

RELIGIOUS VALUES IN GUS JAKFAR'S SHORT STORY BY AHMAD MUSTOFA BISRI

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this research are presented as follows: (1) to analyze how far does the short story reflects religious values, (2) to analyze to what extent do the elements of fiction (character and conflict) give contribution in revealing religious values in this short story. The primary source of data is the quotations from the short story. By using qualitative descriptive method, the quotations are interpreted and analyze based on Yusuf Bilyarta Mangunwijaya's concept of religiosity, and Fatimah's findings related to religious values. The findings of this research show that there are three religious values in the short story. They are religious values between man and God including doing God's orders, leaving God's prohibition, increasing good deeds, and worshipping God sincerely; religious values between man and other man including helping each other, working together, and respecting and appreciating each other; and religious values between man and himself including knowing how to determine the attitude, the outlook on life, and the desire in facing problems of life in a positive way. The other finding shows that religious value is connected to moral message in this short story such as human has no right to judge anyone or any charity that is committed by a person because only God has power to do so.

Key words: Moral Message, Religiosity, Religious Study, Religious Values, Short Story

I. Introduction

Human beings as perfect creatures that are created by God will never escape from the problems of life, ranging from mild problems to complex problems. The issues concern the relationship between man and God, the relationship between man and other man, and the relationship between man and himself. These problems attract the writers to pour and process them into literary works. With the creativity, brilliant ideas, and the understanding of the problems of life, the writers produce literary works which become a mirror of the reality faced by man in his life.

One of the kinds of literature is short story. As a work of fiction which depicts and reflects the everyday human's life, short story is composed of several elements which are interconnected each other, cannot be separated, and together build a story so that the story has meanings. There are two types of elements in the short story: intrinsic elements and extrinsic elements. Intrinsic elements are the elements that serve to build the story in the literary works so that it can be enjoyed and understood by people (Nurgiyantoro in Pudjiono, 2006). Intrinsic elements include character, plot, setting, point of view, the message, and so forth. Meanwhile, extrinsic elements are the opposite of intrinsic elements, the elements that are outside the literary works (Sukada in Pudjiono, 2006). Extrinsic elements include the readers or the society, and so on.

Literature was originally a religious thing (Mangunwijaya, 1988). In other words, religious or religiosity is strongly attached to the literature since the first. In this case, religiosity refers to something "in the heart", "the vibration of personal conscience", "personal attitude that is a little more mystery to others", because it inhales intimacy in the soul that is the taste that covers the totality of the depth of the human itself" (Mangunwijaya, 1988: 12). In short, one's religious attitude refers to how a person acts to his God that is manifested in the form of "standing solemn", "bending down and kissing the ground as expression of devotion toward God", and so forth (Mangunwijaya, 1988).

The connection between religiosity and literature has risen a genre to the so-called religious literature, which contains the lessons and values of religion and morality that are framed with aesthetic element (Fatimah, 2015). The authors of this religious literature show the religious values and religious messages originating from the Holy scripts, in their literary works. It is reflected in one of the short stories written by Ahmad Mustofa Bisri entitled *Gus Jakfar*. In *Gus Jakfar's* short story, there are some religious values that can be found in the setting of the story that takes place in school of Koranic studies, which is definitely firmly attached to the activities associated with the Islamic world. In addition to describe religious values in *Gus Jakfar's* short story, Ahmad Mustofa Bisri also wants to convey a message related to how human should behave in accordance with the provisions of God. Based on these reasons, the writer considers the importance to analyze this short story.

Gus Jakfar tells about a young man named Gus Jakfar who has 'gift' to "read" what will happen to other people through what appears on their foreheads. This 'gift' makes his friends and people around him move away from him because they are afraid of being "read". One time, Gus Jakfar no longer shows his 'gift' in front of his friends and people. This sparks the curiosity of his friends about what happened to Gus Jakfar. They ask it to him and Gus Jakfar describes his encounter with a Kiai named Kiai Tawakkal who makes him realize of what humans should do and should not do. It is the process of realizing that is conducted by Kiai Tawakkal that makes Gus Jakfar turns into a person who can resist the temptation of showing his 'gift' in front of people.

Ahmad Mustofa Bisri as the author of *Gus Jakfar's* short story is also known as Gus Mus. He was born in Rembang, Central Java, Indonesia, on August 10th, 1944. He was the caregiver of Raudlatuh Tholibin's Boarding School in Leteh, Rembang. He was also a poet who was well known in literary circles. Besides a poet, he was also known as a columnist and a humanist. Ahmad Mustofa Bisri also wrote many books, such as *Dasar-Dasar Islam* (1401 H), *Ensiklopedi Ijma'* (1987), and *Fikih Keseharian* (1997). Meanwhile, the literary works that are produced by Ahmad Mustofa Bisri include *Nyamuk-Nyamuk Perkasa dan Awas*, *Manusia* (1979), *Mutiara-Mutiara Benjol* (1994) and *Pahlawan dan Tikus* (1996). *Gus Jakfar's* short story was published in 2004 by Kompas, one of the newspaper publishers in Jakarta, Indonesia (Cafesufi, 2009).

There is a famous proverb that says "do not judge the book by its cover". This proverb is apt to be applied especially to the people of this era. There are many people who easily judge others and view others with one eye, without knowing the real circumstances and conditions. It tickles and then motivates the author to pour this issue into a study by using a short story as the medium. With this motivation, the author wants to change the bad habit slowly, and at the same time wants to remind people to think positively to anyone, in any situation. After this introductory section, this paper will come to analysis section and conclusion section. In analysis section, the author will give more details about the religious values in *Gus Jakfar's* short story. Moreover, in conclusion section, the author will summarize the whole paper in order to make clearer the issue which is analyzed in this paper.

II. Analysis

2.1 Religious Values between Man and God

Throughout the life, human will gain a spiritual experience that will not be forgotten about the "noble personalities" that are shown metaphorically through religious dogmas, myths, and religious rituals (Fatimah, 2015). All dogmas, myths, and rituals of the religion can make human become creatures who rebel against God if they believe them excessively. The only way to anticipate this is by believing in God, with God as the only one, the Creator of the world and the hereafter, and the Omniscient about good and bad. By having the religious values between man and God, man will have faith, obedience, sincerity, submission, and willingness to sacrifice for the God (Fatimah, 2015). The religious value will further strengthen the relationship between God and His creature, and will cause to the fear of the God so that its impact on emerging good behaviors, such as leaving God's prohibition, doing God's commands, worshipping God sincerely, and so on. It is reflected in the quotation below:

"Kegiatan rutinnnya sehari-hari tidak begitu berbeda dengan kebanyakan kiai yang lain: mengimami salat jamaah; melakukan salat-salat sunnat seperti dhuha, tahajjud, witr, dan sebagainya, mengajar kitab-kitab (umumnya kitab-kitab besar); mujahadah; dzikir malam; menemui tamu; dan semisalnya. Kalau pun beliau keluar biasanya untuk memenuhi undangan hajatan atau—dan ini jarang sekali—mengisi pengajian umum" (hlm 27).

"His daily routines are not so different from most other Kiai: leading congregational prays; doing sunnat (optional, but meritorious if performed) prays such as dhuha, tahajjud, witr, and so on, teaching books (generally large books); mujahadah (war against deviation from the true principles of religion); night dzikir (repeatedly chant part of the confession of faith, often in unison, as a form of worship); meeting guests; and such kind of activities. Even if he is out, it is usually to attend the wedding invitation or rarely-and not so often-following public recitation" (p 27).

The quotation shows that many of God's orders or commands are implemented by Kiai Tawakkal as an embodiment of his love for God. He does not only do the obligatory worship like praying five times a day, but also do the sunnat worships such as dhuha, tahajjud, and witr. Meanwhile, teaching books is a form of believe in God's Holy script, and the books can be guides in human's life. Mujahadah and night dzikir are forms of gratitude to God for the graces and blessings that have been given as well as a form of surrender before the Creator. On the other hand, receiving guests, attending (wedding) invitations, and following public recitation are forms of worship in order to maintain good relationships toward other people. The religious values that can be gained from all of those activities make Kiai a good man and a pious servant.

In relation to the characterization as an element of a short story, the quotation describes Kiai Tawakkal as a young man and has a healthy body because he has a lot of activities to be done almost every day. In addition, many of the activities also imply that this character is highly respected by his neighborhood because he is believed to do the important things that cannot be done by random people. Not only is respected and considered important by the community, Kiai Tawakkal is also a person who has a strong education, especially in the field of religion that can be seen from his activity of teaching books.

The next quotation also shows the religious value between man and God that is implemented by Kiai Tawakkal:

"Anak muda, kau tidak perlu mencemaskan saya hanya karena kau melihat tanda 'Ahli neraka' di kening saya. Kau pun tidak perlu bersusah-payah mencari bukti yang menunjukkan bahwa aku memang pantas masuk neraka. Karena pertama, apa yang kau lihat belum tentu merupakan hasil dari pandangan kalbumu yang bening. Kedua, kau kan tahu, sebagaimana neraka dan sorga, aku adalah milik Allah. Maka terserah kehendaknya, apakah Ia mau memasukkan diriku ke sorga atau neraka, sebenarnya Ia tidak memerlukan alasan. Sebagai kiai, apakah kau berani menjamin amalmu pasti mengantarkanmu ke sorga kelak? Atau kau berani mengatakan bahwa orang-orang di warung tadi yang kau pandang sebelah mata itu, pasti masuk neraka? Kita berbuat baik karena kita ingin dipandang baik olehNya, kita ingin berdekat-dekat denganNya,

tapi kita tidak berhak menuntut balasan kebaikan kita. Mengapa? Karena kebaikan kita pun berasal dariNya” (hlm 29).

“Young man, you do not need to worry me because you see ‘hell expert’ sign in my forehead. You also do not need to trouble of looking the evidence that shows I deserve to go to hell. Because, first, what you saw is not necessarily the result of a clear view of your heart. Second, you know, as hell and heaven, I belong to God. Then it is up to Him, whether He wants to send me to heaven or to hell, He actually does not need reasons. As a Kiai, will you dare to guarantee that your deeds will send you to heaven later? Or will you dare to say that the people in the shop that you see with one eye are definitely go to hell? We do good things because we want to be seen good by Him, we want to be closed to Him, but we are not entitled to request reward for our goodness. Why? Because our goodness comes from Him as well” (p 29).

The quotation above also shows the religious value that is possessed by Kiai Tawakkal. Implicitly, he hands, leans, and trusts everything to God. This character also shows that God is the Supreme Ruler who governs all things that run and occur in human's life: living and death, judging good deeds and bad deeds, going to heaven or to hell, and so on. In other words, matters or subjects that are related to the occult are submitted only to God. In terms of characterization, Kiai Tawakkal looks very wise in responding to people's prejudice addressed to him by recalling that there is no advantage in guessing a person's good or bad deeds.

2.2 Religious Values between Man and Other Man

Humans as social beings need others to evolve and to find their identity. Human beings display values such as mutual respect, interdependence, mutual cooperation, and helping each other, in relation with other human (Pudjiono, 2006). These values do not only aim to establish harmony between human beings, but also as a form of binding themselves to the community and ultimately creating good and continuous relationship. It can be seen from this quotation:

“Kemana beliau (Gus Jakfar) pergi saat menghilang pun, kita tidak tahu,” kata Lik Salamun, ‘kalau saja kita tahu kemana beliau, mungkin kita akan mengetahui apa yang terjadi pada beliau dan mengapa beliau kemudian berubah” (hlm 25).

“Where did he (Gus Jakfar) go as he disappeared, we did not know,’ said Lik Salamun, ‘if only we knew where he was, maybe we would find out what happened to him and why he later changed” (p 25).

The quotation shows that there is mutual need of Gus Jakfar's friends in case of attitude changing of Gus Jakfar which is weird. If it is not for the strong ties, his friends will not have to worry to Gus Jakfar due to change in attitude. In other words, his friends are the people who care about Gus Jakfar. This religious value fosters so well that strangeness from oneself can be perceived by others and can be looked for the cause.

Changes, incongruity or discordance referred by Gus Jakfar's friends are his attitude that no longer shows his ‘gift’ in “reading” others’ life, as shown in the quotation below:

“Tapi, Gus Jakfar memang luar biasa,” kata Mas Bambang.... “Matanya itu lho. Sekilas saja mereka melihat kening orang, kok langsung bisa melihat rahasianya yang tersembunyi. Kalian ingat, Sumini..... yang dijuluki perawan tua itu, sebelum dilamar orang sabrang kan ketemu Gus Jakfar. Waktu itu Gus Jakfar bilang, ‘Sum, kulihat keningmu kok bersinar, sudah ada yang ngelamar ya?’. Tak lama kemudian orang sabrang itu datang melamarnya.”

“Kang Kandar kan juga begitu,” timpal Mas Guru Slamet. “Kalian kan mendengar sendiri ketika Gus Jakfar bilang kepada tukang kebun SD IV itu, ‘Kang, saya lihat hidung sampeyan kok sudah bengkok, sudah capek menghirup nafas ya?’ Lho, ternyata besoknya Kang Kandar meninggal.”

“Saya malah mengalami sendiri,” kata Lik Salamun..... “Waktu itu, tak ada hujan tak ada angin, Gus Jakfar bilang kepada saya, ‘Wah, saku sampeyan kok mondol-mondol; dapat proyek besar ya?’ Padahal saat itu saku saya justru sedang kempes. Dan percaya atau tidak, esok harinya saya memenangkan tender yang diselenggarakan Pemda tingkat propinsi” (hlm 24).

“Maka, ketika kemudian sikap Gus Jakfar berubah, masyarakat pun geger; terutama para santri kalong, orang-orang kampung yang ikut mengaji tapi tidak tinggal di pesantren seperti Kang Solikin yang selama ini merasa dekat dengan beliau. Mula-mula Gus Jakfar menghilang berminggu-minggu, kemudian ketika kembali tahu-tahu sikapnya berubah menjadi manusia biasa. Dia sama sekali berhenti dan tak mau lagi membaca tanda-tanda. Tak mau lagi memberikan isyarat-isyarat yang berbau ramalan. Ringkas kata, dia benar-benar kehilangan keistimewaannya” (hlm 25).

“But, Gus Jakfar was indeed remarkable,” said Mas Bambang “Look at his eyes. If those eyes looked at the person's forehead at glance, he could immediately see the hidden secret of that person. You remember, Sumini who was known as a spinster, before she was proposed by the villager she met Gus Jakfar. At that time, Gus Jakfar said, ‘Sum, I saw your forehead really shines, someone had already proposed you, hadn't he?’. Soon the villager came across to propose to her.”

"Kang Kandar, too," said Mas Guru Slamet. "You heard when Gus Jakfar told to the gardener of Elementary School IV, 'Kang, I saw your nose already hooked, you were tired of inhaling, weren't you?' Well, it turned out the next day that Kandar Kang died."

"I even experienced myself," said Lik Salamun "At that time, unexpectedly, Gus Jakfar told me, 'Well, your pocket looked puffy; you got a large project, didn't you?' In fact, at that time, my pocket was deflated. And believe or not, the next day I won a tender organized by the provincial local government" (p 24).

"So, when Gus Jakfar then changes his attitude, the society uproars; especially the students, the villagers who participate in reading the Koran but do not stay at the school, such as Kang Solikin who feels close to him. At first, Gus Jakfar disappears for weeks, and then when he came back, his attitude suddenly changes into a human being. He completely stops and no longer wants to 'read' the signs. He no longer wants to give cues as forecast. In short, he completely loses his privileges" (p 25).

The change in attitude of Gus Jakfar makes his friends feel that there is something wrong with him and they intend to find out the cause. They feel it needs to know the cause as a fellow who lives in the same neighborhood, and it is their duty to resolve problems related to their own friends. In addition, in boarding school, they apply the Islamic rules of attitude that always upholds the friendship among the people in the boarding area. It is mirrored in the quotation below:

"Begitulah, sesuai usul Ustadz Kamil, pada malam Jumat sehabis wiridan salat Isya, saat Gus Jakfar pergi, tidak mengajar, rombongan santri kalong sengaja mendatangi rumahnya. Kali ini hampir semua anggota rombongan merasakan keakraban Gus Jakfar, jauh melebihi yang sudah-sudah. Mungkin karena kini tidak ada lagi sekat berupa keseganan, was-was, dan rasa takut" (hlm 25).

"So, in accordance to Ustadz Kamil's suggestion, on Friday evening after Isya, when Gus Jakfar has spare time, does not teach, the group of students, intentionally, go to his house. This time, almost all members of the group feel close to Gus Jakfar, not like the previous time. Maybe it is because now there are no more obstacles in the form of reluctance, anxiety, and fear" (p 25).

From the quotation, the religious values that appear are mutual respect and cooperation. Gus Jakfar's friends and students jointly decide to visit his house in order to complete and find the cause of changing in his attitude. Meanwhile, they visit Gus Jakfar on Friday evening after Isya. This time is considered as a break time from the routine and appropriate to be used to talk about what happened. The choosing of time is a form of comity from Gus Jakfar's friends and students in his busy. Moreover, the fact that Gus Jakfar is free and does not teach shows that Gus Jakfar's friends and students really do not want their coming disturbs the minds and hearts of Gus Jakfar which will have an impact on the quality of his daily work. In short, they want their conversation with Gus Jakfar is done casually but still has quality. Another quotation that shows the religious value toward man and other man can be seen next:

"Ternyata ketika sampai di sana, hampir semua orang yang saya jumpai mengaku tidak mengenal nama Kiai Tawakkal. Baru setelah seharian melacak kesana-kemari, ada seorang tua yang memberi petunjuk. 'Cobalah nakmas ikuti jalan setapak di sana itu,' katanya, 'Nanti nakmas akan berjumpa dengan sebuah sungai kecil, terus saja nakmas menyeberang. Begitu sampai seberang, nakmas akan melihat gubuk-gubuk kecil dari bambu. Nah kemungkinan besar orang yang nakmas cari akan nakmas jumpai di sana'" (hlm 26).

"Evidently, when I got there, almost everyone I met said they did not know Kiai Tawakkal's name. Only after a day of track here and there, there was an old man who gave the instructions. 'Try to follow the trail over there,' he said, 'You would meet with a small river later, kept cross. Once across, you would see little huts of bamboo. Well, the person you were looking for were probably you found there'" (p 26).

The quotation shows another religious value that is help each other. In addition, the quotation also implies the message that even though we do not know who we help, we should keep helping, as much as we can, because the slightest helps will be very helpful for people who need them.

2.3 Religious Values between Man and Himself

In connection to the man and himself, man has the capacity to take a stand against something, determines the way of life, determines and reaches his own desires, behaves based on his ability, and so forth (Pudjiono, 2006). Such capacities will lead to more positive things, and it can be seen from the following quotation:

"Aku hanya bisa menunduk. Sementara Kiai Tawakkal terus berbicara sambil menepuk-nepuk punggung saya, 'Kau harus lebih berhati-hati bila mendapat cobaan Allah berupa anugerah. Cobaan yang berupa anugerah tidak kalah gawatnya dibanding cobaan yang berupa penderitaan. Seperti mereka yang di warung tadi, kebanyakan mereka orang susah. Orang susah sulit kau bayangkan bersikap takabur, ujub, atau sikap-sikap lain yang cenderung membesarkan diri sendiri. Berbeda dengan mereka yang mempunyai kemampuan dan kelebihan, godaan untuk takabur dan sebagainya itu datang setiap saat. Apalagi bila kemampuan dan kelebihan itu diakui oleh banyak pihak.' Malam itu saya benar-benar merasa mendapatkan pemahaman dan pandangan baru dari apa yang selama ini sudah saya ketahui'" (hlm 30).

"I can only bow. While Kiai Tawakkal keeps talking, patting my back and saying, 'You should be more careful when you got a test of God as a gift. The test of having gift is as dangerous as the test of suffering. The people in the shop before, most of them are poor. Poor people are hard to imagine being arrogant, ujub, or other attitudes which tend to raise themselves. In contrast to those who have the ability and gift, the temptation of being arrogant can come at any time. Moreover, when the capability and the gift are recognized by many people, the tension of being arrogant increased. 'I got a new understanding of life and a new ideology of what I had already known that night'" (p 30).

The quotation shows Kiai Tawakkal's advices to Gus Jakfar. Those advices conclude a new feeling in Gus Jakfar's heart. As a man who is not perfect, as it is also submitted by Kiai Tawakkal, Gus Jakfar chooses and decides to justify Kiai Tawakkal's advices and appreciate the advices that later become the guidance in life. This decision is a manifestation of Gus Jakfar's religious value that he carefully determines his attitude and changes his mind to be better. The effect of changing in attitude causes Gus Jakfar to retain himself from doing acts that harm others and himself as well. In this case, Gus Jakfar does not harm people physically, but by "reading" a person, Gus Jakfar makes people afraid to meet him. Because of Kiai Tawakkal's advice, Gus Jakfar no longer harms others psychologically, and he thanks God for that.

III. Conclusion

The first aim of this research includes analyzing how far the short story reflects religious values, has being answered based on the analysis of data that is obtained from *Gus Jakfar's* short story by Ahmad Mustofa Bisri. This short story reflects several religious values that are the relationship between man and God such as doing God's commands and orders, leaving God's prohibitions, increasing good deeds, and worshipping God sincerely; the relationship between man and other man that is manifested in needing each other, helping each other, having mutual cooperation, having mutual respect and appreciating something or someone; the relationship between man and himself that emerges the capacity to determine the attitude, the way of life, and determine his own desire in facing and solving the problems of life. The second aim of this research includes analyzing to what extent the elements of fiction (character and conflict) give contribution in revealing religious values in this short story, has being answered by the portrayal of Gus Jakfar who has a gift that leads to conflict of his avoidance by people, the portrayal of Gus Jakfar who suddenly does no longer use his gift and this brings out the curiosity of people, the portrayal of Kiai Tawakkal who makes Gus Jakfar turns into a better human being.

Not only shows the religious values that exist in *Gus Jakfar's* short story, the writer also wants to convey moral messages from his work. The most tangible moral from the exposure of religious values in this short story is that we as humans have no right to judge someone's deeds or someone's work because God is the only one who has power to do so. In addition, the gift or privilege that is possessed by a person should not make him being arrogant or knowing everything, because God is the All-Knowing. Therefore, the readers of *Gus Jakfar's* short story should take or comprehend the moral messages to be applied in everyday life that create a tranquil and peaceful life.

Although this research has reached its aims, there were some unavoidable limitations. First, because of the time limit, this research was not analyzed the overall characters and the content of the story. Second, the theory that was used was an old one, and it was difficult to find the current theory or concept associated with this research. The concept of religiosity that was used in this study is certainly not sufficient to examine more deeply about religious values that exist in literary works. Finally, further research is highly needed in order to elaborate and to complete the previous research that can be used by researchers and practitioners as well.

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