduism, which came and has been taken to constitute Javanese state craft and state polity for more than a thousand years, must also have been a contributory factor which had a major impact on the overall formation of Javanese culture. As Hinduism, through its inherent caste doctrine, legitimates elite domination, its impact must have been strongest among the court aristocrats because they benefited from this religion. Accordingly, Hinduism shaped these aristocrats' syncretism and world-view. Islam, on the other hand, which came late via the expansion of trade, and had its wider spread hampered by the pres-

ence of European colonialism and the spread of Christianity, must have had less influence. It touched only the surface of the existing Hindu/Buddhist animistic cultural rock. Consequently, Islam, according to Geertz,

... did not move into an essentially virgin area, ... but into one of Asia's greatest political, aesthetic, religious, and social creations, the Hindu-Buddhist Javanese state, which though it had by then begun to weaken, had cast its roots so deeply into Indonesian society (especially on Java, but not only there)...⁴

Accordingly, in Java, "Islam did not construct a civilization, it (only) appropriated one."⁵ To the Javanese, Islam was an alien tradition adopted and brought by unsettled traders in the coastal areas. Only after a long peaceful assimilation did Islam gradually form enclaves of trading communities in towns and among rich farmers. These Muslim communities adopted a syncretism which stressed Islamic cultural aspects. The net result of this overall process on Java is contemporary Javanese society with its intricate socio-religious groupings, consisting of:

Abangan, representing a stress on the animistic aspects of the over-all Javanese syncretism and broadly related to the peasant element in the population; *santri*, representing a stress on the Islamic aspects of the syncretism and generally related to the trading element (and to certain elements in the peasantry as well); and *priyayi*, stressing the Hinduist aspects and related to the bureaucratic element ...⁶

It was this schemata which, to my understanding, was taken by Geertz as his efficient, albeit simplistic, tool to analyze the abundant ethnographic data from Modjokuto, a small town in East Java. He divided the data according to this predetermined schemata, the *abangan-santri-priyayi* trichotomy. By adding a conflict scenario to his schemata he produced *The Religion of Java*, a controversial portrait of the socio-religious life of the Javanese.⁷

Responses to Geertz varies from total and uncritical acceptance to strong rejection. In between these two extremes there are some who accept it with caution and some who merely repeat his jargon and use it for different purposes and different situations. Siddique (1977), perhaps, belongs to the latter.⁸

Geertz's approach has faced serious challenges from many scholars who attempted more objective retrospects or engaged in serious

studies. They argue against the truthfulness and usefulness of Geertz's syncretic argument, and the ensuing *abangan-santri-priyayi* trichotomy as a clear cut device to categorize Javanese society. Many of these critics agree that *The Religion of Java* is a stimulating work but when it is put under careful scrutiny major shortcomings readily appear at almost every corner. They point out the problem of Geertz's theoretical orientation, especially in relation to the absurdity of his concepts that precipitate confusion such as regarding religious syncretism and how religion is to be distinguished from other regulating factors of human conduct and behavior such as *adat*. Geertz also engaged in improper use of Javanese terms that do not conform with the real meaning that the Javanese usually hold. In addition, Geertz commits a major systematic error by talking only what the modernists and reformists happen to agree on a gratuitously labelling much of Muslim religious life in Java as 'Hindu', etc. Built upon such absurdities and confusions and errors, it is therefore difficult, according to these critics, to accept Geertz's major proposition.⁹

My own findings from Cirebon, a region on the north coast of West Java about 250 km east of Jakarta, also stand in favor of the critics' position. A wide range of ethnographic data from fourteen months period field work carried out between 1991-1993, incorporating many things representing a diverse manifestations of popular religious traditions: belief system, mythology, ritual practices and the transmissions of these traditions from one generation to the next clearly substantiate this finding. Detailed analysis of these traditions suggests that the Javanese socio-religious tradition can be best understood by tracing its roots in terms of traditional Islamic orthopraxy rather than resorting to other traditions such as a Hindu/Buddhist and an animistic past.¹⁰

In this paper I would like to present only a segment of these examinations, i.e. concerning the Cirebon-Javanese 'Belief System.' This will include two aspects: (a) the Cirebonese idea of God, and (b) the belief in spiritual beings. I think, these two aspects are part of crucial points in the formation of overall Javanese socio-religious traditions. It is also partly on these points that the syncretic argument of Javanese Islam, such as Geertzian, laid down their major propositions.

The Cirebon-Javanese Belief System: The Idea of God

The poem I placed at the beginning of this paper is one example of *puji-pujian* (praising God) I frequently heard from a *tajug* (prayer

house) at Blok Kedawung, a village in Desa Kaliwadas of Weru District, about twelve kilometres south-west of the city of Cirebon.¹¹ The poem is in Cirebonese dialect but, somewhat surprisingly, on several occasions I heard the same poem chanted at a prayer house in the Sundanese village of Desa Brujul-Kulon, District of Jatiwangi in Majalengka Regency about 30 kilometers west of Cirebon. This would suggest that the poem is not only known by Javanese speaking people in Cirebon living in the plain close to the coastal area, but also by the inland Sundanese as well. The chanters were groups of people (*jamâ'ah*) consisting of children and adults, males and females, who were about to undertake the prescribed prayer. They usually do this chanting soon after one of them has sounded the *adhân* (call for prayer). During chanting, they recite the verses repeatedly until the *imâm* comes and prayer begins. The poem is not the only one recited in pre-prayer chanting; there are many others. I chose this particular poem because I think it is relevant to a discussion of the Cirebonese idea of God, the subject dealt with in this section.

Chanting *puji-pujian* at prayer time is a common practice among traditional Muslims, especially in Cirebon. Usually, the chanting goes on during the time between the call to prayer and the prayer itself, that is, during the time while people wait for their *imâm* who will lead the prescribed daily prayer. The main idea of the chanting is that, in accordance with standards of piety, no time within the prayer session is without spiritual significance. All activities within this session are directed solely towards *ibâdah* or *ibâdât* (devotion to God),¹² and before the main *ibâdah* (the prescribed prayer) begins, *puji-pujian* serves as a kind of warming up. In this context, the chanting, usually of verses that glorify God or that respect the Prophet Muhammad, or other similar verses, is considered a meritorious religious act. In addition, if the chanted verses are the *shahâdah* (testimony of faith), they, in fact, have a double function: for adults, the function is renewal and re-affirmation of the creed; for children, it is a kind of preparatory drill ensuring that they are conversant with pronouncing the words when the time comes to recite the creed formally.

The first couplet of the poem I have selected includes the Arabic words of the *shahâdah* which the Cirebonese call *syahadat*.¹³ Literally, *syahadat* means testimony. In religious use the term *syahadat* refers to the Muslim profession of faith stating that there is no God but God and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God. The second couplet is the translation of the *syahadat* in rather archaic Cirebonese

Javanese dialect. In English it translates as "I bear witness (in my heart) that there is no Lord but Allāh, and I bear witness (in my heart) that the most Excellent Prophet Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh." The third couplet contains a short description of the two main "characters" depicted in the *syahadat*: the first explains the use of the term *Pangeran* (Lord) for God, a key point for me in determining the poem's relevance; the second explains the function of Muhammad, whose prophethood is universal. The basic idea of Deity that prevails among most Cirebonese seems to conform to the message conveyed by this verse. It says that what is really meant by God is the Being who created heaven and earth together with their contents. There is no doubt however, that the word *Pangeran* refers to Allāh, the proper name of God among Muslims.

For Cirebonese, as well as for other Muslims, pronouncement of the Islamic creed, the *syahadat*, is a supreme religious act whose mere recitation suffices for entry into the community of believers.¹⁴ The important position of the *syahadat* among the Cirebonese is manifest in the fact that almost without exception, all native Cirebonese are Muslim in the sense that everyone, recites the *syahadat* at least once during his/her lifetime. Interestingly, the formal recitation of the *syahadat* takes place at particularly crucial moments of the life cycle, that is, at the time of circumcision and marriage. Circumcision for a boy and marriage for a girl are of fundamental importance among the Javanese.¹⁵

"Formally, in Islam, the obligation to recite *syahadat* is required only once during a lifetime", said Pak Shofie, my informant. He explained that when people have finished reciting *syahadat*, they automatically become Muslim, whatever intention they might have in their hearts and whatever they do after the recital. "We do not know what is in one's heart, we only know what one says." In Islam, Pak Shofie added, to do good or bad, right or wrong is solely an individual's right; for that reason a person is responsible to God. But when a person falls into trouble or gets sick, other Muslims are obliged to help, and when a person dies it is the duty of other Muslims to care for the corpse, to pray at the burial and to bury the person at a Muslim burial complex. This statement confirms that the mere recitation of *syahadat* suffices for entry into the *ummah*, the community of believers whose social bonds are based on the pronouncement of that very creed. Of course this is not to say that a mere oral pronouncement is enough to become a good Muslim. Deeper awareness in the heart of the reciter is also required; again, Pak Shofie explained:

One who would truly recite *syahadat* is required to incorporate two things: the first is to pronounce it by the tongue and to fill the heart with earnestness while witnessing that there is no god that can be rightfully worshipped but Allâh, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allâh. He must be sure that Muhammad's prophethood is to teach *jinn* and humankind about the divine message written in the Holy Qur'ân. Secondly, real recital of *syahadat* should be accompanied by *tasdiq*, *ta'zim*, *khurmah* and *khilwah*. *Tasdiq* means affirming that Allah is the sole God; *ta'dim* means glorifying God; *khurmah* means exalting God; and *khilwah* means being generous in accepting Allah as the sole God; that is the real *syahadat*. Ignoring those elements is to mar the recital of *syahadat* and one's becoming a Muslim is only superficial.¹⁶

Referring back to the poem that begins this section, God is firstly enunciated as *Kang gawe*, the creator of the universe: heaven, earth, and all the contents within them. This indicates that, in the first place, the Cirebonese idea of God is closely related to the concept of creation; professing that as creator, God creates what He likes and by His own will without interference from any other. Secondly, God is only one and the oneness of God is importantly emphasized: he has no companion, and has no equal. "*Gusti Allah iku Siji, oranana kang madani*" (the sovereign Lord Allâh is One, none is equal to Him), Saefullah (37 years), a toy peddler, said. He affirmed the oneness of God by pointing out that it is in fact, depicted in the Holy Qur'ân in *Surat Qulhu* (QS: 112;1-4).¹⁷ He recited the verses and then gave their meaning in *Bahasa Indonesia*, which translates as: "Say, He, Allâh is One, the Eternal God. He begot none, nor was He begotten. None is equal to Him".

Some Cirebonese do recognize a variety of other deities: *dewa* (*deva*, male) and *dewi* (*devi*, female), *Betara* (*Bhatara*, male) and *Betari* (*Bhatari*, female), and also *Sang Hyang*. In general these terms are usually thought to be related to terms for Hindu deities.¹⁸

However, in Cirebon, the meaning of these words or the subjects referred to by such terms are vague. These terms are mainly heard in *wayang* (shadow-puppet) stories. Some *wayang* enthusiasts explain that *dewa-dewi*, *batara-betari* and *sang hyang* are the same things which refer to the earlier ancestors' deities predating Islam, but they do not believe that these divine beings now exist or ever existed. Some others say that these terms refer to superhuman beings, a mixture between *jinn* (genie) and man, each having a certain spiritual or magical power that enables them to become master of a certain element of the universe, such as wind, water, earth, or sky, and that some of our

ancestors took them as deities. Some believe and some do not believe that they existed at some time in history. Still others consider that they are only fictitious figures from *wayang* stories, created by and inherited from an earlier generation to teach people about morality. The last view seems to be most commonly held.

The Cirebonese word for God is *Pa-ngeran* or *Pe-ngeran*.¹⁹ This word is derived from Javanese and has two meanings: God, and lord referring to person of nobility or of high rank. The Cirebonese use the word in distinct ways to mean either of these. *Pangeran* meaning lord, is used only as a title of the court families and is put before the person's name, for example, "Pangeran Diponegoro", "Pangeran Mangkurat Trusmi", "Pangeran Panjunan" and "Pangeran Jayakelana". For the common noun meaning lord they do not use *pangeran* but *pinangeran* (by inserting the infix 'in'); e.g. Pangeran Ardiningrat is a *pinangeran*, not a *pangeran*; there are many *pinangeran* (not *pangeran*) in a court ceremony. *Pangeran* meaning God, on the other hand, is used independently but not as a title preceding any name, not even God's name. Thus, the expression "*Pangeran Allah*" is never found.

In Cirebonese vernacular, asking about a person's God can be phrased as: "*Sapa Pengeranira?*" ("Who is your God?"). The answer is "*Pengeranisun Gusti Allah*" ("My God is the Lord Allâh"). The word *gusti* also comes from Javanese and can also be translated as "lord"; it is akin to, or sometimes used interchangeably with, the word "*kanjeng*" (excellency) to refer to nobility such as prophets, saints, kings or others. A reference using *gusti* however implies a patron-client or a master-slave relationship in which the referee is the patron or the master. *Kanjeng* and *gusti* are used for example in such references as: *Gusti Nabi* or *Kanjeng Nabi*, or *Kanjeng Gusti Nabi Muhammad*, *Gusti* or *Kanjeng* or *Kanjeng Gusti Sinuhun Sultan Sepuh*. *Kanjeng* is therefore, used only in reference to a person and never to God; hence there can be no expression such as: "*Kanjeng Pengeran*" or "*Kanjeng Allah*".

Along with regarding God as *Kang gawe* (the Creator), the Cirebonese also regard God as *Kang Kuasa* (the Sovereign) whose sovereignty is absolute and omnipotent, and *Kang ngatur* (the ruler). The notions of God as sovereign and ruler seem to be more frequently mentioned in daily life than the notion of God as creator. I did not further explore the reasons for this, but it is probably for practical reasons; the matter of life after creation is of more concern than are

matters before creation. As God is omnipotent everything is totally under His control and nothing in the universe is unseen to Him. The three-fold ideas of God as the Creator, the Sovereign and the Ruler are consistent with the ideas of God's absolute omnipotence over men on the one hand, and men's total dependence on Him on the other. The dependency relationship of Creator-created is deeply imprinted; it manifests itself for example in oral traditions, and more apparently, in exclamations. When one begins to do something, especially something important, it is traditional to recite *basmalah*, the pronouncement of *bismillahir rahmanir rahim* (*bi ism Allâh al-Rahmân al-Rahîm*), in the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. On the other hand, when facing something undesirable or unwanted or when frightened, one will spontaneously respond: "*ya Allah!*" ("oh God!"); or "*la ilaha illa 'llah!*" (*lâ ilâha illa Allâh*), even sometimes, "*Muhammad rasulu' llah*" (*Muhammad rasûl Allâh*), with the full recital of the *syahadat* added; or "*masya Allah*" (*mâ shâ' Allâh*, meaning "Allâh does not will that"); or "*Astaghfirullahal'azim!*" (*astaghfiru Allâh al-'azîm* meaning I beg pardon of Allâh the Greatest); or "*la hawla walaquwwata illa billahil 'aliyyil 'azim*" (*lâ hawl wa lâ quwwah illa bi Allâh al-'âlî al-'azîm*, meaning "there is no power and strength except from Allâh the Greatest"). Similarly, these expressions are used when shocked by something or by some accident. In a more precarious situation, when hearing that someone has died one will exclaim: "*Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi roji'un*", (*Innâ lillâh wa innâ ilaih râjî 'ûn* meaning, "lo, we belong to Allâh and lo, unto Him we return"). But in contrast, that is, when facing desirable things or results, the response is: "*alhamdulillah*" (*al-hamd li Allâh*, meaning "praise be to Allâh"). These expressions are commonly enunciated not only by devout individuals and *santri*, but also by ignorant laymen. The only difference is in pronunciation. As one might expect, learned individuals will produce perfect or nearly perfect utterances of Arabic compared with laymen; for example, less learned laymen may pronounce "*la ilaha ill'Allah*" as "*la ilaha ilelloh*" instead of "*lâ ilâha illa Allâh*"; "*masya Allah*" as "*masya olloh*" rather than "*mâshâ' Allâh*"; "*Astaghfirullahal 'adim*" as "*astagpirulloh al-adim*" or even "*astagailah*", or just "*astaga*" instead of "*astaghfiru Allâh al-'azîm*"; or "*la hawla walaquwwata illa billahil'aliyyil 'azim*" as "*la kaola wala kuwata ila billah*" instead of "*lâ hawl wa lâ quwwah illa bi Allâh*".

Although these expressions do not necessarily reflect religiosity, in the sense that the users need not necessarily be devout, these oral

traditions are indications that Islam has indeed penetrated deeply into the traditions of Cirebonese social life.

Islam prohibits its followers from thinking about the substance of God or imagining His essence. Such questions as: "what does God look like" are strictly discouraged as they are beyond the reach of human understanding.²⁰ Not surprisingly, among the Cirebonese too, attempts to describe God end up with the identification of His names in terms of attributes called *sifat-sifate Gusti Allah* (Allâh's attributes) which incorporate *sifat wajib* (*sifât al-wâjib*-the "must" attributes), *sifat mustahil* (*sifât al-mustahil*-the "must not" attributes) and *sifat jaiz* (*sifât al-jâiz*-the "may" attribute). The *sifat wajib* correspond to an affirmation of divine perfection, qualities that must be ascribed to God. There are twenty of these and hence they are known as *sifat rong puluh* (the twenty attributes). Thirteen of the attributes are said to be unanimously agreed on by theologians, while the other seven were added later by others.²¹ These thirteen attributes are: *wujud* (*wujûd*-existence); *qidam* (*qidâm*-eternal); *baqa'* (*baqâ'*-permanence); *mukhalafatu lilhawadits* (*mukhâlafah li al-bawâdith*-dissimilarity with the created); *qiyamuhu binafsihi* (*qiyâmuhu binafsih*-self-subsistence); *wahdaniyat* (*wahdâniyyah*-oneness); *qudrat* (*qudrâh*-power); *iradat* (*irâdah*-will); 'ilmu ('ilm-knowledge), *hayat* (*hâyy*-life); *sama'* (*samâ'*-hearing); *bashar* (*basar*-vision); *kalam* (*kalâm*-speech). The other attributes do not intrinsically describe God's essence; they designate what God can do and usually does, they are *kaunuhu* (*kawnuhu*-He is in a state of being); *qadiran* (*qadîr*-powerful); *muridan* (*murîd*-willing); 'aliman ('âlim-knowing); *hayyan* (*hâyy*-alive); *sami'an* (*samî'*-hearing); *bashiran* (*bashîr*-seeing); *mutakalliman* (*mutakallim*-speaking). To assist memorization, the Cirebonese put the list of the twenty attributes into a poem chanted as follows:²²

Allah,
Wujud, qidam, baqa,
mukhalafatu lilhawaditsi
qiyamuhu binafsihi,
wahdaniyat, qudrat, iradat,
'ilmu, hayat, sama',
bashar, kalam, qâdiran, muridan,
'aliman, hayyan, sami'an,
bashiran, mutakalliman.

The popularity of the poem is helped thanks to modern recording technology and the current trend of people's religious commit-

ment in Indonesia. Now the poem is beautifully chanted by some popsingers and is available on records and cassettes, and can even be heard on some commercial radio stations.

The *sifat mustahil* (the "must not" attributes), correspond to the negation of any defective qualities and, therefore, must not be ascribed to God. Standing in contrast with *sifat wajib*, there are also twenty *sifat mustahil*: 'adam ('âdam-non-existence); huduts (*hudûth*-recency); *fana'* (*fanâ'*-perishability); *mumathalatu lilhawadithi* (*mumâthalah li' al-hawâdith*-similarity with the created); *ikhtiyaju bighairihi* (*ikhtiyâj bighayrih*-non-self-sufficiency); *ta'addud* (*ta'addud*-plurality); 'ajzu ('ajz-weakness); *karahah* (*karâhab*-unwillingness); *jahlu* (*jahl*-ignorance); *mawtu* (*mawt*-inanimated); *asommu* (*asamm*-deafness); *a'ma* (*a'mâ*-blindness); *bukmun* (*bukm*-speechlessness); He, who or that which could be in a state of being: 'ajizan ('âjiz-powerless); *karihan* (*karîh*-unwilling); *jabilan* (*jâhil*-ignorant); *mayyitan* (*mayyit*-dead); *asomman* (*asmm*-deaf); *a'man* (*a'mâ*-blind), *abkaman* (*abkam*-non-speaking).

There is, however, only one *sifat jaiz* (the "may"-attribute): God's prerogative to do or not to do something.

As well as describing God in terms of these attributes, He can also be described in terms of Beautiful Names which are called *aran baguse Gusti Allah* or *asma'ul busna* (*al-asmâ' al-busn*-God's Beautiful Names). But this knowledge is prevalent only among relatively learned individuals and is usually enunciated in Arabic terms. There are ninety-nine Names in total.²³

In theological discourse, especially between the traditional Ash'arite schools on the one hand, and the rationalist Mu'tazilites on the other, there is disagreement about the appropriateness of describing God in terms of attributes. The Ash'arite proponents, including al-Ghazâlî, argue in favor of attribution; while the Mu'tazilites are against it. The Cirebonese clearly stand within the Ash'arite line. In accepting this doctrine, the Cirebonese however, in one way or another, also develop the necessary logical thinking they need to defend their faith. Mas'ud (26 years), a batik factory worker, used the existence of the universe as the basis for his argument on the existence of God:

... everything that exists must have come about because it has been created by its creator. The existence of clothes that we wear indicates that there is someone who makes them, that is, the tailor; the existence of chairs, tables

and furniture indicates the existence of the maker, the carpenter; so too, the existence of plants, trees, animal, seas, earth, heaven, stars, moon, sun and all the things within the universe together with the well established structure and order would clearly indicate the existence of the Great Creator and Sustainer which we, Muslims, call Allâh, the true God.²⁴

I further asked him, given that the universe exists because it was created by the Great Creator, and that this becomes the proof that God exists, who then is the Creator of God?". Appearing slightly offended, he explained:

You must realize that every rule in the world has an exception. You can see for example, in some offices there is a notice on the door saying: "NO ENTRANCE !" But why does the director go in and out of the room freely and carelessly despite the "no entrance" notice? It is because the "no entrance" notice does not apply to him; he is exempted from the rule because he is in fact, the master of the office and it is he who put up the notice. The same token also applies to God. Because God, the prime Creator, is not a thing and is not created, he is exempted from the rule stating that "everything is created." Above all, it will be evident when you also realize that the next two other attributes of Allah are *qidâm* which means without beginning, and *baqâ'*, that is without ending.²⁵

Mas'ud's explanation represents a layman's style. But considering that he only has a primary school education and has never been to a *pesantren* (traditional religious school), that he has learned religion only from *ngaji* at the nearby *tajug*, where chanting *puji-pujian* is one of its media as well as its methods, his argument is remarkable. He accepts religious doctrine not in the form of dead dogma which must be accepted without question, but instead, develops his creed with an enriched body of theological thinking. Not all people are of course like Mas'ud, but there are certainly many others like him, who may be taken as interesting examples showing that there are some cases in which the assimilation of Islam amongst traditional people has produced a sort of 'popular rationalism.' The existence of God cannot be satisfactorily proven by any empirical enquiries, laboratory experiments or sophisticated logical manipulation, let alone by Mas'ud's explanation. Al-Ghazâlî (in Abu Zed 1974) warned that even the prophets were not sent to prove the existence of God and the origin of the world; they were only sent to teach His unity. Arguments for God's existence are permissible only if they are derived and sustained by the Qur'ân.²⁶

The description I have presented would suggest that the Cirebonese do not seem to have a unique concept of God. Their idea of God derives entirely from Islam wherein the concept of deity is recorded in the Holy Scripture, the Qur'ân. The Scripture preaches that basic

to the Islamic faith is the acceptance of the principle of absolute monotheism, the rejection of polytheism, and the destruction of idols by bearing witness that Allâh is the only one and unique God, and the Creator of all that exists. The Qur'ân expresses and emphasizes these basic tenets. This faith is the renewal of what the earlier prophets, Adam to Muhammad, recalled; it has also been validated and ratified by the pre-Islamic monotheistic believers where Abraham *khalîl Allâh*, or the friend of God, is notably described in the Qur'ân as being: just and a prophet, a true believer (*hanîf*), having surrendered himself (Muslim) to God without compromise to the *mushrikûn* or polytheists, those who associate others with God.²⁷

Belief in Spiritual Beings

There is general agreement among the Cirebonese on the existence of spiritual beings, although the details of these beings are perceived differently from individual to individual. The existence of spiritual beings is seen as a corollary of the existence of physical beings. If physical beings exist, why shouldn't non-physical or spiritual beings? Man Misna (52 years), an egg peddler, put the existence of physical vis-à-vis spiritual beings in a duality conceptual framework; he said:

It is natural that everything be of two matching pairs; night-day, male-female, east-west, north-east, bad-good, physical-spiritual and so on. The physical beings like human beings, animals, trees and others do exist as they are clearly visible; the spiritual beings do also exist, but they are not visible due to their name, as spiritual ones. Men who deny the existence of spiritual beings are the silliest ones.²⁸

The commonly known spiritual beings are: *malekat* (*malâikah*-angels), *iblis* (*iblis*-devils), *setan* (*shaytân*-satans) and *jinn* (*jinn*-genies). However, detailed information about these beings is incomplete and speculative. Their nature, essence and actions are described differently by different people. A fairly coherent explanation was given by Fathoni, preferably called Toni (46 years), a hen-and-cock trader. His explanation seems to represent, more or less, the general Cirebonese conception of these beings. He claimed that what he said comes from what he could understand when he heard his *Kyai*, in *Pesantren* Benda, explained the subject once.²⁹ Firstly, he said that he did not know which spiritual beings were created first, but he felt certain that they already existed when Adam was created. *Malekat*, *iblis*, *setan* and *jinn* were, in fact, of similar matter in that they are

created from a kind of smokeless fire. Some people said that *malekat* were created from *sorot* (light), while the rest (*iblis*, *setan* and *jinn*) were created from fire.

Another kind of spiritual being, *mrekayangan* (ghost), was unclearly defined except that it was a type of *setan*. A *mrekayangan* scares people when it appears although it really does not intend to appear nor to scare. Some say that a *mrekayangan* is not really a *setan* because its origin is different from the real *setan*; rather, a *mrekayangan* is the bad spirit of a human being who has died improperly, for example, by suicide, by murder, or by accident while committing a sinful deed. Still others say that a *mrekayangan* is a type of *jinn*.

Malekat

In Islam, the belief in angels constitutes the second Pillar of Creed (*Rukun Iman*).³⁰ It comes after the belief in the oneness of God, Allâh. The other four are belief in His Messengers, the Holy Scriptures, the Day of Final Judgement or Resurrection, and God's will of man's destiny. The Cirebonese certainly believe in these, but many people do not know that they constitute the Pillar of Creed. The last two pillar are mostly referred to as, respectively, *Kiyamat* (calamity) and *Kresane Pangeran* (the Will of God). In relation to the fourth and fifth pillar, Pak Shofie said that Muslims should believe that there are a large number of Messengers of God but every Muslim needs to know only twenty-five of them.³¹ Most Cirebonese also know the names of the twenty-five prophets and frequently use them in naming their children. Nevertheless, few can list them perfectly, let alone in precise chronological order. Some put the list into a chant; hence, they can more easily list the names in the proper order. In contrast, there are only four Holy Scriptures: the *Zabur* (Psalms) revealed to Nabi Dawud (David), *Taurat* (Old Testament) revealed to Nabi Musa (Moses), *Injil* (Bible or New Testament) revealed to Nabi Isa (Jesus), and the *Qur'ân* revealed to the last apostle, Muhammad. Because there will not be any apostles after Muhammad, the *Qur'ân*, which was revealed to him, is believed to perfect the three preceding Scriptures, covering therefore, the main things contained in them.

... the Scriptures revealed by God are four in number. First is the Psalms, revealed to his excellency Prophet David, second is the Old Testament revealed to his excellency Prophet Moses, third is the Bible revealed to his excellency Prophet Jesus, fourth is the *Qur'ân* revealed to his excellency

Prophet Muhammad, God exalts him and peace be upon him, the seal of the apostles, which concludes all the Scriptures revealed before. The prudence contained in those Scriptures are covered by the Qur'ân.³²

The word *malekat* known by the Cirebonese comes from *malâikah*, the Arabic plural form of *malak*, meaning angel. The term refers to the heavenly creatures, the servants of God who stand as intermediaries between the divine world and the human world. Toni, seemed to represent a view widely held by many other people when he said that *malekat* were made of light, never sleep, are not born nor do they give birth, are neither male nor female, can neither eat nor drink, and have no passion nor lust. They are able to assume any form, can move virtually instantly, from one place to another over unlimited distance, and are always loyal to God and do what He wishes. They never forget nor feel tired. "The number of *malekat* is countless, only God knows, but every Muslim should know at least ten of them. Four are Archangels, each has a specific duty with countless subordinates", said Man Muklas, a 64 years old tobacco peddler and the *imâm* at the Kedawung prayer house, (adding to Toni's explanation). He then named and described the ten *malekat*. The first one, and described at greatest length, including his appearance on earth in the form of an unrecognized human being such as a beggar and a good looking man, was Jibril or Jibra'il or Jabara'il (Gabriel), whose duty is to convey revelations to the apostles (*rusul*) of Allah.³³

Man Muklas said that as far as he could remember from a *kitâb* (book or written source of *santri* references) he had read, Jibril had revealed God's words to Adam twelve times, to Idris four times, to Abraham forty times, to Jacob four times, to Moses four hundred times, to Ayyub three times and to Muhammad (peace be upon him), twenty-four thousand times. Jibril is a *malekat muqarrabun* [one of the angels who (is brought) close to God] and is the best known *malekat*.

Jibril is also known by names associated with *ruh* or spirit: *ar-ruh* (*al-rûh*, the spirit) who, with other angels, descends to the world to spread God's grace to the devotees who pray at *lailatul qadar* (*layl al-qadr*), the night of power (or blessing) during which a devotion is considered to be equal to or better than, continuous devotion for a thousand months, and is rewarded accordingly. The night of blessing occurs at the eve of *maleman* on odd-numbered nights after the twentieth day of Ramadân (that is, the 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th, and 29th nights).

Jibril is also called *ruhuna*, (Our spirit, that is, the spirit of God), the nickname assigned when he was sent to Mary and breathed upon her womb, making her pregnant without her having been impregnated by a man. Still another name is *ruhul amin* (*ruh al-amîn*, the faithful spirit), for his main duty is as the angel of revelations. He brought down revelations in clear Arabic, to the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The first revelation was brought down at the cave of Hira near Mecca, signifying the start of Muhammad's prophethood. Jibril came in his original form with wings. This caused a crisis for Muhammad (peace be upon him), who thought that he was possessed by the *jinn* of the cave. Jibril assured him that he really was sent by God and then read the revelation comprising the first to fifth verses of *surat Iqra'* (*al-'Alaq*), saying: "Recite in the name of the Lord who created; created man from clots of blood. Recite! Your Lord the Most Bountiful One, who taught man with pen; taught man what he knew not."³⁴

Furthermore it is said that prior to Jibril's full recitation of the five verses, there was a sort of short dialogue between him and Muhammad. Jibril instructed Muhammad to read, and Muhammad answered that he could not read. Jibril repeated the instruction once again but Muhammad repeated his answer; finally, Jibril read the verses for Muhammad. From that time on during Muhammad's prophethood, in response to the ongoing situation and demands, Jibril routinely came to Muhammad with revelations. Jibril also accompanied Muhammad on the night journey from Mecca to the mosque of al-'Aqsa in Palestine, and from Palestine to the seventh heaven up to *Sidratul Muntaha* (*Sidrah al-Muntahâ*, the final destination). Here Muhammad received first hand instructions from Allah to pray five times a day from whence comes the prescribed duty for all Muslims. Muhammad's night journey is known as *Isra'â-Mi'raj*, which all Muslims commemorate annually on the 27th of Rajab, the third month of the Islamic calendar.³⁵

The other angels after Jibril are: Mikail, Israfil, Izrail, Raqib, Atid, Munkar, Nakir, Malik and Ridwan. Mikail (Michael), has the duty of controlling rain, and distributing *rejeke* (fortune) such as food, nourishment and knowledge to all living creatures, particularly to mankind, whether believers or unbelievers. Thus, everything in the seas, and everything on earth that is useful for sustaining life (such as trees, fruits, grains and livestock) is under the control of Mikail. Another *malekat* is Israfil, the angel who will blow his trumpet on

the day of resurrection. Actually, Israfil will blow his trumpet on three occasions: firstly to signal the calamity; secondly, when the earthly world has vanished altogether; and finally, on the day when the dead are resurrected to receive the Final Judgement. Izrail, the angel of death, is responsible for taking the soul away from living beings. When the time comes, no one can escape from death, or postpone it even a second; Izrail does his job strictly. These four *malekat*, Jibril, Mikail, Israfil and Izrail, are the Archangels (*malekat mukorobun*).³⁶

Two other *malekat* often mentioned are Raqib and 'Atid, whose duties are to record all human activities: words, actions and intentions, whether good or bad. Raqib records all the "good" ones while 'Atid records the "bad" ones. Everyone therefore has the two angels on guard at their sides. People with good intentions are credited with a minor "good" point; a full point is given when the intention materializes into action. By virtue of God's mercy, there are no minor points for bad intentions; a full "bad" point is given only when a bad deed is actually done. A further two *malekat* are Munkar and Nakir, who come to examine the dead in their graves. The examination concerns God, the prophet and the path the dead followed while alive. The righteous and faithful will be able to answer all the questions, and Munkar and Nakir will release them in peace until the Day of Resurrection; the infidel however, will not be able to answer. Consequently they will experience severe suffering. Neither rationality nor intelligence works in answering Munkar and Nakir's questions; indeed, given the belief that the brain is where rationality and intelligence reside, these must also be dead when the body dies. In contrast, belief which is found in the soul, not in the body, will last forever.

The last two *malekat* are Malik and Ridwan. The former is the terrible angel responsible for controlling Hell which, generally, is kept by a large number of subordinate angels of hell called Zabaniyah. In contrast, Ridwan guards paradise and does his duty with thousands of subordinates called the angels of paradise.

Iblis, Setan and Mrekayangan

In Cirebon the term *setan* (satan) is used as a general term referring to any kind of bad spirit being who leads people to sin. When it appears to humans, it becomes a *weweden* or *memedi* (spook). But when the term is further elaborated upon, Cirebonese often classify

setan into: *iblis*, *setan*, and *mrekayangan*. The first two are species which can be vaguely distinguished from each other, but both were created by God from a kind of fire.

Iblis and Setan

At a public speech (*pengajian*) routinely held every Sunday night at Kalitengah desa mosque, Pak Ubeid (49 years, engaged in construction) said that, early on during creation, *iblis* lived in heaven with the *malekat*. He was then cursed and banished from heaven because of his arrogance, disobeying God's order to bow down before Adam when the latter had been created. His reasons for disobeying were firstly, *iblis* thought that compared to Adam, he was the most senior dweller in heaven, had been created and came earlier than Adam; secondly, Adam, who was created from the soil of earth must be lower in rank than *iblis*, who had been created from fire. Bowing down before Adam was therefore, according to *iblis*, unfair, beneath his dignity and did not make any sense. Despite cursing and banishing *iblis*, God still granted his request when he begged God to postpone his punishment until the Day of Resurrection, prior to which he would lead astray his rival Adam, and his descendants. God also deemed that those who stray and fall into *iblis*' trap would become his followers, and after the resurrection they would stay with him in Hell. *iblis* did not waste any time and immediately started working. The first victims were Adam himself and his wife Eve, who were tempted when they were still in paradise.

In another *pengajian*, Kyai Fu'ad Hasyim from the Buntet Pesantren interestingly dramatized the episode of how Adam and Eve fell into *iblis*' trap. Coming before Adam and Eve, *iblis* told Adam and Eve confidently that God's scenario of the universe put Adam and Eve in a bad position. He told them that God did not really want them to stay in paradise forever; this was clearly evident when God prohibited them from approaching a tree in paradise, the "eternity tree" (*shajarah al-khuld*), whose fruit, if eaten, entitled the eater to stay in paradise forever. God instead wanted them to leave paradise and to stay on earth where life would be hard. Adam, and particularly Eve, felt that *iblis*' words were sensible and asked him if there was any way to stay in paradise forever and to avoid staying on earth.

Iblis was pleased that his deception had worked, but he did not show it. On the contrary, he pretended that he was very sad and deeply concerned about their problem. He then insisted that the only

thing that might help would be to pick and to eat the prohibited fruit secretly, without God noticing. Tempted by his insistence, Eve and Adam approached the tree, picked its fruit, and then ate it. But before they had fully swallowed the fruit, they found themselves thrown onto the earth without clothing. One fruit eaten by Adam became stuck in his throat; this turned into his "Adam's Apple", a sign of a mature male. The two fruits eaten and swallowed by Eve earlier became stuck inside her at breast-level and they turned into breasts, a sign of a mature female. Adam was thrown to earth away from Eve. Only after a long search did they get together again. They repented to God who granted His forgiveness, but time could not be turned back; Adam and Eve had to continue living a hard life on earth.

After being banished from heaven *iblis*' generated descendants are called *setan*, whereas Adam and Eve's descendants are called *menusa* (human beings). In turn, both *setan* and *menusa*, also gave rise to descendants, but, unlike human beings, none of *iblis*, *setan*, or their descendants are mortal. Both *iblis* and *setan* still exist and their number has multiplied tremendously. It is unclear whether *iblis* and *setan* are differentiated by gender; but they are generally conceived to be hermaphrodites and to lay eggs. From the time *iblis* succeeded in tempting Adam and Eve to follow his advice, *iblis* and *setan* have been more and more zealous, working together hand in hand using all their power, intelligence and experience to lead Adam's descendants (human beings) astray. They rarely harm or scare humans as their only business is to tempt and trap human beings and *jinn* to follow their path and finally to lead them into being their companions in hell.

As part of their efforts, *iblis* and *setan* often try to force information from *laukh-mahfûz* by spying on the scenarios of the universe,³⁷ especially those relating to individual human's lives, and using them effectively to establish co-operation with *tukang cempad* (fortune tellers) to lead their clients astray. Against such efforts, the guardian angel may take harsh measures and beat *iblis* and *setan* severely. As a result, *iblis* or the *setan* concerned has become weirdly shaped and are called *mrekayangan* by some people.

Mrekayangan

Of the spiritual beings in which the Cirebonese believe, *mrekayangan* is one of the most vaguely defined. Unlike the terms *malekat*, *iblis*, *setan* and *jinn*, which come from Arabic, *mrekayangan* is a local term, but no one knows its precise meaning. Its root is

probably *yang*, which in Javanese means "spirit". *Mrekayangan* is therefore a constructed word, referring to spiritual beings other than *malekat*, *iblis*, *setan* and *jinn*.³⁸ According to Ki Hanan, *mrekayangan* just scare people when they appear in the form of *memedi* or *weweden*. Different opinions persist regarding the origin of *mrekayangan*. Some say that they are really the beaten *setan*, who spy on human life. Others say that *mrekayangan* are the spirits of the dead who, for one or another reason, have difficulties or have lost their way in reaching their proper place (*roh kesasar*).³⁹ Others people combine these opinions saying that *mrekayangan* are of either origin. The reasons for the *mrekayangan*'s difficulties are by and large attributable to extremely bad conduct such as suicide, *nyupang* (profiting from contracts with *setan* or bad *jinn*), sudden death or being killed in an accident while committing the *ma-lima* (five sinful deeds: smoking opium, gambling, womanizing, becoming intoxicated, stealing). In a state between consciousness and unconsciousness, a person may see *memedi* unintentionally, particularly when that person's mental condition is unstable. When consciousness returns the appearance of the *memedi* instantly disappears.

Memedi, be it *mrekayangan* or *jinn*, may take various forms. Some of the more widely acknowledged are: *setan gundul*, *wewe gombel*, *genderuwo*, *blegedeg ireng*, *puntianak*, *jrangkong*, *kemangmang*, *wedon*, *kecik* and many others. *Setan gundul* is a spirit in human shape with all its hair shaved off. The *wewe gombel* or just *wewe* is a huge female spirit who hides children under her armpits, under her breasts or on huge trees. One way to release a child hidden by a *wewe* is a group of people going around haunted places, bringing anything they can beat rhythmically in order to provoke the *wewe* to dance, thus freeing the hidden child from her control. The *Genderuwo* is a male *wewe*;⁴⁰ *blegedeg ireng* is a gigantic totally black figure; *puntianak* are female spirits, who drink babies' blood while they are being born by posing as *dukun bayi* (specialists who help women giving birth). The *jrangkong* is a human skeleton; *kemangmang* is a fire-haired figure, who walks on his hands (Central Java: *banaspati*); *wedon* is a ghost in white garments, wrapped up like a corpse; *kecik* is a small spirit, who steals money for his master (Central Java: *tuyul*).

For some people, these spirits may cause some problems but for others, especially those who are acquainted with the Holy Qur'an, they may not. To avoid being scared (*diwedeni*) is easy enough. By *memacaan*, literally meaning reciting anything (verses or surah of the

Holy Qur'ân), the appearance of these spirits can be avoided and their power can be nullified. Ki Hanan, for example, said: "... for anyone who is willing to perform *memacaan*, there is no way to be scared or possessed."⁴¹

Among the verses and surah for *memacaan* which are considered most effective are: *Ayat Kursi* (the verse of the Throne, QS 2:55), *Qulhu* (Al-Ikhlâs, QS 112), *Qul a'udzu birabbil falaq* (al-Falâq, QS 113), *Qul a'udzu birabbinnas* (al-Nâs, QS 114) and *Alhamdu* (al-Fâtihah, QS 1). For this practical purpose, it is advisable that everyone have some acquaintance with some of these verses or Surah. Recital of "*Bismillâh*" (in the name of God) before doing something or going somewhere is one way to avoid the possible interference of these spirits.⁴²

Jinn

Jinn are another species of spiritual beings created from fire. They may be either male or female. They eat and drink, need a dwelling place, occupy space and can have children. *Jinn* also live in an established society and have a king. Azrak is referred to as the *jinn*'s country although no one knows where Azrak is. On earth, *jinn* occupy haunted places, such as hills, caves, rivers, rocks, trees, certain lands, long unoccupied houses, certain bath houses, wells, bridges, lakes, mosques, ruins and cemeteries. When someone stays at a *jinn*-occupied place, especially if alone, the *jinn* may cause disturbances by producing unidentified sounds, making doors or windows close and open, moving articles or even a sleeping person from one place to another, making things disappear; causing strange incidents, etc. People who experience these kinds of incidents usually feel scared, and they call it *diwedeni* (being scared). In these cases the *jinn* probably does intend to frighten people so that they will leave and will not return to occupy that place again so that the *jinn* can claim the place for itself. Persuading *jinn* to leave an occupied place can be done by specialists, or indeed by non-specialists, through negotiation or by force. Intentionally or unintentionally disturbing or destroying the places occupied by *jinn* can be serious offenses to them. If so, they may lose their temper and take revenge; as a result the person concerned will suffer from some kind of illness (physical or mental). If appropriate measures are not taken to persuade the *jinn* to stop their action, the illness could end in death. Again, these measures can be taken by a specialist or by anyone who can negotiate with, or

force, the *jinn* to stop their action. Some informants told me about Man Makiyo who fought to exhaustion with *jinn*s.⁴³

Like human beings, *jinn* are subject to the temptations of *iblis* and *setan*. There are some *jinn*s, therefore, who are good, pious and faithful (*jinn Islam*), and some others who are bad, sinful and infidel (*jinn kafir*). Bad *jinn* may be malevolent to humans, whereas good *jinn* may be benevolent by helping people to do some hard work, or by producing magical acts. *Jinn* can assume many forms including that of human beings; but most usually they assume the form of an animal, for example, a snake, a lion, a donkey, a cat, or a dog.⁴⁴ A *jinn* who assumes the form of a cat may be just one color (totally white, brown or black) or have a combination of three colors (*belang telon*, meaning three stripes of different colors). Killing or beating such a pseudo-animal (a transformed *jinn*) is risky because the *jinn*, its friends or its kin may take deadly revenge. The risk is more serious than when merely disturbing or destroying their living places.⁴⁵

The original shape of a *jinn* however, is considered to be a human-like figure of gigantic size. Its fingers, to illustrate its size, are as big as *gedang ambon* (a type of large banana). Some people suggest the possibility of co-operation between humans and *jinn* for purposes such as making friends, even marrying *jinn* and taking them as servants, in the case of benevolent *jinn*. This is possible for anyone who masters the mystery of *jinn* and learns *ilmu ghaib* (knowledge of the mysterious world). Some *kyai* are known to have this mastery. There are a number of ways to acquire this mastery, one of which is by doing an exercise (*riyâdah*), aiming to gain the marvel and secret merits of the Verse of the Throne (*ayat Kursi*) of the Holy Qur'ân (QS 2:255) as elaborated by al-Shaykh al-Bûnî.⁴⁶ The procedure for the exercise is as follows:

1. Cleanse the body by bathing and ablution, and the heart by generosity.
2. Wear clean clothing and surrender totally to God.
3. Find a quiet place such as a room, a cave or a place in the bush or mountain for seclusion where contemplation can be performed well.
4. Stay there for a couple of days from Tuesday morning before dawn until dawn on Thursday (Friday morning).
5. Burn incense, then perform a dawn prayer (*salâh fajar*). The incense should be kept burning throughout the stay.

6. Recite the *du'a* of the *ayat kursi* repeatedly 72 times after completing the five prescribed 19 daily prayers and also recite it during contemplation.⁴⁷

If everything is done well, according to al-Bûnî, on the first quiet night, around midnight, there will be the sound of a donkey. The performer must not worry, be scared, or be nervous, as the sound will produce no harm. On the second quiet night, also around midnight, there will be the roar of a running horse. Again, the performer must not worry, be scared or nervous, as this also will produce no harm. On the third night, around midnight three cats, brown, white and black in color, will come from the entrance of the niche where the contemplation is done. They will disappear mysteriously but again, the performer must not be disturbed as the virtue of the *du'a* protects the performer from any potential harm caused by them. Keep the incense burning and steadily recite the *du'a* facing the *Qibla* (*Ka'bah* in Mecca). On the fourth night, around midnight, there will be a smell of something. Soon a servant made of light will come. Again the performer must not be troubled by this, but must make sure that the incense keeps burning, until a voice of greeting is heard. It says: "*Assalâmu 'alaykum yâ walî-Allâh*" (Peace be upon you oh friend of God) to which the performer has to answer with: "*Wa 'alaykumus Salâm Warahmatullâhi Wabarakâtub*" (Peace be upon you, and upon you the mercy of God and His blessing). Eventually, the servant will say: "What would you like to have from me oh friend of God?" The performer should answer him by saying: "I do not expect anything from you, except that I hope you would like to be my servant during my life-time." Then the servant will give a gold ring carved with God's great names (*al-ism al-a'zam*). He will probably also say: "Take this ring and wear it on your right hand as a sign of the pact between you and me. If you want my presence, recite the *du'a* three times, then say, oh king Kandiyas, I need your presence." The servant will come and can be asked to do what one wants.⁴⁸

This procedure is said to be the way for a devout person to make a lawful pact with a good (Muslim) *jinn*. This pact must only be used for righteous and non-commercial purposes. Another pact, a condemned and unlawful one made with a bad *jinn*, is also said to exist. It is said that this pact is made by sinners through mediation by a *dukun* for unlawful and commercial purposes.

Concluding Remarks

I have discussed the nature of the Javanese belief system exhibited by the people in the area under consideration. This belief system, I would stress, constitutes an important part of the overall Javanese religious traditions. I have shown that the Javanese, especially those who live in Cirebon, do not have a unique concept of God. Their concept of the deity is derived in full from Islam. Remnants of previous influence do exist but they lie outside the core of their religious tenets and do not account for the formation of fundamental religious beliefs. Almost everything they enunciate and hold as beliefs can be located in the wider context of Islamic traditions, and can be traced along the lines of traditional Islamic orthopraxy. Almost everything has scriptural roots or finds its justification in the basic sources of Islamic doctrine: the Qur'ân, the Hadîth and the works of the '*ulamâ'*' where operational meanings of the Qur'ân and the Hadîth are elaborated.⁴⁹

To make it clearer, it is worthwhile briefly reviewing what the preceding discussions have highlighted. This is specially useful in order to explore whether some part of the Cirebon-Javanese belief system reveals, at any rate, contributions from non-Islamic elements, such as Hindu/Buddhist/Animist elements.

Central to Cirebon-Javanese ideas is a belief in the unity of God and His attributes which explain His self and His existence. At the periphery there are other beings, physical and spiritual, malevolent and benevolent to human beings. All these beings are considered to be His creations and, without exception, they are fully under His control. This is further substantiated when people refer to their deity. In this reference God is enunciated as the sole Creator, the Sovereign and the Ruler (Governor) of the whole universe and the contents thereof. Strikingly evident throughout the discussions is the total absence of the core Hindu deities and vocabularies (such as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva or other names which would share in these crucial deity positions) that might suggest the intrusion of Hindu influence.

Another aspect that deserves careful consideration is the question of animism in relation to the belief in the existence of spirits and spiritual beings.⁵⁰ Animism, in the Tylorian perspective and as Seymour-Smith (1990:12-13) puts it, presupposes a belief on the part of the believers that the 'spirit' or 'life' endowed in the natural phenomena should constitute an independent entity or hold an indepen-

dent power. This is in sharp contrast to the spirits and spiritual beings in which the Javanese believe. To the Javanese, all beings, spiritual or physical, other than God, are God's creations and are under His control. Moreover, to the people, the existence of spiritual beings is viewed as a necessary consequence of the existence of physical beings. None of the beings are by themselves independent entities nor independent holders of particular powers. Even men, under certain circumstances of God's endowment, can control them or their power. This seems to imply that the people have at least a twofold conviction: that the position of these beings in relation to the sovereign God is low, and that the necessary absence of either the character of a deity or any legitimate right on the part of any of the spirits to be treated as a deity. In fact, the belief in the existence of spiritual beings is not the monopoly of anyone tradition such as animism, but it is a common feature of many other traditions, including Islam and Christianity. If reference to Islamic doctrine is required there is a verse in the early chapters of the Holy Qur'ân (QS. 2:2-3), for example, that says that the pious are those who believe in, among other things, unseen things (*ghayb*), which inevitably includes spirits and spiritual beings. It is therefore ill-founded to consider the Javanese, who believe in the existence of spiritual beings, as necessarily and automatically specifically animist. Indeed, unless it is carefully observed and understood this tends to provoke misunderstanding.

In sum, the syncretic argument about Javanese Islam, including that of the Geertzian perspective, has recently been under siege. At the same time its currency has been significantly diminishing and moving toward extinction. If this work also contributes to that extinction process, I would rather say: "sorry". In fact, this is a reluctant contribution.

End Notes

- * With some modifications, this paper is taken from and is a part of the wider study submitted to the Department of Anthropology, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, the Australian National University, Canberra. See: Muhaimin, A.G. (1995), "The Islamic Traditions of Cirebon: Ibadat and Adat Among Javanese Muslims", unpublished PhD thesis, Canberra: The Australian National University.
1. Geertz, C. (1960), *The Religion of Java*, Glencoe: The Free Press. My own reference in writing this paper is the Phoenix edition (1976).
 2. Geertz, C. (1976), p. 5
 3. *Ibid.* (The word in brackets is my own).
 4. Geertz, C. (1975), *Islam Observed*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p. 11.
 5. *Ibid.*
 6. Geertz, C. (1976), p. 6.
 7. This mode of analysis appears throughout *The Religion of Java*. The deterministic logic and the arguments developed from it are evident in the "Introduction". The separation of ethnographic data appears in the division of the book into three parts, The "Abangan" Variant, The "Priajai" Variant and The "Santri" Variant. An example of the simple way of putting what belongs to which variant is: *slametan* for *abangan*; the prayers, the fast, the pilgrimage, for *santri*; etiquette and mysticism, for *priyayi*. A person named Paidjan must be an *abangan*; Usman or H. Abdul must be a *santri*; Sosro must be a *priyayi*; etc. The terms 'abangan,' 'santri' and 'priajai' are truly Javanese, but they are employed by Geertz, without full understanding of their meaning, to label his ingenuously predetermined animistic group, Hindu/Buddhistic group and Islamic syncretic group.
 8. She uses the jargon of *abangan*, *santri* and *priyayi* in particular to single out the participant group elements in the celebration of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, the *Panjang Jimat* ceremony, in the court of Cirebon. See: Siddique, S (1977), "Relics of the Past?", unpublished PhD Dissertation, Bielefeld: Bielefeld Universitat.
 9. See for example: Koentjaraningrat (1963), "Book Review: Clifford Geertz's *The Religion of Java*", *Majalah Ilmu-ilmu Sosial*, vol.1, no.2, September, pp 188-191; Bachtiar, H.W. (1973), "The Religion of Java, a Commentary," *Majalah Ilmu-ilmu Sastra Indonesia*, Djilid V, No.1; Hodgson, M. (1974), *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press; Suparlan, P. (1976), "The Javanese in Surinam: Ethnicity in Ethnically Plural Society", unpublished PhD dissertation, Urbana: University of Illinois; Nakamura, M. (1984), "The Cultural and Religious Identity of Javanese Muslims: Problems of Conceptualization," *Prisma*, No.31, Jakarta: LP3ES. Dhofier, Z. (1985), *Tradisi Pesantren*, Jakarta: LP3ES; Woodward, M. (1989), *Islam in Java: Normative Piety and Mysticism in the Sultanates of Yogyakarta*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press; Pranowo, B. (1991), *Creating Islamic Tradition in Rural Java*, unpublished PhD thesis, Clayton: Monash University.
 10. See: Muhaimin, A.G. (1995), "The Islamic Traditions of Cirebon: Ibadat and Adat Among Javanese Muslims", unpublished PhD thesis, Canberra: The Australian National University.

11. *Puji-pujian* is a local term referring to chants in praise of God or the prophet Muhammad. It is a common practice among traditional Muslims in Java to chant *puji-pujian* after *azan* or the call to prayer has sounded.
12. In local usage, *ibadah* and *ibadat* make no difference, both are frequently used and interchangeable.
13. Subsequently I shall use the Cirebonese word, the *syahadat*.
14. See also: "God in Islam", *Encyclopedia of Religion*.
15. This is clearly illustrated by Geertz (1976), in *The Religion of Java*, Phoenix ed, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press pp. 51-67.
16. Indepth interview, 28-2-1992: "*Wong kang maca shahadate bener-bener iku kudu nyumponi rong perkara: siji, ngucapaken karo lesan lan nekadaken ning jero ati. Nakseni yen langka Pengeran maning kang wajib disembah sejene Gusti Allah, lan nakseni yen Nabi Muhammad iku dadi utusane Gusti Allah. Diutuse kanjeng Nabi Muhammad iku perlu kanggo nggawa prentah-prentah Gusti Allah ta'ala kang ana ning Qur'an kanggo para jinn lan menusa. Keloro, wong kang shahadate bener-bener iku kudu dibarengi karo tasdik, ta'dzim, khurmat lan khlawat. Tasdik artine negesaken yen kang dadi pengeran iku mung Gusti Allah siji; ta'dzim yaiku ngagungkaken Gusti Allah; khurmat artine mulyaaken Gusti Allah; khlawat yaiku ngrasa tenang lan nikmat atine merga durwe pengeran siji yaiku Gusti Allah. Lamun maca shahadat bli karo mengkonon mangka dadi muslime bli pati temenan.*"
17. This is so named because the *surah* starts with "*Qul huwa Allah*", yet to Cirebonese it is closer to "*Qulhu-w'Allah*". Moreover, they are used to noting the initial word of the Qur'an to refer to a particular *surah*, such as: *Alamtara* for *al-Fil* (QS 105), *Tabbat* for *al-Lahab* or *al-Masad* (QS 111), and *Inna a'thaina* for *al-Kawthar* (QS 108).
18. The word *sembahyang* (to pray) which the Cirebonese use to translate the Arabic word *salah* is probably derived from *sembahyang* (to worship *hyang* or spirit). I explored this possibility with Pak Shofie and others but their answers were inconclusive. They insisted that the word *sembahyang* is another word from *solat*. The latter is derived from Arabic *salah*, and for them *hyang* and *sembahyang* are not related.
19. Either *Pa* or *Pe* may be used without implying any different meaning.
20. There is a hadith urging people to think only about creation and not about the Creator, because they will never be able to know God's Essence. It says: 'Ponder the creation of God, but do not take your meditation into the Divine essence, or you will perish' (See for example, Abduh, S.M. (1966), *Theology of Unity*, translated from Arabic into English by Ishak Musa'ad and K. Cragg, London George Allen & Unwin, p. 53. See also its Indonesian translation, *Risalah Ilmu Tauhid*, by Firdaus, H. (1976), 6th edition, Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, especially p. 79-83.
21. Ngah, Mohammad Nor Bin (1983), *Kitab Jawi: Islamic Thought of the Malay Muslim Scholars*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, p. 10.
22. All these attributes are taken directly from Arabic.
23. For the list of the God's Beautiful Names, see for example, Brown, K. and Palmer, M. (1990), *The Essential Teachings of Islam*, Arrow Books: London, pp. 9-11.
24. Indepth interview, 24-2-1992: "*... apa bae kang ana iki bisa maujud krana digawe deng kang gawe. Anae angoan kang isun kabeh ngenggo nuduhaken anane wong kang gawe, yaiku tukang jahit; anae korsi, meja karo sejene nuduhaken anae kang gawe, yaiku tukang kayu; semono uga dadie tanduran, anae wuwitan, satoan, segara, bumi, langit, lintang, wulan, srengenge lan segala rupa ning jagat kelawan wujud*

- lan aturane kang tapis lan beres nuduhaken anae Kang Maha Agung Kang gawe lan Kang ngatur, kang munggu wong Islam diarani Gusti Allah, Pengeran kang estu.”
25. Interview, 25-2-1992: “La sampean kudu ngerti ari aturan iku ana kalane bli kanggo. Contone ning kantor-kantor ana lawang kang ditempli plang: “DILARANG MASUKI” Tapi dengapa ari kepala kantore manjing metu ora ya ora embuh bae bli perduli karo plang mau? Sebabe ya krana plang “dilarang masuk” iku munggu deweke bli kanggo; deweke bli dinisbataken karo aturan kang ning plang, krana deweke kang nguasani kantor lan ya deweke kang nempeli plang. Semono uga karo Pengeran. Pengeran iku suwijining zat kang gawe, dudu barang lan dudu gawean, dadi bli dinisbataken deng aturan kang munie “segala apa bae ana kang gawe.” Tamba jelas maning, lamun sampean ngerti yen sifate Gusti Allah kang loro sawise wujud iku qidam kang tegese langka kawitane, lan baqa, kang tegese langka pungkasane.”
 26. Abu Zayd, A.R. (1974), *Al-Ghazali on Divine Predicates and Their Properties*, Lahore: SH. Muhammad Ashraf, pp. xxvii-xxviii.
 27. See: “God in Islam”, in *Encyclopedia of Religion*.
 28. Indepth interview, 21-3-1992: “Wis adate segala apa bae iku werna loro, pasang-pasangan; ana awan, ana bengi, ana lanang ana wadon, ana wetan ana kulon, ana lor ana kidul ana blesak ana bagus, sampe sateruse. Ari barang kasar kayadene menusa, satoan, wiwitan, karo sejen-sejene jelas ana merga katon, barang alus keding gan ana, mung bae bli katon, krana arane bae gan alus; boko wong kang bli percaya ning anae barang alus iku ya saking goblog-gobloge wong.”
 29. Toni had not finished primary school but had been to a *pesantren* for about two years.
 30. The word ‘rukun’ here is derived from the Arabic ‘rukn’ (pl. *arkân*) meaning ‘pillar’ It is used in such references as ‘rukun iman’ (the pillars of faith), *rukun Islam* (the five pillars of Islam), *rukun sembadyang* (the pillars of prayers) and *rukun wudu* (the pillars of ablution). It is therefore, different from the Javanese word ‘rukun’ meaning (to live) in harmony.
 31. See for example: Mahsun, K.T. (1958), *Qishashul Anbiya’*, Surabaya: Ahmad Nabhan
 32. An address given by Pak Ubeid (49 years) at a routinely held *pengajian* (public speaking) at the mosque in Kalitengah desa. This quotation is from the 12-4-1992 occasion, saying: “... ari kitab-kitab kang diturunaken deng Gusti Allah iku ana papat. Siji kitab Zabur kang diturunakaen ning Kanjeng Nabi Dawud, loro kitab Taurat kang diturunaken ning Kanjeng Nabi Musa, telu kitab Injil kang diturunaken ning Kanjeng Nabi Isa, papat kitab Qur’an kang diturunaken ning Kanjeng Nabi Muhammad sall’Allahu ‘alaihi wa sallam, nabi akhirul zaman, kanggo nyampurnaaken kitab-kitab kang diturunaken sedurunge. Share’at-share’at kang ana ning kitab kaen kabeh sekien wis dicakup ning Qur’an.”
 33. Field notes from informal discussions after prayer at the Kedawung prayer house (5, 6 and 8 March, 1992).
 34. *Al-‘Alaq* means the Clots of Blood (QS 96:1-5); it is referred to by the Cirebonese as Surat *Jqra’*. Beside talking about the original form of Jibril Man Muklas also spoke about Jibril assuming human forms such as a beggar and a stranger. He said, it is not allowed to mistreat or be coarse to a beggar, especially one who comes to our house, because a *malekat* may assume this personage to test someone’s generosity. “If you cannot give something, just state your sorrow for it.” His illustration of Jibril as a stranger which he claimed to be: “ana ning kitab” (available in a religious book) seemed to accord to the hadith narrated by Muslim

(Abu al-Husayn Muslim bin al-Hajjâj, c. 202/817-261/875) from 'Umar which recounts that Jibril came to Muhammad as a dark, black-haired, unknown man in white clothing. He came mysteriously when 'Umar and other disciples were gathered together with Muhammad, the Messenger of God. 'Umar reported that he saw clearly the man sit face to face with Muhammad, place his knees by Muhammad's knees, put his hands on Muhammad's thighs and ask Muhammad to tell him about *islâm* (submission), *imân* (faith), *ibsn* (deference) and the (day of) *Qiyâmah* (universal destruction). In reply, the Prophet related to the man the five pillars of Islam, the six decrees of faith. Regarding the principles of deference, the Prophet said that deference is 'to worship God as if you see Him as even if you do not see Him He sees you.' 'Umar was very surprised when the man commented, after each of the prophet's answers, 'You are right.' 'Umar thought, 'how could the man ask the prophet something and then respond in the style of an examiner, as if he knew better than the prophet does.' The hadîth continues by recounting the *Qiyâmah*, according to which Muhammad said that the questioned (he, Muhammad) knew no better than the questioner (the man). Then the man asked about the symptoms of universal destruction. The Prophet described some of its symptoms which were: when a man enslaves his own mother; when poor shepherds who usually wore only old torn clothing are competing for luxurious houses and glamour. After this, the man went away mysteriously, leaving the gathering astonished. The prophet asked Umar if he knew who the man really was. Umar said that only Allah and His Messenger knew. The Prophet said that the man was Jibril, who came to teach them about religion. (For the text of this hadîth, see for example: Dahlan, A. (1988), *Hadîth Arba'in Annawawiah*, Bandung: Al-Ma'arif, pp. 12-15.

35. *Isra'* refers to the journey from Mecca to Palestine whereas *Mi'raj* refers to the journey from Palestine to the Sidratul Muntaha in the seventh heaven.
36. Field notes (Arabic: *al-malak al-muqarrabîn*).
37. Field notes. This part and the subsequent section on *mrekayangan* were derived from a discussion with Ki Hanan (67 years), an ex-trader in Kaliwadas. *Laukh Makhsud* refers to the tablet where the record of the decisions of the divine will are preserved (See: *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, pp. 287-288).
38. The word *mrekayangan* is possibly derived from the word *yang* (spirit). *Mrekayangan* is therefore a construction of (m)reka-yang-an, transforming into a spiritual being, a word to refer to a spiritual being other than *malekat*, *iblis*, *setan* and *jinn*.
39. In Austronesian: "spirit of bad dead."
40. The name *genderuwo* is probably derived from *gandharva* (masculine embodiment of celestial light which, in Hindu divinity, are musicians who accompany the dances of their female consorts). See: "demons" in *Encyclopedia of Religion*.
41. Field notes from informal discussion at Kedawung prayer house, 17-3-1992. His Javanese statement is: "... *ari wong kang gelem memacaan sib bli bakal diwedeni atawa kesurupan.*"
42. The degrading efforts of the nature and power of spirits may be a reconciliation between older beliefs and Islam. Not to make the older beliefs variants of Islam, older spirits were taken for explanatory purposes for the existence of *setan* and *jinn*, which are part of Islamic beliefs. Similar efforts also occur with regard to Hindu beliefs where Hindu deities were degraded into ancestors.

43. Man Makiyo was a *kemit* (mosque custodian) in Kalitengah. He died more than a year before I was in the field.
44. Lions and donkeys are not found in Cirebon; so probably the reference to these is due to the influence of Arabian beliefs.
45. It might be from this belief that drivers in Cirebon will avoid hitting a cat. Some drivers of city transportation said that if this does occur unavoidably, the driver will stop his vehicle, take the cat with sorrow and affection, and bury it properly. Some perform a simple *slametan* to prevent possible *na'as* (bad luck) or *blai* (accident).
46. Al-Shaykh al-Bûnî, "... Riyâdah âyah al-Kurshî wa bayân da'awatihâ" in *al-Nawly*, al-Ustadz al-Sayyid Muhammad (?), *Khazinât al-Asrâr*, Syarikat an-Nur Asia, pp. 150-151. This book, with the date and place of publication no longer legible, was shown to me by Pak Shofie. He read the chapter and I recorded his translation in the local vernacular.
47. The *du'a* is made up of the verse of the Throne (*âyat Kursî*), modified by the insertion of incantations, as prescribed in the text.
48. Pak Shofie was reluctant to explain the probable efficacy of the *riyâdah*. However, he copied the text by hand and gave it to me saying: "Just try and prove it by yourself."
49. Whether or not this basis and justification is considered applicable and acceptable to other Muslims, it is much more a matter of internal theological debate within the Muslim community than a subject for judgement by observers.
50. This is specially crucial in Geertz's delineation of *abangan* spiritual beliefs.

A. G. Muhaimin is a researcher at the Office of Religious Research and Development, the Department of Religious Affairs the Republic of Indonesia.