

MBRAKAH IN THE PESANTREN SALAF TRADITION: *The Dialectics of Local Wisdom and the Sufism Ethos for the Harmony of Life*

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Abstrak: Di antara warisan berharga bagi muslim Indonesia yang patut dilestarikan adalah pesantren beserta tradisinya. Sejak awal kemunculannya, lembaga ini tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai wadah proses pendidikan melainkan telah menjadi pusat pergerakan sosial dan berbagai aktifitas masyarakat. Selain itu, pesantren dengan ciri khasnya juga telah mengajarkan banyak hal termasuk merawat tradisi lokal. Salah satu yang menarik untuk dilihat lebih jauh adalah tradisi *mbrakah* atau *ngrowod* yang dilakukan oleh para santri. Tradisi ini termasuk *riyādhah* (baik dilakukan dengan berpuasa maupun tidak) dengan menahan diri untuk mengkonsumsi makanan selain yang berbahan dasar beras dan dapat menggantinya dengan ubi-ubian, kentang, jagung, atau sayur-sayuran. Berdasarkan telaah bibliografi penulis melihat bahwa tradisi *mbrakah* adalah produk dari dialog antara kearifan lokal dan nilai islam. Dialektika keduanya diartikulasikan oleh falsafah jawa dan etos sufisme yang mana keduanya memiliki spirit yang serupa. Hubungan keduanya merupakan hubungan timbal balik yang saling mempengaruhi dan saling mengisi. *Mbrakah* telah bertahan menjadi tradisi di pesantren karena telah dimaknai oleh para santri dengan berbagai pemaknaan, seperti untuk menjaga kesehatan, untuk mengasah spiritualitas ataupun untuk kesalehan sosial yang dapat bermanfaat bagi orang banyak.

ملخص: من بين الموروثات القيمة للمسلمين الإندونيسيين التي يجب الحفظ عليها هي بيسانترين وتقاليدهم. منذ نشأتها، لم تعمل هذه المؤسسة كمكان تعليمية فحسب، بل أصبحت مركزاً للحركات الاجتماعية والأنشطة الاجتماعية المختلفة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، بيسانترين بخصائصها، كما تدرس القيم العديدة، إهتم أيضا برعاية الحكمة المحلية. ومن أشياء مثيرة للاهتمام هو تقليد بركة (*mbrakah*) أو عرووووس (*ngrowod*) التي يقوم بها الطلاب المعاهد (*santri*). يعتبر هذا التقليد كالرياضة النفس (سواء قام بذلك عن طريق الصيام أم لا) بالإجتنااب عن تناول الطعام بخلاف الأرز، ويمكن أن يحل محلها البطاطس، أو البطاطا، أو الذرة، أو الخضار وما أشبه ذلك. استنادا إلى دراسات البحوث العلمية، يرى الباحث أن تقليد بركة هو نتاج حوار بين الحكمة المحلية والقيم الإسلامية. يعبر هذا الحوار من خلال الفلسفة الجاوية والثورة الصوفية حيث كلاهما ذوا تعاليم متشابهة. والعلاقة بينهما هي علاقة متبادلة تؤثر وتمتلى بعضها علي بعض. وصار بركة باقيا من تقليد بيسانترين لأنه فسره الطلاب بمعان متعددة، مثل الحفظ على الصحة، ولشحد الروحانية، أو لصالح الاجتماعي التي تستفيد الكثير من الناس.

Kata kunci: *Mbrakah, kearifan lokal, etos sufisme, tradisi pesantren.*

INTRODUCTION

Islam Nusantara that is sticking into a national issue ignites anyone to see it from various aspects. According to Burhanis view, *Islam Nusantara* can be viewed from the idea of “Indonesian fiqh” such as Hasbi al-Shiddique view, “National Mazhab” from Hazairin, and “contextualization” from Munawir Sjadzali. In other aspects, it’s also can be seen from the ideological point of view. It was as a promising response to religious intolerance and radicalism, and so on.¹ If it examined closely, the terminology of *Islam Nusantara* is essentially not going to cause debate because it is an expression of Islam based on the locality and culture of a place. The contact between Islam and the culture of the place where Islam is present cannot be avoided, because religion and culture are two things that are inseparable.

Clifford Geertz’s sorting of Javanese Muslims into *santri*, *abangan*, and *priyayi* can be proved that the factions of Islamic expression really exist, although, in principle, the basic teachings of Islam are similar.² From the diversity of expression, it can be concluded that non-homogeneity is a necessity in expressing Islam. There are many things that can be used as evidence that Indonesian Islam with all its aspects has its own uniqueness. One of the most visible is the Islamic education institution called *Pesantren*. In this case, the pesantren what is meant is a traditional pesantren or commonly known as *pesantren salaf*.³

For Gus Dur, *pesantren* is a subculture that has unique and specific characteristics.⁴ Pesantren is the oldest of Indonesia’s Islamic education institution that

¹ Ahmad Najib Burhani, “Islam Nusantara as a Promising Response to Religious Intolerance and Radicalism,” *Trends in Southeast Asia Series*, no. 21 (2018): 9.

² Clifford Geertz, *Agama Jawa: Abangan, Santri, Priyayi Dalam Kebudayaan Jawa*, trans. Aswab Mahasin and Bur Rasuanti, II (Depok: Komunitas Bambu, n.d.), 3.

³ *Pesantren Salaf* is a type of Islamic boarding school that is growing rapidly in Indonesia. According to some researchers such as Martin Van Bruinessen, Zamakhsyari Dhofir, or Abdul Munir Mulkhan *Pesantren Salaf* interpreted as Islamic educational institutions that implement traditional curriculum. In other words, those institution teach student (*santri*) the *kitab kuning* (*turath*), with a model of teaching *bandongan* (classical). The Examples of this type of pesantren are *Pesantren Lirboyo Kediri* or *pesantren Al-Anwar Rembang*. In addition to the *pesantren salaf*, there are also modern Islamic boarding schools. In contrast, the second model of Islamic boarding school applies a modern curriculum that does not hold the *kitab kuning* (*turath*). A prominent feature of modern pesantren is the habituation of teaching and strengthening foreign languages, especially Arabic and English. Among these examples are the *Darussalam Modern Islamic Boarding School Gontor, Ponorogo*, *Pesantren Zaitun Solo*, and *Pesantren Daru Najah, Jakarta*.

⁴ Abdurrahman Wahid, *Prisma pemikiran Gus Dur* (LKIS, 1999), 19; Umar Sidiq, “Organisasi Pembelajaran Pada Pondok Pesantren Dalam Di Era Global,” *Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan Dan Kemasyarakatan* 12, no. 1 (2014): 126.

is adaptive to local values and wisdom.⁵ This distinctive feature makes pesantren survive in the midst of a social change that continues to run dynamically. Gus Dur's thesis seems to have similarities with the phenomenon found in the Iranian country. In Iran, institutions such as pesantren are called *Hauzah*. *Hauzah* became a dialectical space between the noble values of religion and the philosophy of life which was then translated by the alumni to answer various challenges and social needs of the society.

As mentioned before, *pesantren* with their characteristics, are able to survive in the midst of exposure to foreign cultures that enter. Likewise with the turn of the era, from traditional, modern, to post-modern, does not make pesantren lose its identity. Pesantren as a center of religious education is at the same time become a space for preservation of local wisdom that is considered to be zero from the aspect of *mashlahāt* (benefit). One of the unique and preserved is *mbrakah* tradition that will be examined in this paper.

Mbrakah has become the identity of the *santri* that is inherent in the pesantren salaf tradition and is still practiced today. However, this phenomenon has not been captured in much detail, especially from a phenomenological point of view and linking it with various social facts. On the basis of this, the question arises whether the tradition is purely derived from Islamic teachings or has undergone localization and if it has experienced localization how the tradition still perseveres in the midst of a purification of Islamic teachings that continues to strengthen.

For those reasons, this paper elaborates some of the bibliographic data with a thick description analysis, specifically on the theme of *mbrakah* tradition which is practiced by the *santri* in traditional pesantren or commonly known as *pesantren salaf*. Some data were analyzed using the theory of religious and cultural relations. This theory is considered important because however the phenomenon of religiosity with its complexity can not only be seen with a theological point of view or merely absolutism.

THE GENEALOGY OF MBRAKAH

From the variously written literature that has been traced, the word *mbrakah* is not found explicitly. The only thing that is used as a reference is the source of the informant in an oral form stating that *mbrakah* is the absorption of *baraka* from Arabic language or interpreted by seeking blessings (*ngalap berkah*).⁶ Another indication, the term is also attributed to the Sufi tradition,

⁵ Ahmad Royani, "Eksistensi Pendidikan Pesantren dalam Arus Perubahan," *Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan Dan Kemasyarakatan* 16, no. 2 (November 22, 2018): 383.

⁶ Interview with K.H Syahar Banuri, one of *mbrakah* practitioners and Leader of *Pesantren Nailul Ulum Trenggalek, East Java*, on 13 August 2018.

which in some of the authors' findings, the *Kiai* or religious figures who become agents of the production of this tradition rely on the traditions and behavior of the Sufis.⁷ Nonetheless, both of them are still a possibility that still needs further study.

If it is true that the word of *mbrakah* is derived from the Arabic language that has been absorbed into the Javanese language, there is a possibility that the use of this term has undergone a process of local absorption. That is mean, the localization carried out by the community is not only the content of the tradition but also the naming.

Likewise in several studies of Javanese Islam, the term *mbrakah* is not widely used for certain traditions related to food consumption patterns. Based on pre-existing studies and also oral narratives from some of the practitioner who are found in several pesantren in East Java, the term that is often used is *ngrowod* or *ngrowot*. Then, as far as the author's seeking *mbrakah* is a synonym for the word *ngrowod*. Therefore, searching about the meaning of *mbrakah* can refer to the term *ngrowod* itself.

In terminology, *ngrowod* is a verb from nouns *ngrowod* or *krowodan* which means fruits and vegetables, then, *ngrowod* means consuming fruits and vegetables or some kind of *krowodan*.⁸ Robson and Wibisono imply that *krowod* or *krowodan* is a general term for field crops except for rice. Then, *ngrowod* to subsist on a diet of roots etc (no rice) as an ascetic exercise.⁹ This understanding is also confirmed by Dhakiri that *ngrowod* is *tirakat* (asceticism practice such as fasting) by eating only leaves and a little fruit, avoiding solid food like rice and fasting routinely would be beneficial to reach a deep understanding in religion.¹⁰

In today's context, it can also be interpreted as a lifestyle of vegetarianism even though they do not fully share the same characteristics. The difference is not only in the type of food consumed but also the philosophy and motivation of people doing the activity. In this case, the motives and philosophy of *mbrakah* behavior are more dynamic than vegetarians. If vegetarians are for health purposes, while *mbrakah* for multi-dimensional purposes, such as for the spiritual purpose, socio-economic dimensions, or medical needs.

In Javanese society, it has existed before Islam spread in the land of Java. As is generally known, adherents of various religions including religion in Java have made fasting a means of getting closer to God. Besides *mbrakah*, ancient

⁷ See M. Hanif Dhakiri, *41 Warisan Kebesaran Gus Dur* (Lkis Pelangi Aksara, 2010); Mokh Syaiful Bakhri, *Syaichona Cholil Bangkalan: riwayat hidup dan karya tulis* (Cipta, 2008).

⁸ Sutrisno Sastro Utomo, *Kamus Indonesia - Jawa* (Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2015), 92.

⁹ Stuart Robson Dr and Singgih Wibisono, *Javanese English Dictionary* (Tuttle Publishing, 2013), 114.

¹⁰ Dhakiri, *41 Warisan Kebesaran Gus Dur*, 80.

Javanese people have known and carried out various fastings such as *patigeni*, *mutih*, *ngalong*, *nganyep*, and the like.¹¹ Fasting is done to enhance the soul and *riyādhah al-nafs* (self-training) and cleansing the soul. Ancient Javanese society mostly believed in the existence of supernatural forces around them. At the same time, with fasting or various spiritual practices they believe can maintain the harmony of life.

Indeed, the tradition of *mbrakah* if traced actually leads to the habits of the Javanese. So it is not surprising that some people consider this tradition is not derived from Islamic teachings. Nevertheless, it is not entirely right to rush to assess this activity as a religious prohibition to be shunned. To see it as an activity that brings benefits, it is necessary to look deeply into the philosophy and the essence of *mbrakah*.

According to Ranoewidjojo, *mbrakah* is identical with the practice of spirituality with necessity and certain conditions that have deep philosophies, he said that:

Ngrowod adalah laku berpantang *wohing dhamèn lan ktêtêging jantung* (hasil yang keluar dari jerami dan sesuatu yang berdetak jantung). Intinya ngrowot adalah menghindari makanan dari padi, ketan, dan gandum, serta segala hasil hewani. Yang dimakan oleh orang laku *ngrowot* adalah *pala kêpêndhêm*, *pala kêsimpar*, dan *pala gumandul*.¹²

Means:

Ngrowod (a popular phrase from *mbrakah*) is a practice of abstinence from the *dhamèn lan ktêtêging jantung* (the results that come out of straw and something that beats the heart). The point that *ngrowot* is to avoid foods from rice, sticky rice, and wheat, and all animal products. What people eat in *ngrowot* is *pala kêpêndhêm*, *nutmeg kêsimpar*, and *pala gumandul*.

Those who practice *mbrakah* are only allowed to consume three types of food i.e. *pala kêpêndhêm*, *pala kêsimpar*, and *pala gumandul*. *Pala kêpêndhêm* means various types of tubers such as potatoes, cassava, sweet potatoes, *talas*, *gadhung*, *garut*, *ganyong*, *gembili*, *suweg*, *mbote*, and the like. While *pala kêsimpar* is a kind of vegetable spread, *perdu-perduan*, such as cucumber, nuts, squash, *pare*, watermelon, melon etc. and *pala gumandul* are in the form of fruits such as papaya, mango, banana, guava, and so on.¹³

Various foods that are allowed to be consumed as mentioned above do not come from a type of rice or meat. In the view of the Javanese people, this activity not because of material or physical factors, but these activities cannot

¹¹ Ahmad Syarifuddin, *Puasa Menuju Sehat Fisik - Psikis* (Gema Insani, 2003), 47; Miftah Faridl, *Puasa Ibadah Kaya Makna* (Gema Insani, 2007), 21.

¹² Romo RDS Ranoewidjojo, *Primbon Masa Kini: Warisan Nenek Moyang untuk Meraba Masa Depan* (Bukune, 2009), 146.

¹³ Ranoewidjojo, 147.

be separated from a noble philosophy, which is for the purpose and benefit of human beings themselves.

MBRAKAH IN JAVANESE PHILOSOPHY

In the famous Javanese philosophy, the *mbrakah* tradition has a philosophical goal not just for physical needs. With *mbrakah*, humans are trained to be more modest and not exaggerating in life. *Mbrakah* teaches to appreciate certain plants, that could be used for basic food needs so that their existence is not overexploited and participates in also preserving the universe. Such as the prohibition to eat the products of plants that need breeding such as rice, sticky rice, and wheat. These plants always get special treatment from land hijacking, irrigation, seed sowing, and harvesting.¹⁴

The other philosophy of *mbrakah* is that a prohibition on consuming animal products, with the aim that humans can respect the right to life of fellow beings. By *mbrakah*, humans will avoid themselves from engaging in the practice of killing or slaughtering animals.¹⁵ Today, some people treat animals not as they should. Animal conservation carried out by the government is partly due to the scarcity of certain animals captured by humans both for consumption and for their own care.

This statement confirmed by Partoyuwono in *Serat wedaran wirid*. According to him, the purpose of the reducing the type of food is not interpreted by avoiding a type of food but only reducing the attitude, as already explained in the local wisdom that “eat if you feel hungry”. Reducing the food, in the present is the same as not eating carelessly because carelessness in consuming food will grow the character of not being able to accept as it is.¹⁶

The purpose of the statement is that the body is like a storage folder for various knowledge and various other potentials. The storage can be used to save knowledge knowing before it happens, clever, become a saint, guardian, etc. if the body and mind are healthy. If the body is not healthy, it will become ill, so it cannot be smart, and it will become a place of distress. Therefore, the attitude that should be done is not greedy in eating, Eating and drinking are not excessive, work naturally, not reducing what is supposed to be, and the mind always to think about the sacred things that imitate the holiness of the Most Holy (God).

¹⁴ Ranoewidjojo, 147.

¹⁵ Ranoewidjojo, 147.

¹⁶ R. S. Yudi Partojuwono, *Serat: wedaran wirid*, vol. 1 (Djojobero, 1962), 76. In the Javanese version

MBRAKAH AS THE ETHOS OF SUFISM AND THE MANIFESTATION OF ZUHUD

Normatively, the foundation of the practice of *mbrakah* is not specifically found in the Qur'an or the Hadith. *Mbrakah* is often attributed to Sufism practitioners who are typically accustomed to restraint themselves and lust over Muslims in general. Usman in his thesis stated that *mbrakah* is more associated with morals or *adāb* which is more specifically a manifestation of asceticism (*zuhūd*). He also emphasized that although not contained in the two authoritative Islamic norms, it would refer to the views of Imam al-Ghazali who in some of his views stressed the need for humans to train themselves from various things that are excessive, including food. He said that food is the source of various physical and spiritual diseases.¹⁷ By keeping food that enters the stomach, it will reduce the risk of the disease that will be suffered.

If it brought into today's context, the practice of *mbrakah* can also be linked to one type of diet for health purposes. In this context, there is one type of dietary pattern called raw food. This kind of diet is by consuming raw foods or by consuming more fresh vegetables other than regular (ordinary) food. Raw food style diet is believed to be able to overcome various physical and mental disorders such as sinusitis, bronchitis, and depression.¹⁸

The theological basis of *mbrakah* attributed to the behavior of the Sufis was also conveyed by Gus Dur, the popular name of Abdur Rahman Wahid, Indonesia's fourth president, and Muslim thinker. In one of his essays published in *Kompas* as excerpted by Dhakiri, that *mbrakah* is an interpretation of the advice of Imam al-Ghazali in *Ihya Ulum ad-Dīn*, namely, about the necessity to implement *tirakat* (psychiatric exercise) for science prosecutors. In al-Ghazali's view, certain types of food will be able to influence the results of the process of seeking knowledge.¹⁹ In line with this statement, Syaichona Kholil, Bangkalan who lived in *Harāmāin* (Mecca and Madina) for a long time also taught and practiced this *riyadhah* (psychiatric exercise). According to Syaiful Bakhri's finding, this was derived from Sufism.²⁰

In the Sufism's point of view, *mbrakah* as behavior is part of an effort to restrain a person to reach certain goals, as well as for the purposes of magic, strength, or for other purposes. So it is not strange if in the process of undergoing the behavior one acts and behaves not as is generally human. In the tradition of

¹⁷ Usman, "Food and Spirituality Understanding Food Consumption in Sufi Perspective as ACultural Basis for Food Diversification in Indonesia; A Case Study of Ngrowot in Asrama Perguruan Islam Tegalorejo, Magelang, Central Java." (Universitas Gajah Mada, 2015), 132.

¹⁸ Made Astawan, *Khasiat Makanan Mentah Raw Food Diet* (Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2008), 3.

¹⁹ Dhakiri, *41 Warisan Kebesaran Gus Dur*, 80.

²⁰ Bakhri, *Syaichona Cholil Bangkalan*, 29.

Sufism, this can be compared with the ascent of *maqām-maqām* (spiritual levels), to arrive at a certain level through various *riyādhah* or *tirakat* such as fasting, guarding, or the like.

Sufis are known as people who are able to endure hunger and thirst, resist sleepiness, or travel long distances to various places. So there is a popular phrase about Sufi wisdom, that the good of the laity is ugliness for people who have special degrees. The Sufis do not only provide themselves with the basic *shari'a*. Or in other words, do not take the cracks (*rukshah*) as stipulated in the Shari'ah. This is none other than the purpose of training and forging themselves as hard as possible for the sake of devotion to God.

RELIGION AND LOCAL CULTURE RELATIONS IN THE MBRAKAH

Although historically, *mbrakah* tradition is closer to the ancient Javanese tradition, it also becomes a practice or ritual commonly practiced among pesantren. *Mbrakah* found in the *pesantren salaf* tradition has undergone an acculturative change, as Choiriyah's research at Miftakhurrosyidin Female Islamic Boarding School, Cekelan Temanggung. The study explained that, in addition to the *mbrakah* fasting rules that do not allow consumption of food made from rice, the students are also encouraged to strictly implement *shari'ah* obligations, such as timely prayer, reading remembrance, perpetuating reading the Qur'an, or reading certain suras after praying five times.²¹

In another study, Bambang Pranowo revealed that what was done by the students at the Tegalrejo Islamic Boarding School was aimed at making the knowledge gained useful knowledge. The third ritual is usually carried out for three years continuously. Although in some cases, the duration of this fasting is relative, depending on the advice or advice from the Kiai. Evidence of acculturation contained in *mbrakah* can be seen from the recommendations to read surah *al-Nās*, *al-Falaq*, and *al-Kauthar* every time after the Maghrib prayer, in addition to refraining from consuming food made from rice ingredients.²²

In addition, in the pesantren tradition, it is not done by every *santri*, except after obtaining the blessing of the Kiai through *ijāzah*. This *Ijāzah* is the guideline for the observance of the *santri*.²³ *Ijāzah* is essentially the realization of how important the position of *sanad* (scientific pedigree) in the process of acquiring a science. doing something on the basis of *ijāzah* through *sanad* has become a tradition of the *santri*. In the tradition of *santri*, without the presence of *sanad*, the accuracy of a science cannot be accounted for.

²¹ Choiriyah, "Puasa Ngrowod; Studi Kasus Di Pesantren Putri Miftachurrosyidin Cekelan Temanggung" (UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2014), 4-5.

²² M. Bambang Pranowo, *Memahami Islam Jawa* (Pustaka Alvabet, 2009), 214.

²³ Pranowo, 216.

This research seems to confirm Mulder's findings that world religions in the process absorb local beliefs or tradition.²⁴ The localization of Islam that occurred in Indonesia can be seen from various traditions that are still preserved to this day among the values of Islam which also continue to develop. Thus, the relationship between pesantren tradition and local culture is dialectical or interconnected. On the one hand, the elements of local culture are absorbed in the pesantren tradition, while on the other hand, elements of the pesantren tradition also enrich the local culture.

In the *mbrakah* tradition, there is a cultural modification obtained from the dialogue between Javanese culture that introduces *ngrowod* as a local treasure and dialogues with religious values, especially in refraining from consuming certain foods. This did not happen immediately, in the process of localization requires an arena in local culture that can absorb elements of foreign beliefs so that elements of foreign belief can grow, develop, and form religious localization. The compatibility between the elements of local culture and the teachings of religion is what then seeps in such a way.²⁵ In this context, between *ngrowod* and *mbrakah* has a similar spirit that can be met between the two, between local wisdom and religious value.

MOTIVES OF MBRAKAH

The motives for performing *mbrakah* rituals are very varied. The shifting of motivation from Javanese tradition into pesantren tradition is also seen. In the Javanese tradition, *mbrakah* is usually carried out near the month of *Suro* (*Muharram*) and *Poso* (*Ramadhan*). The ritual is carried out as a form of training effort in looking for a strength science or just as an effort to get closer to the Almighty.²⁶ This is as told by Ranoewidjojo, that among the goals of people doing *mbrakah* ritual usually as a medium of *riyādhah* in the process of doing *ngilmu* (searching for strength science).²⁷

Whereas in the tradition of *pesantren salaf*, the *santri* perform *mbrakah* based on various motives. In his research, Choiriyah said, it could be carried out for '*ilmiah*, *amāliyah*, and *māliyah* purposes. '*Ilmiah* here is not interpreted theoretically or measurably rationally as in the academic tradition, but rather interpreted as devotion to science. While '*amaliah* in *mbrakah* ritual for the purpose of moral refinement through *riyādhah* and spiritual practices. As for

²⁴ See Niels Mulder, *Agama, hidup sehari-hari, dan perubahan budaya: Jawa, Muangthai dan Filipina* (Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 1999).

²⁵ Nur Syam, *Islam pesisir* (LKIS, 2005), 23.

²⁶ Mukhamad Rizka, *Ilmu kanuragan di pondok pesantren Rohmatul Ummah Assalafy, Jekulo, Kudus* (IAIN Walisongo, 2010), 51 dan 54.

²⁷ Ranoewidjojo, *Primbon Masa Kini*, 147.

māliah, it is interpreted that carrying out every student will be able to balance life with a proportional pattern of life, simple and not excessive.²⁸

The findings of the research conducted by Auliya El haq about the happiness of the practicer of *mbrakah* also become an important aspect to be explored. In this study, the activities carried out by the people of Dadapayam Village, *Suruh* Subdistrict, *Semarang* Regency, were motivated because of three factors, namely religiosity, social life, and health.²⁹

From the three motivations mentioned above, according to the findings, the practice of *mbrakah* can feel the happiness that can be measured through seven aspects. *First*, emotionally, they have an optimistic attitude in living life. *Second*, from the cognitive aspect, they feel relieved, satisfied, and sincere. *Third*, spiritually, the agents have faith and devotion to their Lord. *Fourth*, from the aspect of affection, the actors feel happy, comfortable, and they have many benefits feeling. *Fifth*, their souls look more stable with the emergence of a sense of security, calm, *qonā'ah* (accepting something sincerely), and the ability to control themselves. *Sixth*, from the social aspect, it creates a feeling to always care for others. And *seventh*, from the biological aspect of the body, it won't be easy to get sick³⁰

MBRAKAH AND SOCIAL PIETY

Distinctly from the original appearance that *mbrakah* is a practice for the purpose of spiritual and esoterism practice, it can be a problem solving of social difficulties. In his essay, Irkham wrote an interesting analysis to look at. *Mbrakah* tradition commonly practiced by *santri* can be a transformative solution to the problem of the food crisis, especially rice. According to him, the Indonesian people have used "rice" as the only staple food.³¹ Moreover, there is a popular phrase in our society "if you don't eat rice it hasn't been said to eat". The philosophy of diversity from the smallest thing, in this case, is the dining table, can be a solution to these problems. Even more so if practiced on a broader scale, such as in terms of a food endurance policy.

The problem of the need for rice which has always been a national issue every year can at least be reduced by campaigning to make other than rice as an alternative staple food. Not in the sense of eliminating rice but getting used to

²⁸ Choiriyah, "Puasa Ngrowod; Studi Kasus Di Pesantren Putri Miftachurrasyidin Cekelan Temanggung," 64.

²⁹ Auliya El Haq, "Kebahagiaan Pelaku Puasa Ngrowot Di Desa Dadapayam Kecamatan Suruh Kabupaten Semarang" (UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2016), x.

³⁰ El Haq, 129.

³¹ Agus M. Irkham, "NU, Ngrowot, dan Falsafah Ketidakseragaman," KOMPASIANA, July 30, 2018, <https://www.kompasiana.com/agusirkham/55176d38a333117807b65e2a/nu-ngrowot-dan-falsafah-ketidakeragaman>.

consuming other alternative foods. This is done to reduce dependence on rice and the like.

Actually, Efforts to diversify types of food have been initiated by the government to the government. But these efforts did not produce maximum results. In Usman's analysis, the unsuccessful diversification of staple foods is caused by policies that are not based on the principles of religiosity, or the values of local wisdom but because of material aspects alone. That is mean, it needs to be built and socialized the existence of food theology based on the noble values of religion and local wisdom.³²

Pesantren as subcultures with *santri* who carry noble traditions can at least be aware of these problems. It is undeniable that *pesantren* as traditional educational institutions have inherited traditions whose benefits can not only be felt by the practicer. The spirit and philosophy that is commonly practiced by *santri* can be applied to a wider life. It is time for positive behavior to come from the spirit of religion and local wisdom to become a lifestyle and become a problem solving for the stagnation of the food diversification program.

In addition, in other contexts, human life is essential cannot be separated from the lives of other creatures, including plants and animals. A wise life is to care for fellow creatures of God. Humans must always be introspective that it is impossible for the purpose of life to be achieved without regard to the surrounding nature and life because all is a single entity. If this has been accomplished then even the harmony of life is not difficult to achieve.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The practice of *mbrakah* as a *pesantren salaf* tradition is a portrait of mosaic from the *Islam Nusantara* today. This tradition cannot be seen with the approach of dogmatism and absolutism which places religion as a supra-system. The relationship between religion and culture is an approach that is considered appropriate to see it, with the basic assumption that between religion and culture cannot be separated from each other.

Mbrakah in the *pesantren salaf* tradition has experienced localization carried out by agents. The agents who play a role in making creations here are religious leaders, especially *Kiai* and religious teachers. They carry out acceptance of the wisdom of religious values by maintaining the legacy of local wisdom that has existed before. *Mbrakah* as a form of acculturation manifested from the dialectics between Javanese philosophy and the Sufism ethos that complement each other.

³² Usman, "Food and Spirituality Understanding Food Consumption in Sufi Perspektive as ACultural Basis for Food Diversification in Indonesia; A Case Study of Ngrowot in Asrama Perguruan Islam Tegalorejo, Magelang, Central Java.," (Universitas Gajah Mada, 2015), 132.

The dialectic between the Javanese philosophy and the ethos of Sufism mediated by the *Kiai* in the arena of *pesantren salaf* is not constrained by anything. In addition to the fact that traditionalist religious leaders are more adaptive to local traditions and wisdom, both teachings share the same common thread, namely teachings that emphasize esotericism rather than exoterism. Both the Javanese philosophy and the Sufism ethos view that the substance of religious teachings is the spirituality aspect itself which is owned by every religion. So it is not surprising that in the midst of the current purification movement of Islamic teachings, the practice of *mbrakah* is still carried out in various *pesantren salaf* to this day.

This study also shows that *mbrakah* activities practiced by some *pesantren salaf* spread across Java, especially East Java and Central Java, have been accepted as noble traditional heritage inherited by *santri*. They do not directly rely on the practice of *mbrakah* into the norms of the Qur'an and Hadith, but to the religious lessons (*hikmah*) that have been interpreted by the Sufis. Some data show that the work of Al-Ghazali, especially *Ihya' 'Ulum ad-Din* became the authoritative source of the implementation of the ritual. Of course, in the book does not explicitly explain the provisions of the implementation of *mbrakah* in detail, except only basic teachings such as the necessity to maintain the type of food in the *riyadhah* process and self-training (*tazkiyyah al-nafs*).

Their acceptance of the books of Sufism as an authoritative book in behaving and acting has indeed taken root. The books of Sufism, especially those with *sunni* or *akhlaki* patterns, have also become important references in the learning tradition at the *pesantren salaf*. There are several stages that must be passed in the learning tradition at the *pesantren salaf*, and the culmination is to study Sufism. So, it cannot be denied that the existence of this tradition is caused by these factors.

Furthermore, the tradition survives because it has been interpreted by agents with various Meanings. The Meanings such as to be more modest in consuming food and not excessive are among the meanings held by them as the principle of the implementation of *mbrakah*. Moreover, *mbrakah* is also interpreted as a type of social piety in seeking harmony in life. This second meaning can be translated as a food diversification effort that can be done from the simplest movement, which is proportional to food. Separately from these two meanings, there are still other meanings that arise, such as for the sake of health and to hone spiritual cleanness. Owing to that Preserving *mbrakah* is considered to be so important because it is not solely for spiritual needs and personal piety but also for the benefit of many people.

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