

THE ROLE OF AL-JAILAINI'S HAGIOGRAPHY AMONG JAVANESE MUSLIMS IN YOGYAKARTA

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Abstract:

The Islamic rituals in Indonesia have been studied from several perspectives by many scholars. The rituals are usually performed by using several tools, and the text is most used and read in every ritual. However, the studies do not explain the text used in the rituals comprehensively. Therefore, this paper is meant to describe the roles or functions of the text used in the manaqiban ritual performed by Jamaah Aolia Gunung Kidul Yogyakarta. Using a qualitative method based on participate observations and in-depth interviews, the study finds that an-Nur al-burhani, a Javanese translation of al-Jailani's hagiography, is the crucial tool in the ritual. The text is merely a historical book about the miracles of al-Jailani, but it has been sacred and transformed with several functions. First, the text serves as a manual for performing the manaqiban. Second, the text as a sacred mantra must be read in the ritual. Third, the text can serve as a consolation for the participants. Fourth, the text serves as a binder for internal group solidarity. Fifth, the text as a source of educational values.

Ritual Islam di Indonesia telah diteliti dari beberapa perspektif oleh para ilmuwan. Biasanya, ritual dilakukan dengan menggunakan beberapa sarana, dan teks adalah sarana yang paling digunakan dan dibaca dalam setiap ritual. Namun demikian, beberapa hasil penelitian tersebut tidak menjelaskan teks yang digunakan dalam ritual secara komprehensif. Oleh karena itu, artikel ini dimaksudkan untuk menggambarkan peran dan fungsi teks dalam ritual manaqiban yang diselenggarakan oleh Jamaah Aolia Gunung Kidul Yogyakarta. Dengan menggunakan pengamatan partisipatif dan wawancara mendalam,

penelitian ini menemukan bahwa *an-Nur al-burhani*, sebuah buku terjemahan berbahasa Jawa dari hagiografi *al-Jailani*, adalah sarana terpenting dalam ritual. Teks buku ini pada dasarnya hanyalah narasi tentang karamah *al-Jailani*, namun telah diskralkan sehingga memiliki beberapa fungsi. Pertama, teks sebagai manual dalam pelaksanaan *manaqiban*. Kedua, teks sebagai sebuah mantra sakral yang harus dibaca dalam ritual. Ketiga, teks dapat berfungsi sebagai hiburan bagi para peserta. Keempat, teks berfungsi sebagai pengikat solidaritas internal. Kelima, teks sebagai sumber nilai pendidikan.

Keywords: *manaqiban*; text and ritual; *an-Nur al-Burhani*; *al-Jailani*; mantra.

Introduction

Hagiography is a special literary genre which tells about the good life and gives exemplar from the story of holy men and women (Mansouri, 2012). The existence of the hagiographical book cannot be separated from religious life. Among Christians, the hagiography about their holy figures, known as Saint (St.) was written with the purpose to serve as a minimal model for Christians. The tradition of writing hagiographies among Christians has been going on since the middle of the 2nd century AD. The writing of hagiography in Christian circles is more intended as documentation of the Saint's life and based on a cult-like motif (Head, 1990). However, there has been no further information that the hagiography was used as a text read in cult rituals in the Christian tradition. "The aim of hagiographers was not to produce biography in the modern sense but sought rather portray a saint as an exemplar of the Christian life" (Head, n.d.: 3).

Meanwhile, among the Muslims, the writing tradition of hagiography known as *manaqib* is also found. In Muslims circle, the holy figures in which their *manaqib* is written, are the Prophet Muhammad (Jati, 2012), his companions, and the Sufi figures known as *waliyullah*. The concept of *waliyullah* is more understood in Sufi terminology, i.e., someone who is considered to have very close to God spiritually. Moreover, a man regarded as *waliyullah* also has advantages beyond reason or miracles as God-given privileges due to his proximity. The privilege is called the *karamah* which often used as an indicator of a person's sainthood (Al-Maraqi, 1962).

The writing of *manaqib* in Islam is not only meant as a source of written information about the life journey of a *waliyullah*, but also used as a reading in a ritual known as *manaqiban*. The tradition of *manaqib* reading in Indonesian

Muslims, especially the followers of the *tarekat* (Sufi brotherhood), actually has been going on a long time. The most famous *waliyyullah* in Indonesia is Syaikh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jailani (1077-1166), although he is not Indonesian Muslim (Al-Gailani, 2016; Al-Kailani, 2014: 29). At least, 70 Arabic hagiographical books talking about him (Ad-Duhaibi 2007: 7–11). One of those is a work of Syaikh Ja‘far al-Barzanji (1714-1764) entitled *al-Lujain ad-dani fi dzikr nubdzah min manaqib asy-Syaikh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jailani*. This book was written approximately in 1763 and immediately got a good reputation especially among followers of Tarekat Qadiriyyah-Naqsyabandiyah (TQN) in Indonesia. The name of this *tarekat* refers to ‘Abd al-Qadir himself as a founder (Bruinessen, 2000). Bruinessen notes that in 1883 there has been a tradition of *manaqib* reading as part of efforts to overcome the difficulties of life (Bruinessen, 2000). More recently, the tradition of *manaqib* reading is also still going on in various places with each uniqueness. In the anthropological view, the tradition covers religious rituals beside of the various formal religious rituals in the forms of *ibadah* (worship). Lately, the study of ritual tends to liberate itself from the shadows of both anthropology and sociology and tries to become an independent study (Kreinath, 2005).

Some researches on the *manaqiban* have been reported by scholars. Ta’rifin has observed the *manaqiban* ritual held in a village in Comal, Pematang Central Java, which was carried out in turn from house to house of participants. Moreover, Ta’rifin finds the evidence of a shift in the implementation of the *manaqiban* in the Comal. If in the past, the ritual leader should be the person who has *ijazah* (authority), now anyone can lead the ritual. Again, the participants of the ritual also are no longer required in the free circumstances from *hadats*.

Moreover, the *uberampe* (equipment) prepared carefully is no longer a significant concern. In short, the ritual has taken place pragmatically in Comal. One thing that hasn’t changed is the perception of the participants regard this ritual as a way for obtaining God’s blessings and way out from the problems of their life (Ta’rifin, 2009). Similarly, In Madura, the *Kadiran* is the unique ritual about the figure of al-Jailani (Hadi, 2013).

Meanwhile, Widiyanto concludes that *dzikr* implies various meanings for the members of the Naqsyabandiyah *tarekat* in the Netherlands, i.e., the *dzikr* as something used in healing physical illnesses, and others perceive it as a means to attain *barakah* for their livelihood (Widiyanto, 2006). In other hand, the *manaqiban* is a kind of *dzikr berjamaah* (memorizing God together)

that strengthens social solidarity among participants (Huda, 2011). In line with that, Millie argues that reciting al-Jailani's *manaqib* is *tawasul*. His finding is based on several month research in West Java about *pengaosan layang* or *karamat* reading (a singing paper about *karamat* of 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jailani). The *layang* is a Sundanese translation of the *Khulashat al-mafakhir* (Synopsis of the noble deeds) of Abdullah bin As'ad al-Yafi'i (1298-1367), widely used in the *karamat* reading (Millie, 2008). By using the political perspective, Sahri describes the content of al-Jailani's *manaqib*, written by al-Barzanji. Sahri concludes that al-Jailani has implemented "the struggle from without" as a political strategy toward the political rulers. The strategy is shown by his attitude to make the gap with the rulers (Sahri, 2011). A philological study about *Primbun Jaelani* in Javanese is also conducted to understand the inter-textual relationship with *Primbun Bataljemur Adammakna* (Hidayati, 2013).

The research findings above have not reached out specifically the functions of text in the ritual. Even though, the essential part of the implementation of the ritual is the text of *manaqib*, so its function in the *manaqiban* ritual needs adequate explanation. In Javanese context, the most popular al-Jailani's *manaqib* is *an-Nur al-burhani*, a Javanese version of *al-Lujain ad-dani*, translated by Muslih al-Maraqi (Munip, 2018). Al-Maraqi is not only a translator but also a new writer, because of some additional information about Sufism in his *an-Nur al-burhani*. In part one of *an-Nur al-burhani*, al-Maraqi describes Sufism in general and gives manual guidance for holding *manaqiban* ritual explicitly.

This paper is meant to validate how the manual is implemented by participants in the real *manaqiban* ritual, and how the function of the *manaqib* text such as *an-Nur al-burhani* inferred from the field. Therefore, this paper is originally a research report about the *manaqiban* ritual held by the *Jamaah Manaqib Aolia*, located in Panggang III, Giriharjo, Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta. The discussion in this paper begins with a short description of the ritual theory and research method. Furthermore, the book of *manaqib* used in the ritual also needs to be explained. Meanwhile, the procession of *manaqiban* is reported so that it identifies how the text of *manaqib* is instrumental in the ritual. Finally, abstractions about the function of the text in the *manaqiban* ritual will be presented in its own.

Ritual Theory: A Brief Description

In the context of the study of religion, ritual is an activities in the sacred ceremony or the sacred acts done by a group of believers, which is

characterized by the presence of various elements and components, namely the existence of a time, place, and tools of the ceremony, as well as those who run ceremony (Koentjaraningrat, 1985: 56). The ritual is necessarily a series of words and actions performed by adherents of a religion by using objects and tools in a particular place and clothes. The ritual can be observed from different perspectives. In general, anthropologists observe rituals from its inner symbolic meaning. The cultural studies is not an experimental science for seeking a rule but an interpretive science looking for meaning. While sociologists have put more emphasis on ritual functions in social life, so the functional approach is often used to explain rituals. Later, the psychological perspective is also introduced to view the rituals that are not purely cultural and social, but also psychological. The convergent developments across social scientific disciplines provide evidence that ritual is a psychologically prepared, culturally inherited, and behavioral trademark of our species (Watson-Jones and Legare, 2016: 42-46).

The more representative theory to observe the ritual is what expressed by Turner. He approved the words of Wilson that: "I see in the study of rituals the key to an understanding of the philosophy of life constitution of human societies"(Turner, 1991). It indicates that the ritual is culturally essential to understand the life of the community. Then, Turner says that "the symbol is the smallest unit of ritual which still retains the specific properties of ritual behavior. It is the ultimate unit of a specific structure in a ritual context". Indeed, in his view, "the ritual is an aggregation of symbols." Therefore, if the ritual is dominated by symbols, so the analysis must be paid to those symbols.

The meanings of symbols cover three categories, i.e., exegetical, operational, and positional meanings. The exegetical meanings are inferred from informants or participants of the ritual. Operational meanings can be concluded not only from informant's sayings, but also from their acts in the ritual. While positional meanings can be inferred from interpreting a specific symbol in relation with other symbols in the ritual. The functions of the ritual have two functions, namely integrative and emotive functions. An integrative function can be seen that the ritual will be able to integrate and unify the people by strengthening primary keys and cultural values beyond and above the individuals and groups. An emotive function can be seen that ritual may be a media for expressing emotions of the participants, both positive and negative.

On the other hand, the text has a vital role in the ritual. The text can be a *mantra* (ritual spells), *do'a* (prayers), or written text recited in the ritual. Tiwi

found that there are two functions of *mantra* in the ritual, namely individual and social functions. Individually, the *mantra* causes someone to believe in the existence of a supernatural force in nature. The *mantra* can also be used as a medium for thanksgiving to God. While, socially the *mantra* can be used as a medium for educating children or adolescent; an entertainment for people are in a grieving situation; and enforcement of group solidarity (Tiwi, 2012). Moreover, Suwendi notes that the text has three functions in the ritual: magical function, informative function, and emotive function.

Method

This research is qualitatively conducted. Participate observations are applied for describing procession of the *manaqiban* ritual held by *Jamaah Aolia* in Gunung Kidul Yogyakarta. In-depth interviews are used to obtain the verbal data about opinions, feelings, impressions, and experiences of the participants about the implementation of the *manaqiban* ritual. The research subjects are determined by using the technique of snowball sampling, and KH. Ibn Hajar Dharma Pranolo (75 years), popularly called as Mbah Benu, is chosen as the critical informant because of his role as a leader in the *manaqiban* ritual. Some participants were also interviewed. Collected data are validated by using triangulation, and then analyzed with the stages in the form of description, reduction, categorization, and theorization.

Overview of the *Manaqib* Book of Syaikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jailani

The *manaqib* book used in the *manaqiban* ritual by *Jamaah Aolia* in Gunung Kidul is *an-Nur al-burhani* of Kyai Muslih al-Maraqi (1908-1981), a *Mursyid* of TQN and a leader of Pesantren Futuhiyah Mranggen Demak (Masrur, 2014). *An-Nur al-burhani* is Javanese translation of al-Barzanji's work entitled *al-Lujain ad-dani*. *An-Nur al-burhani* consists of two volumes and published by Karya Toha Putera Semarang in 1962. Volume 1 is an introduction in which Kyai Muslih speaks about several terms related to law status of *manaqib*, *tawasul* (mediation in praying), *khawariq al-adat* (extraordinary), *karamah* of saints, and manual for doing *manaqib*. Kyai Muslih prefers to use the question-answer style for describing the topics above rather than narration style. Meanwhile, volume 2 is the Javanese translation from Arabic *al-Lujain ad-dani*.

After the introduction, the author begins his book with narrating about the birth of al-Jailani and his ancestors that connect to Prophet Muhammad via his beloved daughter, Fatimah. It is believed that al-Jailani had shown his

miracles from early childhood when he did not want to suckle his mother in Ramadhan (Al-Maraqi, 1962b: 21). The next narration is about al-Jailani 's teachers, and how he pursued all branches of Islamic knowledge from them and then lived in deserts of Iraq for 25 years, where he did not meet anyone else. The next pages are decorated by some narrations about other al-Jailani 's miracles, like his capability to answer all questions of a group of *ulama* (Al-Maraqi, 1962b: 32-33), refusing the distractions of *jin* who claimed to be God (Al-Maraqi, 1962b: 45-46), reliving the rooster again (Al-Maraqi, 1962b: 59), helping people remotely from his *madrasah* (Al-Maraqi, 1962b: 61-65), treating sick people because of the disruption of a *jin* (Al-Maraqi, 1962b: 65-66), and so on. The author also inserts al-Jailani 's advice to his followers and closes the book with sentences of prayer recommended to pray after reading the book.

Procession of the *Manaqiban* Ritual

There is not clear when did the *manaqiban* ritual of Syaikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jailani in Indonesia firstly begin. Since the presence of the Qadiriyyah *tarekat* in Indonesia, however, it can be reported, that in the 19th century the ritual was conducted by some people. It seems that the existence of *manaqiban* is inseparable from the Qadiriyyah *tarekat* which is an institutionalization of the Sufi teachings and practices initiated by Syaikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jailani (Bruinessen, 2000). The development of the *Tarekat Qadiriyyah-Naqsyabandiyah* (TQN) in Indonesia causes the rising of *manaqiban* ritual. It is recorded, at least two pesantren as the pioneer of TQN that routinely conducted the *manaqiban* ritual, i.e., the Pesantren Suryalaya in Tasikmalaya of West Java and the Pesantren Futuhiyyah Mranggen in Demak, Central Java. Meanwhile, the other spreaders and followers of TQN who have been reaching out to all of the Javanese community also play an active role in organizing the *manaqiban* ritual in their places. Moreover, the role of translators, publishers, and booksellers of the *manaqib* book also participate in providing access of the *manaqib* text, even now its digital version is also available in e-book form or application that can be read by using a smartphone.

Usually, the *manaqiban* ritual is carried out in every 11th of the month in lunar calendar, considered as the date of the death of Syaikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jailani who died on *Rabi at-Thani* 11th 561 Hijra. At the anniversary of al-Jailani's death, the *manaqiban* ritual is usually held with more extensive scale, known as the *manaqiban kubra*, in several centers of TQN. Even, the ritual has also been conducted in various public places such as the Istiqlal

Mosque, Jakarta (Pojoksatu, 2016), in Pesantren Simarasa Ciamis West Java (Poskotanews, 2016), and some other places. The *manaqiban* ritual is also organized on the initiative or invitation from someone who wants to hold a *syukuran* (thanksgiving ceremony) or ask for prayer from the participants because he needs a great blessing from God. In some areas in Javanese community, the *slametan* ceremony as a form of gratitude to God favors received by someone is often accomplished by inviting neighbors or *Jamaah* to hold the *manaqiban* ritual at his/her home. For example, Pak Kasan who lives in Tegal Central Java, when his son was accepted as a new policeman, He invited his neighbors and his friends of *Jamaah manaqiban* in the village to hold the *manaqiban* ritual in his home. In respect to participants, Pak Kasan provides the food, drink, and *berkat* as a giving for them. Another sample is the *manaqiban* that conducted by someone whom his daughter is accepted as a civil servant. On the other hand, the *manaqiban* is often done by someone individually, regarding its function as one of the *tawasul* media in asking help or blessing from God. In this case, the particular ritual of *manaqiban* does not require more complete facilities and processions than the group ritual.

In this paper, the individual attention is given to the procession of *manaqiban* ritual lead by KH Ibn Hajar Saleh Pranolo (Mbah Benu, 75 years), a prominent *ulama* in Panggang, Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta. The ritual s began in 1980. Although Mbah Benu is an adherent of *Syatariyah tarekat*, because of his father's *dawuh* (instruction) which he has received through dreams repeatedly, he finally begins to perform the *manaqiban* ritual of Syaikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jailani, rather than the founder of *Syatariyah tarekat* he follows. In his dream, the father asks him to wear "the coat he left immediately." The dream continues to recur so Mbah Benu think about the meaning of the dream, and he concludes that he must continue the tradition of reading *manaqib* of Syaikh Abd al-Qadir that is one of his father's habits. Since he starts performing the *manaqiban* ritual, his father come back in dreams, saying: "Well, now you understand what I mean" (interview with Mbah Benu).

Until now, the *manaqiban* ritual is held in Aolia mosque every month at the night of 11th in *Hijra* calendar and attended by more than 1500 people, who come from the areas around Panggang Gunung Kidul, even some come from outside of Gunung Kidul. The procession of this *manaqiban* ritual is led directly by Mbah Benu. The presence of the participants or *Jamaah* shows that the ritual takes place in the hearts of participants, because they come to attend the event without any invitation, just based on information spread

from word of mouths. The Aolia mosque does not seem able to accommodate all of the participants so that it spilled into the street. The *manaqiban* ritual is held from 10:00 PM and ended at around 01:00 AM.

The *manaqiban* is also carried out in rotation in several houses of faithful participants, scattered in Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta, Bantul, and Sleman. The participants have various levels of education and social status. There are some famous university lecturers in Yogyakarta with a doctorate, military commanders, businesspeople, farmers, entrepreneurs, employees, and others. They can be regarded as spiritual disciples of Mbah Benu, who are always faithful to follow wherever the ritual conducted. Mbah Benu's relationship with his disciples is quite familiar. It is proved by his jokes in communication with them as if there is no distance between them. At the time of the ritual located in the head office of a company in Nitikan Yogyakarta, he is willing to wait for some participants who are considered "important" and are in need of spiritual help. When the awaited participants come, then the ritual is begun. Mbah Benu leads directly to all the processions of *manaqiban* from beginning to end. According to him, it is done so that all participants can focus on following the sacred *manaqiban* ritual. If someone else is involved in leading the ritual, it is feared the concentration of participants split. The ritual procession of *manaqiban* ids as follows:

Activities before the *manaqiban* ritual

In the night of Sunday, December 24, 2017, at 09:00 PM, it appears that Mbah Benu already presents at the location where about 25 kilometers from his residence. The night is the schedule of the *manaqiban* at the home of one of Mbah Benu disciples whose location is in Nitikan Yogyakarta. Some participants are present, and immediately put themselves in the space provided. Meanwhile, Mbah Benu is giving advice individually for a woman who is having problems. It is not clear what they are talking about, but the woman looks seriously listening to Mbah Benu's advice.

At 09:30 PM, Mbah Benu entered the *manaqiban* place, while the participants prepared to participate the event seriously. He occupies the space provided, surrounded by his followers. Who seats around Mbah Benu are the participants those personally close to him. In front of him, there is a lot of bottled mineral water that the lid opened. The mineral water is deliberately carried by participants who believed that the water of *manaqiban* has benefits for treatment and others. At that night there were about 75 people present in a

room. While waiting for other participants, especially those who are considered essential, Mbah Benu invites other participants to talk about anything, while giving spiritual advice. The participants faithfully listen to Mbah Benu's talk. The style of his talk makes the atmosphere of the night warm with his jokes.

After the awaited participants are present, then Mbah Benu asks to turn off the lights, but he can read the *manaqib* book under an emergency light covered with a paper in such a way that the light can only illuminate the book. He also requests that the *kemenyan* (incense) be immediately burned. The distinctive aroma of Arabic incense fills the room so that the sacred and magical atmosphere begins to be felt. Furthermore, Mbah Benu conveys *tausiyah* (advice) related to how a Muslim should behave in facing life. According to him, the essential keys to enter heaven are to pray in time with *berjamaah* (congregation) and *bershadaqah* (giving charity), primarily during the *majelis ilmu* (religious lecture) like this event.

Core activities during the *manaqiban* ritual

After giving *tausiyah*, Mbah Benu starts the *manaqiban*. The ritual is begun with *hadlarah* or reading sura al-Fatiha which is expected to be rewarded to the intended persons. Firstly, al-Fatiha is addressed to the Prophet Muhammad, then his companions, the *awliya'*, especially Syaikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jailani, and also the founders of other Sufi *tarekats*. He also sends al-Fatiha to his ancestors, especially some Islamic Mataram kings, such as Panembahan Senopati, Sultan Agung, Sunan Amangkurat Tegalarum, Sultan Hamengkubuwono 1 and 3, and others. Al-Fatiha is also read as *wasilah* (medium) for asking salvation to God for all those present in the event.

Furthermore, Mbah Benu leads the reading or singing of *shalawat* to the Prophet Muhammad Saw followed by the participants. The sound of this *shalawat* is: *Allahmumma shalli 'ala man sammaitahu Ahmada wa Muhammadan wa Sayyidan, Muhammadun Rasulullah*. The reading of *shalawat* lasts about 10 minutes, then followed by a solicitation to ask Allah to forgive them by reading *Sayyid al-Istighfar* 3 times with a humble tone and sung in Javanese style rhythm followed by a translation in the Javanese language. The *istighfar* is *Allahmumma Anta Rabbi, la ilaha illa Anta, khalaqtaniwa ana 'abduka, wa ana 'ala 'ahdika wa wa'dika mastatha'tu*. The ritual situation becomes solemn, because of the crying sound of participants who feel many sins. By using Javanese language, Mbah Benu asks God so that all sin of participants forgiven.

The next step is the *tahlilan* consisting of reading sura al-Ikhlash, al-Falaq, an-Nas, al-Fatiha, first verses of al-Baqarah, *ayat kursi*, last verses of al-Baqarah, *istighfar*, *shalawat*, *la ilaha illallah*, *tasbih*, and closing prayer. It is interesting that Mbah Benu reads the *Hizib Nashr* that is believed as a prayer to get help from God in facing the enemy. After the *tahlilan*, Mbah Benu reads the book of *an-Nur al-burhani*. He scans the book so it is challenging to listen openly. His articulation is also not clear, and it is challenging to be understood. However, each he finds word of al-Jailani, he reads it loudly, followed by the phrase “*radhiyallahu anhu*” by the participants. Likewise, when he reads the name of Muhammad Rasulullah, the participants answer it by saying “*shalallahu ‘alaih*”. When he comes to the narration of al-Jailani’s ancestors, he sings *syi’ir* (poetry) together with the participants, and when he comes to the end of a fragment of the story, the participants pray as provided in the text, i.e. *Allahmumma unshur nafhati ar-ridwan ‘alaihi, wa amiddana bi al-asrar al-latiawda’taha ladaihi*.

When it comes to the story of the rooster revived by al-Jailani with Allah’s permission, and then the rooster says *la ilaha illallah Muhammadun Rasulullah, Syaikh ‘Abd al-Qadir waliyyullah*, the participants mimic the rooster shoutingly three times. When Mbah Benu comes to the saying of al-Jailani, i.e. “*Idza sa’altum Allah ta’ala fas’aluhu bi*” (If you want to ask Allah, please ask him through me), the all participants pause to do *tawasulan* (asking God’s help) through al-Jailani, led by Mbah Benu by reading the sentence of *tawasulan* 7 times. This sentence is added initially by Kyai Muslih as the translator and not found in the original text of *al-Lujain ad-dani*.

When Mbah Benu reads *faqdhi hajatina* (God, please grant our needs), all of the participants are permitted to plead silently and personally to God. This opportunity is not wasted by the participants to plead to God by their interests. Usually, the participants are motivated to follow the ritual of *manaqiban* for this purpose actively. After the *manaqib* reading finished, Mbah Benu ends the ritual with prayer, and all of the participants sing together a collection of Arabic poetry which genuinely is the prayer to God. A collection of poetry is still a part of the text in the original *manaqib*. The poetry is essentially a plea to God through *al-awliya* (saints). After everything finished, Mbah Benu ends the ritual with apologies to the participants for any mistake during the ritual. Precisely at 11:00 PM, the reading of *manaqib* is done successfully.

Activities after the *manaqiban* ritual

After the series of events in the *manaqiban* ritual are complete, then Mbah Benu talks that the *manaqiban* in this time is really smooth and very powerful. He says that the invited *awliya* (saints) attend and follow the ritual. He also explains why the lights turned off when the *manaqiban* is going on. According to him, it is intentionally done so that the saints are pleased to attend the *manaqiban*, and the participants can follow the ritual seriously. He has done the *manaqiban* in one time, but a lot of *demit* (ghost) attend the ritual, in contrast to the current *manaqiban* which is attended by many *awliya*'.

Furthermore, Mbah Benu gives the opportunity to anyone to ask about anything, related to *manaqiban* or another religious issue. A young man asks several questions about heaven and who is Mbah Benu? Mbah Benu answers that in the heaven one will be given the beautiful women by Allah. This answer is related to the status of the questioner as a single man. About the question of who is Mbah Benu? He says that he does not know who he is. The most know about him is who creates him, namely Allah, then if you want to know who he is, please ask God who creates him.

Several notes are referred from the description about the procession of the *manaqiban* ritual above. **First**, Mbah Benu as a leader in the ritual takes the dominant role. He leads the procession of *manaqiban* from beginning to end, including reading the text of *an-Nur al-burhani*, praying and others. He can also be considered as a medium for the participants in conjunction with the unseen persons. He has full authority in performing the ritual, even without criticism. Although he reads the *manaqib* text very fast and the articulation is unclear, but the participants still give no correction or criticism. The full trust of the participants to the authority of Mbah Benu seems to be in line with the relation of Sufi *murshid* (teacher) and his *murid* (disciples) in Sufi *tarekat*. There is a charisma in his personality that makes the participants do not dare to criticize. In contrast, the participants give a great respect to him and believe that he can help them in asking God to provide a way out from their life problems both in the world and the hereafter. Therefore, the participants often give him money, cigarette, and others as an expression of their gratitude.

Second, there is a belief among the participants that the *manaqiban* ritual is very beneficial as efforts to solve the problem of health, economics, career, political, spiritual, households, and others. In one occasion, Mbah Benu tells the story of a criminal case (of corruption) is being dealt with the Attorney General and involving one of his followers. Mbah Benu is asked for

help by the follower so he will not go to jail. Director of the JNE, a developing airfreight service companies in Indonesia, also believes the positive impact of the *manaqiban* on the development of his company. Mbah Benu once told that since the JNE was a small company with small assets, its owner always held *manaqiban* until now, when the company developed into a great asset with trillions. There are fears if his business will be bogged down if he stops following the *manaqiban*.

Third, the *manaqiban* ritual can unite the participants from various backgrounds of educational, social and economic. All participants sit together without any border of social status. There is one commonality of purpose in making the ritual as a kind of the spiritual efforts for solving the problems they face. **Fourth**, the *manaqiban* ritual organized by *Jamaah Aolia* under the leadership of Mbah Benu does not require complicated means as magical rituals in general. There's only the *hio* (joss sticks) or *kemenyan* (incense) burned during the procession of the *manaqiban*, mineral water, and original dishes. Joss sticks or incense sticks symbolize the rising of praying, and supplications to God in conjunction with the incense smoke rose to the top. The big room where the ritual is also filled by the smell of incense making the impression of the sacred situation. The use of incense in the ritual is often associated with traditions of religions before Islam, namely Hinduism and Buddhism, so there are some Muslims who regard the use of incense as the deeds of the *tasyabuh* (resembling of other religious teachings), even it is considered as the act of shirk. The mineral water should not be provided in the ritual. The water is carried by some people who believe that water of the *manaqiban* has various benefits, i.e., for the treatment of both physical and psychological illnesses. While the dishes presented in a box whose contents snacks and rice also are not part of the actual necessity in the ritual. The dishes are provided by the host to the participants as a charity.

The Functions of Text in the *Manaqiban* Ritual

The presence of *an-Nur al-burhani* as a text is significant in the *manaqiban* ritual organized by *Jamaah Aolia*. Based on observations, at least there are some functions of the text in the ritual, i.e.

Text as a manual for performing the ritual

In *an-Nur al-burhani*, there is a manual how to carry out the *manaqiban*. Based on observations, the manual is applied consistently by all participants.

It is true that Mbah Benu modifies and adds some prayers that are not in the text of *an-Nur al-burhani*, but it does not reduce anything of the ritual series described in the book. In other words, the role of text in *an-Nur al-burhani* as a manual book is seen consistently implemented in the ritual.

Text as a sacred and magical mantra

By observing the *manaqiban* ritual performed by *Jamaah Aolia*, the text of *an-Nur al-burhani* can be considered as a mantra for performing the ritual that structurally covers three stages, i.e., opening mantra, core or primary mantra, and closing mantra. The opening mantra is often called *hadharah*, i.e., the reading sura al-Fatiha which is devoted to the Prophet Muhammad, his companion, the angels, the guardian or saints, and deceased ancestors. In this case, sura al-Fatiha has three functions. First, as the opening prayer of the ritual and others. It is already common among most Muslims to recite sura al-Fatiha, when they would start corporate events, such as starting the learning activities in the classroom, study, and others. Usually, the reciting al-Fatiha is led by a teacher or master ceremony by saying the phrase as follows: "*li rida'illah wa li syafa'ati Rasulillah, al-Fatiha*" which means "for the sake of God and intercession from The Messenger, let us read sura al-Fatiha". Furthermore, all participants of the event read al-Fatiha loudly.

Second, al-Fatiha also serves as a mantra which is considered an effective way to ask Allah so that the reward of reading given to the intended people, or at least sura al-Fatiha is believed having a positive impact for them. The belief is based on Prophet's saying: "*al-Fatiha lima quri'at lahu,*" means that al-Fatiha can be read for solving all intended problems. Third, the reciting al-Fatiha also serves as a first keyword to connect with the unseen and holy people in the occult world. It is believed that although they have already left the world, they are still alive in other world or the hereafter.

It is a common belief among adherents of Sufism that the holy people who have lived very close to God are allowed to be as a *wasilah* or a medium in order for prayer is granted by God. It is because of an inferiority feeling among participants of the ritual in front of God due to the sins that they do. That is a reason, why they will ask for the help of the holy people or saints that have left the world to let them join the ask Allah. Also, for Mbah Benu, reading sura al-Fatiha is not merely as a keyword to connect with the occult world, but at the same time as an invitation for holy people or saints to attend the ritual together with the other participants. He often claims that whenever

the *manaqiban* is held, Syaikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jailani always participates and condones the ritual. This recognition is undoubtedly complicated to be validated by ordinary people who do not know anything about the occult world.

The second mantra is the primary mantras which contain the prayers. This mantra is read after opening mantra. In this case, all the text of *an-Nur al-burhani* is the first mantra. It seems there is a transformation from the general function of the *manaqib* text as an informative text narrating the journey of the life of Syaikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jailani becomes a text that serves as a mantra or a prayer. This function is a particular change in the implementation of the *manaqiban* ritual. The text is not studied to get the meanings, but the text is skimmed by ritual leaders regardless of whether the participants who listen to the reading understand its meaning or not.

Understanding the meanings of text is not so great for them. Instead, the blessing of the text or the positive spiritual influences of the text is what they want to get. That is why only ritual leaders carry the book *an-Nur al-burhani*, and none of the participants carry the book. Nevertheless, almost all participants know when it is time to "sing" the prayer together during the recitation of the *manaqib* text. They are also familiar with the hymn because they have repeatedly followed the *manaqiban* ritual. At least, there are five times they sing a prayer together, i.e., in the opening prayer, the poem of al-Jailani 's ancestral lineage, in interceding with al-Jailani , calling *rijal al-ghaib* (unseen figures) to help them plead to Allah, and in the closing prayer requesting *husnul khatimah* (good closing in the death) to God.

Like a mantra, the reading of the *manaqib* text should not be arbitrary. Only those who have the authority are allowed to read the text in a ritual because there are procedures to obey. Recently, however, there is a shift in authority over who has the right to read the texts as Ta'rfin reports, as well as that occurring in the rituals held by MA Futuhiyah's students. Not to mention the existence of the festival where the reading *manaqib* text in Ciamis has undoubtedly lowered the level of the sacred ritual.

Text as a consolation

The *manaqib* text can also serve as a solace and a stress reliever. The ritual of reading *manaqib* text causes the participants to forget for a moment the crush of life problems faced. By following the ritual, there is a glimmer of hope for the possibility of obtaining solutions to the life problems they face. Psychologically, when the heart connected to spiritual beings, it will cause

inner peace. True inner peace is found by submitting to God Almighty. It is where the *manaqib* text serves a kind of tranquilizer against spiritual awareness. The inner calm that all the participants perceive is proved by their strength in sitting and actively following the ritual for more than 2 hours.

Their participation is also very high which is indicated by their timely presence and attention in every stage of the ritual. Moreover, the frequency of attendance of some participants in following the ritual is also quite high. It is evident that they are addicted to the spiritual comforts they get when following the *manaqiban* ritual. Many participants claim to have a blessing in their life after following the ritual, so they want to always participate routinely in the next times. Moreover, the existence of a prayer text "sung" together can also cause the participants to feel soluble and entertained. The rhythm of *shalawat* songs and other prayers creates a peaceful and spiritual atmosphere.

Unfortunately, the reading of the *manaqib* text which dominated by Mbah Benu gives the effect of less appreciation from the participant because the intonation and the tone of reading not heard. Elsewhere, the recitation of the *manaqib* text is sung in a melodious voice with intonation and rhythm that gives comfort to whoever hears it. Factually, in the *waosan layang kanjeng syeikh* ritual, the translated *manaqib* text in Sundanese is sung with a typical Sundanese rhythm, as reported by Millie (Millie, 2008b). Nevertheless, it seems that all participants remain faithful in following the ritual from beginning to end. None of them left the place until the end of the ritual.

Text as a binder of group solidarity

The translated text of *manaqib* like *an-Nur al-burhani* may also serve as the unifying of the participants. The similarities of ritual procedures included in the book cause the participants bound by the same procession. Moreover, if someone of a particular association of a particular group attends the same ritual in the other group, he will not be unfamiliar with the new group. He will soon be able to adapt to the new group because of the similarity of the ritual procession to what he has experienced.

Text as a source of educational values

Indeed, the *manaqib* text contains the educational values that are still relevant to be taught to the participants. Sahri finds some political, educational values contained in the text of al-Jailani's *manaqib*. Among these are al-Jailani's political attitudes that do not want to be co-opted by the authorities and

how he gives rebuke, criticism, and advice to the authorities. In the *manaqib* ritual all participate, it seems that Mbah Benu as a ritual leader does not dig up the educational values contained in the *manaqib* texts. The spiritual advice that he gave to the participants before and after the ritual is more general and situational depending on the needs of them at that time. The sayings that he often repeated are the suggestion about the importance of following the *manaqiban* ritual as a solution to any life problems. Then, he also actively teaches them to love anyone without looking at the background of his tribe and religion. He says: "Do not look at tribes and religions, look at who created them!" Not to forget, he also advises leadership to members of participants who have served as directors and military commanders.

Conclusion

The *manaqiban* ritual is one of the Islamic rituals that has been going on for a long time and still carried out by Muslim Indonesia, including Javanese Muslims. It is believed by participants that the *manaqiban* is one of spiritual efforts to solve their daily life problems. This research finds that the ritual leader has dominated and becomes a central figure in performing the ritual. He leads the ritual, reads the text, and becomes a medium in praying to God. However, the participants seriously follow the ritual from beginning to end. One of the essential means in the *manaqiban* is the text of the *an-Nur al-burhani* by Kyai Muslih al-Maraqi, a Javanese translation of *al-Lujain ad-dani* of Syaikh Ja'far al-Barzanji.

Initially, as a hagiography, *an-Nur al-burhani* is merely a historical book about the right acts and miracles of al-Jailani, however, in fact, the text of *an-Nur al-burhani* has been sacred and transformed from the source of information about al-Jailani's life to the sacred text with several functions. First, the text serves as a manual for performing the *manaqiban* ritual. The manual is added by Kyai Muslih as a translator. Second, the text as a sacred mantra must be read by authority person in the ritual. The mantra is believed as a "shortcut" for asking help from Allah through al-Jailani as a *wasilah* or a medium. Third, the text can serve as a consolation for the participants, because there are many *shalawat* and *syi'ir* sung together. Fourth, the text serves as a binder for internal group solidarity. The text is a symbol that unites *tarekat* members or followers wherever they are. Fifth, the text has a function as a source of educational values. During the ritual, the leader often gives some good lessons from al-Jailani's life to the participants.

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