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 serves 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,

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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 waliyyullah. The concept of waliyyullah is more understood in Sufi terminology, i.e., someone who is considered to have very close to God spiritually. Moreover, a man regarded as waliyyullah 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 waliyyullah, 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’riffin has observed the manaqiban ritual held in a village in Comal, Pemalang Central Java, which was carried out in turn from house to house of participants. Moreover, Ta’riffin 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’riffin, 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 dzikir 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 Primbon Jaelani in
Javanese is also conducted to understand the inter-textual relationship with
Primbon 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


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 Qadiriyah 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 Qadiriyah 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 Qadiriyah-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 Futuhiyah 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 Istiqfal
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, businessmen, 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: *Allahumma shalli ‘ala man sammaitaahu Ahmada wa Muhammada 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 *Allahumma 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-Ikhlas, 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-latia’udata ‘aha lada’ihi.

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 mursyid (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 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-dānî* 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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