A psychological study of religious transformation among Moslems who practice Dzikir Tawakkal

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CHAPTER ONE

AIMS AND OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

During the last two decades, there has been a resurgence of interest in religion among both lay people and social scientists. In a secular country such as the USA, religious life has become a societal trend. Based on a representative sample of over 1,500 Americans, The Princeton Religion Research Centre noted 34 percent of their sample claimed to have had "a born-again experience" which projects to about 50 million people in the USA; 31 percent reported religious or mystical experiences projecting to approximately 47 million people (see Paloutzian, 1984). Another study in the USA by the Gallup organisation reveals that 73 percent of the sample identified themselves as being religious, 22 percent considered themselves nonreligious and only 2 percent claimed to be atheist (Spilka et al. 1985).

Within Indonesia, the interest in religion among Moslems has significantly increased since the 1980's as indicated by the increasing enthusiasm of Moslem young people in religious activities. Vatikiotis (1990) reported that: "...a new wave of confidence is surging through Indonesia's Moslem majority. A resurgence of faith has been evident in the younger generation for some years" (p.25). However, quantitative studies supporting these views still have not yet been undertaken.

The interest in religion among social scientists, particularly psychologists, is indicated by the renaissance of the psychology of religion as a specialised field of study. The history of the psychology of religion reveals

that at the turn of this century religion was a highly respected area of study in psychology, dignified by such notables as William James, G. Stanley Hall and Carl Gustav Jung. However, the increasing influence of a behavioural paradigm forced work on religion to the periphery of scientific investigation. During this era of decline, religion was considered as a taboo topic in psychology (see Beit-hallahmi, 1977; Spilka et al., 1985). The revival of the psychology of religion which occurred in the mid-1950s is indicated by the appearance of new journals devoted to scientific research in religion such as *Journal for the Scientific Study in Religion, Journal of Religion and Health*, and *Journal for Psychology and Theology.* Similarly, a large number of research papers and literature in the area of psychology of religion have been published not only in the USA, but also in Scandinavia, the Netherlands, Germany, India and Japan (Wulff, 1991).

Among the most widely studied topics in the psychology of religion is the phenomenon of a dramatic change of religious life often referred to as religious conversion (Jones, 1937; Scroggs & Douglas, 1977; Byrne, 1984). The topic of religious conversion has received considerable attention from the pioneers of the psychology of religion including James (1902), Coe (1916), and Jones (1937), as well as a number of contemporary researchers (Paloutzian, 1981; Ullman, 1982, 1988; Thumma, 1991). However, contemporary research on religious conversion is limited in terms of the content covered and the methodology adopted.

The content of the research on religious conversion focuses mostly on what Thouless (1936) called "ordinary conversion", the conversion from agnostic to religious life and from one religious affiliation to another (Ullman, 1988, 1989). "Mystical conversion", the conversion from ordinary religious life to mystical religious life has received limited attention in contemporary research. Another limitation concerns the source of data which is largely based upon the experience of Judeo-Christian tradition (Ullmann, 1982; Cooley, 1984). There is very little research on any other religious traditions including Islamic tradition.

The methodology limitation of the contemporary research on religious conversion arguably results from the domination of quantitative methods derived from the natural scientific approach (Coe, 1916; Jones, 1937; Ullman, 1982, 1988). Quantitative methods tend to be reductionistic in the sense that the focus is restricted to the observable and measurable behaviour. This approach is unable to portray the meaningfulness of the experience being studied for the participant (Wulff, 1991).

The current study addresses the limitations of the research on religious conversion stated above. Rather than focusing on "ordinary conversion" as other research have, the current study is more concerned with "mystical conversion", that is, the conversion from ordinary to mystical religious life. The term being used to describe such phenomenon is "religious transformation". The reasons for using the term "religious transformation" are as follows:

(a) The term "religious conversion" is ambiguous in meaning. In early studies of this phenomenon, this term referred to a change from one religion to another, from a nonreligious background to an intense commitment to religious belief and to an increased commitment within the framework of the person's own religious affiliation (James 1902, Jones, 1937, Johnson, 1945). However, in recent studies this term has been mostly used to designate a change of religious affiliation (Meadow & Kahoe, 1984; Ullman, 1989).

(b) The term "religious transformation" is considered as able to cover a wide range of experiences including an increased commitment to religion, transformation of the sense of self and transformation of consciousness.

The term "religious transformation" in the current study is defined as a change of religious orientation from "ordinary" religious life to "mystical" religious life as a result of a particular dzikir practice, that is dzikir tawakkal. The term dzikir tawakkal refers to a meditation-like method which is practised in an Islamic religious group called the Pengajian Tawakkal[38] (PT).

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[38] Throughout this thesis the Pengajian Tawakkal is written as "PT".

The aim of the current study is to explicate the experience of religious transformation among Moslems who practise dzikir tawakkal in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The main concern of this study is to explicate the meaning of the transformative experience from the perspective of the individual. This explication is seen as contributing to our knowledge of religious transformation within a Moslem context.

The unique value of the current study is not only its focus on the phenomenon of "religious transformation", but also on the context of the data which is drawn from an Islamic tradition. The adoption of a qualitative-phenomenological approach is optimizes our understanding the meaning of the phenomenon of religious transformation from the perspective of the participant. This approach is considered complementary to the empirical-statistical oriented research in the psychology of religion.

The thesis is divided into Six chapters. The first chapter describes the aims, the relevance and the significance of the study.

Chapter Two reviews the literature relating to the phenomenon of religious transformation in the psychology of religion. It reviews the psychological nature of religious life, the development of religious life and religious transformation which includes the role of meditation practice in religious transformation.

Chapter Three describes dzikir practice in Islam. In order to give a clear picture of dzikir practice within the Islamic religious context, I describe the religion of Islam in general by outlining the meaning of the words "Islam" and "Moslem", the belief structures and the rituals in Islam. This is followed by a description of dzikir practice and the role of dzikir in the process of religious transformation.

Chapter Four outlines the methodology adopted in the research, that is, a phenomenological approach. Firstly I present the background of the participant of the current study which covers the history of the PT group and its practices. This description provides a context for explicating the phenomenon

of religious transformation as expressed by the research participants. Then, I review some of the basic concepts of phenomenology as a philosophical school of thought and which has become the foundation of the phenomenological approach in psychology. This is followed by a discussion of the difference between phenomenological and natural scientific approaches in psychology. I argue that the phenomenological approach is the most appropriate method in pursuing the aims of the current study. Finally, the method of collecting and explicating data based upon a phenomenological approach is described. A step by step example of the procedure of explicating data is provided in an appendix.

Chapter Five covers the results of the current study which includes the common episodes emerge from each of the protocols. This is followed by the explication of themes within each episode for each participant. I then present the synthesis of the themes as the core of the findings of the current study.

Chapter Six addresses the phenomenon of religious transformation among people who practise dzikir tawakkal and draws some conclusions based upon the results of the current study. The discussion will include a comparison and contrast of the current findings with the findings of other researchers and literature in the area of the psychology of religion and religious studies. The value of the phenomenological approach as is applied in this current study is also examined.

CHAPTER TWO

RELIGIOUS TRANSFORMATION

In this chapter I review the literature relating to the phenomenon of religious transformation. Firstly, I review the psychological nature of religious life and religious development. This is followed by a review of dramatic religious change from "ordinary" religious life to "mystical" religious life which, in the context of the current study, refers to religious transformation. The role of meditation in the process of religious transformation is then discussed. Finally, I review the process of religious transformation in some literature.

2.1. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL NATURE OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

Some scholars maintain that the word "religion" derives from the Latin "religio" which was first employed to designate a power greater than human power and requiring a person to respond in a certain way to avoid some consequences. Other scholars argue that "religio" refers to the feeling which is present in a person who conceives and observes such power (Wulff, 1991).

According to Paloutzian (1984) the word "religion" derives from the Latin word "legare" which means to bind or to connect. This implies that the term religion refers to the process of rebinding and reconnecting in order to gain a sense of wholeness or completeness. Thus, from an etymological point of view, religion indicates the striving of a human being for a certain connection with a power greater than, and outside of, the self.

Psychology has been concerned with religious phenomena since its early development as a systematic "science". A number of theories have been developed to explain the nature of religiousness. In the following section I review some basic theories of the origin of religion: human nature theories, cognitive theories and emotional theories. These "natural-scientific"

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psychological theories are complemented by the existential-phenomenological perspective on the origin of religion.

According to human nature theories, religion is considered as an expression of one of the human instincts (Jastrow, 1902; Spinks, 1963). The notion of religious instinct was popular in the earlier days of religious psychology when psychologists tended to explain all of human behaviour in the same way. According to Meadow and Kahoe (1984) religious instinct is innate to human existence, both physically and psychologically. On the biological level Burhoe (see Meadow & Kahoe, 1984) speculated, from a genetic and neurophysiological basis that the nature of the human brain facilitates the development of religion. The left hemisphere of the brain is thought to be responsible for "rational" understanding of nature, whereas the right hemisphere relates to something "irrational" which is responsible for mystical understanding. On the psychological level Jung (1959) claimed that the structure of religious experiences is deeply rooted in the human psyche. His theory of archetypes in the collective unconsciousness typically have religious connections.

According to the cognitive theories, religion began when people constructed explanations about complex experiences that were difficult to understand . When early people thought about death, disease and dreams, they concluded that some immaterial entity (soul) influenced their life. The idea of soul led to the notion of God (Meadow & Kahoe, 1984).

Emotional theories about the origin of religion are among the most widely discussed by scholars. According to Freud (1929) religion emerge from a reluctance to accept harsh realities. When people experience difficulties, they tend to escape from reality and search for a "father" image who is able to control harmful forces. Freud concluded that religion is a universal "obsessional neurosis" due to the fact that there are some similarities between neurotic compulsive symptoms and religious rituals. This conclusion led to a strong critique both from theologians and other psychologists. For example Clark (1958) criticised Freud for tending to see religion in only its infantile

aspect. Wulff (1991) argued that Freud's theories were based on highly speculative work.

The emotional theories include the notion of existential anxiety as the origin of religion, especially the anxiety over inability to avoid death. Royce (1973) argue that religion is the result of apprehension that comes from being human and dealing with life which is full of problems and sorrows. Therefore, Pruyser (1971) wrote that religion is "...born from situations in which someone cries: Help!" (Pruyser, 1971, p. 80).

From the existential-phenomenological point of view, religion can be traced to the quest for life's meaning (Clark, 1958). Religion is regarded as the way people seek the meaning of life. Otto (1917) ascribed religion to a direct apprehension of the "Wholly Others". This implies that the human being has a special capacity, a kind of "sixth sense" which enables people to make contact with the divine. The mental state which is induced in the presence of a divine object is called "numinous", an experience of a great awe or "amazement absolute" (Wulff, 1991).

Phenomenological understanding of the psychological nature of religion focuses on the psychic quality of transcendence (the climbing beyond) as the source of religion (Wulff, 1991). This capacity is indicated by the possibility of the individual to reflect on the past and to anticipate the future. Religion is understood as the "transcendence of the world as a whole" (Wulff, 1991, p.521).

The psychological theories reviewed above indicate that no single theory and understanding can be used in approaching such a complex phenomenon like religion. Although there are some differences between one theory and another, these explanations share a similar basic understanding that religion is inherent in human life both physically and psychologically.

2.2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

Psychologists of religion tend to discuss the development of religious life by adopting a psychological model of human development (Meadow & Kahoe, 1984; Paloutzian, 1984; Wulff, 1991). Psychological developmental theories which are often applied are: Piaget's cognitive development; Kohlberg's moral development and Erikson's psychosocial development theories. However, the descriptive approach applied by Clark (1958), Crapps (1986) and Thun (see Wulff, 1991) is more fruitful for the purpose of this study than the theoretical approaches. The following sections therefore describe some characteristics of religious life during childhood, adolescence and adulthood.

2.2.1. Religious Life During Childhood

According to Clark (1958) and Crapps (1986) the major characteristics of religion of childhood are egocentric oriented, authoritarian, concrete-anthropomorphic, and ritualistic-superficial.

According to Crapps (1986) the most obvious characteristic of childhood religion is its egocentric orientation. Religion takes on meaning and is organised around the sense of self. The egocentricity of religious life in children is clearly indicated in their prayers. Long et al. (1968) studied the conception of prayer among children and found that prayer is associated with particular concrete activity and is highly personalized. Children often pray for egocentric things, such as obtaining candy or toys. The authoritative character of religious life among children is indicated by the fact that almost all children's ideas of religion come from other people (Clark, 1958). Thun (see Wulff, 1991) found from his investigation that children's religion is dependent on environmental factors. Children unreflectively accept religious ideas and doctrines on the basis of a relationship with significant adults, rather than on the basis of rational and theological meaning (Crapps, 1986). However, this

does not mean that there is no reflection by children concerning their religious life. Zeligs (1974) collected some questions about God asked by young children in 3rd grade which reveal the way they think: Does God die like every one else? How does God make Himself? How does He get up in the sky? How old is He? Is He Christian or Jewish?.

The above questions not only suggest the concrete (realism) mode of thinking but also the anthropomorphic character of their religious life. Children attempt to relate abstract religious explanations to their concrete world of experience. In understanding the idea of God, for example, young children often refer to "a big old man in the sky" (Paloutzian, 1984, p. 72). According to Crapps (1986) this anthropomorphic character of children's religious life is highly influenced by a patriarchal orientation of biblical literature in Christian tradition. There is no research data nor literature on the anthropomorphic tendency among children in other religious traditions, including Islamic religion.

Although some children often question religious ideas and doctrine, such questioning essentially is not "serious" (Paloutzian, 1984). Children's religious life is superficial in the sense that children uncritically imitate adult religious behavior. They perform religious obligations ritualistically and verbally. Aside from motives of imitation, children also have the desire to please their elders (Clark, 1958).

The characteristics of religious life in childhood described above have the quality of changeability which means that the metamorphosis of children's religious life is inevitable (Wulff, 1991). The change will either lead to religious maturity or to infantile religious life depending upon the degree to which they cultivate a spiritual dimension.

2.2.2. Religious Life During Adolescence

Thun (see Wulff, 1991) has explored the change of religious life that occurs in adolescence. He found that some characteristics of religious life in childhood are carried over into adolescence, for example, egocentricism and ritualistic behaviour. Although some of Thun's subjects had undergone an intensification and deepening of their faith reflected in profound inner experience, for the majority genuine religious experience remained foreign. Some of them experienced conflict and doubt, while others were disillusioned by religious hypocrisy and religious indifference.

According to Paloutzian (1984) adolescents are inconsistent in their commitment to religion. They are both religious and non-religious. On the one hand some research suggests that religious interest and religious practice are prevalent during adolescence. On the other hand there is also some research which indicates that adolescents have less tendency to believe and an increased tendency to wonder about specific religious teaching (Paloutzian, 1984).

Clark (1958) affirms that doubt and conflict are the most common characteristics of religious life in adolescence. Religious doubt concerning a specific religious teaching is often expressed by adolescents. This doubt often leads to conflict between belief and disbelief or conflict of loyalty to two different religious ideas or to two religious institutions. Although theologians often view doubt and conflict among adolescents as an obstacle to faith, psychologists of religion do not deny that doubt and conflict are important factors in religious growth (Clark, 1958).

The above literature reveals that conflict between doubt and belief, as a characteristic of religious life in adolescents, relates to their psychological development. Adolescents' cognitive growth allows them to examine religion through logical and abstract thinking. They attempt to exchange the authoritative and uncritical religious life of childhood with a more rational understanding.

2.2.3 Religious Life During Adulthood

Clark (1958) referred to two characteristics of religious life in childhood, egocentric orientation and ritualistic behaviour, which are often still found among adults as being an egocentric orientation of religious life among adults is reflected in the content of adult private prayer which involves all sorts of requests for personal favours from God, while the ritualistic behaviour is indicated by the absence of genuine spiritual life in performing religious obligations. These two characteristics arguably reveal the immature nature of religious life of adult people.

Allport (1950) proposed six criteria of mature religious life which provide the basic characteristics of the more advanced development of religious life in adulthood. According to these criteria religious life is considered mature if it is well differentiated, dynamic, consistent, integral and heuristic.

A person possesses a well differentiated religious life if he/she accepts his/her religion reflectively and critically, the opposite of authoritative religious life in childhood. A well-differentiated religious life is able to encompass all dimensions of the human life: rational, emotional, social and mystical.

Allport considers the dynamic nature of religious life as the most important characteristic distinguishing mature from immature religious life. Religious life is dynamic if religion is able to take control and direct the motives and the activities of a person. Religion becomes a goal to be sought for its own sake and is not the servant of personal interest or egocentric tendency. Religion also provides the power of motivation and the power of transformation in individuals.

According to Allport, religion must persistently and consistently direct and transform character. Mature religious life will produce a consistent morality which means that a person's everyday life behaviour is consistent with the moral values of his/her religion.

The comprehensive character of mature religious life is indicated by the

role of religion surveying as a comprehensive philosophy of one's life. Everything that befalls to a person is related to the Divine. A comprehensive philosophy of life will make for tolerance of the differences of religious life and faith.

Mature religious life is not only comprehensive but also integral. This means that religion is integrated into all areas of life and into all human knowledge (science). Allport treats the problem of integration of science within a religious perspective. For him, a person who has mature religious life will find no gap between science and religion. The heuristic nature of mature religious life means that a person recognises the tentativeness of his/her belief. Therefore, he/she is always seeking for more "light" and for more valid belief.

Clark (1958) added to Allport's criteria for mature religious life. According to Clark a person who has a mature religious life, has a capacity to grow, has humility, is socially effective and is sensitive to what appears to him/her to be the apprehension of the Divine Nature. For this person, religion becomes a central concern and gives meaning to life.

The characteristics of mature religious life proposed by Allport (1950) and Clark (1958) provide a clear understanding of the goal and the ideal development of religious life. However, it should be argued here that immature and mature religious life are not two distinct conditions. Rather the development of religious life is a hierarchical continuum. An effort to achieve all of the criteria becomes a never ending journey throughout life. As stated by Clark (1958): "...the process of religious development is never complete".

2.3. RELIGIOUS TRANSFORMATION

2.3.1. Definition

The current study is concerned with the dramatic change of religious life among Moslems who practise <u>dzikir</u> <u>tawakkal</u>. The term often used in the literature of psychology of religion to describe this phenomenon of change is "religious conversion". However, in the current study the term "religious transformation" is applied. The rationale for adoption of this term will be clarified.

In psychology of religion the term "religious conversion" refers to a type of religious development which is characterised by abrupt religious experience and a change of direction concerning religious ideas and behaviour (Clark, 1958; James, 1902). The change of direction could be indicated by a change of religious affiliation (Meadow & Kahoe, 1984; Ullman, 1989), or by an increased commitment to religious beliefs, for individual either with an already devout religious life or from non-religious background (James, 1902; Byrnes, 1984; Ullman, 1988, 1989).

Depending upon the direction of change in religious conversion, Thouless (1936) distinguished between "ordinary conversion" and "mystical conversion". The term ordinary conversion is used to designate the change of religious life from agnostic to religious. Included in this conversion is the change from one religion to another. On the other hand, the term mystical conversion refers to dramatic religious change from ordinary to mystical religious life.

Thouless's classification is arguably incomplete for two reasons. Firstly, mystical experience does not apply solely to mystical converts. There are instances of religious conversion which suggest that mystical experiences occur and play an important role for people who convert from agnostic to religious life. Secondly, mystical experience does not only occur "naturally" as an unexpected experience, but it also occurs in relation to a particular spiritual discipline, such as meditation. In spite of this incompleteness, Thouless's classification of religious conversion provides a basic understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

Although the current research is concerned with the phenomenon of

religious conversion, particularly mystical conversion, the term "religious transformation" is used. The main reason is that the term "religious transformation" is considered as being able to cover a wide range of experiences such as an increased commitment to religion, transformation of consciousness and transformation of the sense of self. These experiences are often found among people who practise meditation (Meadow & Kahoe, 1984).

Thus, the term "religious transformation" in the current research is defined as a change of religious orientation from "ordinary" to "mystical" religious life as a result of a particular meditation practice. Within this context the term "ordinary" refers to the common religious life among adult people which is characterised by ritualistic-superficial and egocentric tendencey, whereas "mystical" religious life is a religious life which is accompanied by mystical experiences and apprehension of God.

2.3.2. Meditation and Religious Transformation

Within the last decade meditation practice has received significant attention in Western society. In the United States alone, millions of people reportedly practise meditation in their everyday life (Walsh, 1983). Meditation has thus become a self-help tool to overcome a large range of everyday life problems, including physical, psychological and social difficulties. The practice of meditation is supported by a significant body of research undertaken by scientists to document the range of effects of meditation practice. For example, Orme-Johnson & Farrow (1976) present almost a hundred scientific research papers which examine the efficacy of Transcendental Meditation programs in various areas. In addition, a number of psychological theories and studies have been used to explain the mental process involves in meditation (Naranjo & Ornstein, 1971; Van der Lans, 1987; Ornstein, 1986).

The psychological essence of the practice of meditation is the attempt to restrict consciousness to a single unchanging source of stimulation for a certain period of time (Ornstein ,1986). There are many varieties of the meditation technique but all involve focusing awareness on visual, auditory and kinaesthetic patterns (Meadow & Kahoe, 1984). In Zen Buddhism the student is instructed to count his/her breaths from one to ten and repeat the counting. Visual meditation techniques are found in Yoga traditions and involve a "steady gaze" on external objects such as a stone, a vase, or a candle. These objects are used as a focus for a fixed point of concentration, rather than for their physical characteristic (Ornstein, 1986).

The most common form of auditory meditation involves the use of a <u>mantra</u>, a certain word which is consider sacred. The meditative experience can be achieved through chanting this mantra repetitively. In Yogic tradition the most common <u>mantra</u> is <u>Om</u> or <u>Om</u> <u>mani</u> <u>padme</u> <u>hum</u> (Ornstein, 1986). Christians from Eastern Orthodoxy use the "Jesus prayer" : "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me a sinner" (Meadow & Kahoe, 1984, p. 148). In Islamic tradition there are some formulas which are often used to achieve meditative consciousness: <u>laa</u> <u>illa</u> <u>ha</u> <u>illallah</u> [there is no god but Allah] or <u>astaghfirulloh-al</u> <u>adzim</u> [I seek the protection of Allah]. Meditation practice within Islamic tradition will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

Auditory meditation techniques are sometimes combined with kinaesthetic or repetitive bodily movements. Instances of this method are the "whirling dervishes" of Turkish Sufis in which the Sufis dance and whirl in a circle while chanting a particular formula.

It has been well documented that meditation is a potential method for radical transformation of consciousness, from normal-waking consciousness to altered states of consciousness and results in what are called mystical experiences (LeShan, 1974; Ornstein, 1986; Walsh, 1983). Psychologists of religion have identified some characteristics of mystical experiences which is often found among mystics, regardless of era and tradition. These

characteristics are as follows:

(a) The mystical experience has noetic quality. It is not perceived as merely an emotional experience, but as a source of knowledge.

(b) The mystical experience is ineffable. That is, the mystical experience   is difficult to describe in words.

(c) The mystical experience has a quality of unity. It creates a sense of oneness of all things, perceived either inwardly or outwardly.

(d) The mystical experience is real. It is not hallucination or imagery.

(e) The mystical experience involves timelessness and spacelessness. An awareness of time and space disappear.

(f) The mystical experience is holy. This religious aspect of the experience involves a sense of sacredness, prompting a response of awe and wonder.

(g) The mystical experience has a deep positive mood. It is a profound experience of utter joy, blessedness, and peace.

(h) The mystical experience has a quality of paradoxicality. This apparent when a person's seemingly contradictory statements are logically analysed.

(i) The mystical experience is passive. This means that a person feels that his/her thought, feeling and bodily motions are somehow not the product of his/her own effort (James, 1902; Meadow & Kahoe, 1984; Spilka, 1991; Stace, 1966).

Mystical experience is very important for the development of religious life. It is potential in bringing a dramatic change of religious orientation. This is evidenced in the lives of most of the great religious leaders who are said to have had mystical experiences before they changed their own life and their society (Jones, 1937; Clark, 1958). The current research is concerned with a change of one's own religious life as the person becomes involved in practising dzikir (meditation in the Islamic tradition) and in having mystical

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experiences.

CHAPTER THREE

DZIKIR PRACTICE AND RELIGIOUS TRANSFORMATION

The purpose of this chapter is to review dzikir practice in Islam which provides the ground of the life-world of the participants in this present study. In order to do this, I will firstly describe the meaning of the words "Islam" and "Moslem". Then, Islamic belief structure and rituals are described within the context of this research which is concerned with the practice of dzikir and with mystical dimension of Islam. Finally, the role of dzikir practice in religious transformation is discussed.

3.1. THE MEANING OF THE WORDS "ISLAM" AND "MOSLEM"

According to Ahmad (1974) the root of the word "Islam" is SLM, which can be pronounced salm meaning 'peace', or silm meaning to surrender, to submit, to yield, to give one's self over. This two rooted meaning led the Islamic scholars to two inseparable meanings of Islam. Firstly, Islam is understood as "...to enter into peace" (Ali, 1950, p.2) and secondly as "...complete submission and obedience to Allah" (Maudodi, 1958, p. 5). From these two meanings, Ahmad (1974) concluded that the word "Islam" signifies that one can achieve real peace of body and soul only through submission and obedience to Allah.

From the etymological point of view of the word "Islam", Shaltout (1958) understood a Moslem as one who has made his peace with God and with fellow human beings. Peace with God implies complete submission to the will of God while peace with human beings implies doing good to the fellow human. Parallel with this meaning Maudodi (1958) understood the word

"Moslem" in its essence as one who submits and is obedient to God. The obedience to God means obedience to His law. Maudodi (1958) interpreted the law of God in a broad sense which not only refers to "religious law", but also embraces "natural law". Therefore, he stated that the term "Moslem" not only addresses the people whose religion is Islam, but also all creatures, animate and inanimate. "Everything in the universe is Moslem, for it obeys God by submission to His laws" (Maudodi, 1958, p.7). In this sense Moslem means "nature".

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that a Moslem is one whose religion is Islam and who obeys and submits his own will to the Will of God.

3.2. ISLAMIC BELIEF STRUCTURE

As a religion, Islam has developed through a particular belief structure basis. Principally, there are five basic beliefs [iman] in Islam: belief in God; belief in His Angel; belief in His Prophet-Messenger; belief in His Revealed-Books and belief in the Last Day. These beliefs are based on the teaching of the Qur'an[39], the Moslem's sacred book:

> "O ye who believe, believe in God and His Apostles and the Books which He hath sent down to His Apostles and the Scripture which He hath sent down formerly. Whosoever denieth God and His Apostles and the Last Day hath strayed far from the Truth"
> (Q[40]. 6:135).

As Moslems, the participants of this present research share the same basic belief structure with all other Moslems.

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[39] In the current study the spelling of "Qur'an" is applied, rather than "Koran".

[40] The initial "Q" stands for the Qur'an, while "6:135" means chapter 6, verse 135.

3.2.1. Belief in God

The corner-stone of Islam is not only belief in the existence of God, but also belief in the oneness of God [monotheism]. The oneness of God [tauhid] is stressed by Moslems, because Islam does not compromise in any kind of association with God. "Monotheism in Islam is absolute oneness of God" (Jomier, 1989, p.40).

The opposite of tauhid is syirik meaning taking a partner to God. A Moslem believes that syirik is the gravest of all sins which is not forgiven. According to the Qur'an there are various forms of syirik (Ali, 1950). Firstly, there is worshipping anything besides God, such as stones, idols, trees, animals, heavenly bodies or human beings who are supposed to be gods. This is the most palpable form of syirik. The second form is the associating of other things and beings with God. This supposes that other things and beings possess the same attribute as the Divine Being. The third form is that in which some people take others as their lord and blindly obey them. Similar to this form, blindly following one's own desire is also syirik. Nasr (1972) believed that only Sufis, those who follow a mystical path and receive the Divine knowledge could really experience the tauhid, because they were able to eliminate the very subtle forms of syirik.

According to Islam, Allah is the proper or personal name [ismu-dzat] of the Divine Being. It is also known as the greatest name [ismu-adzom] of God. Aside from the name of Allah, God also possesses names that represent the attributes of Divine Nature. These attributive names are called asma-al sifat, better known as asma-ul-husna [the Most Beautiful Name]. On the basis of the Qur'an and Hadist[41] the Most Beautiful Name of Allah is considered to number ninety-nine. Both ismu-dzat and asma-ul-husna are often used by all Moslems as a means to practise dzikir [remembrance of God], that is by reciting the Names repeatedly.

3.2.2. Belief in Angels

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[41] Hadist is the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad.

The Arabic word for angel is malak which is often used in plural: malikat. This word means the bearing of messenges (Ali, 1958; Murata, 1989). The angels are unseen beings belonging to the world of the unseen [alam ghaib]. As supernatural beings which are believed to be created from the light, angels do not appear in the material world generally, except by Divine Command (Shaltout, 1958).

The attribute of angels is to obey the command of God and they can not disobey. They vary in rank and function. Some angels do nothing but worship while others attend to the affairs of the world (Tritton, 1951). According to Islamic teaching, the angels have a close connection with the life of a human being from the time he/she is in the mother's womb till death and even after death, and especially have a connection with the spiritual state of human beings.

Moniuddin (1985) related a tradition [hadist] which describes the close relationship between dzikir practice and the belief in angels:

> "According to the prophet Muhammad a group of angels is given a special duty by Allah to perform a patrol of the entire earth looking for those who are engaged in remembrance of Allah, chanting His Name. When such assemblies are discovered, the angels are so amazed and pleased that they call more angels to joint them and placing their wings together in embrace they make a column that reaches up into the Heavens" (p. 142).

Thus, Moslems believe that when they practise dzikir, the angels will surround them.

The belief in angels also involves belief in another kind of supernatural creature which is called jin[42]. While the angels are said to have been created from light, the jin were created from fire. According to the Qur'an jin are like human beings who are organised into communities. Some of the jin are virtuous, others are wicked (Jomier, 1989; Shaltout, 1958). Ali (1958) quoted a tradition which shows that angels possess all the spiritual virtues and none of the shortcomings of human beings, while jin are described as sometimes

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[42] In English the term 'genie' is derived from jin, however the religious meaning of jinn is different from the mythological creature in the story of Aladin.

whispering and being provocateurs-evil to human beings. In terms of spiritual development, Moslems understand the wicked jin as the distractor from getting closer to God.

2.2.3. Belief in Prophet-Messengers

Islam distinguishes between the inspired prophet [Nabi] and the Messengers [Rasul]. Every messenger requires a prophet because he receives a particular mission, but a prophet is not always a messenger (Jomier, 1989).

The Moslems believe that Allah sent His messengers at all times and to all people to guide them to the right path which enables people to arrange their daily affairs so that they live wisely and correctly. The Qur'an teaches that Moslems should believe in all of those prophets, whether their names are mentioned in the Qur'an or not (Ali, 1950). According to tradition there have been 124,000 prophets in the world, but only 25 names are mentioned in the Qur'an. Some of their names are mentioned in the Bible, while some are not.

According to Islam, the message brought by all the Prophets is essentially one and the same, even though in matters of detail there has been a gradual evolution in their messages toward the final and perfect revelation (Gibb, 1951; Jomier, 1989). Moslems believe that the last of the prophets is Muhammad who has become the prototype of the ideal human being. Moslems also believe that the prophet Muhammad's mystical experience during the ascension [mi'raj] to the Divine Throne, to some extent, can also be achieved by practising dzikir.

3.2.4. Belief in the revealed books

According to Islam God has revealed various "books" or scriptures to several major prophets. The earlier scriptures which are called sukhf are referred to anonymously , but four 'books' are singled out by name: Tawrah

[Torat] given to Moses; Zabur [Psalm] given to David; Injil [Evangel or Gospel] given to Isa (Jesus] and the final revealed book is Al-Qur'an [Koran] which was given to Muhammad. A Moslem not only believes in all of the prophets, but also in all of the revealed books stated above.

The Moslems believe that the Qur'an is the verbatim revelation of the Word of God, revealed in Arabic through the archangel Gabrielle to the Prophet Muhammad . Since it is the actual Word of God, not only the meaning of the Qur'an is considered sacred, but also its physical form (Nasr, 1989).

The role of the Qur'an as the final revelation is very important for Moslems. The Qur'an is the original source of guidance for all aspects of human life, either spiritual or worldly life. Dzikir practice which is employed by the participants of this present research is based on the Qur'anic teaching. Aside from that, most of the object of recitation in dzikir practice derived from the Qur'anic verses.

3.2.5. Belief in the Last Day

According to Islam, all life on this earth will come to an end at a time known only to God. The Qur'an describes some important events of the Last Day such as the sounding of "trumpets", the splitting of heaven, the grinding of mountains to dust, the resurrection of the dead from the tombs, the judgement of actions, the deed-records' books being opened, the verdict and then paradise for some and hell for others (Ahmad, 1958; Jomier, 1989).

The belief in the last day includes the belief in life after death. According to the Qur'an death is not the end of a human's life. Death only opens the door to another higher form of life (Ali, 1950). In this future life people will suffer the consequences, good or bad, of their deeds in this world.

The belief in the last day also involves the belief in the existence of the unseen world [alam ghaib]. Moslems who practise dzikir often reported their experience of accessing this "other" world.

3.3. ISLAMIC RITUALS

The five beliefs [iman] described in the above section constitute the basic foundation of the whole building of Islamic religion, while the five forms of Islamic rituals are considered as its pillars. These five pillars, which should be practised as obligatory rituals, are: syahadat [profession of the faith], shalat [prayers], shaum [fasting], zakat [alms] and hajj [pilgrimage]. For Moslems, all of these rituals purify their life physically, socially and spiritually in order to get closer to God.

3.3.1. Profession of the Faith [Syahadat]

The formula of the profession of the the faith [syahadat] is: "I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah" (Jomier, 1989, p.78). This formulation of faith is characteristic of Islam that it is enough to recite this formula to be considered as a Moslem. For Moslems "by heritage" [Moslems whose parents are Moslems] there is no obligation to recite the syahadat at a particular occasion, since one of the formulas which is recited during prayer [shalat] is the syahadat. Thus, for people who practise shalat, it is taken for granted that they have already practised the profession of the faith.

The first formula of profession of the faith in Arabic laa illa ha illallah [there is no god but Allah] is the most common formula recited for practising dzikir. This formula is believed to be the most powerful recitation in bringing a change to Moslems' religious life (Chishti, 1989).

3.3.2. Canonical Prayer [Shalat]

Shalat is considered the most essential pillar in Islamic ritual. From puberty onward, every Moslem man and woman is obliged to observe canonical prayers five times a day. Each is made up of a number of raka'at[43].

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[43] Literally the raka'at is an act of bowing down before God,

Technically, one raka'at consists of a number of postures and prayers. The worshipper first stands reverentially, then he/she bows down, then stands up again, then falls prostrate placing the forehead on the ground, then sits down in a reverential position, then again falls down in prostration. These sets of postures and prayers are called one raka'at. The variation of raka'at for each obligatory shalat is: Fajr[44] [morning prayer] consisting of 2 raka'at; Dhuhur [midday prayer] consisting of 4 raka'at; Ashar [afternoon prayer] consisting of 4 raka'at; Maghrib [sunset prayer] consisting of 3 raka'at; and Isha' [night prayer] consisting of 4 raka'at.

During each of these bodily postures a Moslem must recite a particular formula or some Qur'anic verses. According to Ali (1950) the recitation during shalat is also considered as dzikir. This is parallel with the injunction of shalat in the Qur'an "...raise shalat in order to remember Me." (Q. 1:16). Shalat in the middle of the night is recommended by the Qur'an and Hadist as a means to draw closer to God.

Shalat is considered as the means for purification of the soul. Therefore cleanliness of the body is necessary as a preparation (Ali, 1950). A Moslem has to take partial ablution [wudlu] before praying. The parts of the body that has to be cleaned in order in the ritual of wudlu are: the hands to the wrists; the mouth; the nostrils; the face; the right and the left hands to the elbow; the head; the feet to the ankles.

3.3.3. Fasting [Shaum[45]]

The word shaum literally means "abstaining". In Islamic ritual this term refers to fasting or abstaining from food and drink and sexual intercourse from dawn till sunset. This external fasting should be followed by internal fasting, that is restraining oneself from indulging in passions and desire and not engaging in evils either evil thoughts, actions or sayings. The practice of fasting is obligatory during the lunar month of Ramadhan [the ninth month of the Moslem year] for every responsible and fit Moslem. Children under the age

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[44] In Indonesia, morning prayer is usually called subuh.

[45] In Indonesia, shaum is called puasa.

of puberty, insane people and very old people are excluded from this obligation.

There are other times when fasting is recommended. These include six days after Ramadhan, Mondays and Thursdays of every week, a few days in the month of Rajab and Sya'ban. Moslems usually practise non-obligatory fasting together with dzikir and non-obligatory shalat as spiritual exercises, because fasting is believed as to be a very powerful practice for purifying the soul from the influence of the lower nafs and for drawing closer to God.

3.3.4. The Alms [Zakat]

The literal meaning of zakat is purity. However, technically it is an obligatory charity for every Moslem who, at the end of the year, is in possession of a certain amount of wealth to give zakat at the minimum rate of two and one half percent. While zakat is considered an obligation, there are other forms of voluntary charity referred to as infaq or shodaqoh.

Even though the main goal of zakat is to purify possessions, its spiritual value is also significant as purifying the soul from the evil of greed and selfishness (Shaltout, 1958).

3.3.5. The Pilgrimage [Hajj[46]]

The pilgrimage [hajj] constitutes a religious obligation for every Moslem, but is explicitly limited by possession of the necessary means and the physical possibility of getting to Mecca. A Moslem who is of responsible age, in fairly good health, and is financially capable and secure must undertake hajj at least once in his/her lifetime.

The time of performing hajj is in the month of Dzulhijja, the twelfth month of the Moslem year. It closes with the celebration of the festival of sacrifice [Idul Adha]. At this time the pilgrims as well as other Moslems all over

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[46] In Indonesia, hajj is pronounced "haji"

the world sacrifice a sheep or goat.

During the ritual of hajj, Moslems repeatedly recite aloud a particular dzikir formula in: Labbaik Allohumma labbaik [Here am I, O Allah. Here am I in Thy angust presence].

3.4. DZIKIR PRACTICE IN ISLAM

From the above section, it is clear that dzikir [literally meaning remembrance, recollection, or invocation] is essentially and practically very tightly related to all Islamic rituals. In this sense dzikir means "...becoming aware by the creature of the connection that unites him for all eternity to the Creator" (Michon, 1989, p.275). However, Moslems also recognise a specific form of ritual which is called dzikir. This dzikir practice can be seen from two views: firstly, dzikir practice as understood by the general Moslem population and secondly dzikir practice as understood by a specific Moslem mystical group.

For the general Moslem population, dzikir is considered as an optional ritual which involves recitation of the name of God, of the Qur'anic verses and of a particular formula. This recitation is not only recommended after practising shalat, but also in everyday life. For example, reciting bismillahir-rahmanir-rakhim [in the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate] when beginning every action, alhamdulillah [praise be to God] when ending the action, and insya Allah [If God will] when planning future actions.

For an Islamic mystical group dzikir is understood as a spiritual exercise in seeking a close relationship with God. In this sense, dzikir is carried out according to a particular technique which has some similarities with the meditation method in other religious traditions.

Both the general Moslem population and specific mystical groups stress the importance of dzikir. Moslems use many verses in the Qur'an as references in the practice of dzikir. Among these verses are:

"The dzikir of Allah is the greatest thing" (Q. 29:45).

"Remember Allah with frequent remembrance and glorify Him morning and evening" (Q. 33:41).

"Remember Me, and I will remember you [or Mention Me, and I will mention you]" (Q. 2:152).

The importance of dzikir is also mentioned in some traditions [hadist]. Among the writing of he Hadist are:

"Human beings never assemble to invoke Allah without being surrounded by angels and covered by Devine blessing, without peace [sakinah] descending on them and Allah remembering them."(Michon, 1989).

"There is a way of polishing everything and removing rust and that which polishes the heart is the invocation of Allah." (Michon, 1989).

There are various objects of recitation commonly used in dzikir practice. The most common object of recitation is the Divine Name, either the personal name (Allah) or the attributive name, the Most Beautiful Name of Allah [asma-ul-husna]. Other objects of dzikir recitation include verses of the Qur'an, the prayer for the prophet Muhammad [shalawat Nabi], the plea for forgiveness [istighfar], and the testimony of the faith [syahadat].

The method of dzikir can be differentiated into dzikir jahr and dzikir khofi. Dzikir jahr which is also called dzikir lisan involves open recitation in which the worshipper recites aloud, whereas dzikir khofi or dzikir qolbi involves repetition in the 'heart' [mind or spirit]. Some Sufi groups have developed a method of dzikir which involves rhythmical body movement, music and even dance as in the whirling dervishes. Like meditation, Sufism also employs "the subtle body" called latifah[47] when practising dzikir. The method of dzikir practice employed by the participants of this present research is described in Chapter Three.

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[47] Similar to chakras in the Hindu and Buddha tradition.

3.5. DZIKIR PRACTICE AND RELIGIOUS TRANSFORMATION

The present study is concerned with dzikir practice which is carried out according to a specific technique similar to meditation practice. This kind of dzikir is a powerful means of religious transformation. According to Trimingham (1971) dzikir is the pivot of mysticism. Invocation of Allah is regarded as the way to cure illness of the soul and to purify it. Dzikir turns the tendency of the soul from the outward to the inward, turns the soul from multiplicity to unity and transforms religious orientation from self-centred to God-centred (Nasr, 1972; Trimingham, 1971).

During the process of purification and drawing closer to God, it is very common for Moslems who practise dzikir to have some mystical experiences or Altered States of Consciousness (ASC). Howell (1989) explored the range of ASC's experiences among Javanese mystics, including Moslems who practise dzikir in Sufi orders [tarekat]. As in many other religious traditions, the role of these experiences is significant in transforming one's religious life. Mystical experiences as a result of dzikir change a Moslem's religious orientation from ordinary religious life to the life of a mystic.

A number of cases in the history of Sufism designate the role of dzikir practice in religious transformation. The most popular example is the case of Al-Ghazali who died 1111 A.D. (Arasteh & Sheikh, 1989). He was a professor of Islamic theology and philosophy at the University of Baghdad. At the age of 39 Al-Ghazali experienced inner turmoil in which the contradictory forces that were activated within him by his search for truth, led him to doubt his knowledge. His life became meaningless and he was suffering from a depression due to an existential search. He then decided to follow a Sufi path, renounced his life and travelled in the Middle East from Syria to Mecca during which time he practised dzikir intensively and in solitude. These experiences transformed his religious life. When finally he returned back to his academic profession, Al-Ghazali became a very productive writer. In one of his books, Al-Ghazali wrote about his personal experiences (Arasteh & Sheikh, 1989).

This current study is concerned with the process of religious

transformation among Moslems who practise <u>dzikir</u> <u>tawakkal</u> within the <u>Pengajian</u> <u>Tawakkal</u> group. Although this is not a Sufi group, their practice of <u>dzikir</u> has some similarities with that of Sufism. The focus of this research is on the meaning of the experience of religious transformation from the perspective of the participants.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

This chapter is divided into two sections. Firstly, I describe the background of the participant of the current study, the <u>Pengajian</u> <u>Tawakkal</u> (PT) group and its practices. Secondly, I review the phenomenological research approach as the foundation of the methodology adopted in this research. In this section I review the basic concept of phenomenology as a philosophical school of thought, followed by the contrast between a phenomenological research approach and the natural scientific approach in psychology. I then describe the method of collecting data for the present research and finally I present the method of explicating data based upon a phenomenological approach.

4.1. THE BACKGROUND OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The following is a description of the PT group from which the data of the current study was gathered. This description is based upon my participant observation and interviews with Dr. Achmad Husain Asdie, the coordinator of the PT group branch of Yogyakarta.

Pengajian, which literally means religious gathering is one of the important traditions among Moslems in Indonesia. Almost every mosque or neighbourhood organises a religious gathering or pengajian regularly where the Islamic religion is taught. The program and the method of a pengajian is different from one group to another. Sometimes a pengajian group also has a particular name. The Pengajian Tawakkal is one of the names of a pengajian group where the word tawakkal means total trust and surrender to God.

The PT is nationally organised. It was founded in Jakarta in 1974 by Bapak Permana Sastralegawa, formerly of the Indonesian army. This group rapidly developed many branches in several other cities.

The PT branch of Yogyakarta where the present study was undertaken is coordinated by Dr. Achmad Husain Asdie, an internist and a lecturer at Gadjah Mada University. This branch began its activity in July 1977. Like other PT branches, the main activity of the PT branch in Yogyakarta is practising dzikir. This activity formerly was centred in Dr. Asdie's house. In 1992 at least 6 other groups practised dzikir tawakkal[48] in Yogyakarta. However, there is no exact number of its members, because people are allowed to join dzikir practice and leave the group freely. According to Dr. Asdie the active membership in Yogyakarta is about 150 people.

After building a mosque in 1988, the PT branch of Yogyakarta expanded its activity to include not only the practising of dzikir and other religious activities but also the operation of a kindergarten and a medical clinic. In the following section, I will describe the main religious concern of the PT group which relates to the current study, that is the practice of dzikir and the practice of sujud mutlak.

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[48] The term dzikir tawakkal refers to the method of dzikir which is practised by the PT group.

4.1.1. The Practice of Dzikir Tawakkal

As discussed in Chapter Two, dzikir practice is prescribed in the Qur'an and recommended to Moslems who seek a close relationship with God. Since it is not an obligatory ritual, like canonical prayer [shalat], the method of practising dzikir has many variations.

The method of dzikir practice in the PT group is usually called dzikir qolbi, that is the repetition of the name of God in the heart or spirit. In applying this method, the PT group refers to a verse in the Qur'an with the meaning : "Call upon the name of your Lord in your heart" (Q. 17:205). The following section is a description of the practice of dzikir in the PT group based on my observation and papers delivered in PT meetings (Yayasan Tawakkal, 1990).

The practice of dzikir can be carried out in a group or individually. In group dzikir, there is usually a guide [pembimbing] who takes charge of the procedure, leading the participants in reciting a certain formula, or verses in the Qur'an or the name of Allah.

The PT members are required to have ablution [wudlu] before practising dzikir and strengthening the intention, that is to come closer to Allah or to devote to Him only. Dzikir practice is undertaken in a cross-legged sitting position with the body facing the qibla [the direction of obligatory prayer] and the eyes closed.

The first recitation refers to the conviction of the faith, the Syahadah, that is asyhaduan laa illa ha illallah, wa asyhadu anna Muhammadar Rosululloh which means "I bear witnesses that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger". This formula is recited loudly by the dzikir guide and the participants must follow the recitation in their heart or spirit. The second recitation is the prayer to the prophet [shalawat], followed by some short chapters [surah] in the Qur'an. The core of dzikir is carried out by recitation of the name of God either the Supreme Name [ism-ul-adzhom] that is "Allah", or the most Beautiful Name of Allah [asma-ul-husna][49]. The main

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[49] According to Islam, Allah has 99 names in which every name reflects His attributes. Moslems are recommended to recite these Most Beautiful Names when they pray (ber-do'a) or practise dzikir. It is believed that by reciting asma-ul-husna, a Moslem is able to gain a certain characteristic derived from the attribute reflected in the name he/she is reciting.

goal of practising <u>dzikir</u> is to draw closer to Allah through achieving the condition of trust in and surrender to God [tawakkal]. This condition can be attained when a PT member is able to perform <u>dzikir</u> throughout his body which means that all part and cells of his body recite the name of Allah.

In order to achieve the above goals, the PT group utilises seven <u>channels</u>[50] which are located in certain parts of the body, that is: in the centre of the chest; two fingers below and above the left breast; two fingers below and above the right breast; above the genital and on the forehead. However, in most of the occasions of <u>dzikir</u> practice I observed, the recitation of the name of God was in the centre of the chest. It was done by visualising a mouth inside the chest (or other six channels) which recites the name of "Allah" as directed by the guide. Apart from the Supreme name of "Allah", the Most Beautiful Names which are often recited in pairs are <u>Ya</u> <u>Rahman</u> - <u>Ya</u> <u>Rahim</u> [O, the Compassionate - O, the Merciful], <u>Ya</u> <u>Malik</u> - <u>Ya</u> <u>Qudus</u> [O, the Sovereign Lord - O, the Holy], <u>Ya</u> <u>Ghafur</u> - <u>Ya</u> <u>Rakhim</u> [O, the Forgiving - O, the Merciful], <u>Ya</u> <u>'alim</u> - <u>Ya</u> <u>'adzim</u> [O, the Knower - O, the Magnificent], <u>Ya</u> <u>Fatah</u> - <u>Ya</u> <u>Rozaq</u> [O, the Opener - O, the Sustainer], and <u>Ya</u> <u>Hayyu</u> - <u>Ya</u> <u>Qoyyum</u> [O, the Ever Living - O, the Eternal].

The invocation lasts between one or two hours. Before finishing this practice, the guide orders the participants to inhale completely and hold the breath as long as posssible while reciting <u>al-fatihah</u> [the first chapter in the Qur'an]. Finally, everyone exhales slowly accompanied by reciting the phrase <u>alhamdulillah</u> [praise be to God] and then wipes the hand over the whole of the body.

After finishing the practice of <u>dzikir</u>, the meeting continues with a short religious talk which is delivered by the <u>dzikir</u> guide or the PT coordinator. This is followed by a certain program called <u>kesan</u> <u>dan</u> <u>pesan</u>[51] in which a PT member who has joined the meeting has the opportunity to share his/her experiences in practising <u>dzikir</u> with other members.

4.1.2. The practice of <u>Sujud</u> <u>Mutlak</u>[52]

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[50] The term <u>channel</u> used in the PT group is similar to <u>latifah</u> (refined/subtle) in Sufi tradition. Both of these terms refer to "subtle body" which is similar to <u>chakras</u> in the Hindu tradition.

[51] This term literally means "impression and suggestion".

[52] <u>Sujud</u> <u>mutlak</u> sometimes is also called <u>dzikir</u> <u>mutlak</u>.

From 1977 to 1984 the PT branch of Yogyakarta, together with many other branches, emphasised utilising the seven channels when practising dzikir, especially during a specific dzikir referred to as sujud mutlak. Sujud[53] literally means the act of kneeling and bowing the head in Moslem prayer [shalat]. Mutlak means total, absolute, complete.

The practice of sujud mutlak is actually similar to dzikir practice. Apart from the time of performing sujud mutlak being longer than dzikir, the other difference is that in dzikir practice sometimes the participants still have some desire, whereas in sujud mutlak they totally surrender to the will of God. Therefore only the members which were spiritually mature or destined, according to the PT coordinator or the dzikir guide, could carry out the sujud mutlak.

During the practice of sujud mutlak, the participants should totally surrender to God and allow everything to happen to them. It was reported to me that people who carried out the sujud mutlak released some kinds of involuntary movement[54], or cried and even fell asleep. This practice was usually followed by dramatic changes in the participant's life which they referred to as transition. Sometimes the side effects led to a negative religious life which was criticised by other Moslems. As a result, the PT branch of Yogyakarta has not practised the sujud mutlak since 1985. Thus, the participants of this research who had been members of the PT group for more than 8 years often reported they carried out the sujud mutlak and had specific experiences related to this practice.

4.2. PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH APPROACH

In this section I overview the basic concept of phenomenology and phenomenological research approach in psychology.

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[53] In the PT the term sujud sometimes also refers to the dzikir practice.

[54] For example, some people spontaneously performing shalat without their own intention. They can not prevent the movement even though they are totally aware of what is happening.

4.2.1 Basic Concepts of Phenomenology

The word "phenomenology" is derived from the Greek "phainomenon" (plural "phainomena") which literally means "appearance" of something. The idea conveyed by this term is that when we talk about something (an object), it is necessary to distinguish between the appearance of the object and the object itself. As Emmanuel Kant (in Spinelli, 1989) argued we never know the thing itself (noumenon), but we can only know the thing as it appears to us (phenomenon).

Even though the term "phenomenology" has been used since the mid-eighteenth century, phenomenology as a philosophical movement originated in the early twentieth century (Spinelli, 1989). This movement can be traced back by focusing upon such key figures as Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Marleau-Ponty, Max Scheler, Gabriel Marcel, and Jean Paul Sartre among others, each of whom shared a common concern for the acquisition of knowledge of our world.

The Phenomenological movement represented a reaction against the dominant school of thought known as "positivism" in explaining reality. Positivists adopt the view that reality exists independent of our consciousness. Reality exists as separate entities and separate structures. Phenomenologists argued that the reality which we perceive exists through the meaning that each of us gives it. In other words, there is a "dialogical relationship" between people and the world (reality) (Spinelli, 1989; Valle & King, 1978).

I shall not discuss the phenomenological movement in philosophy in more detail. Rather, my main concern is in the phenomenological approach in psychology. However, some basic epistemological constructs of phenomenology, that is intentionality, noema and noesis, lebenswelt and dasein will be described in the following section.

(a) Intentionality

The term "intentionality" derived from Latin "intendere" which means "to stretch forth". This term was first used by Brentano to describe "fundamental

action of the mind reaching out to the stimuli which make up the real world in order to translate them into its realm of meaningful experience" (Spinelli, 1989, p. 11).

Adopting Brentano's idea, Husserl pointed out that consciousness is intentional. Consciousness is always "of something". Metaphoric expressions to picture the process of intentionality are: "intentional arrow", the "beam of light of consciousness" and "world openness" (Von Eckartsberg, 1981; 1986). Intentionality implies that consciousness always has an object. The object of consciousness could be a concrete object, like a chair, a car, or other person, or it could be an abstract idea or concept. Therefore, when speaking of consciousness we are referring to its intended object in an implicit or explicit way (Valle & King, 1978).

(b) Noema and Noesis

The phenomenological notion of intentionality points out that we always translate the unknown stimuli of the world into things or objects. Husserl suggested that every act of intentionality was made up of two experiential foci which he labelled noema and noesis (Spinelli, 1989). Noema (or noematic) refers to the object, the perceived, the "what" that we direct our attention toward and focus on. Noesis (or noetic) is the subject, the perceiving. It is the mode, the "how" through which we define an object.

Even though theoretically it is possible to distinguish between the noema and the noesis, the two are not fully distinct in practical. When we talk about experiences, we not only explain the experience (the noema), but also the way he/she experienced it (the noetic).

(c) Lebenswelt [life-world]

Lebenswelt is a German word which expresses the total interrelatedness or mutual dependence of a phenomenon's distinguishable aspect, that is the person and his/her world co-constitute one another (Valle & King, 1978). The English translation of this word is "life-world" (connected with a hyphen) which refers to the world as lived in every day life. That is, the life-world is different to and independent from the world as known to science. For example, we experience that the sun always rises in the east and sets down in

the west. This is our life-world which is different from the scientific explanation that the sun does not move, rather the earth rotates around the sun.

"Life-world" is called the foundation or ground for the reflection of thought. In this way, life-world is both independent of knowledge and also the starting point for all knowledge (Valle & King, 1978).

Husserl (see Schweitzer, 1983) outlined the three features of the life-world: it is extended in space and time (spatio temporal dimension); it exhibits various regularities; and it presents in a certain relativity with respect to the experiencing subject.

(d) <u>Dasein</u> [being-in-the-world]

Martin Heidegger, who was a student of Husserl, was particularly concerned with the central ontological issue, the nature of "being". In <u>Sein und Zeit</u> [which is translated into English as "Being and Time"] he argued that human existence is tied inseparably to the world (Spinelli, 1989).

For Heidegger, a human being is <u>dasein</u>. This term literally means "being-there" but is usually translated as "being-in-the-world". It means that in an essential way, the human being is oriented to the world. Man and the world can not be separated and are always in dialogue with each other. One could not exist without the other. Therefore, people and the world are said to co-constitute one another (Valle & King, 1978). In other words, being man is being in the world (Schweitzer, 1983).

4.2.2. The Phenomenological Vs Natural Scientific Approach in Psychology

The establishment of contemporary psychology as a "science" has been criticised by a number of psychologists (Giorgi, 1975; Collaizi, 1978; Valle & King, 1978). The focus of the criticism is on the adoption of the natural scientific approach with its emphasise on hyphotetico-deductive research in the study of human phenomena. Because of the success of the experimental quantitative method in physic and chemistry, psychologists believe that by adopting this method, the credibility of psychology could be established within the academic community (Bullington & Karlton, 1984). Bakan (1967) cynically

characterised psychologist as playing at science in much the way children play at being a cowboy, imitating every aspect of cowboy life, except the most important aspect: taking care of the cow.

Bullington & Karlton (1984) pointed out that the aim of the natural-scientific method is to explain phenomena in causal law thinking, following the principles laid out by natural science. A phenomenon was thought to be relevant to the study only if it could be measured and tested. In other words, a phenomenon must be observable, measurable and replicable as in the laboratory of the natural sciences in general (Collaizi, 1978). This implies that the human being is observed as a thing among other things, disregarding the unique psychological status. However, on individual has also private experience which could not be observed and quantified. Through the limitation of its subject-matter, psychology, which literally means science of the mind, becomes the science of behaviour (Valle & King, 1978).

Adopting positivism's view of reality the natural science paradigm characterised by dualism, assumes an "objective-world independent of the subject (Giorgi, 1975). The world is considered preconstituted field of objects or pure facts which await explication.

In response to the criticism on "natural scientific psychology", many alternative is emerging, such as the grounded research of Glasser & Strauss (1967) which focuses on systematic inductive approach to theory building and the human science aproach which emphasises human experience as its subject matter (Giorgi, 1970; Barrell et al., 1980). The alternative forms of research under the human science approach are the experiential, hermeunitical, perceptual and phenomenological method (Barrell et al., 1980). I shall discuss the phenomenological approach in a more detail in the following section.

Phenomenology is the systematic investigation of subjectivity which focuses on human experience (Bullington & Karlton, 1984). In other words phenomenology studies the phenomena as experienced by man. It is not guided by causal law thinking and it is not concerned with explaining, predicting and controlling the phenomena (Valle & King, 1978).

In contrast to the natural scientific approach, the phenomenological approach, seeks to understand the human condition as it manifests itself in concrete, lived situation as adopting Husserl's notion of "returning to the things themselves" (Valle & King, 1978). The main goal is to produce a clear, precise

and systematic description or to explicate the structure meaning of the subject matter through disciplined reflection of descriptive data (Valle & King 1978; Polkinghorne, 1989). Although phenomenology is qualitative in nature, it does not emphasise upon the description of overt action and behaviour. Rather it is more concerned with the meaning of a phenomenon for subject.

The phenomenological approach abstains from interfering activities such as hypothesis testing, deductive inferential reasoning, premature generating and value judgement (Wertz & van Zuuren, 1988). It does not hypothesise before hand about what psychological meaning will be found, but it allows the researcher's intuition to pick out thematically relevant material from the protocol. The researcher employs the principle of "epoche" which means to put aside or bracket all presupposition and knowledge about the phenomena being investigated. By doing this, the researcher is able to return to the things themselves.

Since the present research is concerned with the experience of religious transformation and the meaning of this experience for the participants, the adoption of a phenomenological research approach is necessary.

4.3. THE APPLICATION OF A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

This section describes the application of a phenomenological approach in the current study which covers the method of selecting the participants, the method of collecting data and the method of explicating data.

4.3.1. Selection of Participants

The data of the present research was gathered from members of the Pengajian Tawakkal [PT] group branch of Yogyakarta during field work, from August to December 1992. The criteria for selecting the participants were:

(a) that they be active members of the PT group branch of Yogyakarta, that is, they were practising <u>dzikir</u> and were actively involved in a <u>dzikir</u> group at the time the data was collected.

(b) that they be willing to participate in this research.

(c) that they are able to articulate their experiences.

In the beginning of my field work, I obtained permission and support for the data collection from Dr. Asdie, the coordinator of the PT branch of Yogyakarta. Dr. Asdie gave me an opportunity to give information to the PT members who attended the <u>dzikir</u> group in his house. I expressed my interest in the field of <u>dzikir</u>, explained my research aims in keeping with the phenomenological precept and asked for the potential participant to provide their name on a list if they were willing to participate in this research. Of 75 members who attended the <u>dzikir</u> practice, 45 were willing to be interviewed indicating their enthusiasm and cooperation in this project. The participants of the present study were selected from the list so as to obtain a distribution across gender, age and length of <u>dzikir</u> practice.   Nine participants were included in the final explication. The distribution of the participants can be seen in the following table.

TABLE
DISTRIBUTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS
ACROSS GENDER, AGE AND LENGTH OF PRACTICE

	M	F	Total
LENGTH OF PRACTICE			
< 5 years	2	1	3
5 - 10 years	1	1	2
> 10 yearrs	3	1	4
AGE			
20 - 29 y.o.	1	-	1
30 - 39 y.o.	1	1	2
40 - 49 y.o.	1	1	2
50 - 59 y.o.	3	1	4
TOTAL	6	3	9

4.3.2. Data Collection

There are many ways for collecting data in phenomenological research. The current research adopts a dialogical interview (Colaizzi, 1978). The term "dialogical" is emphasized here, because in this interview the researcher did not focus on a list of questions addressed to the participants. Even though an interview guide was developed, the focus of the interview was on a dialogue between two people, namely the researcher and the participant. The rationale for adopting this method is that the descriptive data derived from a dialogical interview is potentially rich, because it allows further investigation of the phenomena being studied.

According to Colaizzi (1978), the main characteristic of the dialogical interview method is that the researcher is required to be presented to the participant in a special way. That is, the researcher must realise that the participant is more than merely a source of data. The participant is a person living within a meaningful world and his/her verbalised experience which results from his/her meaning structure can be accessed only when the researcher listens with the totality of his/her being and personality. Moreover, the researcher not only focuses on the verbal articulation (verbal communication), but must be attentive to the participant's nuance of speech and gesture (non-verbal communication).

The principle of dialogical interview stated above could be achieved by a trusting relationship between the researcher and the participant. Therefore Schweitzer (1983) has suggested that the data should be collected only after suitable rapport has been established with the participant and when there is sufficient trust to allow for the meaningful exploration of the data provided by the participant.

In order to better establish good rapport and trust with the participants, I regularly participated in the practice of dzikir either in Dr. Asdie's house or in the PT mosque. Being a Moslem who also practises dzikir (even though affiliated to a different Moslem group) allowed me to achieve this quality of relationship without difficulty. Furthermore, when interviewing the participants in their own house, I was accompanied by a PT member known to all of the participants. This condition developed the sense of "internal" dialogue between the PT fellow members.

All of the interviews were audio-taped. The focus of these dialogues

were gathering data of the participants' experience of religious transformation and the meaning of this experience from the participants' perspective.

4.3.3. Data Explication

In contrast to quantitative methods of data analysis, the phenomenological approach to the explication of data is not definitive. The qualitative method developed by some pioneers of the phenomenological approach (Colaizzi, 1978; Giorgi, 1985; Van Kaam in Polkinghorne, 1989) has been modified and extended by other researchers to make the method responsive to the phenomena being investigated (Schweitzer, 1983; Hycner, 1985; Wertz, 1985 ; von Eckartsberg, 1985, 1989).

Data explication in the current study was developed based upon the phenomenological methods developed and applied by Von Eckartsberg (1985, 1989), Wertz (1985), and Schweitzer (1983). The six stages of the data explication are as follows:

Stage 1: Gaining a sense of the data as a whole:

The aim of this stage is to familiarise the researcher with the data that has been collected during field work. This stage is divided into two steps:

Step (a): Transcription

This procedure includes not only the transcription of the literal statements, but also notes significant non-verbal and para linguistic communication. Since the interview was conducted in Bahasa Indonesia, the transcriptions will remain in the original language to maintain the original nuances of meaning in the data as far as possible.

Step (b): Gaining an overview

This step requires reading the transcriptions several times (and listening to the tape if necessary) with an open attitude, that is, to

read without preconceptions and prejudgments until the researcher believes that he/she has grasped the essential meaning of the phenomenon as a whole.

Stage 2: Constructing an "Individual Phenomenal Description" (IPD)

An Individual Phenomenal Description (IPD) is a description drawn from the transcription which has no redundant, repetitive and irrelevant statements. The IPD is written in the first person perspective. As far as possible, the original mode of expression is maintained. Since the IPD serves as the basis for further explication, it will remain in Bahasa Indonesia. One of the IPDs will be translated into English for the purpose of providing an example of the refined data. Five steps are followed in constructing the IPD:

Step (a): Discarding redundant statements of the transcription.
Step (b): Demarcating meaning units by means of slashes.
> A meaning unit is part of the transcription (words or phrases) which expresses a unique and coherent meaning that clearly differentiates the meaning unit from the meaning unit which precedes it and the meaning unit which follows.

Step (c): Eliminating irrelevant meaning units.
> A meaning unit is considered irrelevant when it is not related to the phenomenon under study.

Step (d): Regrouping and reordering the relevant meaning units.
> The researcher regroups and reorders the relevant meaning units according to their intertwining meanings and places them in temporal order.

Step (e): Numbering the IPD
> All of the IPD are line numbered for use as references in themes explication.

Stage 3: Identifying the common episodes in each of the IPD

An episode is a series of events or experiences in the description which

has a specific meaning bound by time. To identify the episodes common to all of the IPDs, the researcher needs to read the IPDs repeatedly and thoroughly grasp the common sequential flow of the descriptions. The demarcation of each episode provides the basis for understanding the process of transformation in a temporal order.

Stage 4: Explicating themes in each episode

A theme refers to an essential idea which encapsulates the intended meaning revealed by the participant. The themes in each episode is explicatied through reflection on the Individual Phenomenal Description (IPD) and the original transcription. The themes together with their explication are written in English from the IPD which is in Bahasa Indonesia. This stage is very challenging and crucial, because the researcher has to draw upon his knowledge of the two languages to express the thematic meaning.

Satge 5: Synthesis of the explication of themes within each episode

The aim of this stage is to identify the common and unique   themes which emerge in each episode of all IPDs. To write a synthesis, the researcher needs to read both the explication of the themes and the IPD itself.

The process of explication described above allows the researcher to understand the process of transformation and the common themes which emerge in each episode. An example of the step by step procedure of explicating data is provided in Appendix I.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS

The result of the current research is divided into three sections comprising: the common episodes identified within each Individual Phenomenal Descriptions (IPDs); the explication of themes emerging in each episode for each IPD, and the synthesis of themes for each of the episode across all of the IPDs.

5.1. THE COMMON EPISODES WITHIN EACH IPD

Four common episodes have been identified and delineated within each IPD which provide a temporal reference for the explication of the data. The first episode entitled "the pre-dzikir period" which covers the participants' religious life from childhood to their first contact with the PT group. The second episode is "the period of initial contact with the PT group" which includes the events and experiences preceded the participants' joining of the PT group and practising dzikir. The third episode is entitled "the period of dzikir experience". During this period most of the participants practise dzikir intensively and report many religious experiences associated with the practice of dzikir . The fourth episode is called "the period of renewed religious life" which reflect the participants' new religious life. In this episode dzikir practice is already integrated into the participant's religious life.

5.2. EXPLICATING THEMES WITHIN EPISODES FOR EACH PARTICIPANT

The emergent themes within each episode are explicated in turn for each of the IPD of the participants who are initialised as HE, BS, SU, MA, AG,

ND, BD, BM and EL. Information concerning the biographical data of each participant is provided in Appendix II.

5.2.1. Participant HE

I. The pre-dzikir period

Theme 1: The participant's life-world derives from Islamic and Javanese traditions.

The participant described his childhood and adolescence as living in two worlds derived from two traditions, that is Islamic and Javanese tradition.

The Islamic tradition in the participant's life was associated with the practice of ibadah, that is the worship dimension of the Islamic religion. Since the participant was a young boy, he had been performing canonical prayer [shalat] five times a day and fasting [puasa], especially in the month of Ramadhan. However, he disclosed his shalat and puasa as "ritualistic and superficial" without really experiencing an essential relationship with God. He focused only on the harmony with his surroundings.

The participant's relationship with the Javanese tradition was associated with his heritage of Javanese aristocratic blood and his interest in the magis[55] world. The participant's possibility to access the world of magis was facilitated by his supernatural power he gained through self defence schools and practising spiritual discipline, such as fasting. In this context the participant integrated the practice of fasting in Islamic religion with Javanese tradition. Further harmonious integration was evidenced by his joining various Javanese self-defence schools which had an Islamic basis.

Theme 2: Physical and supernatural abilities result in self-centredness.

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[55] The world of magis in Javanese tradition is the world of supernatural which is usually associated with supernatural power.

The participant disclosed his life horizon as being centred upon empowerment. Since he was a young boy his activities had been directed towards gaining a sense of power through practising self defence skills which embodied both physical and supernatural abilities.

The sense of power and abilities were dominant thematic fields in the participant's awareness. Islamic religion, for him, was given meaning from the perspective of gaining power and ability. He disclosed:

"....[my religious life] was ritualistic and superficial. It was limited only to obtain physical and supernatural power for self defence" (HE, ln[56]. 4-6).

The participant's sense of powerfulness was confirmed by his ability to achieve the status of a champion [pendekar], the highest place in his social network. However, this sense of powerfullness was also understood as resulting in the development of his self-centredness. He came to the conclusion that "...self defence and self-centredness are identical" (HE, ln. 25).

The participant reported that he experienced having a high level of self-centredness which led him to look at his future with an over-optimistic attitude. He perceived that with the power he gained, he was able to control his future.

II. The period of initial contact with the PT group

Theme 3 : Inner contact with the PT promotes curiosity

The participant related an event when he had a contact with the PT leader. He not only experienced a physical contact, but also an "inner contact" or spiritual connection. With his supernatural ability the participant was able to "sense" that the PT leader had a particular supernatural ability [ngelmu]. He

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[56] The initial "ln" which stands for "line" indicates the number of line in an IPD.

was also able to "sense" that the PT leader knew that he, too, had supernatural ability. He described this contact as follows:

"I could sense that this doctor [PT leader] had "something". It seems that he could also sense [that I had supernatural ability]. So, it was like an inner contact" (HE, ln. 29-31).

During the inner contact the participant experienced the confrontation between his supernatural ability and the spiritual ability of the PT leader. He tried to "detect" the characteristic of supernatural ability of the PT leader had. However he failed, because he noticed veils covering Dr. PT leader's body.

"There was only a veil [covering PT leader], like smoke or cotton or paper without any writing. I tried to detect his ngelmu from a certain side but there was a veil and from the other side there was also a veil" (HE, ln. 34-37).

The participant's response to this failure was an arousal of his curiosity. His sense of powerfulness was shaken by the fact that he could not detect the PT-leader's supernatural ability. This curiosity led him to the membership of PT group.

III. The period of dzikir experiences

Theme 4: Practising dzikir activates Divine power within the participant.

The participant reported a series of experiences while performing a specific dzikir practice, that is sujud mutlak[57]. During this practice the participant experienced total surrender to the Will of God which was indicated

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[57] For more information about this practice, see Chapter Three, section 3.1.2.

by his attitude of total passivity. The passivity allowed his receptiveness of any emerging spontaneous actions or feelings. He related how his body suddenly moved imitating the action of self defence.

"I was totally aware of what was happening, but I couldn't resist the action which emerged. The action was like when I was practising self defence. My body perspired and was hot" (HE, ln. 46-48).

The participant interpreted his involuntary movements as the activation of the Divine power within himself. The activated Divine power then confronted the "other" power he had "buried" inside himself. Since the participant had a lot of physical and supernatural abilities from self defence, the confrontation resulted in the releasing of involuntary movements imitating the action of self defence.

The release action indicated purification of the participant's inner existence in which supernatural power he had gained from the "outside" was replaced by the Divine Power activated from the "inside".

Theme 5: Practising dzikir promotes the experience of purification

While practising sujud mutlak the participant experienced purification in two dimensions, physical and spiritual. In the physical dimension his body moved itself and imitated the action of ablution [wudlu]. He washed his hands, his face, his arms, his head and his feet. In Islamic ritual, the ablution is performed to clean the body before a Moslem observes a certain ritual, especially shalat [canonical prayers]. In the same sense the participant's experience of imitating the action of ablution refers to physical cleanliness.

Aside from the physical, the participant also experienced spiritual purification. He described his experience as follows:

"...I could see my hand was very dirty. Many dirty things were on it, like faces and "dirty" animals. When I washed my hand like in ablution, then my hand sparkled" (HE, ln. 63-65).

This experience indicates the participant's ability to access the essence of the ablution. He enlarged the meaning of "physical" ablution to include "spiritual" purification.

Theme 6: Dzikir practice as an experience of illumination

For the participant, the Islamic religious teaching and rituals were not merely dogma. Rather he believed that there must be "something behind" all of the obligatory rituals. He had tried to obtain the rational understanding of the "something behind" rituals through critical questioning addressed to his parents, but they did not give him a satisfactory explanation.

Dzikir experiences during the sujud mutlak, however, provided the participant with the possibility of arriving at the "behind" of Islamic teaching and rituals. The dogmatic teaching and routine rituals were illuminated by his concrete experiences. The illumination experience was described as "...answering of some fundamental questions" (HE, ln. 85).

One of the basic questions which was answered during the sujud mutlak is concerned with the ritual of ablution [wudlu]. When the participant was a young boy he questioned the order of ablution beginning with washing the hands and ending by washing the feet. His parents gave him an authoritative answer by saying that it was "the regulation" of the sequence of ablution. When he performed a different sequence, the ablution was judged as unaccepted [tidak sah][58].

During the sujud mutlak the participant experienced irresistible bodily movement imitating the action of ablution sequentially. He believed that it was not he himself who moved his body. Rather the movement was from God as the direct answer to his repressed question. This experience gave the light to the participant's understanding of ablution which allowed him to access the essence of ablution. The ablution for him was not merely a ritualistic behaviour, but was meaningful. "It [the ablution] has a falsafah"[59] (HE, ln. 75).

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[58] This term literally means "illegal". In Indonesian Islamic tradition this term is used to indicate that a ritual is performed inappropriately according to "syari'ah", the Islamic law. This implies that the ritual is not accepted by God.

[59] Falsafah literally means "philosophy", but it is often used to describe the wisdom and the

Another Islamic teaching which was illuminated during the sujud mutlak was the Prophet Muhammad's experience of revelation. The participant related a tradition [hadist] that when the Prophet received Qur'anic revelation his body trembled. The participant's own bodily experience of "hot, cold and trembling " while practising dzikir was associated with the Prophet Muhammad's bodily experience of revelation. He pointed to this parallel experience and disclosed his belief that the Prophet Muhammad's revelation was not a lie.

> "It turned out that I experienced it [the bodily experience of trembling]" (HE, ln. 52).

This experience led the participant to his conviction of the revelational quality of the Qur'an.

Theme 7: The Ka'bah[60] is understood as the centre of magnetic power.

The participant's experience of illumination included the "regulation" of the qiblat [direction of prayer], that is facing to the Ka'bah. When the participant was a young boy he confronted the teaching of Islamic tauhid [that is, not to worship idols] with the fact that the direction of prayer is to Ka'bah which physically is a stone building. He understood prayer [shalat] as also worshipping the Ka'bah. This understanding changed when the participant experienced another irresistible movement, that is imitating the action of prayer. He described his body as suddenly turning itself toward the Ka'bah. The Ka'bah was understood as possessing nur[61].

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reason behind something, either rational or transcendental.

[60] Ka'bah is the principle Islamic shrine in Mecca towards which Moslems direct themselves when praying.

[61] Nur is an Arabic word which literally means "light". In Bahasa Indonesia this word implies the meaning of "supernatural or spiritual light".

"It [the Ka'bah] is not merely a stone. I experienced that it has incredible light [nur]" (HE, ln. 80-81).

The above statement leaves no doubt that the participant not only "understand" the Ka'bah as "not merely a stone", but he also "experienced" it, even though the participant and the Ka'bah were separated by a long distance. Experiencing the Ka'bah was facilitated by his ability to access the spiritual aspect of the Ka'bah, that is, the nur.

For the participant, the nur of the Ka'bah not only had the quality of giving light but it also had the quality of magnetic power with a capacity for drawing people in the direction of the Ka'bah.

"When I turned to a different direction, my body was dragged [by this magnetic power] to this direction" (HE, ln. 82-83).

This magnetic power was described as terrifying due to the fact that the Ka'bah is the focus of direction for Moslems around the earth when they are praying.

Theme 8: Sudden conviction leads to transition.

The participant's experience of illumination [the answering of some basic questions] during the sujud mutlak resulted in a sudden conviction of Islam teaching and dzikir practice. This conviction was described as haqqul yaqin [the truth of certainty], that is the religious belief based upon his own experience. The haqqul yaqin was contrasted with his old belief which was based only upon the religious knowledge he had from other people.

The participant's sudden conviction of Islamic teaching led him to the period which he described as transition. This transition was characterised by his "extreme" attitude toward himself and others. The "extreme" attitude toward himself was indicated by his understanding of himself as being the truest and the best person. He gave the reason as follows:

"I had already had [spiritual experiences] while other people had not" (HE, ln. 86-87).

The impact of the participant's feeling of being the truest and the best person was the "extreme" attitude toward others. He judged his relatives and other people as being on the wrong path and he demanded they follow his spiritual path, that is dzikir practice. This attitude resulted in a confrontation with his relatives which affirmed his experience of transition.

IV. The period of renewed of religious life

Theme 9: The experience of finitude of existence leads to greater
 proximity to God.

The participant reported that after undergoing transition he often practised tafakkur[62]. Together with other PT members he went to the mountain or to the sea near his home town and meditated upon the Universe which reflected the Greatness of God. This practice allowed him to experience his "creature-ness" before the "Creator" which evoked the feeling of finitude of his own existence before the Divine existence. He described his feeling as follows:

"I felt so small. [I was like] a point [in the Universe] which coud not   be seen" (HE, ln. 98-100).

The participant's experience of "creatureness" and "smallness" drew him into a close relationship with God. This relationship was characterised by the ambivalence of feeling in which he experienced the simultaneous feeling of love and fear of God.

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[62] Tafakkur literally means "meditate upon". In the PT this term refers to a certain practice in which a group of PT members meditate upon the Greatness of God in the open air.

Theme 10: Entering the way of annihilation as a transcending way-of-being.

The participant disclosed his sense of nothingness in the world. These following statements indicate his sense:

"...I know nothing" (HE, ln. 109).
"...I am nothing... could do nothing..." (HE, ln. 117-118).
"...I have done nothing..." (HE, ln. 131).

The participant was entering "the way of annihilation", renouncing all of his sense of self. He experienced a self-dying, a becoming nothing. He transcended all of the dimensions of his life. He understood the life in mundane world [dunia] as meaningless compared to the life in here-after [akherat].

"...the [life] in this dunia is 1/3,600 second compared to the life in akhirat" (HE, ln. 101-103).

Even though the participant mentioned a number in that comparison, it is not the quantity he referred to. Rather the magnitude denoted the indefinite quality of living in the here-after.

5.2.2. Participant BS

I. The pre-dzikir period

Theme 1: Religious life is characterised by strong commitment to Moslem group.

The participant described her religious life before practising dzikir as

focussing on the social dimension of Islamic religion. Rather than understanding Islam as a way of devotion to God, she perceived Islam as a religious "organisation" for a group of people called Moslems.

Being a Moslem for the participant meant being committed to Islamic organisation. She had a very strong commitment to the Moslem organisation which was described as being fanatic [fanatik]. This fanaticism was indicated by her active involvement in a Moslem based organisation when she was a university student and her loyalty to the Moslem political party during the general election.

"I [always] voted Moslem [party]. I was so fanatic" (BS, ln. 3-4).

The participant's fanaticism revealed the character of her religious life which emphasised the relationship with her fellow Moslems. In contrast, the participant's relationship with the Divine through the Islamic religious rituals was described as being "loose". She performed the canonical prayers [shalat] irregularly. Her commitment to the Moslem organisation was described as much more important than her devotion to God.

Theme 2: Participant's everyday life is inconsistent with Islamic moral values.

The participant disclosed herself as being hypocritical [munafik]. Although she had a strong loyalty to the Moslem group, her everyday behaviour was inconsistent with Islamic moral values. Instances of her hypocrisy concerned her sexual behaviour. She reported that she dated when she was a university student and nearly committed adultery [zina], even though she was aware that adultery was a sinful deed according to Islamic values.

II. The period of initial contact with the PT group

Theme 3: The experience of suffering[63] leads to the reassessment of sinful life.

The participant reported her experience of suffering prior to her joining to the PT group in which her husband not only married again but also terrorised her. She disclosed herself as being in a "depressive" state of mind. She often encountered bad dreams in which her husband would kill her. She was also vulnerable to illness, although she is a medical doctor.

For the participant, her experience of suffering was meaningful as allowing her to assess her past life and at the same time reorganise her present life. In assessing her past life, she experienced the feeling of being sinful. She articulated this as follows:

> "I read a book [entitled] Dua puluh tujuh dosa besar [twenty seven sinful deeds]. It turned out that I had committed almost all of them, although only in minor ways. I felt that I was full of sin"
> (BS,ln.17-19).

The participant transcended her suffering by saying that her suffering related to her past behaviour that was "full of sin". This transcendental perspective led her to organise her behaviour in the present time by focussing her life on her devotion to God. She began to practise dzikir and other methods of worship which allowed her to experience a sense of proximity to God.

III. The period of dzikir experiences

Theme 4: Dzikir experiences understood as the way to attain equilibrium.

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[63] In this explication the word "suffering" is the translation for the word "musibah" which the participant used to describe her misfortune, and her "personal disaster".

The participant reported a series of experiences when she practised dzikir in which she recited the formula of the plea for forgiveness [istighfar] in her heart, that is asking forgiveness from God, even though the dzikir guide commanded the recitation of the name of Allah. She understood that her recitation of istighfar was not a conscious act on her part, rather "that was the gift from Allah" (BS, ln. 32). In other words, the participant perceived that God made her recite the istighfar.

In the subsequent dzikir practice the participant not only recited istighfar but also cried. By applying psychological theories, the participant interpreted her response of crying as releasing her feeling of depression and sadness. This release also influenced her body which became tense. She described this as follows.

> "During that time my sadness had no outlet. By reciting istighfar my sadness was released. I cried until my body tensed" (BS, ln. 35-36).

Referring to the PT leader's explanation, the participant interpreted her dzikir experiences above as indicating the process of attaining equilibrium. Since she had lived a sinful life, she needed to ask forgiveness from God to attain equilibrium. Her need was expressed during the dzikir practice. Therefore, she recited istighfar which was followed by crying as her repentance.

The process of attaining equilibrium in the participant's heart was confirmed by another experience in which she was shaking with laughter while practising dzikir. She understood this experience by saying that when she was depressed, her "heart" was full of complain. Dzikir practice allowed her heart to laugh.

> "...God makes people laugh and cry. In the past, my heart was constantly griping. When it was being touched by the name of Allah, it [my heart] was able to laugh" (BS, ln. 41-43).

Since the participant had experienced extreme sadness, she needed to laugh

in order to attain equilibrium. Her need, again, was expressed during <u>dzikir</u> practice and she laughed irresistibly.

Theme 5: Tackling problems through dialogue with the Qur'an.

The participant's relationship with the Qur'an was changed by practising <u>dzikir</u>. She perceived that her relationship with the Qur'an before practising <u>dzikir</u> as being "monological". Previously, the Qur'an said nothing to her about her real life problems. For her, reading the Qur'an was something boring. After beginning <u>dzikir</u> practice the participant's relationship with the Qur'an became "dialogical", in the sense that the Qur'an not only gave her the injunction for what she should or should not do, but the Qur'an had a significant role in guiding her to tackle her concrete everyday problems.

The following is an illustration of the participant's dialogue with the Qur'an. The participant reported that her husband banned her from practising <u>dzikir</u> in the PT. She "consulted" the Qur'an about this problem through a certain method. Firstly, she held the Qur'an in her hand, then she practised <u>dzikir</u> and prayed for guidance from God. After that she opened the Qur'an and found the following verse by chance:

> "They prevented [the believer] from the right path. If you followed them, you belong with them."[64]

For the participant, the above verse which was found by chance was meaningful as it "spoke" about her current problem. She interpreted the term "they" in the above verse as including "her husband" and "the right path" as "practising <u>dzikir</u>". So, her husband's effort to ban her practice of <u>dzikir</u> meant that her husband prevented her following the right path. In this context the participant believed that her practice of <u>dzikir</u> was confirmed by the Qur'an as "the right path". Therefore, her response to reading this verse was the emergence of conflicting feelings. On the one hand she was happy as her

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[64] The verses mentioned by the participant is not a direct quotation from the Qur'an.

practice was confirmed by the Qur'an. On the other hand she was fearful because if she followed her husband, it meant that she belonged with the unbelievers. To resolve this conflict the participant needed to continue her dialogue with the Qur'an by "asking" what she should do.

> "The verse which emerged [and I found by chance] from the Qur'an was: Ignore the unbeliever and the hypocrisy" (BS, ln. 62-63).

The above statement indicates that the verse which the participant found by chance corresponded to her "question". Thus, the Qur'an had given her a clear answer to her problem, that is to ignore her husband's ban and to continue practising dzikir.

The finding of a particular verse "by chance" should be noted here. The participant used the word keluar which means "comes out" or "emerge" in describing a particular verse she found "by chance" after opening the Qur'an at random. For her, it was not "by chance" she found a particular verse, rather God made her find this verse.

IV. The period of renewed religious life

Theme 6: Contrasting mode of knowing and mode of understanding in approaching religious teaching.

The participant discussed two modes of approaching the religious teaching, that is knowing [tahu] and understanding [mengerti]. The difference is that the mode of knowing refers to "rational" understanding whereas the mode of understanding refers to "experiential" understanding. In the level of "knowing" she understood a certain teaching from the outer perspective, while in the level of "understanding" she described being able to grasp the essence of the teaching. This teaching has been illuminated by her own experience. She mentioned an example as follows:

"Before, I knew [tahu] about the sickness of the heart [penyakit-penyakit hati], like hatred, envy etc. Now, I understand [mengerti] what is it like" (BS, ln. 95-96).

The participant continued her explanation by contrasting her past and present life. In her past life she already knew the teaching that God is the protector, but she was still afraid of being killed by her husband. She described her present lif: "Now, I can understand and experience that God is the only protector" (BS, ln. 99-100).

Theme 7: Gratitude to God as a way of responding to everyday problems.

The participant reported that her attitude in responding to everyday problems had changed after practising dzikir. Before, when she had a problem her response was sadness and depression, but after practising dzikir her response was gratitude. She interpreted her everyday problems within the new horizon of religiosity.

"Now, if I have disaster [I say] alhamdulillah[65]. If I received a favour [I also say] alhamdulillah. Everything that happens to me is better for me. They are all the Mercy of God" (BS, ln. 118-119).

The above statement indicates that the participant had transcended her life. She expressed gratitude not only when she received a gift from God but also when she had trouble. Both the gift and the trouble had been given the same meaning, that is as "the Mercy of God".

The following is one example of the participant's gratitude. She reported that she sometimes had asthma illness after joining the PT group. She understood this illness as a reminder from God, because she had forgotten to recite the name [asma] of Allah. Here, she played with the homonym of the word asthma, that is a kind of illness and the word asma,

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[65] Alhamdulillah means "praised be to Allah". This word is usually recited by a Moslem who perceived that he/she has receives a favour from God. This is the way a Moslem expresses his/her gratitude.

meaning "name" [of God]. The participant understood that these two different meanings had a relationship. She said:

> "When I forgot the asma, the other asthma emerged"
> (BS, ln. 128-129).

By playing with this homonym, the participant meant that her asthma illness related to her forgetfulness to recollect the name [asma] of God. Thus, rather than feeling depressed having asthma she responded to the sickness with gratitude, because she had been reminded to recollect the name [asma] of God in her heart at all times.

Theme 8: Intimate relationship with God is mediated by the Qur'an.

The participant's dialogue with the Qur'an as previously explicated reveals her relationship with God. Her dialogue with the Qur'an was understood as her dialogue with God. In other words, the participant's relationship with God was mediated by the Qur'an. This relationship was characterised by intimacy in which the participant "asked a question to God", "received an injunction from God", "was reprimanded by God" and "God gave support and consoled".

From the Qur'an the participant received God's answers concerning her question. For example, the participant requested guidance from God for the do'a[66] she should perform.

> "I asked God what kind of do'a [shall I perform]. Praise be to Allah, I got the answer [from the Qur'an]. I wrote the do'a down and memorised it"
> (BS, ln. 116-117).

From the Qur'an the participant could receive an injunction to do something. For example, she reported that when she opened the Qur'an at

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[66] Do'a is usually translated as "prayer". In this context it refers to a certain formula which is practised as a means to request something from God. This formula can be taken from the Qur'an, or Hadist, the tradition.

random she found verses which she interpreted as God asking her to "...proclaim a 'war' with my husband" (BS, ln. 79-80).

The intimacy with God was also indicated by the participant's personal relationship in which she perceived that God was angry with her.

"I was reprimanded by God, because I felt secure from His punishment" (BS, ln. 86-87).

On another occasion she understood that God gave her support and consoled her when she "warred" with her husband.

"I read from the Qur'an that the believer is better. [I also read the verses] about heaven and angels. I became very happy"
(BS, ln. 111-113).

The above examples confirmed the proximity between the participant and the Divine. The participant discovered the significance of God's guidance in her real life.

5.2.3. Participant SU

I. The Pre-<u>dzikir</u> period

Theme 1: Disinterest toward Islamic teaching.

The participant disclosed himself as being ignorant of the Islamic religion during his childhood. He was not responsive to the possibility of living religiously which was offered by his family. He reported that he felt uneasy when his parents instructed him to learn Islamic teaching.

For the participant, there was no place for religion within his childhood. Religion was unattractive, because the centre of his interests were in physical

activities.

II. The period of initial contact with the PT group

Theme 2: Curiosity leads to the practice of <u>dzikir</u>.

The participant reported that his interest in learning Islamic teaching was influenced by contact with a charismatic religious teacher. In the hand of this teacher, religion became attractive for him.

The participant's further involvement in religion was indicated by his enthusiasm to read Islamic books. The focus of his attention was on the <u>Hadist</u> which prescribed the importance of <u>dzikir</u> "throughout the whole body"[67]. The participant's understanding of the <u>Hadist</u> was a literal one. That is, it was possible for the whole body to recite the name of Allah, not just the mouth. However, he had no idea how to experience <u>dzikir</u> "throughout the whole body". His curiosity was aroused which led him to the practice of <u>dzikir</u> in the PT group.

III. The period of <u>dzikir</u> experiences

Theme 3: Physical and spiritual contact with the PT leader reveals the guidance of <u>dzikir</u>.

The participant reported that he joined <u>dzikir</u> practice in which he sat close to the PT leader. The participant's knee was touched by the leader resulting in him experiencing the condition of <u>dzikir</u> "throughout the whole body".

The physical and spiritual contact with the <u>dzikir</u> guide was essential for the participant in determining the quality of <u>dzikir</u>. The contact revealed the spiritual guidance inherent in practising <u>dzikir</u>. The participant understood that

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[67] This is the direct translation of the participant's term: <u>dzikir</u> <u>seluruh</u> <u>tubuh</u> .

for people who had achieved a high degree of spirituality, the guidance was not necessarily through physical contact, rather it was given through "spiritual contact".

Theme 4: Dzikir practice leads to experience a lived body.

The participant described his experience of dzikir "throughout his whole body" as follows:

> "[The recitation of the name of Allah] started in the middle of [my] chest and then spread out to [my] whole body... I felt all of the pores and cells [of my body] recited the name of Allah continuously" (SU, ln. 16-18).

The above description reveals the participant's experience of his body as a lived-body. For the participant, his body was not merely flesh and bones, a physical object in which to dwell. Rather the body was experienced as a physical subject with the possibility to be "alive", that is to recite the name of Allah as his mouth and his heart did.

The possibility of the participant's body being experienced as being alive was confirmed by his later experience in which he was performing shalat and achieved the condition of khusu' [totally absorbed]. Then, "...all of [the cells in] my body recited Al-Fatikhah[68]..." (SU, ln. 32-33).

Theme 5: Dzikir "throughout the whole body" described as an ineffable experience.

The participant's experience of dzikir "throughout the whole body" reveals the ineffable quality of dzikir experience. He expressed:

> "...It was like... I don't know... [My body] felt light...I felt comfortable,

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[68] The recitation of Al-Fatikhah, the first chapter in the Qur'an is obligatory in observing shalat.

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like...<u>los</u>[69]" (SU, ln. 25-26).

The above description reflects that although the participant had tried to communicate his experience, he had difficulty in describing it. He focused on the alteration of his sense of body which became "light" and on his feeling of "comfortable".

The use of the expressive word of <u>los</u> rather than exact description of his experience confirmed the ineffability of <u>dzikir</u> "throughout the whole body."

Theme 6: Dreams reveal anticipation of the future.

The participant disclosed several dreams which he described as anticipatory of future events. These dreams were preceded by a "high quality of sleeping". The specific kind of sleeping was characterised by the observance of <u>shalat</u> and the practice of <u>dzikir</u> before sleeping. The participant's dreams during this sleep were understood as being meaningful as the dreams revealed an anticipation for future events.

The participant reported that the meaning of his dreams was realized from their repeated occurrance in his real life. Instances of his anticipatory dreams were dreams of having meals. Every time the participant had a dream of having a meal, he had some kind of sickness soon after. He concluded that the meaning of his dreams of having a meal was a "sign" for his future illness. This "sign" thus enabled him to prevent such anticipated illness. He reported:

> "Once I had this kind of dream. [Then] I got up and spat to the left and the right side. I asked protection [from Allah] and observed <u>shalat</u>. It turned out that I didn't have any sickness" (SU, ln. 44-46).

The above description indicates that the way in which the participant prevented his future illness was through the contact with the Divine. He asked for God's protection and observed <u>shalat</u>.

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[69] <u>Los</u> is a Javanese expression of being pleasure and relieve.

The participant's anticipatory dream not only related to his future illness, but also referred to future events in different places. He reported a dream in which he saw his family who live in a different city, in trouble. The trouble he saw in his dream then occurred one day later.

Anticipatory dreams were understood as the indication of the timelessness and spacelessness of the participant's experience. He said:

"These [experiences] is called [the experiences in which] time and space disappear" (SU, ln. 51-52).

IV. The period of renewed religious life

Theme 7: <u>Dzikir</u> facilitates the development of "inner feeling".

The participant who is a doctor related some experiences concerning his medical practice, which not only relied on rational medical knowledge but also on his "inner feeling", especially when he encountered patients who had just arrived in the emergency section. In such situations his "inner feeling" told him about the diagnoses of the patients. This feeling enabled him to provide a particular treatment. He reported that the later medical examination confirmed the appropriateness of his diagnosis and treatment. The "inner feeling" which assisted the participant in his medical practice was described as being developed after he practised <u>dzikir</u> intensively.

Theme 8: Sense of proximity to God characterised by a feeling of total dependence.

The participant disclosed his experience of his close relationship to God after he practised <u>dzikir</u> intensively and experienced <u>dzikir</u> "throughout the whole body". This close relationship was indicated by the emergence of his

"need" to practise dzikir. The participant understood that the practice of dzikir was obligatory for him.

"Formerly, I believed that dzikir is unobligatory [sunnah][70], but now   it become an obligation [for me]...If I didn't practise dzikir I felt   something missing (SU, ln. 59-61).

The experience of his close relationship to God was confirmed by the participant's understanding of shalat in which he experienced that " Shalat has become part of my life" (SU, ln. 62).

The participant's sense of proximity to God was characterised by total dependency. He experienced this dependency especially when he was practising shalat and achieved the condition of total absorption [khusu'].

The feeling of being dependent upon God was also evident in the participant's everyday life. He reported that when he was facing everyday life problems he "complained" to God which resulted in a feeling of relieve.

5.2.4. Participant AG

I. The pre-dzikir period

Theme 1: Living in religious conflict.

The participant disclosed his experience of religious conflict during his childhood and adolescence. He was born in a Moslem family but received formal education from a Catholic school. He discovered the contrast between the two worlds of the religions. On the one hand he experienced a sympathetic human relationship with the followers of Catholicism. He articulated his admiration for his school mates and his teacher as follows:

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[70] According to syari'ah [Islamic law] practising dzikir is considered as an unobligatory ritual.

"The Catholic people were always very kind to me. When I didn't go to school, my teacher came to my house and brought some gifts. I was very happy" (AG, ln. 2-4).

On the other hand, the participant perceived that Moslems in his neighbourhood lacked sympathy. When he asked for help, they tended to avoid providing the favour.

The participant not only expressed his negative attitude toward Moslems, but also questioned Islamic rituals intensively. He contrasted the Islamic obligation to perform shalat with the Catholic way of worshipping.

"Why should I observe shalat five times a day? Why should I stand, and bow [ruku'] then touch my head to the ground [to perform shalat]? [Isn't it better] just once a week to go to church like a Catholic?" (AG, ln. 7-9).

The participant's antipathy toward Moslems and Islam on the one hand and his sympathy with the Catholic religion on the other revealed his conflict. The participant had no sense of being a Moslem although his religion was Islam. He experienced a distance between his existence and the Islamic religion. He described himself as "[orang] Islam KTP" [ID-card Moslem] which means he is a Moslem in name only. He experienced Islam as not part of his own existence, rather Islam was "out there" on his "ID-card".

II. The period of initial contact with the PT group

Theme 2: Doubt and distrust prevents from joining the PT group.

The participant's first contact with the PT group were characterised by doubt and distrust. He questioned the practice of dzikir:

"Why did people close their eyes. Some were crying and some laughing?" (AG, ln. 18-19).

The above question revealed the participant's doubt that dzikir practice was an Islamic method. He associated dzikir practice with meditation in Javanese mysticism [kebatinan]. His doubtness was affirmed by his experience of distrust for the PT leader. He believed in the rumour that the PT leader was a "medical doctor" [terkun][71]. The experience of doubt and distrust prevented the participant from joining the PT group and from practising dzikir.

Theme 3: Conviction of Islamic teachings is achieved through rational understanding and emotional involvement.

The participant reported that he entered the Islamic world by rational searching for the "truest religion" among all religions. In this context he contrasted his understanding of the Islamic theology of the oneness of God [tauhid], and the Catholic doctrine of Trinity which was understood as the belief in "more than one" God. The participant referred to the scientific theory of the law of the universe in his searching for the "truest religion". The participant compared the authority of God in the Universe with the authority of a captain of a ship:

"I used my logical thinking. If there was more than one captain in a ship, there must be confusion. So, God must be one"
(AG, ln. 28-29).

The participant's conclusion led him to the conviction of Islamic teachings of the Unity of God. This conviction was affirmed by the scientific explanation of the verses of the Qur'an by Moslem scholars and by the participant's understanding that the basic idea of life was that it is dynamic. The "true religion" was one which was living and dynamic.

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[71] Terkun is a medical doctor who combines his practice with traditional medicine and/or magical practice. This term is used in the negative context.

"According to my logical thinking Islam [is dynamic and it] is a true religion" (AG, ln. 32-33).

The participant's conviction of Islamic teaching was further affirmed by his emotional involvement with the prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an. He reported that his reading of the prophet's biography affected his feeling. He was impressed by the way the prophet treated people who hurt him. This impression was enhanced when the participant was reading the Qur'an, especially the surah Ar-Rahman[72], and he experienced the verses on a deeply emotional level.

Theme 4: Involvement in a crisis of another leads to the practice of dzikir.

The participant reported his involvement in his friend's life crisis in which his friend had a serious accident and needed a large amount of blood. The participant's feeling of responsibility motivated him to contact the PT members who were practising dzikir that night. To his surprise, a number of PT members were willing to donate their blood and the life of his friend was saved. The participant was impressed by the PT members altruistic behaviour.

In this situation, the participant also witnessed the contrast between two patients (his friend and another patient) who were in an emergency condition. For his friend, the donation of blood was able to be organised by the participant in a very short time and the life of his friend was saved, while there was no blood donor for the other patient and he died.

The participant disclosed his belief that the critical moment described above had been arranged by God.

"If it hadn't been arranged by God, it would have been impossible [for me to organise the blood donor]" (AG, ln. 62-63).

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[72] This is the title of a chapter [surah] in the Qur'an.

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Thus, his friend's crisis was also significant for the participant's own life in which his heart was opened. "God opened my heart " (AG, ln. 55). This statement implies that before the critical moment, the participant experienced the "closedness" of his heart. Even though he had already accepted the dzikir practice as an Islamic way of drawing closer to God, he still had not joined the practice of dzikir. By being involved in such a critical situation the participant was able to experience the "openness" of his heart which led him to practise dzikir.

III. The period of dzikir experiences

Theme 5: Practising dzikir results in experiencing ambivalent feelings.

The participant reported the emergence of ambivalent feelings while he was practising dzikir.

> "I cried. I remembered my sins of the past. I felt afraid of the punishment from God. [On the other hand] I also felt comfort. I had the feeling of plong[73]" (AG, ln. 68-70).

The above description indicates that the participant experienced two contrasting feelings, the feeling of sorrow and the feeling of comfort. The participant's feeling of sorrow emerged when he realized his sin, but simultaneously he experienced the feeling of comfort as his sense of burden was relieved.

Theme 6 : Practising dzikir intensively leads to transition.

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[73] Plong is an expression to indicate the feeling of relieve or an experience which is difficult to be communicated.

The participant experienced transition in joining the PT group which was characterised by his intense practising of dzikir and renouncing the worldy life. He described himself as like "a thirsty person".

"When I felt enjoyment in drinking, I wanted to drink more and more until I was not aware of myself" (AG, ln. 79-80).

The participant drew an analogy between his practice of dzikir with drinking water. Since he was very thirsty, he drank more and more until he was not aware of himself. Like a drunk person, the participant was not aware of his surroundings. He lived a life of renunciation, detached from the profane world. He did not want to complete his schooling. Although a young man he had no sexual interest. He also lost his interest in hobbies of watching movies and listening to music. All of his attention was directed toward the life of the here-after by practising dzikir intensively. He described life in the mundane world "[it] has no value" (AG, ln. 86).

The participant's transition was also characterized by renouncing his personal self and living a life of piety. All of his activities were given religious meaning as devotion to God.

Theme 7: Practising riyadloh[74] indicates an effort to internalise God's attributes.

The participant reported that he practised a spiritual discipline [riyadloh] in which during one week he invoked a different pair of the beautiful name of Allah [asma-ul-husna] each day. The invocation of each pair of asma-ul-husna in his heart was accompanied by a different physical discipline, such as fasting and deprivation of sleep. This practice indicated the participant's effort to internalise the attributes of God as reflected in the asma-ul-husna.

The participant experienced a number of trials when he practised the riyadloh. He related one example when he invoked the pair of asma-ul-husna:

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[74] Riyadloh is an Arabic word meaning spiritual discipline.

<u>Ya</u> <u>Rahman</u>, <u>Ya</u> <u>Rahim</u> [O Merciful, O Forgiving] and made an effort to internalise the mercy and the forgiveness of God. Thus, he was obliged to treat other people with mercy and forgiveness. The trial began when his friend borrowed his motor bike. He reluctantly lent his motor bike to his friend. However, he remembered the invocation: "<u>Ya</u> <u>Rahman</u>, <u>Ya</u> <u>Rahim</u>" which means that he had to be kind to other people. The trial continued when his friend had an accident and his motor bike was broken. The participant responded to this situation by saying:

> "As a human being I was mad, but then I [remembered that I had to be] <u>Rahman</u> and <u>Rahim</u>" (AG, ln. 90-92).

The statement above reveals the participant's struggle to internalise the Mercy and the Forgiveness of God as his own attribute. As a human being his reaction was anger. However he tried to replace this reaction with the attributes of God. Therefore, he had to forgive his friend.

IV. The period of renewed religious life

Theme 8: Confrontation with family enables the enlargement of the meaning of religious life.

The participant's transition which was characterised by his renunciation of his life reversed after he confronted his family. The participant argued that his family could not understand what he was experiencing. On the other hand, his family criticised his unwillingness to complete his study. This confrontation resulted from the different understandings of the meaning of life. The participant understood that life in this world was meaningless and it was not necessary for him to possess any worldly attributes, while his family perceived that the material possessions and worldly attributes were important for living in this world.

The participant interpreted the resolution of the confrontation with his family in the light of religious meaning, that is as "...the words of God for

introspection" (AG, ln. 97-98). He believed that through his family God reminded him to examine his way of living. By doing this, the significance of life in this world for the here-after emerged in his awareness which enabled him to enlarge the meaning of religious life. He was aware that devotion to God not only referred to worshipping and renouncing the worldly things, but also included engagement with worldly activities. He realised that he also needed material possessions. The participant's new understanding of religious life was reflected in his prayer [do'a]:

"O Allah, it turns out that my life is not enough with only practising dzikir. Now, I want to finish my study with Your Blessing and Your Mercy. I want [to live] like others, but still in Your path" (AG, ln. 102-105).

The above prayer reveals the participant's intention to live "like others" within the path of God.

Theme 9: Life is experienced as meaningful.

The participant experienced his life as meaningful, in the sense that it was God related. Firstly, all of the events in his life were understood as being arranged by God, and secondly all of the events were perceived as reminders from God.

The participant discussed his understanding that all of his life events were experienced as being arranged by God:

"We make a plan [for our life], but God [also] make a plan. Everything which happens in this world is the plan of God."
(AG, ln. 107-109).

He argued further by reflecting upon his past life in which he was very ambitious to complete his study quickly and then to find a job in an oil company, so that he could go wherever he wanted and meet a lot of girls. But what he found in reality was different. He had to become involved in his friend's life crisis which led him to practise dzikir intensively and to experience

his renunciation of life. He interpreted that all of these events had been arranged by God. He perceived that:

"...God turned me back and forth. So that I came to understand religion" [AG, ln. 110-111).

The above statement indicates that for the participant, the meaning behind his everyday life's events were drawing him to "come to understand religion" which enabled him to have guidance in his life.

The meaningfullness of the participant's everyday life was confirmed by his transcendental understanding in which he perceived that all of his everyday life's events were reminders from God.

5.4.5. Participant MA

I. The pre-dzikir period

Theme 1: Islamic rituals are performed under fear of punishment.

The participant disclosed his religious life as "heritage". He received a traditional religious education which involved passing on religious knowledge from one generation to the next.

The participant had already actively performed the Islamic ritual, shalat five times a day, since he was young. However, he experienced reluctance as well as pressure in performing shalat. Rather than understanding the shalat as the way to devote himself to God, he performed this ritual in response to the threat of going to hell.

"If there was no threat of hell [for not performing] I might have ignored shalat" (MA, ln. 4).

For the participant, performing shalat was a matter of form. He reported that he did not experience the significance of shalat in his everyday life. "Before and after shalat is the same" [MA, ln. 5-6).

II. The period of initial contact with the PT group

Theme 2: Practising dzikir was associated with hypnotism.

The participant disclosed his doubt of the practice of dzikir after his first contact. He associated the practice of dzikir with hypnotism. He suspected that people who were practising dzikir were being hypnotised by the dzikir guide. The participant articulated his argument:

"When they [the members of PT group] were practising <u>dzikir</u> the hand of the <u>dzikir</u> guide moved like he was hypnotising" (MA, ln. 14-15).

The participant's doubt of the practice of <u>dzikir</u> prevented him from joining the PT group. However, his dialogue with the leader "opened" the possibility of his joining <u>dzikir</u> practice. He was convinced by the leader that <u>dzikir</u> practice was based upon Islamic teachings in the Qur'an and <u>Hadist</u>, the Prophet's tradition.

III. The period of <u>dzikir</u> experiences

Theme 3: Practising <u>sujud</u> <u>mutlak</u> leads to the experience of purification.

The participant reported his experience when he was practising <u>sujud</u> <u>mutlak</u> in which he achieved the condition of absorption [<u>khusu'</u>]. Suddenly he experienced his body falling and his hand moving to roughly imitate the action of washing his body.

Referring to his colleague's explanation, the participant understood his involuntary movements as a way of purification in order to attain a condition of equilibrium. He discussed the movement further by providing an example. If someone loved dancing very much, he/she would release the action of dance while practising <u>sujud</u> <u>mutlak</u>. This means that his/her heart was purified of an extreme love of dance. His/her love of dancing was being balanced with his love of God.

In the same sense, the participant's own rough movements to clean his body were interpreted as indicating that he had something in his body which needed to be purified. This understanding was confirmed by the fact that after practising <u>sujud</u> <u>mutlak</u> he developed a skin disease.

The participant's experiences of involuntary movements and developing a skin disease led him to examine his past life. By doing this, he found that he had tried to gain invulnerability [<u>kebal</u>] for his safety. The participant conceived that this effort was considered as <u>syirik</u> [taking partner to God] which was

regarded as an unforgiven sin. Thus, his "rough" movements and his having skin disease were understood as the releasing of his sins.

Theme 4: An ineffable experience facilitates a sense of becoming a new person.

The participant reported an ineffable experience while he was practising sujud mutlak. Since he had difficulty in describing his experience, he used the word plong[75] to express his feeling. During this time he experienced a metamorphosis and a sense of becoming a new person. The participant reported that all of the past burdens of his heart had gone. He described his experience as follows:

> "I experienced that I changed to become a new person. I felt so well and fresh. My mind was clean without any problems and my heart had no more jealousy and annoyance. My chest was so wide [lapang]

(MA, ln. 37-40).

The above description indicates that the participant's experience of becoming a new person allowed him to experience a sense of well-being which involved physical, psychological and spiritual dimension. In the physical dimension he experienced the condition of "fresh and well", while on the psychological dimension he had no "jealousy and annoyance" and in the spiritual dimension he experienced the widening of his "chest" which referred to his centre of spiritual life.

The participant's experience of plong allowed him further to reestablish his relationship with others in a new horizon. His feeling of inferiority in relation to others had gone. The new understanding that all human beings are equal enabled him to experience a more harmonious social life. Thus, the participant's sense of becoming a new person encompassed changes in his physical, psychological, spiritual and social life.

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[75] See footnote 36.

Theme 5: Performing   prayer [shalat]   during sujud mutlak leads to   the experience of illumination.

The participant related an experience while he was practising sujud mutlak in which he performed shalat. He disclosed this performance was un-intentional. It was not his own awareness which commanded his body to stand, rather he suddenly felt his leg muscle "made" his body stand up. His arms "...raised themselves up" (MA, ln. 44) to perform takbir[76]. Both his back and his knee "...bent themselves" (MA. ln. 45) to perform the act of ruku'[77] [bowing] and sujud[78].

The experience of performing shalat during sujud mutlak enabled the participant to experience the illumination of prayer directly. For him, the act of shalat was "universal", in the sense that all human beings would perform the same action provided that his/her heart was reciting the name of Allah in his/her heart. This understanding was assured by the participant's witnessing of a non-Moslem person who releases the action of prayer while joining the practice of dzikir. The participant believed that the action of prayer was not "...created by the Prophet Muhammad," (MA, ln. 48), rather it reflected the nature of human response before the Divine existence.

Theme 6: Jin[79] is experienced   as a distractor from   the participant's relationship with God.

The participant narrated an experience in which he was distracted by a bad spirit [mahluk halus[80]] when he was trying to get closer to God by

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[76] Takbir is the recitation of Allahu akbar [Allah is the great. In this context it indicates the beginning of prayer [shalat].

[77] Ruku' is the second position of prayer [shalat] after standing.

[78] Sujud is the position of prostration when the forehead touch the ground.

[79] In some literature the word jin is translated as "demon".

[80] Mahluk halus literally means "spirit" either "good" or "bad". Since the participant refers to the bad quality of mahluk halus, the term used in this explication is "bad spirit". ...

practising <u>dzikir</u> and <u>shalat</u> intensively. He perceived that the bad spirit "disliked" the participant's close relationship with God.

The participant described two ways the bad spirit distracted him, that is through a deception and an intervention. Firstly, he heard a "voice" which introduced itself as a fellow traveller on the path of God. The voice promised to help the participant increase his spiritual life. The participant reported that the voice of the spirit was telling him something good, for example how he should perform ablution in a spiritual way. Therefore, he "trusted" and followed the instructions of the voice. In this stage the participant identified the spirit as an angel. However, this trusting relationship was broken when the voice prevented the participant from praying to God, because of his impurity. The prevention led the participant to question the validity of the voice he heard.

"I thought [what was instructed by] the voice did not correspond with the Qur'an and Hadist. Even though a human being is sinful, he/she is allowed to pray to God directly" (MA, ln. 75-77).

The above statement indicates that the participant used the Qur'an and Hadist as a source of authority in examining his spiritual experience. He discovered that the instruction of the voice did not "correspond" with the Qur'an and Hadist which meant that the voice was untrue. The Qur'an and Hadist reportedly allowed the participant to recognise the deception of the voice of a bad spirit. He then believed that the voice was not from an angel, but from a <u>jin</u> which was trying to distract his relationship with God. Therefore, the participant opposed the <u>jin</u> and declared "...I won't trust you anymore" (MA, ln. 77-78).

The participant's opposition to the <u>jin</u> led him to experience further distraction in which the <u>jin</u> , as a spiritual-being, intervened in his material world. The participant reported that suddenly the glasses in his kitchen "exploded" for no apparent reason. The <u>jin</u> also prevented him from performing <u>shalat</u> by spinning his body around "..like a spinning top." (MA, ln. 81). The energy which turned the participant's body around was described as strong and could not be opposed.

The participant expressed his apprehension after having this

experiences. However, his colleague help him to overcome the distraction by suggesting that practising dzikir continuously would chase the jin away.

Theme 7: Dzikir promotes the possibility of accessing the world of spirit.

The participant reported that his experience of distraction by a jin led him to the possibility of accessing the world of spirit. He disclosed himself as being sensitive to "feel" the presence of a spirit, especially a jin. He described his technique identifying the jin was by practising dzikir and asking to God to give him a "sign". The participant experienced receiving the "sign" through his "feeling".

"I felt something different [when there was a jin] in a certain   place"
(MA, ln. 88-89).

The above statement points to the participant's possibility of identifying the presence of a jin through his feelings.

The participant's possibility of accessing the world of spirit was legitimised by a friend with paranormal ability who was able to "see" the presence of a jin. He reported that his "feeling" about the presence of a jin corresponded with the friend's paranormal "vision".

Theme 8: Mediation is experienced through healing.

The participant reported a number of experiences in which he was involved in healing action. One of the experiences occurred when he joined a training centre and stayed in a lodge with other PT members . He narrated that when passing in front of a room where a PT member was sick, suddenly he felt the presence of a "power" which "pulled" him to sit next to the sick. Even though he did not intend to visit the sick member, his feeling of brotherhood motivated him to pray for the sick.

The participant reported that when praying for the sick member, he experienced the presence of "electrical current" in his hand which then flew to

the sick hand resulting in healing.

The participant understood that his healing action was a jatah[81] for the sick. This means that he believed that God cured the sick. The participant did not claim that he had the ability to heal the sick, rather he regarded himself as a mediator in healing.

The participant's understanding of the jatah was also applied to the healing of himself. He reported that when he had an illness, he tried to heal himself by practising dzikir. He believed that when his illness was cured, it meant that he had received the jatah from God. On the other hand, when he failed, it meant that he had to use the conventional method, that is seeing a doctor.

IV. The period of renewed religious life

Theme 9: Relationship with God characterised by selflessness.

The participant disclosed his relationship with God as being characterised by selflessness. This characteristic was evident when he acted as a dzikir guide and as mediator in healing practice.

The participant reported that he was appointed by the PT coordinator to be a dzikir guide, even though he had never been taught to guide other people in dzikir. However, this experience allowed him to understand what a dzikir guide does. Before joining the PT group the participant perceived that a dzikir guide was a hypnotist. This perception was actually incorrect.

The participant pointed to the main difference between the practice of dzikir and hypnotism. For him, a hypnotist should strengthen his/her "ego" in order to rule the ego of another, whereas a dzikir guide should "suppress" his/her ego and experience helplessness without God's blessing. The sense of selflessness was important for the participant when he was acting as a dzikir guide.

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[81] Jatah literally means allotment, quota, portion. In the PT group this word is often used to describe the divine decree, fate or God's Will that something happens.

"We could do nothing without the blessing and Mercy of   Allah" (MA, ln. 158-159).

The absence of any self-desire (nafsu) was also essential in the participant's role of mediation in healing. He reported that when his prayers for the sick were accompanied by his self-desire, the healing action was unsuccessful. One of his failures in healing occurred when he tried to heal his mother from paralysis, although he had successfully cured his friend from the same paralysis. The participant interpreted his failure as being due to strong self-desire to cure his mother. This means that he had no sense of selflessness in his relationship with God.

5.2.6. Participant ND

I. The pre-dzikir period

Theme 1: Religious involvement as a superficial experience.

In describing his religious life before practising dzikir, the participant used his childhood as a reference as follows:

When I was a young boy, I was asked by my grandfather to gain religious knowledge in a small mosque [langgar] and to practise shalat. I had to observe all religious practices. However, religion wasn't tightly connected with my life. Religion [meant] only   fulfilment of the obligation. I worshipped [God] shallowly   [ngambang]" (ND, ln. 1-4).

The religious life described by the participant not only represented his religious life in childhood, but also in adolescence and adulthood prior to his practice of dzikir. The description reveals the participant's personal involvement in religion as superficial. There was distance between religion and

the participant's existence. Religion as a personal involvement was perceived as being outside of his existence, which was symbolised by the personification of a grandfather who gave him orders "to learn religious knowledge" and "to practice shalat". For the participant, religion meant fulfilment of the rituals which was characterised by feelings of obligation. Thus, religion did not have a significant meaning in his life. The participant was more interested in gaining supernatural ability than in religious activities. Within the structure of the participant's existence the Islamic world and the participant's life-world were two different worlds with only superficial connections.

Theme 2: Gaining supernatural ability leads to the safety of life.

The participant disclosed his engagement in a supernatural world. This engagement was indicated by his effort to gain supernatural abilities such as:

"...magnetism, telepathy, invulnerability [kebal], inner power   [tenaga dalam] ... invincibility [menghilang] even occultism and sorcery" (ND, ln. 6-8).

The supernatural abilities sought during the pre-dzikir period provided the participant with a means for self-defence. The need to have such abilities was in accordance with the characteristics of the participant's community in which people were prone to experience conflict with others which often led to fighting. In this context, the supernatural abilities were central and pivotal to the network of the participant's life because they allowed him to live within a horizon of safety -- the safety of life which he could not find from his religion which was experienced as superficial. The participant articulated: "I was more proud of my abilities than my religion" (ND, ln. 14).

Theme 3: Living in opposition to Islamic moral values.

The participant recollected his life before practising dzikir
as being in opposition to Islamic moral values. He described this as follows:

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"I have done lots of sinful deeds" (ND, ln. 41).

"I have done <u>mo-limo</u>[82], except commit adultery. I stole [the company property], gambling, drank alcohol, smoke cigarette..."

(ND, ln. 16-17).

Although the participant used a Javanese term to describe his deeds, he applied the Islamic moral values by saying that the deeds were considered sinful. In other words, the participant's conduct was experienced as inconsistent with Islamic moral values.

II. The Period of initial contact with the PT group

Theme 4: Suffering as instrumental to reviewing the way of living.

The participant reported that despite having gained many supernatural abilities, he experienced continuous suffering for two years prior to his contact with the PT group. This suffering was the result of a personal disaster in which all of his family members suffered in turn from illnesses.

The suffering constitutes significant events for the participant. It was revealed as being meaningful in two ways. Firstly, the suffering reflected God's reminder of the way the participant was conducting his life, which was in opposition to Islamic values. Aside from conducting sinful deeds, the participant also reported his ignorance of the religious obligation to contribute to charity (<u>zakat</u>, <u>shodaqoh</u>, <u>infaq</u>). The participant understood that the consequence of this ignorance was the illnesses of all of his family members, because that was the way "...God takes my money" (ND, ln. 49-50).

Secondly, the suffering was meaningful as it was instrumental in causing him to review his life and life-possibilities. The participant ceased his sinful deeds and began to enter a new possibility of life, that was to live religiously.

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[82] <u>mo-limo</u> literally means "five-m". This term is generally used by Javanese Moslem to describe five kinds of sinful deeds which begins with the letter 'm', i.e. <u>maling</u> (stealing), <u>main</u> (gambling), <u>madat</u> (smoking cigarette/opium), <u>madon</u> (committing adultery) and <u>minum</u> (drinking alcohol).

Theme 5 : Moral conduct influences health and happiness.

The participant reported that during the period of suffering his children suffered from severe illnesses. He interpreted the illnesses as not merely caused by the disease, rather they were connected with his way of living.

"I gave my family food of: cement, sand, stone. Logically, if the stomach was fulfilled by such things it will cause sickness"
(ND, ln. 42-43).

In the above statement the participant is not referring to the physical aspect of "cement, sand and stone", but in essence he gave his children the haram[83] food, in which the way he obtained the money to buy food was through stealing cement, sand and stone. The haram food is understood to be the cause of the illnesses.

In this context the participant points to the connection between the moral conduct and physical health. For the participant, sinful deeds led to suffering while good deeds led to happiness.

Concerning the Islamic teaching of eating haram food, the participant not only related this eating as a sinful deed with consequences in the here-after, but he understood this deed had consequences in his immediate experience as causing sickness. This understanding is underlined by the participant's later experience. After changing his life-style and living in harmony with Islamic moral values he found his life became calm and happy even though his suffering has not finished yet. Thus, living in harmony with Islamic moral values facilitated an ability to face the suffering. The suffering is transformed into happiness.

III. The period of dzikir experiences

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[83] Haram means unlawful according to Islamic law (syari'ah).

Theme 6: Involuntary movement as indication of the experience of purification.

The participant reported his experience of involuntary movement when he practised <u>sujud</u> <u>mutlak</u>:

"At that time I was purified. As my heart was very dirty, the purification was also very strong. All of my self-defence actions were released. I was jumping, running, kicking, hitting. I was fully aware [of my movement], but it cannot be controlled" (ND, ln. 32-35).

In the above description the participant refers to "the heart" as the spiritual dimension of his existence which was influenced by good and bad deeds. Since the participant had lived a sinful life before, he experienced his heart as being very dirty. Therefore, the purification experience was "very strong". He experienced involuntary movements which imitated the actions of his self-defence ability. These movements revealed a relationship between the two dimensions of his existence, that is his physical existence and his spiritual existence. The relationship is characterised by the influence of each on the other. When the participant conducted something wrongly in the physical dimension, the spiritual dimension (heart) became "dirty". On the other hand, when his heart was purified, his physical dimension "released strong movements".

Theme 7 : <u>Dzikir</u> practice facilitates the possibility of accessing to spiritual reality.

Concerning <u>dzikir</u> practice, the participant discussed as follows:

"<u>Dzikir</u> <u>qolbi</u>[84] makes the heart clean like a glass [of a window]. If

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[84] <u>Dzikir</u> <u>qolbi</u> is the recitation of the names of God in the heart.

the heart is clean, it can [be used to] see the other [spiritual] world"
(ND, ln. 92-94).

The participant described the function of practising dzikir as the way to clean the heart. He was not referring to a biological heart, but to one of a supernatural dimension. The participant used a metaphor in discussing the heart which was like glass of a window that can be used to see the "outer" world when it is clean. In this context the heart relates to bashiroh[85]. When the heart is clean, the bashiroh has the possibility of accessing the spiritual reality, both the real human spirit and the world of spirits.

The participant's possibility of accessing the real the human spirit was indicated by the following experience:

"I have met people whose face was [the face of] dog or pig. It reflects his own character. If he is greedy, I can see [his face
became a greedy animal] (ND, ln. 78-81).

In this experience the participant revealed his ability to "see" the very essence of the human character. He was not referring to his visual perception, but to "see" in the sense of being able to penetrate existence to reveal the intrinsic qualities of situations.

The participant's possibility of accessing the world of spirits was indicated by an experience in which he was asked by some university students to chase away bad spirits living in the campus. The students were scared because they saw a mysterious woman with long hair carrying her baby in the laboratory. When the participant went to that place he "saw" many spiritual beings living there. Together with other PT members, the participant chased the spirit away by practising dzikir and reciting a certain Qur'anic verse. This experience which is often described as exorcism emphasised that practising dzikir not only opened the possibility of accessing to the world of spirits, but also removing the bad influence of spirits through the recitation of a particular Qur'anic verse.

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[85] Bashiroh means inner eyes or the sixth sense.

Theme 8: <u>Dzikir</u> as a source of supernatural ability.

For the participant, <u>dzikir</u> practice serves as a source of supernatural abilities. He referred to <u>ilmu</u> <u>ladduni</u>[86] in describing supernatural abilities which he had after practising <u>dzikir</u> and which needed no special effort. One example of this was the participant's possibility of being "invisible". He reported that before practising <u>dzikir</u> he was unable to become "invisible", although he had learned how. However, after practising <u>dzikir</u> he reported some experiences in which other people were not aware of his presence which was understood as the invisibility of his body. Other supernatural abilities that the participant related are clairvoyance, precognition, inner power and healing ability. All of these abilities were understood as being given by God. He only possessed the ability to pray and surrender to the will of God.

Theme 9 : <u>Dzikir</u> practice results in healing.

The participant reported some healing experiences which relates to <u>dzikir</u> practice. One of the experiences was healing his own children. When he faced his suffering which was due to the sickness of the children, the participant practised <u>dzikir</u> by reciting a particular formula derived from the Qur'anic verses. Reciting this formula, the participant "heard" a voice telling him how he should treat his children. The participant did not identify the voice as being from God, but he emphasised that the voice guided him. When he followed this guidance, his sick children were cured.

The participant also related another healing experience when a person came to his house with a particular sickness. The participant then practised <u>dzikir</u> and he "saw" smoke coming out of the body of the sick person. The participant realised that the sick person was influenced by sorcery. By practising <u>dzikir</u> this influence disappeared.

The two instances above reveal that <u>dzikir</u> practice opened the participant's possibility to be involved in facilitating healing. This healing action

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[86] This term literally means "knowledge from God".

relates to supernatural ability which was evident in the participant's ability to "hear" and "see" in a different manner.

IV. The period of renewed religious life

Theme 10: Closeness to God characterised by selflessness.

The participant experiences a greater closeness to God after practising dzikir. He made a comparison between his life before and after practising dzikir. Before dzikir, he took every effort to gain supernatural abilities, whereas after practising dzikir he emphasises his ability to get closer to God.

"I am now learning how to get closer to Allah and surrender [to Him]" (ND, ln. 115).

The proximity of the participant's relationship with God was characterised by selflessness. Even though he possessed supernatural and healing abilities, he perceived himself as being selfless within himself. He perceived that he was not able to do anything by himself. The only thing he could do was pray to God. If someone humiliated him, he interpreted the humiliation as a test from God and therefore he had to be patient.

5.4.7. Participant : BD

I. The pre-dzikir period.

Theme 1: Religious conflict leads to the absence of the sense of being a Moslem.

The participant disclosed her experience of religious conflict during her

childhood and adolescence. Even though she had been born as a Moslem, she reported her negative disposition to Islamic religion. For her, Islamic religion was associated with punishment. On the other hand she described her sympathy toward Catholicism which was associated with love. She described her experience as follows:

> "I hated Islam, because the Kyai[87] [who taught Islamic religion] in my neighbourhood often got angry with me, while the Catholic priest in my school loved me very much" (BD, ln. 5-6).

The participant's religious conflict was confirmed by her later experience in which her intention to became a Catholic was prevented by her grandmother. This conflict led her to the absence of the sense of being a Moslem. She reported that even though "formally" her religion was Islam, she did not have a guilty feeling for not performing obligatory shalat.

Theme 2: Involvement with Javanese mysticism [kebatinan] provides a sense of calmness.

For the participant, everyday life problems had the potency to disrupt her sense of personal stability. She disclosed that she experienced mental instability when facing a stressful condition. The participant's effort to deal with her sense of vulnerability was to become involved with two groups of Javanese mysticism [kebatinan], firstly Pangestu followed by Sumarah. In these groups the participant practised meditation[88] which provided her with a way of transcending everyday life problems. The meditation practice allowed the participant to achieve a sense of calmness in dealing with everyday life problems.

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[87] Traditional Islamic leader/teacher in Java.

[88] The meditation practice in the Sumarah which is also called dzikir has some similarities with the practice of dzikir in the PT.

II. The period of initial contact with the PT group.

Theme 3: Practising <u>dzikir</u> is understood as a <u>kebatinan</u> method.

The participant's first response to contact with the PT group which applied <u>dzikir</u> practice was disbelief. In her understanding, practising <u>dzikir</u> was a <u>kebatinan</u> method which had provided her with a sense of calmness. She did not recognise the possibility of living in tranquillity within the Islamic framework. This response confirmed the participant's negative disposition toward Islamic religion which was associated with punishment.

III. The period of <u>dzikir</u> experiences

Theme 4: Overcoming conflict leads to the sense of being a Moslem.

The participant disclosed her conflict in being a <u>kebatinan</u> follower and a Moslem. Although she had been practising <u>dzikir</u> for one year, she had not performed <u>shalat</u> and fasting as Moslem's obligation. Two events reportedly precipitated the emergence of her sense of being a Moslem.

The first event occurred when the participant had a chance to talk to the leader of <u>Sumarah</u>, one of the Javanese mysticism groups she had been involved with. The participant disclosed her intention to join this <u>kebatinan</u> group again. She "promised" to God:

> "O Allah, if I can talk to Pak Zahid [the <u>Sumarah</u> leader] I will join the <u>Sumarah</u> again, but if not I will start practising <u>shalat</u>" (BD, ln. 48-50).

The above statement suggested the participant's effort to resolve her conflict by making a "promise" to God: if she was able to talk to the <u>Sumarah</u> leader in a meeting, she would become a <u>kebatinan</u> follower, but if not, she would become a Moslem which was reflected by practising <u>shalat</u>. The

participant reported that at that meeting she suddenly had menstruation which prevented her from talking to the Sumarah leader. This sudden menstruation was experienced as meaningful. It was interpreted as the "answer" of God concerning her conflict. She concluded that she should become a Moslem and practise shalat rather than become a kebatinan follower. However, the participant broke her "promise" to God. She had not practised shalat until she experienced the other event in which her husband was suddenly dismissed from his job. Although this event shocked the participant, it facilitated her overcoming her conflict and the emergence of her sense of being a Moslem. She proclaimed: "Now, I truly become a Moslem" (BD, ln. 64).

Theme 5: Dzikir facilitates the experiences of spacelessness

The participant reported experiences while she was practising dzikir in which she was "flying up through the air" and "entering down into the earth."

The experience of "flying" occurred when she was practising dzikir in a mosque. Suddenly, she noticed herself "flying" until she reached the roof of the mosque. Her "flying" was confirmed by her notice of her body "sitting down there" (BD, ln. 82). This experience was described as frightening. She was worried she would be unable to "go down".

The participant's experience of "entering down into the earth" happened when she felt fear of dying while practising dzikir. She described this experience as follows:

"I felt like entering down into the earth. It turned out that beneath the earth's surface was wonderful. The light was like the full moon. Even though it was day time, [I] didn't feel hot. There was a garden with a very beautiful fountain. I was amazed. Suddenly I was tapped by my grandmother [who has died)" (BD, ln. 91-97).

The participant's response to the above experience was happiness which overrode her fear of dying.

The experience of "flying up to the air" and "entering down into the earth" indicated the spacelessness quality of dzikir practice. The participant

experience that her life was not bound by space. She had the possibility of existing "over" and "beneath" the earth.

Theme 6: <u>Dzikir</u> promotes the possibility of accessing to the past and the future time.

The participant disclosed her possibility of accessing to the past and the future while she was practising <u>dzikir</u>. Her access to the future was indicated by a visionary experience, described as follows:

"Before Mr. T [a PT member] died I had already known. When I was practising <u>dzikir</u> I saw an empty room with a coffin [in the middle].   I also saw Mrs. T [the wife, standing] alone. Then, I heard a voice: 'That   is Mr. T [in the coffin]" (BD, ln. 81-83).

The above description revealed that the participant was informed through the vision that a PT member would die. Her anticipation then was confirmed by the later event in which the person she saw in her vision died. This experience indicated that <u>dzikir</u> facilitated the participant's possibility of accessing to the future events through a vision.

The participant's possibility of accessing to the past was indicated by her experience of "entering down into the earth" in which she met her dead grandmother.

"[My grandmother said]: Believe me, that you won't die soon. You will [reach] the age like me, i.e. 98 years...and your life will be beneficial for others..." (BD, ln. 99-101).

This statement reflected the participant's relation to time was not denoted by linear sequence, but both the past and future are experienced in the present. The participant experienced a sense of continuity between the past, the present and the future.

Theme 7: Healing ability relates to the sense of selflessness.

The participant disclosed her experience in healing action which was determined by her sense of selflessness. This experience occurred when she was asked to give power [menyetrum][89] to a PT member who was about to collapse. Realising that she had no ability to heal, the participant asked for a suggestion from a fellow member who then told her to do whatever she could. The participant then held the hand of the nearly-collapsed friend and while she was reciting a Qur'anic chapter, al-fatikhah, she totally surrendered to the will of God. She described her experience as follows:

"[Suddenly] I felt cold. As if my chest opened. I didn't know...[how to describe this experience]. I felt as if I flew...I didn't know where I was. I felt I had disappeared. Then, as if there was a power [to heal]..." (BD, ln. 112-114).

The above description reveals the ineffable quality of the participant's experience. The participant had difficulty in describing her experience of spiritual openness, revealed as the opening of her chest, and her experience of selflessness, revealed as the disappearance of sense of self. The experience of spiritual openness and selflessness provides the participant's possibility of a contact with a Divine power which resulted in healing.

In discussing her experience in healing, the participant emphasised the importance of the sense of selflessness. Since she had submitted totally to the will of God and sought to have no egocentricism, the mediatory role of healing became possible. This understanding was confirmed by another experience in which the participant tried to repeat her experience of becoming a healer, but she failed. She interpreted the failure as being due to the intervention of her self desire. Therefore, she understood the ability of healing as purely a "gift" from God.

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[89] Menyetrum is Javanese word derived from stroom which means electricity. The word menyetrom means "to give electrical power". In the PT this word refers to giving or receiving supernatural power which is often described as "electricity-like".

IV. The period of renewed religious life.

Theme 8: Intimate relationship with God affirmed by the descent of angels.

The participant described her relationship with God as being intimacy. She understood that God loved her by giving her a series of spiritual experiences and that God cleansed her heart by guiding her to the practice of dzikir. Therefore, she had to be serious in practising dzikir. She prayed:

"Don't forget me, O Allah. If I am dirty, please purify..." (BD, ln. 141-142).

The participant's intimate relationship with God was affirmed by the experience of "the acceptance of dzikir practice". She reported that when she was practising dzikir in the PT mosque, she experienced that the mosque was crowded although only a few people were there. Referring to a hadist which was related by the PT coordinator, the participant understood that the crowdedness of the mosque she experienced was the indication of the descent of the angels who join the practice dzikir[90]. This meant that her practice of dzikir was accepted by God.

Theme 9: Events reveal interrelatedness between everyday life and spiritual life.

For the participant, everyday life events were meaningful as related to the spiritual life. The interrelatedness between her everyday life and her spiritual life is indicated by an accident in which her foot was pricked by a nail.

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[90] See page 22 and 30 of this thesis for the quotation of the hadist which is concerned with the descent of angels.

She understood the prick as God's reminder for her "bad thought" toward others.

The participant related another experience in which the breast cancer she had suffered for many years suddenly grew bigger after growing smaller for a while. She associated the growth of her breast cancer with the practice of dzikir. When she practised dzikir intensively, the breast cancer grew smaller, but when she was not serious in practising dzikir the cancer grew bigger. This experience confirmed the interrelatedness between her everyday life and the spiritual life.

5.4.8. Participant BM

I. The pre-dzikir period

Theme 1: The participant's belief in a Divine existence develops within Javanese tradition.

The participant disclosed her childhood as lacking a religious environment. She did not receive religious education and did not observe Islamic rituals. However, she reported that since an early age, she had a strong faith in a Divine existence within a Javanese tradition. She believed that her faith was given by nature. This belief related to her understanding that all human beings have a natural tendency [fitrah[91]] to believe in a Divine existence.

Javanese tradition which was experienced as focusing on the spiritual dimension of life thus allowed the participant to develop her own fitrah. She prayed and communicated with the Divine in the context of traditional Javanese practices, that is by practising spiritual discipline especially fasting.

"...I prayed to God in the Javanese way, for example fasting on

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[91] Fitrah is an Arabic word meaning nature, or natural tendency, disposition. This word is usually used both in a religious and an everyday life context.

Monday and Thursday" (BM, ln. 7).

Theme 2: Intense involvement in Islam is understood as a gift from God.

The participant articulated that she had a very intense involvement in Islamic religion during her adolescence, both rationally and emotionally.

In the rational way, the participant seriously studied Islamic teaching through reading the Qur'an and attending religious meetings. She spent a lot of her money to support her effort. She described herself as being "thirsty for religion". The participant's emotional involvement in Islamic religion was indicated by emotional responsiveness "...to cry when listening to something related to [Islamic] religion" (BM, ln. 12-13).

Since the participant's intense involvement in Islamic religion emerged within herself, she understood this involvement as a gift from God. "Allah has given me the guidance and favour" (BM, ln. 11-12).

II. The period of initial contact with the PT group

Theme 3: Practising dzikir as an expression of God's will.

The participant's first contact with the PT group was characterised by an ambivalent attitude. On the one hand, she banned her husband from joining this group. She argued about the significance of dzikir practice. On the other hand, she herself was curious about the practice of dzikir and wanted to join PT group.

Referring to her husband's argument, the participant understood that practising dzikir was a matter of God's will, rather than human effort.

> " He [my husband] said that even though he had already joined the PT, he [my husband] could not expect me [to join] if God had not opened [my] heart" (BM, ln. 16-17).

The above argument indicates that for the participant, God's will played an important role in determining who would practise dzikir. The close

relationship between two people does not guarantee that one will follow the other in practising dzikir. The participant affirmed this argument by saying that she had tried to join the PT, but she failed to perform dzikir fully. She even "...got dizzy when practising dzikir." (BM, ln. 20). The participant understood that her effort was useless without God's blessing.

III. The period of dzikir experiences

Theme 4: Overcoming ego-centredness as a barrier for the participant to become fully immersed in dzikir.

The participant disclosed herself as being arrogant before joining the PT group. She experienced the feeling of being "the purest person." She associated her arrogance with her high level of self-centredness [aku][92].

The participant's ego-centredness and arrogance were understood as leading to a "closed" heart, in the sense these qualities made her unable to receive the Divine blessing to fully perform dzikir.

Two events reportedly facilitated the lowering of the participant's ego-centredness. The first event was her reading of the prophet Muhammad's biography. She was so impressed by the suffering of the prophet in spreading the Islamic teachings that she was moved to tears.

"Since then, my heart opened. My arrogance was reduced" (BM, ln. 27-28).

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[92] In this context aku which literally means "I" refers to "ego" or "self".

In the above statement the participant related the opening of her heart to the reduction of her arrogance.

The second event was the participant's witnessing of PT members who were practising dzikir and performing prayer [shalat] involuntarily.
These events shook the participant's feeling of being the purest person and resulted in her feeling of being a "dirty and small" person.

The participant's feeling of being a "dirty and small" person led her to experience the low level of "ego" [aku] which enabled her to become fully immersed in dzikir.

Theme 5: Spiritual visions are experienced as being significant to religious life.

The participant reported a number of spiritual visions while she was practising dzikir. The spiritual visions are experienced as significant for her religious life.

In one of her spiritual visions the participant "saw" a beautiful garden. She did not identify what the garden was, but she described the significant influence of the vision as promoting hope in her religious life.

In another vision the participant "saw" an ocean from which a lot of people were trying to escape and the sun was dangerously close to the people. After identifying the scene as what was going to happen in the end of the world, the participant articulated her feeling in response to her experience as follows:

"I was so scared to see that scene. I remembered my sin" (BM, ln. 49).

The above statement indicated the significant influence of the spiritual vision for the participant's religious life as it reminded her of her own sin.

Theme 6: Spiritual vision as a reminder from God.

The participant reported a spiritual vision while she was practising <u>dzikir</u> in which she "saw" a far away small point coming closer toward her. When the point was very close to her, she realised that it was the <u>Borobudur</u>[93] temple. Her response to this vision was one of surprise. She tried to "reject" this vision, but the vision became more clear.

"I was almost screaming, because at that time I hated any kind of statues [<u>berhala</u>][94]" (BM, ln. 52-54).

The participant's sense of surprise was influenced by her interpretation of the Islamic teaching of <u>tauhid</u>, that is to worship God only. For the participant, this teaching meant that all of the statues, must be destroyed. Therefore, she "hated any kind of statues" and hated religions which incorporated statues, particularly Buddhism.

The participant's hatred of statues changed after experiencing the spiritual vision of <u>Borobudur</u>. She interpreted the vision as a reminder from God. "God twisted my ear" (BM, ln. 58). This vision led to a renewed understanding of the statue. She regarded the statue as a form of God's favour to a human being who had been given an artistic idea and the ability to create statues. She disclosed her tolerance of the creation of a statue, as long as it was not treated as an idol.

Theme 7: Bad spirits [<u>mahluk</u> <u>halus</u>][95] experienced as distractor.

The participant related an experience in which she worshiped God completely by reciting a particular formula of <u>dzikir</u>, <u>laa</u> <u>illa</u> <u>ha</u> <u>illallah</u>[96]. She

[93] The name of a famous Budhist temple in Central Java.

[94] The word <u>berhala</u> has two meanings: firstly, indicating the physical aspect of statues, and secondly referring to the idea of idolatry.

[95] See footnote 43.

[96] This formula means "There is no god, but Allah."

experienced that there were bad spirits [mahluk halus] who "disliked" her total devotion to God and tried to distract her effort to draw closer God. She reported a number of distractions from the bad spirits. Firstly, when she was practising dzikir she heard a voice telling her that "..it was wasteful to recite the name of Allah because Allah did not exist" (BM, ln. 77-78). The participant's response to her hearing of the voice was despair and helplessness since her strong effort to remember God was regarded as wasting time. However, this feeling passed quickly after she identified that the voice was from a bad spirit which was trying to deceive her by saying something untrue.

Apart from the deception, the bad spirits were also experienced as trying to frighten her. She reported a waking vision in which she saw "bad spirits" in the form of adult people and children who briefly came to her house then disappeared. The bad spirits also terrorised the participant's dreams. She disclosed her fearfulness when she went to bed. As she closed her eyes, the bad spirits were seen in many fearful forms. She described one of the most frightening dreams as follows:

"I went to bed at twelve o'clock. When I closed my eyes, the window [in my bed room] opened [itself]. A flash of lightening struck outside. I thought the world would end. My bed was very bright. I was so scared, then I read ayat kursi[97] which [suddenly] was written on the wall. Suddenly, there was fire beside me. There were [also] three or four old people who had very short bodies and red faces surrounding me. I rejected them. Finally, there was a huge and

high figure which growled [expressed] with annoyance and fed up. [The figure] stamped the foot [loudly]. I was so scared. When I got up, [I noticed that] I had read the ayat kursi 150 times" (BM, ln. 83-95).

The above dream confirms the participant's experience of distraction by bad spirits and reveals her struggle against their influence by reciting a particular verse from the Qur'an.

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[97] A verse in the Qur'an which is believed as powerful against bad spirits.

IV. The period of renewed religious life

Theme 8: The Qur'an as mediator between the participant and God.

The participant reported an experience in which her communication with God was mediated by the Qur'an. This experience occurred when the participant was concerned with her son who had joined a juvenile gang. She asked God for guidance through the Qur'an. She practised dzikir until she achieved the condition of total surrender to God and then her hand moved involuntarily to open the Qur'an. The verse which she "found" was about patience [sabar] and gratefulness [syukur] to God. She responded to reading the verse as follows:

"That [verse] was the guidance from God. I had to learn to be patient and to be grateful [to God]" (BM, ln. 127-128).

The above statement clearly indicates that the verse the participant read from the Qur'an was understood as a direct answer from God in response to her problem. That is she had learn to be patient and to be grateful [to God]. This experience affirmed the mediatory role of the Qur'an for communication between the participant and God.

Theme 9 : Interrelatedness between the participant's everyday life and spiritual life.

The participant disclosed her understanding that every day life events were meaningful. These events were not merely incidents in the mundane world, but had a connection with her spiritual life. On the other hand, her spiritual life also had a significant influence on her everyday life. She reported that when her spiritual life was "good" (reflected by her continuity of practising dzikir), she found her everyday life was stable. On the hand, when her practising of dzikir was disorganised, "...[everyday life's] trouble emerged "

(BM, ln. 133-134). The following is an example of the participant's every day life events which had a connection with her spiritual life.

The participant related an experience in which she was to participate in a choral contest and needed her children's help to do the housework. Finding the children still asleep, she became angry. Then, while she was sewing her clothes for the contest, the needle pricked her finger.

The pricking of her finger, for the participant, was not a small incident which only related to her "physical" finger, rather this was meaningful. She transcended the accident by reflecting the meaning behind it: "What does God mean by [giving me] this accident." (BM, ln. 139-140). By doing this, she was able to arrive at the message behind the incident, that is as the admonishment from God. Because she became angry with her children, she forgot to recite the name of God in her heart. Therefore, she responded to the accident by reciting istighfar, which represented her repentance.

Theme 10: Total submission to the will of God associated with selflessness.

The participant disclosed her belief that what had happened in her life was according to the will of God. She experienced that her life was like being a puppet [wayang] in the hand of the puppeteer [dalang]. What happened on the "stage" was according to the will of the puppeteer. In this context, the participant did not mean that she had no desire. She explained that she actually still had her desire and her will, but what happened in real life was according to the will of God. She believed that "What happened to me is the best thing for me" (BM, ln. 141-142).

The participant associated her total submission to the will of God with selflessness. When she practised dzikir diligently, it was understood as not her own ability to be diligent.

5.4.9. Participant EL

I. The Pre-dzikir Period

Theme 1: Islam is understood as being the most perfect knowledge.

The participant understood Islamic teaching as the highest form of knowledge compared to scientific knowledge, especially psychological theories which he had learned from psychological magazines. Islamic teaching for him encompassed the guidance of human life in both corporeal and spiritual life, whereas psychological theories were only concerned with human behaviour. The participant had a strong belief that Islamic teachings

were far more complete than psychology. Rather than following psychological theories, the participant preferred to apply Islamic teaching to solve his everyday life problems.

II. The period of initial contact with the PT group

Theme 2: Joining the PT group is motivated by gaining "inner power"[98].

Prior to his joining the PT group, the participant disclosed his feelings of being bored with Islamic knowledge which he had been studying since he was in primary school. This feeling of boredom was prompted by his sense of powerlessness when he encountered physical confrontation. The knowledge of Islamic teaching which he already had was unable to provide him with an "inner power".

At this stage, the topic of "inner power" was important for the

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[98] The term "inner power" is a direct translation of tenaga dalam which means the power emerge within himself as a result of a particular physical or spiritual method.

participant. He expressed his interest in gaining such a power which would enable him to live a secure life. However, his belief in Islamic teaching prevented him gaining "inner power" from a self defence school which was not in accordance with Islamic teaching.

"...[To gain supernatural power in a self defence school] I have to do something which made me unable to perform shalat. I became unwilling [to follow this method]...(EL, ln. 19-21).

The participant's initial contact with the PT group gave him hope of the possibility of gaining "inner power" from a religious source which was not in conflict with Islamic values. He disclosed his motivation to join the PT group as being able to gain inner power.

III. The Period of dzikir experiences

Theme 3: Dzikir causes the invisibility of body.

The participant reported a supernatural aspect of dzikir practice in which he had the experience of invisibility. This experience occurred when the participant followed the prescription from a Qur'anic verse to recite the name of God in his heart at all time, including when he was riding in a bus. The participant found himself not having to pay the fare.

"The inspector didn't see me, even though he stood in front of me" (EL, ln. 35).

The participant understood the failure of the bus inspector to ask him for the

fare as resulting from his invisibility to the inspector. To legitimise this experience the participant mentioned other PT members who had similar experiences.

The participant's experience of "invisibility" of his body affirmed the potency of dzikir practice in influencing the experience of his body. In this case the physical body was experienced as a spiritual body with the possibility of being "invisible" to others.

Theme 4: Dzikir practice illuminates Islamic teachings.

The participant reported that he received intense Islamic religious education both formally in his Islamic schools and informally in his family. He described his Islamic knowledge as being characterised by a mode-of-knowing. He "knew" almost all aspects of Islamic teachings from a purely rational dimension. Practising dzikir, however, brought a new dimension to his understanding of Islamic teaching. His mode-of-knowing was changed to a mode-of-understanding in which he not only "knew" a particular teaching but also "understood" the hidden meaning and later experienced it. The participant provided an example as follows:

"I have recited the formula: inna sholati wanusuki wamahyaya mawamati lillahi rabbil 'alamin[99] since I was a little [boy]. But I didn't experience it...[therefore, I was still] afraid of dying [EL, ln.   26-28).

The Islamic teaching signified by the formula stated above had already been recited by the participant for a long time, but the meaning for him was limited to the formality of shalat. This formula did not have any significant in his life. Therefore, he was still "afraid of dying." The participant reported that practising

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[99] This formula is recited during canonical prayer which means: Surely my prayer, my sacrifice, my life and my death are for Allah the Lord of the Universe.

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<u>dzikir</u> illuminated his understanding of the meaning behind the formula which led him to strengthen his belief that his life and his death was from God.

IV. The period of renewed religious life

Theme 5: Coincidental and meaningful everyday life events relate to moral values.

The participant reported a series of experiences in which he encountered coincidental and meaningful everyday life events which led him to the realisation of Islamic moral values.

In one of the experiences the participant had lied to his parents that he needed money for his study. Before using the money for his own necessity, the participant broke the camera which he had borrowed from his friend. The amount of money to repair the camera was exactly the same as the amount of money the participant got from his parents. The broken camera and the cost for repairing it were not two coincidental events for the participant. Rather they had a certain meaning as a reminder from God for his wrongdoing, that is telling a lie.

The participant also related an experience in which he kept the money of the organisation of the PT group in his "own pocket" by chance. He reported that usually the treasurer never checked the finances, but the participant was surprised when the treasure found the lack of money. Although the participant had no intention to take the money for his own purpose, the sudden verification of the treasurer had a certain meaning for the participant concerning his "clean conduct".

The participant's understanding of the two experiences stated above facilitated his realisation of Islamic moral values that "...I have to be honest and clean [of conduct]" (EL, ln. 42).

Theme 6 : Physical and spiritual ability as the expression of the will of God.

The participant understood that his physical and supernatural ability he gained after practising <u>dzikir</u> were the expression of the will of God.

Concerning his physical "ability", the participant reported an experience in which he had not been sick for a long time. At first, he understood his physical health as being related to his success in practising <u>dzikir</u>. However, this conclusion was shaken by another experience in which he continuously recited the name of God in his heart while walking in the rain and wishing to remain healthy, but he became sick soon thereafter. This sickness allowed the participant to realise his selfishness and arrogance and led him to revise his understanding of his physical health as not merely due to "his success" in practising <u>dzikir</u>. Rather it understood as the expression of the Will of God.

The participant's understanding of the will of God was affirmed by another experience in which he foretold the exact time when the rain was going to stop. When his forecast came true many times, he interpreted that he had a precognition ability. However, he was shaken by the fact that his foretelling did not always eventuate. Therefore, he concluded that any abilities he had were understood as the reflection of the will of God.

> "If I had any abilities, they are not from me, but purely [the expression of] the Will of God" (EL, ln. 64-45).

The above statement reveals that rather than attribute his ability to his own capability the participant understood his ability within a larger perspective, that is as part of the will of God.

4.3. SYNTHESIS OF THE EXPLICATION OF THEMES WITHIN EACH EPISODE

In this section I present a synthesis of the common and the unique themes across participants within each episode. This synthesis is based upon the themes and their explication which emerge within each participant.

I. The Pre-_dzikir_ period

Two major themes emerge as being of particular significance to the participants in this episode. Firstly, the participants' involvement in Islam as their heritage religion is superficial (HE, ND, AG, BS). A participant (AG) describes himself as being orang Islam KTP, ["ID-card" Moslem] that is a Moslem in name only. Another participant (SU) discloses his disinterest toward Islamic teaching. For the participant BS, the social dimension of Islam is more important than the ritual of shalat. She discloses her loyalty to Moslem organisations as being "fanatic", while her commitment in practising shalat is described as being "loose".

A number of participants experience the performance of shalat as being routine and formal devoid of a relationship with God (HE, ND, AG). Their motive to perform religious rituals is egocentric, such as gaining supernatural power (HE, ND). A participant (MA) discloses his motivation to perform shalat as fear of punishment (MA).

The participants' superficial involvement in Islam is confirmed by their conduct in everyday life which is reported as being inconsistent with Islamic moral values. Two of the participants describe themselves as living in a sinful life (BS, ND). A participant (ND) reports further by saying that he committed sinful deeds [mo-limo][63] before practising dzikir.

The second major theme in this episode is the significant influence of other traditions on the participants' religious life, especially Javanese tradition

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[63] Five kinds of sinful deeds. For further information, see footnote 45.

and Catholicism. The Javanese tradition, which is experienced as focusing on the spiritual dimension of life, provides the ground for the development of a participant's belief in a Divine existence (BM). Some of the participants integrate Javanese tradition harmoniously within Islamic religion (HE, BM, ND). Being a Moslem does not prevent the participants gaining supernatural power, nor magical power within Javanese tradition nor from joining a Javanese mysticism [kebatinan] group (HE, ND).

While the Javanese tradition is integrated harmoniously with Islamic religion, the Catholic religion is understood by some of the participants as being in conflict with Islam (AG, BD). The comparison between these two religions in this instance leads the participants' to adopt a sympathetic attitude toward Catholic followers and a negative disposition toward Moslems. The participants experience a good human relationship with Catholic followers and this relationship is associated with love and care. In contrast the human relationship among Moslems is associated with anger and selfishness. This leads some of the participants to experience a religious conflict (AG, BD).

II. The period of initial contact with the PT group.

Four common themes emerge in this episode. Firstly, the participants experience an intense involvement in Islamic religion on rational and emotional levels (BM, BS, AG, SU). The participants' rational involvement in Islamic religion is indicated by their enthusiasm to study Islamic teaching through reading the Qur'an (BM), reading Islamic books (SU), attending religious gatherings (BS) and applying either logical thinking and scientific knowledge in understanding Islamic religion (AG). Along an emotional dimension, the participants' involvement in Islamic religion is revealed by the participants' devotion to Islamic worship (BS) and emotional responsiveness to the verses of the Qur'an (BM, AG).

The second common theme in this episode is the participants' experience of suffering in which they experience a life-crisis, either their own (BS, ND, HE) or another's life crisis (AG). This suffering which emerges prior to the participants' joining the PT group is understood as meaningful. For the participants, this suffering is regarded as God's reminder. Furthermore, the

suffering constitutes a significant event which results in a marked change in the participants' life, that is from living a sinful life to living a devout life (BS, ND).

The participants disclose their curiosity about the practice of dzikir and about the PT group which leads them to their initial contact with the PT group (HE, BM, SU). During the first contact with the PT group, some of the participants directly accept the practice of dzikir (BS, BM, SU, EL) but some experience distrust and doubt (HE, AG, MA, BD, ND). For the participants whose experience is characterised by doubt, they question whether the practice of dzikir is an acceptable Islamic method. A participant (HE) associates the practice of dzikir with magical practice, while another (MA) associates it with hypnotism. The practice of dzikir is also misunderstood as the method of a Javanese mysticism [kebatinan] group (BD).

The further theme common to the participants in this episode is the significant role of the PT coordinator in bringing the participants to believe in and to practise dzikir through a rational understanding that the practice of dzikir is based upon Islamic teachings (AG, MA, ND). Within this context, some of the participants experience inner or spiritual contact with the PT coordinator (HE, MA). An instance of the inner contact is an experience of a participant (HE) in which with his "inner eyes" he tried to "detect" supernatural ability of PT coordinator. However, the participant failed, because he "saw" veils covering the body of the PT coordinator.

III. The period of dzikir experiences

The common themes to emerge in this period can be classified into two groups. Firstly, those themes which relate to the practice of sujud mutlak in particular and secondly themes which relate to the practice of dzikir in general. Since the practice of sujud mutlak was performed in the PT branch in Yogyakarta from 1977-1985, themes which relate to sujud mutlak refer only to the participants who joined the PT group branch of Yogyakarta before 1985 (HE, BM, AG, MA and ND).

One of the most common themes which relate to the practice of sujud mutlak is the participants' experience of purification (HE, ND, MA). The

manifestation of the experience of purification is varied. Most of the participants report an experience of physical release involving involuntary movements of the whole body which is similar to self defence actions (HE, BD) or washing the body repeatedly (MA). These movements are understood as a result of the confrontation between the Divine (or inner) power which is activated by the practice of dzikir and the "outer" power, the power which is gained through ways other than dzikir practice (HE, ND, MA). For the participant MA, the purification is also manifested by the presence of a skin disease after practising sujud mutlak.

The participants' experience of purification not only involves the physical dimension, but also embraces spiritual, psychological and social dimensions (HE, MA). Spiritual purification is indicated by the experience of participant HE in which he "sees" his hands full of faeces and dirty animals while practising sujud mutlak, but when he performs ablution involuntarily, his hands sparkle. The purification in psychological and social dimension is evident in participant MA's experience. He experiences the

sense of becoming a "new person" which is characterised by an emerging sense of physical, mental, social and spiritual health.

The experience of purification leads the participants to perform spontaneous prayer [shalat] while they are practising sujud mutlak. They perform shalat "completely" from the beginning to the end (HE, MA, ND) or "partially"[64] (BM, AG). The experience of performing shalat is understood by the participants as an indicator of being totally immersed in dzikir.

The theme of purification relates to another theme, that is, illumination. A number of participants experience illumination in which they arrive at an understanding of the essential meaning of Islamic ritual and of the Qur'anic verses (HE, AG, BM, MA). The participants come to an understanding of the "inward" aspect of religion. The ritual of physical ablution [wudlu] is seen as cleaning not only the physical body but also the spiritual body (HE). The ritual of prayer [shalat] is understood as "universal", in the sense that the bodily postures of shalat are a natural response when someone recites the name of

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[64] For example, only performing the act of sujud where the forehead touches the ground.

Allah in the heart (MA). The participants' understanding of Qur'anic verses is also deepened (AG, BM).

The illumination as a related theme is not only experienced by the participants who practise sujud mutlak, but also the participants who do not practise (EL, BS). However, for the participants who practise sujud mutlak, this illumination leads them to transition, while the participants who do not practise sujud mutlak do not report any abrupt transition.

The experience of transition is characterised by the strong belief in Islamic teaching (HE, BM, MA, AG, ND), strong motivation to practise dzikir and to learn or preach Islamic religion (AG, BM, ND). They described themselves as being "thirsty for religion" (AG, BM). For participant HE, the experience of transition is also characterised by the feeling of being the "truest" person, in the sense that practising dzikir in the PT group is believed as the only valid mystical path. For the participant AG, the transition is indicated by his renunciation of worldly life. He focuses his activities on religious matters and ignores worldly activities, because he understands life in this world as having "no value".

The themes which relate to dzikir practice in general involve the participants experience of dzikir as a bodily, emotional, rational and spiritual experience.

Dzikir as a bodily sensation is indicated by involuntary bodily movements during sujud mutlak for the long standing members (HE, BM, MA, ND, AG) and is associated with the experience of purification. For members who joined the PT group more recently, this bodily experience includes muscle tension (BS) and the recitation of the name of God experienced "throughout the cells of the whole body" (SU). The participants' sense of the body is altered (HE, BD). This includes the understanding of the physical body as a spiritual body with the possibility of being "in-visible" (EL, ND).

Dzikir as an emotional experience is indicated by the feeling of repentance for sinful deeds (AG, BS) and the emergence of deep positive feelings such as love, happiness, joy, and bliss. These deep feelings sometimes are experienced as being melded together with contradictory feelings such as fear, sorrow, and regret (HE, BM, AG).

Dzikir as rational experience is evident in the participants' experience of illumination in which they arrive at the essence of religious teaching (HE, AG, BM, MA). In this context, the participants describe two modes of

understanding of religious teaching: the mode of knowing and the mode of understanding (BS, EL). The mode of knowing relates to rational understanding, while the mode of understanding involves intuitive and experiential understanding.

Themes of dzikir as a spiritual experience are manifested in many kinds of experiences which include the experience of drawing closer to God, of distraction by mahluk halus [spirit], of possible access to the world of spirit, of timelessness and spacelessness, and of healing action.

Practising dzikir is described as drawing the participants closer to God (HE, AG, BM, BS, SU). Inwardly, the participants experience love for and fear of God. Outward expression of this close relationship is manifested by the intense practice of religious ritual such as prayer (shalat), either obligatory or non-obligatory. Two participants (HE, AG) report their effort to internalise the attributes of God reflected in asma-ul-husna [the Most Beautiful Names of Allah].

A further theme related to the practice of dzikir is the experience of distraction by bad spirits [mahluk halus]. Two participants' (BM, MA) report their actual experience of the distraction from a close relationship with God by bad spirit which sometimes is identified as a demon [jin] (BM, MA). The bad spirit deceives the participants by introducing itself as a spiritual guide or by giving false information about the existence of God. The bad spirits also disturb the participants in waking consciousness or during sleep. An instance of this distraction is the experience of participant MA in which a bad spirit prevents him from performing shalat by spinning his body around "like a spinning top." The participants report that this distraction can be solved by practising dzikir intensively or reciting a particular Qur'anic verse. Practising dzikir is understood as the process of cleansing of the "heart" (ND, HE). The clean "heart" allows the participants to experience spiritual visions (BM, BD) and to experience the openness to the world of spirit (ND, MA). An instance of the spiritual vision is the vision of an event which is understood as an event at the end of the world (BM). The participants' openness to the world of the spirit is indicated by their ability to detect the presence of spirits [mahluk halus] through feeling (MA), dreaming (BM) or even "seeing" (ND, BM). A participant (ND) is not only able to "see" spirits, but also to "see" the very essence of human character in which he is able to penetrate existence to reveal the intrinsic qualities of situations.

Including in the theme of the openness to the world of spirit is the participants' ability to "chase bad spirits away" (ND, MA). An instance of this ability is a participant (ND)'s experience in which by reciting particular Qur'anic verse he chases away bad spirits who live in a laboratory of a university.

Practising dzikir leads to the experience of timelessness and spacelessness. The theme of timelessness is evident in the participants' experience of the alteration of the sequential nature of time. The possibility to experience past time is indicated by an experience of participant BD in which she met her dead grandmother "down into the earth" when she was practising dzikir. The possibility of access to future time is evident in anticipatory experiences of a number of participants (SU, BD, BM). The anticipation of future events includes the future events of the self (BD), of others (BD, SU) and of the future predicted by Islamic teaching, such as the events of the end of the world or the life in heaven which is meaningful within everyday life of the participant (BM).

The experience of spacelessness is indicated by the participants' ability of clairvoyant perception which refers to an awareness of events removed in space (HE, ND). Instances of these events are the detection of a spider in a house which the participant has never known before (HE) or the dream of an actual event in the participant's family who lives in a different city (SU). These experiences reveal the possibility of extra-sensory perception among people who practise dzikir. The sense of spacelessness is also indicated by the experience of space unboundedness in which a participant experiences "flying up to he air" and "entering down into the earth" while practising dzikir (BD).

A further theme related to the practising of dzikir is the participants' healing action which might be healing of the self (MA, BM, BS) or of others (HE, BD, ND, MA). The participants describe the healing power as an "electricity current" which is present immediately after practising dzikir (BD, MA). Healing is understood as the result of mediation between God and the person in need of healing. This mediation in healing can be achieved by destroying the sense of self (selflessness) and total surrender to the will of God (BD, MA). Thus, rather than attribute the healing ability to themselves, the participants understand it as the destiny of God (HE, MA, BD).

IV. The period of renewed religious life

Four common themes emerge in this episode which signifies the participant's renewed religious life. Firstly, the participants commonly experience a close relationship with God. For them, being-in-the-world is understood to include being-with-God as an essential constituent (BD, BM). All of their activities are God-related (HE, AG). This close relationship with God is characterised by selflessness (HE, MA, EL, ND), by the feeling of total dependence upon God (SU) and total submission to the will of God (BM). A participant (HE) experiences the awareness of "creature-ness" before "the Creator" which leads him to the experience of self-annihilation, self denial and a transcending of his way of being. Two participants (BD, BM) understood that their spiritual experiences during the practice of <u>dzikir</u> indicate the love of God fo them.

Some of the participants describe their intimate relationship with God as being mediated by the Qur'an (BS, BM, AG). The verses of the Qur'an are understood as the "words of God" which have significant meaning in the participant's life. The participants' relationship with the Qur'an is characterised by a "dialogue", in the sense that the Qur'an provides the answer for solving their everyday life problems. This "dialogue" is understood as the participants's communication with God (BM, BS, AG).

The practice of <u>dzikir</u> reveals as restructuring their world-view of religion. That is, religion is not experienced as something "out there" but as part of their existence (HE, AG). A number of participants explicitly disclose the significance of religion in their everyday life ((HE, AG, BS, BD, MA). Religion gives the participants direction for their life (HE, BD).

The participants' understanding of religion in a fuller way emerge as a related theme in this period. In approaching Islamic teaching, the participants not only apply the mode-of-knowing which signifies rational dimension but also the mode-of-understanding which represents the

experiential and spiritual dimension of their existence (HE, BS, EL). Although the participants believe that life in here-after is more important than the

mundane life, they not only emphasise the devotion to God through performing religious rituals, but also through worldly activities (HE, AG).

A further theme in this period is the participants' experience of meaningful life. A number of participants report their life as being meaningful (AG, BS, BM, EL). They understand that everyday life events are not something coincidental. Rather, it is interpreted as the expression of the will of God (AG, EL). The participants also experience the interrelatedness between their everyday life and spiritual life. Everyday life activities are transcended to include a spiritual dimension. A participant (AG) expresses his transcendental understanding of sleep as a reminder from God "...that we will die."

The participants are reportedly able to seek the wisdom behind adverse events (BD, BM, ND). For example, when they have a sickness they praise God, because they understand the sickness as a reminder from God to practise dzikir intensively.

In Summary, two common themes emerge in the pre-dzikir period. Firstly, the participants' involvement in religion is superficial, characterised by ritualistic, egocentric tendencies and inconsistency between their conduct and Islamic moral values. The second theme is the significant influence of Javanese traditions and Catholicism in the participants' religious life. While Javanese tradition is integrated harmoniously with Islam, the influence of Catholicism leads the participants to religious conflict.

Four common themes which emerge in the period of initial contact with the PT group, are: the participants experience a more intense involvement in Islamic religion both on a rational and emotional levels; the

participants experience suffering which resulted from personal disaster prior to the joining to the PT group; the participants experience doubt and distrust toward the practice of dzikir during their first contact with the PT group and the significant role of the PT coordinator in bringing the participants to believe and practise dzikir.

The common themes which emerge in the period of dzikir experience can be classified into two groups. Firstly, themes which relate to the practice of sujud mutlak. These include: the participants' experience of purification which

is characterised by involuntary movements; the experience of illumination; and the experience of transition during which the participants involve themselves in religion totally and renounce their worldly life. Secondly, the themes which relate to dzikir practice in general which include bodily, emotional, rational and spiritual experiences. Dzikir as a bodily experience varies from involuntary movements to the experience of recitation of the name of God throughout the cells of the whole body. As an emotional experience, dzikir includes the emergence of deep feelings of love, happiness and bliss which sometimes meld with fear, sorrow and regret. Dzikir as a rational experience reflects in the change of the participants' understanding of religious teaching from rational to intuitive and experiential. Dzikir as a spiritual experience encompasses the participants' experience of drawing closer to God, the experience of distraction by bad spirits, the experience of spiritual visions, the experience of timelessness and spacelessness and the experience of healing practice.

Four common themes emerge in the period of renewed religious life. Firstly, the participants experience a close relationship with God which is characterised by selflessness, total dependence and total submission to the will of God. Secondly, the participants experience total involvement in Islamic religion which includes a rational, emotional, social and mystical dimension. Thirdly, the participants experience the significance of the Qur'an in their life-world. Finally, the participants experience a meaningful everyday life which reveals an understanding of interrelatedness between everyday life and spiritual life.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I discuss the process of religious transformation among Moslems who practise <u>dzikir</u> <u>tawakkal</u> by presenting the findings of the current study in a coherent manner. I compare several important themes which have emerged in this study with the literature previously reviewed. I also compare <u>dzikir</u> practice with meditation as practised in Western society. Finally, I propose some ideas for future research.

6.1. RELIGIOUS TRANSFORMATION

The current study reveals that the participants, that is Moslems who practise <u>dzikir</u> <u>tawakkal</u>, experience a religious transformation from "ordinary" to "mystical" religious life. It is argued that this transformation parallels the process of religious development from immature to more mature religious life.

The "ordinary" or immature religious life of the participants in the current study is reflected in the themes which emerge in the pre-<u>dzikir</u> period. That is, involvement in religion is experienced on a social level which is characterised by superficial, ritualistic and egocentric tendencies. In other words, the participants religious life is conventional and their faith is a cultural imitation. In this period being-a-Moslem for the participants means being-with-other-Moslems.

The "mystical" or more mature religious life of the participants on the other hand is indicated by the most common theme which emerges in the

period of renewed religious life, that is the participants experience a close relationship with God. In this period, the participants' involvement in religion includes social, rational, emotional and spiritual dimension. The participants' faith develops from within as intuitive faith. Being-a-Moslem for the participant means being-with-God.

The current study reveals further that the participants' experience of religious transformation passes through several phases. These phases are indicated by the themes which emerge within each of the four episodes.

The first episode, referred to as the pre-dzikir period, covers the participants' religious life from childhood until the initial contact with the PT group. Themes which emerge in this episode reveal the characteristics of the participants religious life in this stage, that is focusing religious life on the social or outer dimension of Islam. They performance religious rituals in a ritualistic and superficial manner. The role of custom and tradition where the participants live are experienced as being significant in shaping the participants' religious life. In this context, most of the participants reported their Islamic religious life which is practised within a Javanese context. A number of participants disclosed that they involved in the tradition of Islamic religion by practising shalat [canonical prayer] and puasa [fasting]. At the same time, they engaged with self defence, supernatural power, spiritual discipline and mysticism within Javanese tradition. While Javanese tradition is integrated harmoniously Islamic tradition, the influence of Catholicism is experienced as developing a religious conflict.

Further themes to emerge in the pre-dzikir period is the participants' self centred tendencies (see 6.1.1.) and inconsistency between the participants' conduct and Islamic moral values. These themes, together with the themes of superficial and ritualistic religious life, parallel the characteristics of religious life during childhood (Clark, 1958; Crapps, 1986). An important point should be noted here. That is, although most of the participants were already in their forties when they first had contact with the PT group, the characteristics of their religious life are similar in some respects to the characteristics of religious life in childhood. This indicates that there is no relationship between age and maturity of religious life.

The initial phase of religious transformation is revealed in the second episode of the explication of data. In this episode most of the participants report being involved in Islamic religion on an emotional and a rational level.

For some of the participants their involvement in religion is precipitated by the experience of a sense of suffering due to some personal disaster (See 6.1.2.). Most of the participants disclose their curiosity in the practice of dzikir which leads them to join the PT group. In this stage, the role of the PT coordinator is significant in bringing the participants who experience doubt and distrust of the practice of dzikir to a belief in and willingness to practise dzikir.

In the subsequent phase of transformation, the participants are involved in the practice of dzikir which allows them to experience spiritual or mystical experiences (See 6.1.3.). Since most of the participants report spiritual and mystical experiences related to dzikir practice, this episode is entitled "the period of dzikir experiences".

Spiritual experiences which relate to the practice of a particular dzikir practice called sujud mutlak are: the experience of purification; the experience of illumination which has a significant influence on the participants' understanding of religious teachings (see 6.1.4.); and the experience of distraction by bad spirits [jin] or demon which is understood as an obstacle to religious transformation (See 6.1.5.). These experiences bring about a radical change in the participants' religious life which is understood as a transition. In this stage the participants involve themselves totally in religion and renounce their worldly life. For the participants who did not practise sujud mutlak, the transformation is described as more gradual. However, their experience of dzikir is similar to that of those who practise sujud mutlak, that is, the experience of drawing closer to God, of spiritual visions, of timelessness and spacelessness and of healing action. The themes to emerge in the period of dzikir experiences indicate that the participants experience transformation of consciousness (See 6.1.6.).

The fourth or the last phase of religious transformation explicated in the current study is referred to as the period of renewed religious life. The themes that emerge in this period are consistent with some characteristics of mature religious life proposed by Allport (1950) and developed by Clark (1958), that is: well-differentiated, dynamic, consistent, comprehensive, heuristic, integral and direct apprehension of God.

A well-differentiated characteristic of the participants' religious life is indicated by the participants' religious experiences along a rational, emotional, social and mystical dimension. The dynamic character of mature religious life is revealed in the role of dzikir practice both in enhancing the participants'

religious life and in restructuring their world-view. The consistency of the participants' religious life is indicated by the emergence of the sense of being a true Moslem and the application of Islamic moral values in their everyday life. The comprehensive characteristic is reflected in the perceived role of Islamic religion in giving the participants direction for their life. Direct apprehension of God is revealed in the participants' close relationship with God which is characterised by the sense of selflessness (See 6.1.1.).

The themes to emerge in the period of renewed religious life indicate that religious life develops within the participants themselves. Thus, the current study reveals that the participants who practise dzikir tawakkal experience religious transformation from "ordinary" to "mystical" religious life, or from immature to more mature religious life, or from imitative faith to intuitive faith, or from being-with-other-Moslem to being-with-God. However, it does not mean that they have reached the goal or the perfection of religious life, because "...religious development is never complete" (Clark, 1958, p. 240). The unfinished nature of the process of transformation is clearly stated by a participant (HE) in an interview: "...the perfection [of my religious life] is still far away. It has still a long way to go...".

6.1.1. Transformation of sense of Self

The current study reveals that the participants' religious experience involves transformation of the sense of self. This is indicated by the difference between the participants' sense of self reflected in each episode of data explication.

In the pre-dzikir period, a number of participants report their attitude of self-centredness. Their involvement in religion is motivated by self-interest, such as to gain supernatural ability (HE, ND), to have a good social relationship in an organisation (BS), and to avoid the punishment of the hell (MA). This self-centredness is also indicated by the participants sense of arrogance. A participant (HE) felt that by gaining physical and supernatural ability in self defence he was able to do everything, so that he took it easy in looking at his future. Another participants (BM) described the high level of her arrogance or her ego [aku] as the result of her feeling of being "the purest

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person".

The current study reveals that for some of the participants the initial process of self-transformation occurs in "the period of initial contact with the PT group" in which they experienced a sense of suffering due to personal disaster. A participant (HE) experienced the undermining of his sense of arrogance, because his supernatural ability was challenged by the PT leader's spiritual ability. For most of the participants, their experience of self-transformation occurs in "the period of dzikir experiences". This transformation is clearly evident in a participant's (MA) experience while practising sujud mutlak. He related his experience of plong[65] during which he metamorphosed and experienced "becoming a new person". Another participant (BD) reported her experience when she was asked to heal a PT member who was about to collapse. Realising that she had no ability to heal, the participant surrendered to the will of God, prayed and recited al-fatikhah[66]. Then, she experienced the loss of sense of self: "I felt as if I flew. I didn't know where I was. I felt I had disappear."

The participants' experience of self transformation is confirmed by their renewed sense of self in "the period of renewed religious life". In this period most of the participants experienced their sense of self as being selfless characterised by self annihilation, and self denial. This sense of selflessness is often accompanied by a sense of total dependence, surrender and submission to the will of God. In relation to supernatural ability, particularly in healing action, most of the participant attributed this ability to God rather than to "them-selves". A participant (HE) expressed: "...I was nothing. I knew nothing. I could do nothing."

The transformation of the sense of self in relation to a spiritual path is a frequent theme in the literature of mysticism and transpersonal psychology (Moss, 1981; Anthony, 1982; Deikman, 1982; Meadow & Kahoe, 1984). Within Islamic tradition, particularly Sufism, this topic has been discussed by Arasteh (1980) Shafii (1985) and Frager (1989). These authors clearly suggest that Sufism is concerned with self transformation, because the main goal of Sufism is "...to transcend the self and to 'lose' oneself in God" (Frager, 1989, p. 306). Shafii (1985) related to seven stages that Sufis pass through to

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[65] See footnote 36.

[66] See footnote 31.

achieve this goal, that is: repentance [taubat], abstinence [wara'], renunciation [zuhd], poverty [faqir], patience [sabr], trust in God [tawakkal] and contentment [ridha].

The current study might be compare to Sufism. The aim of Sufism, that is to transcend one's self, is similar to a number of themes emerge in the current study. The stages that Sufis pass through is also revealed in the explication of the process of religious transformation. Thus, it is argued that the practice of dzikir tawakkal is a Sufi method, although the Pengajian Tawakkal (PT) group does not claim to be a Sufi order [tarekat].

6.1.2. The Experience of Suffering

A number of participants in this study report an experience of suffering prior to practising dzikir. This sense of suffering is significant as an initiation point to religious transformation.

The important role of suffering in enhancing religious growth has been discussed by Clark (1958). He stated that although most psychologists of religion tend to neglect the experience of religious suffering as the subject of study, all major religions have taken human suffering into account. Among the Biblical writers, for example, suffering was connected with growth, because "in many places and in many ways the praise of suffering are sung" (Clark, 1958, p.171). According to Buddhist tradition, all existence is suffering: "...birth is suffering; old age is suffering; illness is suffering; death is suffering; grief, lamentation, pain, affliction and despair are suffering..." (Schumann, 1973, p.29). Among the Shi'i Moslems, the tradition of injuring their own body as a form of physical suffering becomes an important religious ritual to commemorate the martyrdom of Hasan, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (Momen, 1985).

There is also some evidence in the history of religion of the high proportion of saints and prophets who experienced suffering and crises before they attained a higher level of mystical and spiritual life. In Buddhist tradition, it is stated that before achieving enlightenment and becoming a Buddha, Sidharta Gautama experienced suffering due to an existential crisis (Schumann, 1973). In the Christian tradition, the experience of Saul of Tarsus

becoming Paulus the Apostle is also precipitated by the experience of suffering (Thouless, 1958). In the Islamic tradition, one example of the relationship between suffering and spiritual life is the Prophet Muhammad's experience of ascension [mi'raj] to the Divine Throne which occurred shortly after the death of his wife and his uncle (Nasr, 1989).

Psychologists of religion who have a natural scientific orientation tend to see religious suffering and religious experience from a mental health perspective. Ullman (1988) for example, claimed that religious conversion is best understood as a search for relief from emotional distress, because he found that most of his sample experience emotional turmoil prior to the religious conversion. Spilka et al. (1989) affirms this idea by saying that religious mystical experiences are present with signs of psychological distress.

The concept of a mental health perspective being applied uncritically to religious phenomena has been strongly criticised by Clark (1958) as "cheap" and "ridiculous". Great religious leaders were not concerned with mental health, but "...they bequeathed to society values that their followers have used and civilisation has celebrated" (Clark, 1958, p. 217).

From a phenomenological perspective, the fundamental bias of understanding a religious phenomenon from an empirical perspective is the predetermed application of a cause-effect way of thinking. That is, suffering causes religious transformation, because the suffering is experienced prior to religious transformation. This reductionistic framework is criticised by phenomenological psychologist. From a phenomenological perspective, two series of events occurring in a sequence do not indicate that one is the cause and the other is the effect. "A cause-effect thinking can be not only limiting but also misleading" (Valle & King, 1978, p. 10). This critique has been well explained by Alan Watts (1962) in the following example:

> ...[Suppose] someone has never seen a cat. He is looking through a narrow slit in a fence, and on the other side, a cat walks by. He sees first the head, then the less distinctly shaped furry trunk, and then the tail. Extraordinary! The cat turns round and walks back, and again he sees the head, and a little later the tail. This sequence begins to look like something regular and reliable. Yet again, the cat turns round, and he witnesses the same regular sequence: first the head, and later the tail. Thereupon he reasons that the event *head* is the invariable and necessary cause of the event *tail*, which is the head's effect. This absurd and confusing gobbledygook comes from his failure to see that head and tail go together: they are all one cat" (Alan Watts, 1962, p.26).

From a phenomenological perspective, therefore, the suffering experienced by the participants in the present study needs to be understood as a meaningful part of the whole process of religious transformation, rather than in a cause-effect frame of reference.

6.1.3. <u>Dzikir</u> and Mystical Experience

<u>Dzikir</u> experiences as revealed in the current study share some similarities with mystical experiences previously reviewed. The similarities include the following characteristics: both <u>dzikir</u> and mystical experience have noetic quality, as the source of knowldge; they are ineffable; they are holy; they are passive; they involve timelessness and spacelessness and both experiences produces deep positive moods (James, 1902; Stace, 1966; Meadow & Kahoe, 1984; Spilka et al. 1991).

The noetic quality of <u>dzikir</u> experience is evidenced in the participants' experience of illumination. A number of participants reported a new understanding of religious teaching. A participant (ND) explicitly associates <u>dzikir</u> practice with <u>ilmu</u> <u>ladduni</u> which literally means the knowledge from God.

The ineffable quality of <u>dzikir</u> experience is indicated by the difficulty for the participants to describe their experience. A participant (SU) has difficulty in communicating his experience of <u>dzikir</u> which he senses "throughout the whole body". Similarly another participant (BD) found that it is difficult to describe her experience of "spiritual openness" which results in healing. Rather than communicate their ineffable experiences in a verbal description, most of the participants use expressive words such as <u>plong</u>.

The holy quality of <u>dzikir</u> experience is clear from the participants' understanding of their experience in a religious context, that is, as a gift from God. This is confirmed by a participant's (HE) sense of sacredness in which he experienced his "creatureness" before "the Creator".

The characteristic of passivity associated with <u>dzikir</u> experience is reflected by the participants' receptiveness of any spontaneous actions or

feelings during sujud mutlak. Furthermore, the passivity is also evident in the participants' experience of total submission, surrender and dependence upon the will of God.

Dzikir practice allows the participant to experience timelessness and spacelessness. The timelessness experience is indicated by the participants' experience of alteration of the sequential nature of time. Past and future time is experienced in the present. The sense of spacelessness is evident in a participant's (BD) sense of space unboundedness in which she experienced "flying up to the air" and "entering down into the earth".

The deeply positive moods associated with dzikir practice are experienced by a number of participants. A participant (BM) reported her experience of joy and bliss when she recited a particular dzikir formula. Another participant (SU) reported his experience of "dzikir throughout the whole body" as being one of pleasure and happiness.

Additional characteristics of mystical experiences reported in the literature but which do not emerge in the current study are the qualities of unity and paradox. A unique dimension of dzikir experience compared to recorded mystical experiences reviewed in the literature concerns the possibility of healing. A number of participants reported some healing actions in relation to dzikir experience, either for themselves or for others. In this context the participants emphasise their role as a mediator and the importance of selflessness for the success of healing. Rather than attribute the healing ability to themselves, the participants understand their healing ability as the will of God.

The above observations and comparisons indicate that dzikir experiences can be understood as sharing characteristics with mystical experiences in other traditions. This observation affirms the participants experience religious transformation from "ordinary" to "mystical" religious life, that is religious life which is accompanied by mystical experiences.

6.1.4. Two Modes for Understanding Religious Teaching.

A number of participants report an experience of illumination during or after practising dzikir in which their understanding of Islamic teaching is

deepened. In exploring their experience, the participants distinguish two modes of understanding of religious teaching: the mode of knowing and the mode of understanding. In the mode of knowing the participants gain religious knowledge rationally, whereas in the mode of understanding the participants obtain religious knowledge experientially or intuitively.

The difference between rational and intuitive knowledge has been widely explored by Ornstein (1986). Based on neurological research, he hypothesised that the left hemisphere of the brain was responsible for rational consciousness, while the right hemisphere was responsible for intuitive consciousness. Ornstein argued that rational consciousness relates very closely to empirical science, while intuitive consciousness relates to mysticism and meditation practice. He argued further that rationality is not the only authentic tool for gaining knowledge. Without intuitive knowledge, rational knowledge is incomplete. Ornstein therefore proposed the need for a synthesis between the rational knowledge of western science with the intuitive knowledge of the eastern mystic.

As revealed in the current study, the polarity between rationality and intuition is not only applied for understanding general knowledge (science), but also for religious teaching. A number of participants stated that they had already "known" a particular Islamic teaching on a rational level before practising dzikir. However, the experience of illumination enabled them to "understand" the essential meaning of Islamic teaching intuitively. This finding supports the prior study that intuitive understanding relates to meditation practice (Ornstein, 1986).

The current study reveals further that the participants' understanding of Islamic teaching influences their religious life in terms of the observance of rituals and of the belief (iman). The influence of rational understanding of religious teaching on the observance of religious rituals is indicated by the participants' reluctance in practising shalat in the pre-dzikir period, although they already understood Islamic teaching rationally. In contrast, after practising dzikir and gaining intuitive understanding, they performed shalat and other religious obligations intensively.

It has also been shown by this study that the participants' experience of illumination produces an intuitive understanding of religious teaching. This understanding then strengthens their belief [iman]. For example, a participant (HE) experienced bodily sensation while practising sujud mutlak in which he

felt his body was cold and trembled. He associated this bodily experience with the prophet Muhammad's revelation experience. This experience led him to a strong belief [haqqul yaqin] in the revelatory quality of the Qur'an.

The above discussion reveals that religious transformation involves the transformation of understanding of religious teaching from a rational to an intuitive understanding.

6.1.5. Obstacles to Religious Transformation

The current study indicates that religious transformation can be understood as a process of religious development to achieve a more mature religious life in which the participants experience a close relationship with God. This journey to draw closer to God is experienced as being personally engaging and demanding. Aside from the suffering which is experienced by the participants in the initial episode of transformation, they also face other obstacles during the process of transformation.

One of the palpable obstacles of the religious transformation as revealed in the data of this study is the distraction of (bad) spirits [mahluk halus] which is sometimes considered as demons [jin]. A participant (BM) reported that when she was practising dzikir intensively by reciting the formula laa illa ha illallah she experienced the distraction by bad spirits during waking consciousness and sleep. She saw a dreadful being which tried to frighten her. This participant was also deceived by a "voice" when she recited the name of God in her heart. The "voice" told her that God did not exist.

The forms of distraction by bad spirits as experienced by the participant (BM) stated above have previously been discussed in the religious studies literature. Pempel (see Meadow & Kahoe, 1988) identified various forms of "demonic obstacles". These obstacles involve enticing distractions that keep the meditators from reaching a deeper level of consciousness which may include visual experiences of horrible monsters, anxieties about death and profound despair.

The deception of the bad spirits was also experienced by another participant (MA) in which he heard a "voice" (identified as being from a jin)

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which initially introduced itself as a spiritual guide, but later the voice prevented the participant from praying [berdo'a] to God. The jin then prevented the participant from performing shalat by influencing his body to spin around "like a spinning top". This kind of temptation has been discussed by Vikler & Vikler (1977). Based upon Christian tradition they suggested a continuum of demonic involvement in temptation toward evil, ranging from sinful human nature, to demonic temptation, demonic oppression and demonic possession.

Thus, the distraction of an evil spirit is a common experience in most of the religious traditions. Some of the literature also reveals that this temptation is not only experienced by "ordinary" people who seek a close relationship with God but is also experienced by some religious leaders. For example, it is stated in the Bible that Jesus was directly tempted by the devil or Satan (Schumann, 1973). It is also described in the tradition [Hadist] that the prophet Muhammad was tempted by jin when he was performing shalat (Philips, 1989).

The current study reveals that the demonic distraction discussed above is considered a notorious external or "outside" obstacle of religious transformation, that is from other "beings". Dr. Asdie, the coordinator of the PT group in Yogyakarta added some forms of the obstacles from internal or "inside", that is from within a person him/herself[67]. Included in "inside" obstacles is the "hidden" sense of arrogance which emerges after practising dzikir. This form of obstacle is experienced by a participant (HE) in which he felt that he was the "truest" person and demanded that other people follow his path. Other "inside" obstacles mentioned by Dr. Asdi are the tendency to practise dzikir intensively and to ignore worldly activities. The ignorance of worldly activity due to practising dzikir intensively is revealed in the experience of a participant (AG) in which he was involved intensively in religious activities (including practising dzikir) and was unwilling to finish his University study.

The current study indicates that both "outside" and "inside" obstacles of religious transformation can be solved by the participants through consistently practising dzikir and attending PT weekly group meetings.

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[67] This information derives from my records of one of Dr. Asdie's religious talks (ceramah) after a weekly meeting during my field work.

6.1.6. Transformation of Consciousness

It has been recorded in the psychological literature that meditation is a potential method for alteration of consciousness often referred to as altered stated of consciousness (ASC) (Shapiro, 1980; Walsh, 1983; Meadow & Kahoe; 1984; Ornsrein, 1986). These study focus predominantly upon mental-psychological and physiological process of the ASC, psychological factors correlates to ASC, factors triggering to the ASC and the characteristics of ASC. Among the characteristics of ASC discussed are alteration of bodily sensation, emotion, thought, perception, sense of time, sense of self, and sense of reality (Ludwig, 1969; Walsh, 1983).

The current study reveals that the participants' experience a shift of awareness while practising dzikir and in everyday waking consciousness. This shift is consistent with an experience of an altered states of consciousness. On a physical level, a number of participants report their change of bodily sensation while practising dzikir such as muscle tension, hot, cold and light. The participants also report bodily experiences such as spontaneous bodily movements and the recitation of the name of God "throughout the cell of the whole body".

The alteration of participants' emotion during the practise of dzikir is reflected in the emergence of deep positive feelings such as love, happiness and joy which sometimes meld together with the feeling of fear, sorrow and regret. The participants also report an alteration of the sense of self as previously discussed (see 6.1.1.).

Furthermore, a number of participants report visionary experiences, the hearing of "voices" and the ability to percept the presence of spirits. For example, a participant (HE) experienced a "spiritual ablution" in which he was able to see his hands were full of "dirty things" and became "sparkle" when he imitated the action of ablution. This indicates the participant's alteration of perception.

Further evidence of ASC experiences in the practice of dzikir is the participants' alteration of their sense of time (past and future experience in the present) and alteration of their sense of space indicated by a participant (BD) experience of the sense of space unboundedness (flying in the air or entering down to the earth).

The above observations leave no doubt that the participants in the current study experience, in Western term, an alteration of consciousness. However, unlike most of the ASC research, which is based upon the perspective of a natural scientific paradigm, the current study reveals the significance of the meaning of ASC experiences for participants. For example, a participants' (BD) experience of "entering down to the earth" associates with her fear of death. Another participant (BM) discloses her strong belief in the teaching of the Qur'an after she experiences "altered" visual and auditive perception. Thus, for the participants, ASC experiences are not their goal. Rather their experiences are understood as a part of the whole process of religious transformation.

6.2. MEDITATION AND DZIKIR PRACTICE

In discussing the findings of the current study it is fruitful to compare dzikir practice with meditation in other religious traditions and meditation which is practised in contemporary Western Society.

As reviewed in Chapter II, dzikir practice, particularly dzikir tawakkal is a method of meditation within an Islamic tradition. This practice is similar in some respects to meditation practices derive from other religious traditions. One of the similarities is that both dzikir and meditation practice are practised as a spiritual exercise in order to achieve a higher level of spirituality or to draw closer to God. As revealed in the current study dzikir tawakkal is considered to be a means of bringing about religious transformation, that is transformation from ordinary to mystical religious life in which God becomes the centre of the participants' life.

Another similarity is concerned with the role of meditation in the context of the religious system. Ornstein (1988) suggested that most meditation practices are an integral part of religious rituals. Similarly, the current study reveals that dzikir practice is only a part of Islamic rituals. Aside from practising dzikir the participants also practise other religious rituals, such as shalat, puasa (fasting) and other religious obligations.

Meditation as practised within contemporary Western society , however, is significantly different from dzikir practice. While dzikir is practised

within a religious context, meditation practices which are adopted by Western people from Eastern tradition tend to be separated from their original metaphysical or religious foundation. They are practised in a secular context without any notion of a divine force or power (Wulff, 1992).

The secular orientation of meditation practice is evident in the use of meditation as a self-help tool to overcome a large range of everyday life problems, including physical, psychological and social difficulties (Walsh, 1983). Although these short term effects of meditation might be beneficial for everyday life, without metaphysical context and religious belief structure meditation experience cannot be understood precisely. Maslow (1964) pointed out that a number of Western people have "mystical" experiences but fail to understand and acknowledge their experiences because they lack of metaphysical basis.   Without a meaningful religious system, these experiences become meaningless. This view is confirmed by the findings of the current study. Since the participants practise dzikir in an Islamic religious context, they understand and grasp the meaningfulness of dzikir experiences and the meaningfulness of their life.   Thus, metaphysical and religious context is very important for people who practise any kind of meditation practice.

6.3. IDEAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The adoption of a phenomenological approach in the present study allows us to understand the experience of transformation within the context of the meaning structure of the participants' life-world. I would argue that this picture could not be achieved by adopting a natural scientific approach which tends to explain a phenomenon in a partial and reductionistic way and from a cause-effect perspective. However, there are two limitations to this study deserving further discussion. The first is concerned with the nature of the data and the second with the problem of data explication.

One of the limitations of the current research is the use of retrospective data. The participants in this study were interviewed about experiences which occurred in the past and are given meaning in the present. It is thus difficult to portray the dynamic interrelationship between the religious experiences and

the meaningful life-world over time. According to Spilka et al. (1991) retrospective data is limited to the extent that the memories of the participants might be distorted to keep them in line with present feelings. Therefore, reporting immediate experiences across time add utilising a longitudinal approach could enrich the quality of data. Such an approach may be able to provide a more fine-grained picture of the process of change of the participants' ideas over time.

There are two main problems in the explication of the data. The first problem is concerned with the language translation. While the original interview data was gathered in <u>Bahasa</u> <u>Indonesia</u>, it is difficult, if not impossible, to translate all of the data into English in a way which fully reveals all of the original meanings. There are some implicit or contextual meanings in one language which cannot be adequately translated to another language. Therefore, it was impossible in the current study to explicate all themes and meanings contained within the original data, because the explication is necessarily an "English" translation from the original <u>Bahasa</u> <u>Indonesia</u>.

Another problem in the explication of the data concerns the requirement of the researcher to be presuppositionless. Ideally, from a phenomenological approach, a researcher has to put aside all extraneous theoretical frames of reference and his/her own knowledge in explicating data. However, I found that to be totally presuppositionless is also impossible. Although I have tried to put aside all of the theory and my own involvement in the practice of <u>dzikir</u>, I still wonder whether the objective of being presuppositionless can and has been achieved.

The phenomenological procedure developed in this study for explicating data is fruitful in understanding a religious phenomenon, including the process of religious transformation. However, this procedure is extremely complex and time consuming. The use of appropriate computer software to assist in the task of qualitative research as suggested by Tesch (1991) may be helpful for future studies which may then draw upon a larger number of participants and a larger pool of data.

6.4. CONCLUSIONS

Contemporary psychological literature in religious development focuses predominantly on the development of religious life during childhood and adolescence. The topic of mysticism is invariably treated as a separate area of study. This stance assumes that "mystical" religious life is only attained by a few people, namely the spiritual elite. The current study which applies a phenomenological approach reveals that religious transformation can be understood from a developmental perspective, that is, a change of religious orientation from "ordinary" to "mystical" religious life; from immature to mature religious life; from imitative faith to intuitive faith, or from being-with-other-Moslem to being-with-God. This transformation involves transformation of the sense of self, of understanding religious teaching and of consciousness.

Mystical religious life, that is religious life which is accompanied by mystical experience and direct apprehension of God, is thus not restricted to great spiritual leaders. Although the process of religious transformation is revealed as being both demanding and personally engaging, it is subject to learning and can also be applied in ordinary living.

participants, Moslems who practise <u>dzikir</u> <u>tawakkal</u>, experience religious

transformation: from ordinary to mystical religious life; from immature to more mature religious life;

5.1.4. The Experience of Bodiliness

The current study reveals the significance of bodiliness in disclosing the participants' experience of religious transformation. This is clealy indicated during the participants' experience of purification. A number of participants reported the experience of bodiliness while practising dzikir ranging from muscles tension to releasing involuntary movements imitates the action of self defence or washing the body repeatedly. When the pure condition of spirit is achieved, the response of the participants's body is performing shalat. A participant (MA) described that his arms "raised themselves up" to perform takbir and his back and his knee "bent themselves" to perform the act of ruku' [bowing] and sujud [prostration].

These experiences suggest the inseparable unity between the participants' body and spirit which is reflected by the influence of each on another.

The influence of bodily existence to the spiritual life is indicated by a participant's (ND) understanding of the sicknesses of his family. He perceives that this sicknesses are not merely caused by diseases, but more importantly is caused by his moral conduct. On the other hand, the influence of spiritual life to the bodily existence is evidence in a participant's (BD) experience in which she associated her breast cancer with her relationship with God reflected in the intensity of practising dzikir.

Further relationship between body and spirit is indicated by the participants' experience of physical body as spiritual body with the possibility of being "invisible". Thus, for the participants, the body possesses spiritual quality. The term "heart" which is often used by the participants does not refer to the anatomical heart as understood by biological or medical science. For

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the participants, the "heart" encapsulates their spirit which is responsive to the Divine influence.

From a phenomenological perspective, Moss (1989) referred to Marleau Ponty's notion of human body as a lived-body body. He suggested that body is not merely bones and flesh described by empirical science, but it is described in a meaningful way as a lived-body. For example, the legs are described in relation to its meaning for walking, running or kicking, while the hand associates with the meaning of grasping and holding. This description is confirmed by the findings of the current study. A number of participants reporeted the meaningfulness of their bodiliness. For example, a participant's (SU) related his experience while practising dzikir, that "...the cells throughout my body recited the name of God." This participant also reported that when he performed shalat not only his mouth recited the Qur'anic verses, but also "the cells throughout my body recited al-fatikhah." In this case the participants discloses the meaning of his body in worshipping God.

Thus, the current study reveals the participants' experience of bodiliness, that is, body is not reduced to a physical object, but is experienced as a meaningful lived-body and it plays a significant role in the process of religious transformation.

As a postcript of this theses, I quote a poem by a well-known Sufi, Jalaluddin Rumi, which reflect the process of transformation:

I live in realms of ore and stones;
And then I smiled in many -tinted flowers;
Then roving with th wild and wandering hours;
O'es earth and air and ocean's zone
In a new birth

I dived and flew,
  and crept and run
And all the secret of my essence drew
Within a force that brought them all to view
  And lo, a man!
  And then my goal.
Beyond the cloud, beyond the sky,
In realms where none may change or die-
In angel form; and then away
Beyond the bounds of night and day,
And life and Death, unseen or seen,
Where all that is hath ever been,
  As one and whole.

(Quoted from Arasteh, 1990)

The uniqueness of dzikir practice compared to other meditation practices is that dzikir practice is very tightly connected with the Islamic rituals and belief structure, whereas other meditation pratices are somewhat

"loose". For example, while it is arguebly still possible for non-Buddist people to learn and practise Buddist's meditation, it is impossible for non-Moslems to practise dzikir. If a non-Moslem practises dzikir, according to Islamic tradition he/she would automatically become a Moslem, because one of the formula which should be recited during dzikir practice is the profession of the faith (syahadat), the gate to enter the Islamic religion.

The close connection between dzikir practice and Islamic religion is also indicated by the application of Islamic belief structure in interpretating any experiences which have occured during or after dzikir. For example, when a participant (MA) got a skin desease after practising dzikir, he understood the desease as the sign of purification for his sin to gain a supernatural power in a certain way which is considered as a form of taking a partner to God (syirik kecil). Another participant (BD) interpreted her dzikir experience by referring to a tradition (hadist). Thus, the Islamic belief structure serves as a context for understanding and acknowledging experiences. Without this context a particular experience cannot be understood precisely.

The weekly meetings offered the participants a chance to relate their experiences in a forum called kesan dan pesan. The participants reports that they sometime also discuss their problems personally, either with Dr. Asdi or more senior members.

The process of attaining the essential meaning of being-a-Moslem can be understood from the meaning of the word "Moslem". As reviewed in Chapter II, the word "Moslem" conveys two meanings. Firstly, "Moslem" refers to one whose religion is Islam. In this sense, the term "Moslem" is used as a social-religious identity which makes a distinction from people who affiliate with other religions. Secondly, "Moslem" means total submission to the will of God. This is understood as the essential meaning of the word "Moslem" (Maududi, 1958)

The current study reveals that before practising dzikir most of the participnts experience distance between Islamic religion and their existence. A participant (AG) described himself as "[orang Islam KTP]" which means that his involvement in Islam is only on his "ID-card". Another participant (BS) focuses her religious life on the social dimension of Islam with little commitment toward the Islamic ritual of shalat and little direct experience of God. These instances suggest that before practising dzikir the participants' experience of the sense of being-a-Moslem in relation to social identity.

After practising dzikir, however, the participants experience that being-a-Moslem means total surrender to the will of God. This experience is confirmed by the most common theme emerges in "the period of renewed religious life". That is, the participants experience close relationship to God which is characterized by selflessness, feeling of total dependance and total submission to the will of God (BM, MA, ND, SU, EL). This characteristics reflect the essential meaning of the word "Moslem".

Thus, the current research reveals that religious transformation is a process of attaining to a higher level of religious life by arriving at the essential meaning of being-a-Moslem.

Two themes in the period of renewed religious life
which is considered as unique characteristics of a more mature religious life emerge from the current study. Firstly, the internalization of religion in which the participants experience Islamic religion as part of their existence. Secondly, the experience of meaningful life in which the participant understand the interrelatedness between their everyday life and their spiritual life.

The participants spiritual and mystical experience does not experience of suffering the joining to the PT group, the practice of dzikir and the spiritual-mystical experiences reveals the whole process of religious transformation. The former experience does not mean the cause of the latter experience.

This meaning is the most widely understood by Moslems and non-Moslems. As revealed in the current study, the participants understand and experience the sense of being a Moslem in relation to this meaning before practising dzikir . That is, they
including the participants of the current study before they practise dzikir. This is evident in the themes which commonly emerge in the pre-dzikir period.

The term "ordinary" religious life, used by Thouless (1950) is considered appropriate to describe this religious life of general population. Clark (1958) also stated that religious life of most of adult people are still ritualistic and superficial.

The process of religious transformation among Moslems who practise dzikir-tawakkal stated above is similar in some respects to the process of religious conversion proposed by Clark (1958), the process of mystical transformation of a Christian Monk explicated by Moss (1981) and the stages of mystical life described by some scholars (Meadow & Kahoe, 1982). The characteristics of dzikir experiences explicated in this study is also similar to the characteristics of mystical experiences described by other psychologists of religion such as James (1902) and Stace (1960). These characteristics includes ineffability, noetic quality, passivity, paradoxical, timeless and spaceless of the experience of dzikir.
  The present study , however, has some unique qualities compared to other study. The first unique quality concerns with the source of data. While most of the psychological study on religious transformation based upon documentary report (Clark, 1958; Meadow & Kahoe, 1982) or hermeneutical study (Moss, 1981) of the "spiritual elite", the present study enrich those studies by providing empirical data from "ordinary" people. The Islamic tradition as the background of the participant of

this study is also unique compared to other studies which are mostly based on Christian tradition.

Within the last decade meditation practice has received tremendous attention from Western people. In the United States alone, millions of people practise meditation in their everyday life (Walsh, 1983). Western people are reportedly amazed with the positive effect of meditation practice. Meditation has thus become a self-help tool to overcome a large range of everyday life problems, including physical, psychological and social difficulties. Meditation is supporte by a significant body of research done by scientists to justify the effect of meditation practice. For example, in "Scientific Research on the Trancendental Meditation Program" Orme-Johnson & Farrow (1976) presents almost a hundred scientific research papers to examine the efficacy of Trancendental Meditation program in various areas. In addition, a number of psychological theories and studies have been used to explain the mental process ionvolves in meditation. (Naranjo & Ornstein, 1977; Ornstein, 1989; Van der Lans, 1987).

5.4. The Pengajian Tawakkal (PT) and Tarekat[68]

I should now discuss the emergence of the PT within Islamic tradition which is considered unique but still problematic for general Moslems in Indonesia. While a religious gathering (pengajian) itself is very common among Moslems in Indonesia, the practice of dzikir qolbi in a pengajian is unique for the Pengajian Tawakkal. However, this uniqueness has also created some problems. One of the problems faced by PT group as revealed in the data of this study is that the practice of dzikir in the PT is often associated with a Kebatinan (Javanese mysticism) group rather than an Islamic mysticism group. A further problem is indicated by an event which I encountered during my field work in which a member of the PT group told me that Moslems in a neighborhood were restless because some young Moslems practised dzikir qolbi. According to general Moslem understanding, dzikir qolbi should be practised in a Sufi group (tarekat) and under the guidance of a Sheikh or Guru. The restlessness of Moslems in this neighboorhood motivated the PT members to organize a seminar attended by these two groups. Attending this seminar gave me a more clear understanding of the problem faced by the PT group in the general Moslem community.

The first issued discussed in the seminar was whether the PT group could be categorized as a tarekat. According to Islamic mystical tradition (tasawwuf), there are some criteria for a mystical group to be called as a tarekat. The most essential criterion is the existence of a Syaikh or Guru as a spiritual Master who holds a silsilah, a spiritual chain which link the Syaikh to the Prophet Muhammad. This criterion cannot be achieved by the PT group, because there is no Sheikh and silsilah in this group. Therefore, it is clear that the PT group "is not" a tarekat.

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[68] Tarekat is a Sufi order or brotherhood in Islamic mysticism

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Dr. Asdi, the coordinator or leader of the PT group branch of Yogyakarta, in this seminar stated that the PT group does not claim itself as a (new) tarekat. However, in a personal interview Dr. Asdi did not deny the link between the PT group with a tarekat. There are two indications of the connection between the PT group with a tarekat. Firstly, the history of the PT group suggests that the founder (Bapak Permana) learned some mystical knowledge in some places and from some spiritual leaders before he founded the PT group in Jakarta. In my interview Dr.Asdi did not mentioned a particular place or person where Bapak Permana learned, according to Dr. Asdi it could be a tarekat. The link between the PT group and tarekat is also indicated by some similarities between the practice of dzikir in the PT with dzikir practice in some tarekat, especially the practice of dzikir qolbi or reciting the name of Allah in the heart and the use of the "seven channels" as a means for one to be able to recite the name of Allah throughout "the whole body".

The reluctance of the PT group to be referred to as a tarekat gives a clear answer for the first problem. However, the second problem arose, because dzikir qolbi as understood by general Moslem is only practised in a tarekat. Why does the PT group which is clearly not a tarekat also practise this kind of dzikir?. In responding this question, the PT group provides a strong argument that the practice of dzikir qolbi directly follows the injunction in the Qur'an. Members of the PT group often refer to a verse in the Qur'an: "Call upon your Lord in your heart" (Q. 17:205). For PT members, it is clear that this injunction to practise dzikir qolbi is not only for a tarekat members, but also for all Moslems.

The other important problem which was discussed in the seminar I attended is concerning with the role of a Sheikh, Guru or guide. Almost all of the tarekat group agree on the importance role of a Guru in practising dzikir for the spiritual journey to God. For the tarekat members, the Syaikh is believed to have a direct spiritual connection with the Prophet Muhammad through the silsilah from which the barakah (blessing) can be descended. With this spiritual quality, the Sheikh is able to help the followers to overcome the problems which usually emerge in the journey. It is a very popular belief among tarekat group that when people practise dzikir without a Sheikh or guide, satan will be their guide (Michon, 1989). This implies that practising dzikir without a Sheikh is unacceptable.

In this controversy, Dr. Asdi clearly stated that there is no Sheikh or Guru in the PT group. Even though there is always a dzikir guide (pembimbing) when the PT members practise dzikir together, the role of this guide is not the same as the role of Sheikh in a tarekat. However, Dr. Asdi strongly belives that Allah alone is become the guide for Moslems who want to get closer to Him by practising dzikir qolbi.

The problems stated above suggests that the existence of the PT group is not totally accepted by all Moslem society. From a tarekat point of view the PT group is regarded as breaking Islamic mystical tradition and unacceptable. However, from a different side the PT group can also be seen as a form of revival of Islamic religious life by separating from the orthodoxy of the tarekat tradition.

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GLOSSARY

Asma'ul husna : The most beautiful name of Allah

Barzakh   : the period after death, before ressurection.

Dzikir-jahr: the recitation of the name of God loudly

Dzikir-khofi: invocation of God in the heart.

Hajj   : pilgrimage

Hadist   : the tradition the Prophet Muhammad.

Iman   : belief

Khuldi   : the forbidden fruit which Adam and Eva must not get   near, but they ate it.

Malaikat   : angel

Mujaaddin : the revivalist of the message of propher Muhammad in certain age

Qur'an   : the holy book of Moslem.
            Q. 2:10 means the Qur'an chapter 2 verse 10.

rakaat   : number of 'bow' during the prayer (shalat)

shalat   : prayer

shaum   : fasting

syirk   : the ascribing a partner to God

sukhf   : the earlier scripture revealed to anonymous prophet

zakat   : alms-giving

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