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Javanese mystical Qur'ān interpretation: Kyai Saleh Darat's (d. 1903) Fayḍ al-Raḥmān and the Javanese mystical world

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Javanese Mystical Qur'ān Interpretation

Kyai Saleh Darat's (d. 1903) *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* and the
Javanese Mystical World

Nur Ahmad

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Cover image: A mystical diagram depicting a human form as God's last manifestation within the framework of the seven grades of Being. Source: PNRI. KBG. 691, *Primbon Brajakusuman*, f. 3r.

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Javanese Mystical Qur'ān Interpretation
Kyai Saleh Darat's (d. 1903) *Fayḍ al-Rahmān* and the Javanese Mystical World

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Leiden, 26 February 2026

Nur Ahmad

NOTE ON CONVENTIONS

- Unless otherwise noted, English translations of the Qur'ān are based loosely on Arthur J. Arberry's *The Koran Interpreted* (1964), with occasional adjustments on punctuation, style, and word-choice to clarify the exegetical issue at hand and the decisions made in the *Fayḍ al-Rahmān* and the Javanese exegetical materials. The adjustments also include the replacement of archaic words with modern ones for better readability to contemporary readers.
- Non-English words are written in italics unless for common words in English, proper names, frequently used terms.
- Quotations mainly from Malay and Javanese sources, which often include Arabic words, are transliterated and spelt as in the source consulted even when this involves forms that are considered no longer standard.
- Javanese transliterations follow the system given in *Pedoman Umum Ejaan Bahasa Jawa Huruf Latin Yang Disempurnakan* (General Guidelines for the Enhanced Roman Spelling of the Javanese Language, 2011). An adjustment is made for ě such as in *pēsantren* and for e such as in *pegon* and *ngelmu*. Arabic transliterations follow the system of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam Thre* (*EI³*). Malay transliterations follow the Arabic system.
- The information of the title, the author, and the dates corresponding to Arabic literature are consulted to *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur* (History of the Arabic Written Tradition) and its supplements by Carl Brockelmann, and – whenever possible – the biographies of the persons in question in *EI³*.
- Complete names and death dates are given after the first mention of a person, then shortened and dropped, respectively, thereafter.
- Dates pertaining to Islamic history are presented using both the Islamic *Anno Hijrae* and the Common era, such as Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111).

ABBREVIATIONS

General Terms

b.	(Ar.) <i>bin</i> (a son of)
bt.	(Ar.) <i>bint</i> (a daughter of)
d.	died
f.	folio
ff.	folios
MS.	Manuscript
MSS.	Manuscripts
n.d.	no date of publication
Ng.	(J.) Ngabehi
p.	page
pp.	pages
Q	Qur'ān
R.	(J.) Raden
RA.	(J.) Raden Ayu

Manuscript Collections, Archives, and Publishers

AMS	Amsterdam University Library, the Netherlands
BL	British Library, London, United Kingdom
Cod. Or.	Leiden University Library, the Netherlands
EAP	Endangered Archives Programme, London, United Kingdom
IOL	India Office Library, London, United Kingdom
PNRI	<i>Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia</i> (National Library of Indonesia), Jakarta, Indonesia
RP	Radya Pustaka Museum, Surakarta, Indonesia
SB	Sanabudaya Museum, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Journals and Encyclopedias

<i>BKI</i>	(D.) <i>Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde</i> (Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia and Oceania)
<i>EI³</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> , 3 rd edition, online. Edited by Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Devin J. Stewart. Leiden, Brill, 2007-
<i>GAL</i>	<i>Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur</i> (History of the Arabic Written Tradition), by Carl Brockelmann. Translated by Joep Lameer. 2 vols. Leiden, Brill, 2016

GALS *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur: Supplement* (History of the Arabic Written Tradition: Supplement), by Carl Brockelmann. Translated by Joep Lameer. 3 vols. Leiden, Brill, 2017-2018

NZG (D.) *Nederlandsch Zendeling Genootschap* (Netherlands Missionary Society)

Languages and Linguistics

Ar.	Arabic
D.	Dutch
J.	Javanese
Id.	Indonesian
Kr.	(J.) <i>Krama</i> (the high Javanese register)
Ng.	(J.) <i>Ngoko</i> (the low Javanese register)
M.	Malay
pl.	plural
sg.	singular

GLOSSARY

Akbarian	belonging to the mystical school of Ibn ‘Arabī and his interpreters.
<i>aksara</i> (J.)	in the Javanese mystical literature surveyed in this book, it refers to the written letter of the Javanese and Arabic scripts.
<i>bāṭin</i> (Ar.)	esoteric meaning of the Qur’ān and Islamic rituals.
<i>dhāt</i> (Ar.)	God’s essence.
<i>fiqh</i> (Ar.)	Islamic law; scholarly interpretations of <i>shari‘a</i> .
<i>Gusti</i> (J.)	Lord; a title for God.
<i>ḥaqīqa</i> (Ar.)	the deeper reality of the creation that corresponds to the Real (Ar. <i>al-ḥaqq</i>); the last stage of spiritual journey starting from <i>shari‘a</i> to <i>ṭarīqa</i> then culminates in <i>ḥaqīqa</i> , in which a spiritual wayfarer knows the Real.
<i>al-insān al-kāmil</i> (Ar.)	the perfect human being is a spiritual hierarchy and a grade of existence in the cosmological framework of the Akbarian school; a work by ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (d. 831/1428).
<i>kawula</i> (J.)	a servant in relation to the Lord.
<i>kyai</i> (J.)	leader of <i>pēsantren</i> .
<i>martabat pitu</i> (J.)	seven grades of Being; the framework of God’s manifestation in the Akbarian school introduced by the seventeenth Indian scholar, al-Burhānpūrī.
<i>pegon</i> (J.)	Arabic modified script for writing in Javanese language.
<i>pēsantren</i> (J.)	Islamic boarding school where a <i>santri</i> learns from a <i>kyai</i> to master traditional Islamic sciences.
<i>primbon</i> (Ar.)	compendium of mystical teachings in circulation among members of a Sufi order; it is a genre of literature which in this book is identified as the Javanese mystical literature.
<i>al-ṣalāt al-dā’im</i> (Ar.)	perpetual prayer is a mystical prayer popular among the Javanese mystics.
<i>sālik</i> (Ar.)	spiritual wayfarer.

- santri (J.)** student of Islamic sciences especially when studying in *pēsantren*.
- sharī'a (Ar.)** Sacred Law as it is found in the religious scriptures; the first stage of spiritual journey, in which a spiritual wayfarer focuses on the Islamic law.
- suluk (J.)** a genre of modern Javanese poetry composed in *těmbang*; its main theme is philosophical Sufism pointing to the dominant influence of the Akbarian School; it is another genre of literature which in this book is identified as the Javanese mystical literature.
- tafsīr (Ar.)** scriptural exegesis of the Qur'ān, the result of which is called the outward or the exoteric meaning (Ar. *al-zāhir*).
- al-tafsīr al-ishārī (Ar.)** the allusive interpretation of the Qur'ān, the result of which is called allusive meaning (Ar. *al-ma'nā l-ishārī*) or the esoteric meaning of the Qur'ān (Ar. *al-ma'nā al-bāṭin*).
- ṭarīqa (Ar.)** lit. path; a Sufi order; the second stage of spiritual journey where a spiritual wayfarer focuses on the inner aspects of religion.
- ta'wīl (Ar.)** symbolic interpretation.
- těmbang (J.)** main verse forms used in modern Javanese literature.
- waḥdat al-wujūd (Ar.)** the oneness of Being; the concept of God's oneness in the Akbarian school.
- wujūd (Ar.)** Being, particularly used for God's Being; the existence of the cosmos.