

Religious Satisfaction on Women Doing Fasting for Three Years (*Dalail al-Khairat*): Motives, Practices, and Challenges

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Abstract

Dalail al-Khairat was originally a book containing the praying and greeting to the Prophet Muhammad written by Sulaiman al-Jazuli at a pesantren in Jekulo, Kudus. It was republished in the form of regular recitation, known as the "wiridan" along with the obligation to engage in continuous fasting for consecutive of three years but in two main Muslims' festivities. This research raised three main questions: what are sources of knowledge and practices of three years of fasting among female students; what factors motivated female students to practice fasting for three years and what were the challenges encountered? And what is the impact of the three-year fasting practice towards these female Muslims' religiosity? Our research reveals that this kind of fasting has become a routine activity and they started all over again should the fasting was cancelled. In addition, the wiridan, a special recitation was a challenge for female students, in which they are not allowed to break from the recitation had they are aging due to menstruation. The other important finding suggests that this kind of fasting is carried out by students because it departs from ideological and pragmatic interests; meanwhile the impact of the implementation of the fast is labiriyah (outward) and bathiniyyah (inward). Outwardly the students are more likely to succeed in the learning process and facilitated all matters. While from the inward, it appears that there is religious satisfaction felt by the students after undergoing it.

Keywords: Religious Satisfaction, *Dalail al-Khairat*, Sulaiman al-Jazuli, Female Students, Well-being.

INTRODUCTION

Dalail al-Khairat fasting is one of the hardest kinds of fasting to fulfil. This fasting has been practices by many in Indonesia. However, there is no specific guidance in the Qur'an or Hadith regarding this kinds of religious practice. This fast is usually followed by chanting the praying and greeting for the Prophet Muhammad following the guidance given in the book of *Dalail al-Khairat* by Sulaiman al-Jazuli. In this practice, fasting, which is prescribed in Islamic teaching meets the ritual recitation of the praying and greeting to the prophet Muhammad, and later on boarding schools in Kudus incorporate the two kinds of practices together, which is then known as the fasting of *Dalail al-Khairat*. This fasting is carried out for three years consecutively except on two Islamic holidays, namely *Eid al-Fitr* and *Eid al-Adha* and *Tasyriq*, if canceled in the middle of fasting, the previous fasting is considered invalid, and it should be repeated from the beginning. The female Muslims in this case were more challenging as they have regular menstruation. Women need to decide when she finishes her period, which of course would be complicated if they have irregular periods. Jalil shows that KH. Ahmad Basyir, the diploma giver of *Dalail al-Khairat*, guided students to be successful and blessed by Allah by practicing the readings of the praying and greeting to the prophet as mentioned in of the book *Dalail al-Khairat* and carrying out fasting for three years (Jalil, 2016, p. 83).

The study of fasting has attracted the attention of many researchers both for the obligatory and for non-obligatory fasting. Those many studies revealed four trends: a) studies that place fasting as a means to draw closer to Allah and interpret it as a part of worship and ritual that can increase emotional intelligence (Alhamdu

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& Sari, 2018; Generous, 2013; Munib, 2019; Rahmawati, 2017; Susetya, 2015); b) studies that see fasting as one part of health therapy and improvement of physical functions (Golbidi et al., 2017, 2017; Hamidi et al., 2019; Trepanowski & Bloomer, 2010); c) studies that place the non-obligatory fasting as a creative process that has its own tradition in various Muslim regions (Qudsy et al., 2017; Suyadi & Albar, 2018); d) studies that place *dalail* fasting as a part of fasting to achieve certain goals (Jalil, 2015; Jalil & Aris Arif Mundayat, 2010; Masturin, 2015; Rafi'i & Qudsy, 2020). Studies that place *dalail* fasting as part of the efforts of self-forging are accompanied by recitation of certain readings and *dhikr* every day and carried out by male Muslims. Nevertheless, studies investigating female Muslims' practices of fasting have been lacking in literature, and thus it is timely to engage in an academic work regarding female Muslims' practices of certain forms of fasting.

This paper fills gaps of previous studies as the attempt to complement the stated shortcomings. By focusing on female fasting students of *Dalail al-Khairat* for 3 years at the pesantren, the following three questions can be formulated: a) What are sources of knowledge and practices of fasting for three years among female students; b) What factors motivate female students to practice fasting for three years and what are the challenges? c) What is the impact of fasting during these three years? The answers to the questions above will be the focus of this research.

The study departs from three arguments: first, the fasting of *Dalail al-Khairat* as a form of expression of the spirit of the female students who in their implementation experience various challenges and obstacles. This is because students who carry out fasting are students who are in their teens to adults who have monthly menstrual cycles. Second, the behaviour of the female students to fast in *dalail* departs from various motives, including diet, parents' commands, and learning success. Third, the practice of fasting for 3 years has a strong impact on the development of students' character and provides emotional stability in life. This is because the habit of fasting trains Muslims to restrain the passions and anger, which lead them to be emotionally mature students.

This is a descriptive qualitative research. Our research site was in the Pesantren Darul Falah Jekulo, Kudus, consisting of 406 female students. Women pesantren is considered as a subculture which is existed in Indonesian society (Labibah, Taufiq & Alimi, 2022). This pesantren was chosen as it has over 90% of students practiced fasting *Dalail al-Khairat* for 1-3 years (Jalil, 2011). In addition, in the context of the *Dalail al-Khairat* fasting, this pesantren is an Islamic boarding school that has the authority to grant *Dalail al-Khairat* fasting certificates. Our data were obtained from existing literature, observations and interviews. We reviewed literature discussing this type of fasting. Meanwhile we focused our observations on fasting activities of female students in their pesantren. We interviewed 10 female students who had been fasting for three years/less, religious teacher and caretaker of the pesantren. The selection of female students is based on the assumption that female students experience more complexities in performing the fasting, especially when their monthly menstrual cycle data and general tendencies of emotional ups and downs during the menstrual period. The data obtained was analyzed using motivational theories that look at various forms of reasons in the practice of fasting in *dalail*.

***Dalail al-Khairat* in the Indonesian Context and Beyond**

The term *dalail al-khairat* refers to something that leads to guidance, guidelines, leadership and avenues to reach kindness. The *dalail* practice of both the *Qur'an* and *khairat* was initially a *wirid* (the recitation of the praises and greetings to the Prophet Muhammad) only, instead of a kind of fasting. Shaykh Sulaiman al-Jazuly as *mu'allif* (the author) of the book of *dalail al-khairat* suggest that the book contains varied kinds of chanting out the *wirid* in the form of praises and greeting to the Prophet Muhammad rather than a form of fasting. The recitation of praises and greeting to the prophet is quite familiar among Malay Muslim communities, these data are recorded in various libraries (AR, 2012; Omar et al., 2014). However, in Kudus, K. H. Sanusi transformed the *wirid* into a kind of fasting, in which the fasting becomes the integral part of the *wirid* (Interview with Alamul Yaqin, 2019), this is so to help the reciter of the *wirid* to be more focus.

Dalail al-Khairat is a form of fasting in which there are series of complexities and challenges. This is because prior to performing the *dalail al-khairat* fasting, those who are fasting should start with series of different kinds of fasting. They starts with a-7 day of fasting (known as *puasa nyirib*), followed with fasting of the *Dalail al-Qur'an* for a year. After that it is followed by a-21day of *manaqib* fasting, and continued with *Dalail al-Khairat*

fasting for 3 years. These kinds of fasting emphasize efficient efforts towards inner wealth that trigger a diligent attitude and hard work among the practitioners of *Dala'il al-Khairat* (Jalil, 2016). Furthermore, the *Dalail al-Khairat* is a kind of tarekat (a certain way to approach Allah) characterized with a three-year consecutive fasting along with the recitation of the book of *Dalail al-Khairat* without being neither restricted to place where the book is recited nor guided directly by the Shaykh (teacher). *Dalail* fasting is then divided into two kinds: the *Dalail al-Khairat*, the three-year consecutive fasting accompanied by continuous recitation of the praises and greeting of the prophet as prescribed in Sheikh Abi Abdillah Muhammad bin Sulaiman al-Jazuli's teaching. The second one is *the dalail al-Qur'an*, characterized with a one-year fasting accompanied by the daily recitation of the *wirid* (Kharis, 2017). The *wirid* of *Dala'il al-Khairat* encourages the emergence of spirit to achieve a success (Jalil, 2016).

However, the existence of *dalail* fasting is still alien among lay people, the *dalail* fasting is generally better known among the kyai, ulama and pesantren. Meanwhile, some indeed perceive it negatively due its coercive nature, and worse of all, the practiced could not be referred as the teaching of the Prophet Muhammad as it was not a common practice in the time of the prophet-hood (Mardliya & Rahmawati, 2014). Rohman, et al (2012) state that *Dalail al-Khairat* is one of the diplomas given to those successfully engage in a three-year consecutive fasting, which is known as the *dalail* fasting among lay people. In Indonesia, the tradition of *Dala'il Khairat* can be found in the traditional pesantren in Java, especially in the Central Java region. Darul Falah Islamic boarding school in the village of Jekulo, Kudus and the followers of K.H Ahmad Basyir are some of the communities that make the *Dala'il Khairat* as a tradition that is *sunnah muakkadah* or strongly recommended practices (Jalil, 2016).

Someone who wants to carry out this kind of fasting must secure permission in advance from the teacher or *mujiz* *Dalail al-Khairat*. The process of granting permission is usually referred to as the process of granting diplomas. In addition to giving permission, *mujiz* also explained the time used for fasting and the provisions that must be carried out while fasting. The *Dalail al-Khairat* fasting is generally performed within the time specified by the *mujiz*. There are times when it is done for 3 years, others add another 3 years, 3 months, 3 weeks and 3 days. The fasting should be done consecutively except on days that are not allowed to fast. These days are *Eid al-Fitr*, *Eid al-Adha*, and *Tasyriq* and the time of period in women.

The book *Dalail al-Khairat* was recorded to have been written by Shaykh Sulaiman Al-Jazuli (870H / 1465M) when he studied in the city of Fes, Morocco. Another narration states that the book is a collection of extracts collected from several books in the library of Al-Qarawiyyin University, Fes, Morocco. The writing of this book begins with a story, which goes as follows. One day Shaykh Sulaiman Al-Jazuli would take ablution for prayer when he was walking in a desert. But he did not get any tool to take water in the well. He then saw a small kid who looked at him from a high place, then the small kid asked him: "Who are you?" He then explained who he is, so the child said: "Oh Shaykh, you are an expert in the recitation of praises and greeting to the messenger of Allah Peace be Upon Him, and you are a respected person, why are you confused about not getting water?" Then the little boy came closer to the lip of the well and blew it once, immediately the water rose and finally made it easy for him to perform ablution, (Amalina, 1435, p. 25). Then the little boy returned to his home, and Syekh Sulaiman Al-Jazuli immediately performed ablution and performed the midday prayer. After completing his ablution he asked: "With what are you getting this *karomah* (a special skill) son?" He replied: "Because I multiply recite prayers to the Prophet (PBUH), then he vowed to compose a book of praises of the Prophet PBUH (Amalina, 1435).

Fasting, Spirituality, and Biological Stance

Fasting does not only increase one's religiosity but also increase one's spirituality. In fact, the fasting trains Muslims to be humble and patient. It also helps Muslims to purify themselves through learning to self-control and engage in good deeds (Singh & Muhamed, 2010). Singh sees, that spirituality does not only include the emotional matters, but also include "truth", where fasting is able to improve one's spirituality because one can love and deepen his Lord which Singh refers to "the period of spiritual struggle", i.e. with oneself, with God, and the Devil. Singh and Muhammad (2010) then added that the concept of "spirituality" refers to internal

struggles in the search for specifically defined terms that included the search for meaning, unity, for connectedness and transcendence.

In addition, spirituality is defined by Hill and Hood as a form of "feelings, thoughts, experiences, and behavior" which is described in the Webster dictionary as a synonym for "church" or "religion" (Singh & Muhamed, 2010). Oki (2013) sees spirituality as a form of positive energy where the power of spirituality is seen from the existence of faith, Islam, *ihسان*, and *taqwa* that can bring people to the glory of a healthy mind, and the attitudes or behaviors seen by Oki include "istiqamah (integrity), sincere, jihad and virtuous deeds. Singh explained that spirituality and religion shape one's attitudes and improve one's internal health. Fasting is then seen by a number of scholars as a form of spirituality, which is carried out by all religious adherents because it can improve one's spirituality (Ariyanto et al., 2012) through our attitudes, speech actions, emotional and spiritual thoughts (Rokim, 2017).

Fasting and Religiosity

Fasting or *shaum* is a term in Islam that etymologically comes from the word "*al-imsak*" which means to hold back from the prohibitions of Allah and carry out on His Shari'a (Rokim, 2017). This suggests that fasting is a form of religious rituals (Ariyanto et al., 2012; Nurjanah, 2014; Wiktor-Mach, 2012; Salma & Jarudin, 2020), where in Islam, fasting is one of the 5 pillars of Islam besides *shabada*, *salat*, *zakat*, *fasting*, and *hajj* (Ariyanto et al., 2012; Salleh, 2012; Darajat, 2012). This is also in line with the thoughts of Glock and Stark arguing that religiosity consists of five interrelated dimensions: ideology, experience, ritual, consequences, and intellectuals where in the ritual dimension, fasting is one of the practices contained therein. In addition, fasting increases one's religiosity because fasting as it includes cognitive, affective and conative elements improve human quality accompanied by good behavior such as persevering worship and all forms of good deeds, such as alms giving, helping others, reminding each other, and connecting friendship (Yuwono, 2011). The fasting shapes beliefs and behaviors of a person (Hodler et al., 2018). This, then cannot be separated from the teachings in Islam as contained in surah Al-Baqarah verse 45 states that "make patience and prayer as your helper" (Sholichatun, 2005).

Fasting is not only a ritual in Islam but also a ritual of the previous generation so that it is also called a general religious practice, one of which is in Christianity, where fasting must be done as an expression of piety together with charity and prayer as a form of "approval from God" which became a spiritual discipline, especially in repentance and spiritual (Singh & Muhamed, 2010). Fasting in this case explained by Ariyanto et al (2012), is an old treaty from the Hebrew language which means tsum, tsum is also in Greek namely *nêsteuô* which means not eating. Meanwhile, in the Bible fasting comes from the words *asitia* and *asistos* which can bring mercy, and blessings from God in one's life, where "fasting also brings someone into a deeper, closer, more intimate, and powerful relationship with God" which is a measure of one's piety against his Lord because with fasting, someone tends to produce piety as a form of one's religiosity (Reza, 2013).

A Source Of Knowledge And Practice Of Three Years Of Fasting For Female Students

***Dalail*: A Source Of Knowledge**

The *Dalail al-Khairat* was initially the *wirid* (a special recitation of praises and greeting to the prophet) published in Shaykh Sulaiman al Jazuli's book (Jalil, 2015: 82). The salaf as-salih (the righteous people) then modified the *wirid* by inserting fasting as the major part of the *wirid* itself. This is to allow more concentration during the *wirid* activities'. In the process of introducing the practice of fasting *Dalail al-Khairat*, the kyai (Muslim cleric) used cultural approaches as to allow easy acceptance by the lay people, and he back his arguments up on this particular practice by referring to the yellow book (refers to the traditional book containing Islamic knowledge, which is a big part of the Darul Falah boarding school's curriculum. .

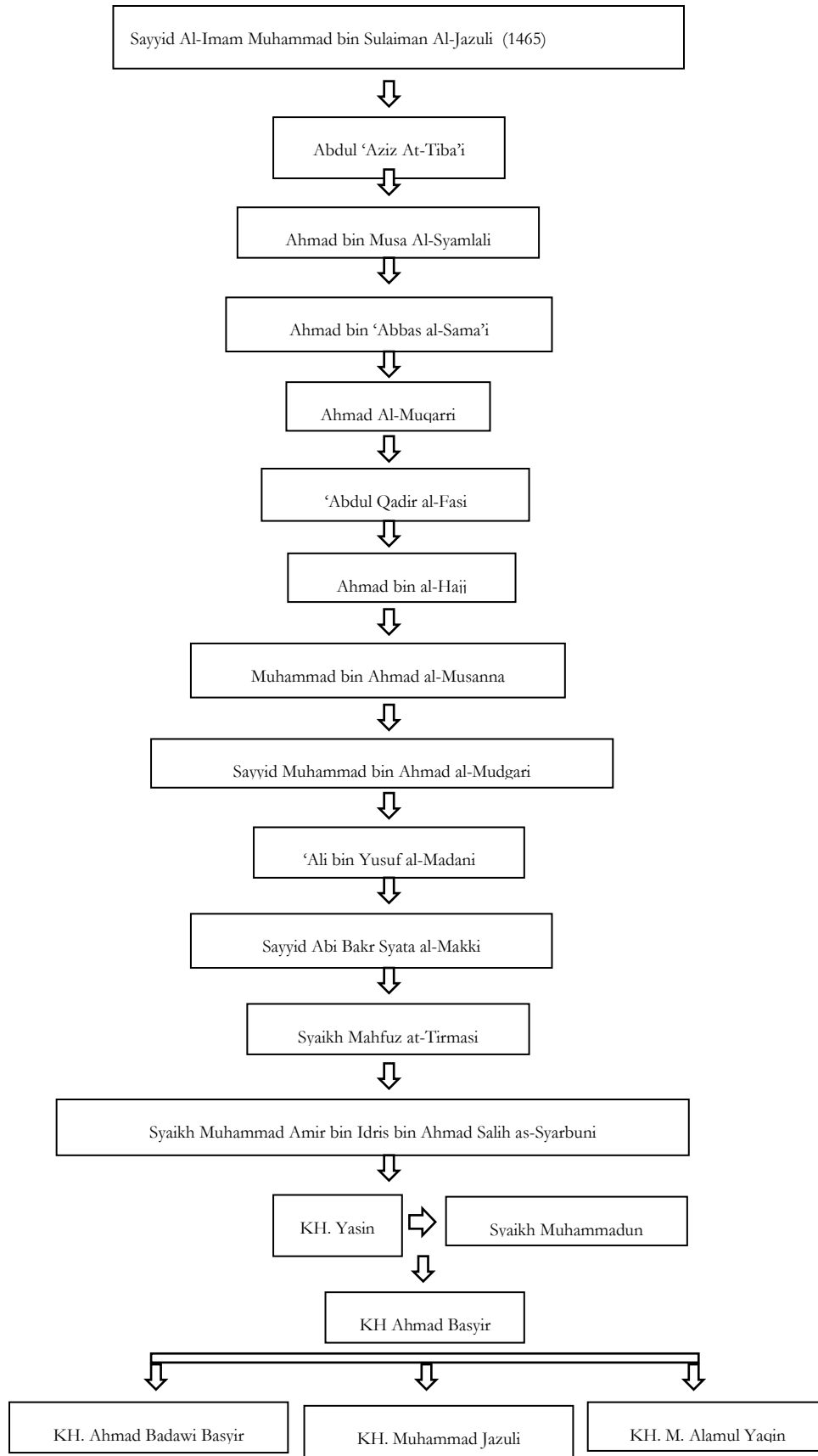
"There have been many evidences (regarding fasting dahr). The Fathul Wahab book also provides some evidences on the command of this particular fasting. We should be fasting should there is no valid rule available in the Islamic scripture. For example, there should be no fasting whatsoever during the important main feasts in Islam (Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha), the three days after Eid al-Adha, and there should be no fasting during

women's period. What is not allowed is *wisbol* fasting (fasting that connects fasting to the next day without breaking). Many companions of the Prophet Muhammad did this one-year of fasting, such as Abu Hurairah. What is clear is that Imam Shafi'i has always in state of fasting for 16 years. It is explained in *Ihya Ulumuddin* that earlier people also fasted. As for Shaykh Sulaiman al-Jazuli, he entered the cave for 13 years for *uzlah* (being alone; an initial level of *khalwat*). After that many of his students took *Bai'ah*. " (interview with KH. Ahmad Badawi Basyir (51 years), the leaders at Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School 3, in Jekulo on October 25, 2018)

After carrying out the *dalail al-khairat* fasting, someone will be given a *sanad* which contains a chain of knowledge of fasting in *dalail* that reaches the Prophet. *Sanad* is used as a reference chain of transmission of hadith knowledge.

"This fasting can be linked back to the Prophet Muhammad, *sanad* was given to people who have completed the fasting." (interview KH. Ahmad Badawi Basyir (51 years), at Darul Falah 3 Islamic Boarding School, in Jekulo on October 25, 2018)

In the following information, we would provide information on the *sanad* given to those who have completed the fasting.



The flowchart of *Dalail al-Khairat* (Rafi'i & Qudsy, 2020)

The chart shows the transmission of knowledge (Qudsy et.al, 2024) and practice of *Dalail al-Khairat's* diploma. It is originated from the scholars mentioned in the chart. KH. Ahmad Basyir bequeathed knowledge and practice of fasting in *al-Khairat* to his three sons, namely KH. Ahmad Badawi Basyir, KH. Muhammad Jazuli, and KH. M. Alamul Yaqin. As for the above review, KH. Ahmad Basyir received this fasting certificate of *al-Khairat* from KH. Yasin and Kyai Muhammadun. KH. Yasin is the founder of the Pesantren Bareng where KH Ahmad Basyir studied. Whereas Kyai Muhammadun was one of the first students of KH. Yasin at the boarding school. He is a niece of Kyai Yasin who has been a nephew since the age of 16. Thanks to his great curiosity, he once prayed to Kyai Yasin and expressed his desire to study the main references. Finally he was advised by Kyai Yasin to study with Kyai Amir Pekalongan who is also a teacher of Kyai Yasin. He studied there for three years until he got a scientific *sanad* which was connected to the original source, the author of the book or to the Prophet Muhammad, especially the narration reported from Shaykh Mahfudz al-Termasi. In a *sanad*, the scientific chain of a student through his teacher becomes more preserved, from one generation to the next (Ulum, 2018). So the same is true for the fasting of *dalail al-khairat*, which is ensured of the chain of *sanad*.

KH. Amir Idris in *sanad* is written as Shaykh Muhammad Amir bin Idris bin Ahmad Shalih as-Syarbuni better known as Mbah Amir Pekalongan. He was born in the village of Mundu Cirebon in 1294 H or 1875 AD. Shaykh Amir went to Mecca to study. In Mecca, he studied with many scholars, including Indonesian scholars who studied there. Among the scholars were Kyai Mahfudz at-Tirmi, Kyai Asad Tegal, Kyai Abas Brebes, Kyai Masduki, and others. In addition to learning from Indonesian kyai who lived in Mecca, he also studied with Shaykh Said Bakasyel, Shaykh Said Yamawi, and studied al-Qur'an with Shaykh Sarbini (Muzawida, 1434).

Shaykh Mahfudz at-Tirmasi is the name of one of the scholars who is also listed in the Sanad Dalail al-Khairat. Shaykh Amir bin Idris was actually the student of Syaykh Mahfuzd in Makkah as he got a diploma from him. He is one of the scholars from the archipelago who studied in Mecca. When he was 6 years old he spent his childhood in Makkah, he returned Makkah in 1308 AH for the second time where he studied various disciplines. He was known for his perseverance, seriousness and commitment in learning science, especially hadith with well-known teacher at the time, Muhammad Syata 'al-Makki. He was the regarded to be an important part of the teacher's family (Muhajirin, 2016, pp. 39-40). Shaykh Muhammad Syata was then known as the first generation to have the authority to provide Dalail Al-Khairat fasting certificate before Shaykh Mahfudz at-Tirmation. However, Shaykh Mahfudz at-Tirmati argued that he in fact received the *sanad* in al-khairat directly from his teacher, namely Sayyid Muhammad Amin bin Ahmad Ridwan al-Madani (at-Tirmati, tt). This therefore, suggests that when referring back to the earlier connected *sanad* up to the *muallif dalail al-khairat*, it has a lot in common. So the difference is only in the teacher Shaykh Mahfudz at-Tirmai. This information shows that he obtained diplomas from his two teachers, just like KH. Ahmad Basyir who got a diploma from KH. Yasin and KH. Muhammadun as explained in the above *sanad*.

The explanation above suggests that there was no transformation of knowledge in the practice of fasting of *dalail al-Khairat*. KH. Ahmad Badawi argued his practice of the fasting resembles his teacher's ways of practicing it, KH. Ahmad Basyir, in which he followed his teachers' practices as well (Interview with KH. Ahmad Badawi Basyir (51 years) at Darul Falah 3 Islamic Boarding School on 3 January 2019). The practices of *dalail al-khairat* are not easy to transformed due to the nature of its teaching; it has been taught in the *tarekat* method, and in fact in a branch of the *tarekat* itself. Victor Danner states that the Jazuliyah Tarekat is one of the branches of the Syaziliyah tarekat (Mulyani, 2005, p. 72). Mulyani pointed out that the tarekat came from a famous imam, Shaykh Sulaiman Al-Jazuli. According to him, Jazuliyah emerged as a manifestation of the very strong observance of the Prophet Muhammad PbUH.

In the *tarekat* there are several terms that are also commonly used in the tradition of fasting in *al-khairat*. Some of these terms include *mujiz*, diploma, *wasilah/tawassul*, *uzlah*, *riyadhab*, and *wirid*. This is influenced by understanding and practices as performed by *tarekat* practitioners. In the tradition of Islamization of the archipelago, the influence of Sufism will also be found during spreading of Islam. The first centuries of Islamization in Southeast Asia coincided with the rise of medieval Sufism and the growth of the tariqa (Van

Bruinessen, 1995, pp. 187-188). The *tarekat* culture is also practiced in educational institutions in Indonesia, one of which is the pesantren.

Dalail Fasting Tradition

The tradition of fasting as an act of *tirakat* or *riyadhah* has been widely practiced at the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School now. Since the establishment of the Islamic boarding school, the santri have performed a lot of fasting as a form of tirakat. Before doing fast dalail, usually mujiz ordered to do the betel fasting first.

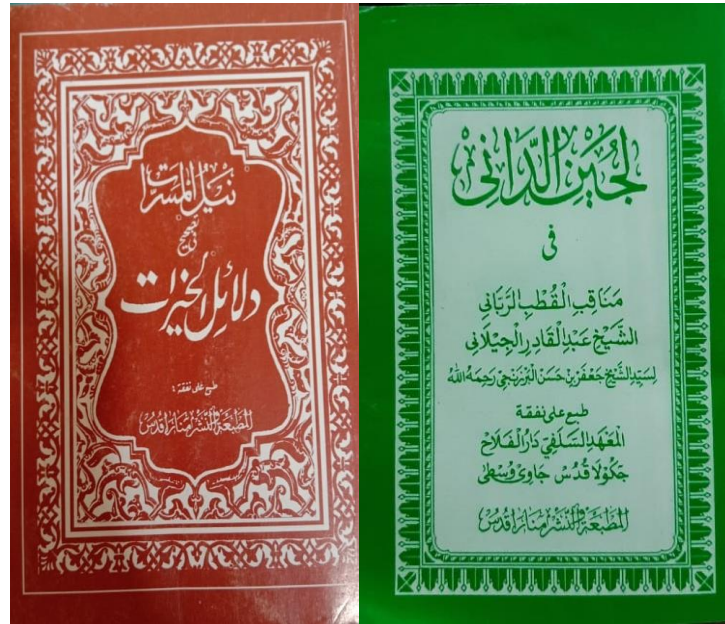
"If dalail fasting must be left out, there are stages, *inna fatabna and qola musa*. *Inna fatabna* (padhang ati). No eating meat for 7 days, *qola musa* rejects magic 7 days. " (interview of Zumrotul Mustafidah (20 years), Durotun Nasikhah (24), and Yadrukha (22), students at Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School 3, in Jekulo on November 2, 2018)

The *nyirib* fasting refers to the state of fasting where no meat is allowed to consume. The *nyirib* fasting is performed along with certain *dhiker* or *wirid*. The recitation of the *wirid* required by the Mujiz is performed before the fasting of *dalail* namely *inna fatabna* and *qola musa*.

Someone who wants to fast *Dalail al-Khairat* must secure permission from the teacher or *mujiz Dalail al-Khairat*. The process of granting permission is usually referred to as the granting process of diplomas. The process of granting the diploma took place in the living room in the Darul Falah boarding school in the Islamic boarding school. The students who wanted to ask for a diploma sat waiting for Abah Badawi to call anyone who wanted to fast. When he mentioned the type of fasting, the students who intend to ask for the fasting diploma raised their finger and then he said yes, that enabled students to receive a diploma and can perform fasting. The students were then given types of practices they have to perform while fasting. Sometimes he restated rule and regulation regarding the fasting even though these rules and regulations have been generally understood by students (Arifah interview, November 2, 2018).

The role of the religious cleric in the performance of the *Dalail al-Khairat* fasting is to grant a diploma at the beginning of practicing fasting who want to fast. Furthermore, the implementation of fasting by each student is carried out with personal control. The kyai only received reports when the students had finished fasting for 3 years and then gave sanad as a sign of the completion of the fasting and the fasting and *wirid* practices have been chained up to Shaykh Sulaiman al-Jazuli (interview with Ula).

In Darul Falah Islamic boarding school, the practice of *wirid dalail al-khairat* has become a commonplace for students. The Book of Nailu al-Masarrat fi Tashili Dalail al-Khairat (Basyir, nd) (the Dalail book that was inspired by KH. Basyir) can be found in various angles in pesantren along with the Qur'an and other books. The recitation of *wirid* can be performed at any time. Some of them perform it after obligatory praying, and some others perform it in their spare time between learning periods. It is very common for students to recite the *wirid* silently and sitting calmly and politely. Besides *wirid*, which is practiced individually, every Tuesday there is also a collective activity, the recitation of Manaqib Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jaelani (al-Barzanji, nd) and *Dalail al-Khairat* in congregation in the musalla (mosque).



Picture 1. The book of *Nail al-Masarrat fi Tashib Dalail al-Khairat* validated by KH. Basyir and Manaqib Syekh Abdul Qadir Jaelani

During their performance of the fasting, they consume the morning meal (sahur) as usual. After the dawn prayer in congregation they carried out their respective activities in the pesantren and in formal schools. They will then gather again approaching the *iftar* (breaking the fast). The students prepare food to break the fast on a big tray or large plate to be consumed together. The *iftar* is not only enjoyed by those who fast only, those who do not fast are also allowed to join the crowd for the evening meal. They sit in a group of 2 to 6 people. They eat together in a large container filled with rice, vegetables and dishes.

The Motivation and Challenges for *Dalail Al-Khairat* Fasting

Motivation For *Dalail Al-Khairat* Fasting

Dalail fasting is not a short ritual; it is carried in for a long period of time. Those students fast due to varied reason: first, they fast because of parents' encouragement. A student, for example states:

"My father is also fasting the *Dalail al-Khairat*, but ya, it is only 3 years, there are no additions. In addition, my sister who is in one of the pesantren in Jepara's (also does fasting), my sister was also advised by my parents, suggesting that when we are still young, we should practice this kind of fasting

Parents play significant role in enhancing children's spirituality through encouraging them to fast. For them, fasting is used as a means to reach glorious life in their old age.

"My father, Alhamdulillah has been (fasting) *Dalail al-Khairat* for 3 years ago, then my father told me that someone in their youth performing this kind of fasting will have a high degree before Allah, and it will give them some benefits later" (Arifah interview, November 2 2018)

Second, some students have been self-motivated. Students who perform this kind fasting would be best practiced when they are in the boarding school. In addition, their practices of obligatory fasting in the month of *Ramadhan* shape their attitude when engaging in the *Dalail al-Khairat* fasting.

"Internally motivated; it is within myself, I really want to fast even though I have been fasting the *dalail Quran* for one year, I want to continue fasting, because I do not feel good if I stop fasting. So while I am in the boarding school, I feel it necessary to fast, and in fact it comfortable to do so (interview with Syafa'ah). "

When asked if one fasts the *dalail al-khairat* for dietary purpose, one of them stated.

"I have no idea, I believe when we fast, I should have lost my weight, I am really not sure, I just feel it healthy to be fasting, so I just do it, and I hope I will get the blessing of Allah" (Interview with Ni'mah)".

The findings suggest that the students do not see fasting as the medium to lose their weight. In fact, some of them gain more weight, but they are positive that they gain some comfort feeling as the result of feeling, they experience emotional maturity and stability.

Challenges Of The Dalail Al-Khairat Fasting

In performing the *dalail al-khairat* fasting, the students face several challenges. One of the most common challenges is illness. If they get ill, these students should stop fasting, and they have to recount the days of fasting from the beginning when resuming the fasting. Therefore, it was revealed that illness bears the major challenges for students in performing this kind of fasting.

"In the beginning of fasting I felt no problem at all, but memorization is the toughest condition ever. If I get fever, I believe in 2 to 3 days, the fever disappears, but I do not like the idea of taking me home if I got ill. the most dizzy thinking is memorization, colds 2-3 days have finished missing, there is"

The next challenge is the inability to be consistent in practicing *wirid* of *Dalail al-Khairat*. This *wirid* must be completed every week. This is a challenge especially for students who also memorize the Qur'an.

"If I do not recite the *wirid* regularly, say for example, I recite it in one another day, I would not be able to be consistent. Sometimes I recite it on Tuesday but not on Wednesday. So, for me the most challenging thing in reciting the *wirid* is the fact that I cannot be consistent" (interviewed with Potlin).



Picture 2. A female student is reciting the *wirid* of *Dalail al-Khairat*

In addition, students who also memorize the Qur'an sometimes feel physically weak during the day. This is because students who still memorize the Qur'an have a high intensity of reading the Qur'an.

Most female face difficulties during their monthly period. They feel confused finding out the inconsistencies of their period. However, having fasted, they found it become more regularly.

"To determine the time of the period and when it stops depends on each individual, since it is a privacy for everybody. If they get period after the fajr prayer, they do not need to fast but if the period is inconsistent, they may need to fast when they are sure (Interview with Ula). "

Therefore, each of individual needs to be very careful in determining when she should fast or she should stop fasting in relation to her monthly period. Siti Syafaah states:

"In our pesantren, we use the term *Ngeker* (waiting for the status between the menstruation and it is clean. If the color of menstruation tends to be yellow, it perhaps the female students may start fasting after the fajr prayer"

Another main concern of the female students if whether or not they will get a period during the month or not as Arifah said

I have been experiencing a bad ill, indeed different people experience hardship differently. For example, if I do not have enough rest, I would tend to be ill and got irregular period. I then went for a traditional medical check-up and had a massage, and I was suggested to be cautious on my illness, and had I stop getting period, I was recommended to have detailed medical check-up. My illness worsen during performing the dalail al khairat fasting (Interviewed with Nur Arifah, 23 November 2019)

However, even during their period, female students are continuously reciting the dzikir (the recitation of remembrance).

"While in illness, we keep reciting the dzikir, but we do not recite the surah al-fatihah (the opening surah di the Muslim Holy Book). Basically, we continued reciting the dzikir. " (Interviewed with Alawiyun Nikmah, 23 November 2019)

It is more difficult for female students to perform the Dalail al-Khairat than do the male students. It is aggravated if the female students are no longer in the *pesantren* and the fact that they are married. Alamu Yaqin (November 26, 2019), one of the teachers in Darul Falah emphasizes that the female students should count all the missing fasting during the period to be replaced on another day. In addition, the female students would probably spend more time fasting than do the male students as they have to add the missing ones. In that case, they may end up fasting for 360 days or some of them should fast as long as 4 years for those whose period is in irregular state.

The Impact Of The-Three Year Fasting For Students

Fasting of *Dalail al-Khairat* has a great impact on the physical and psychological aspects of the students. Students seem to be healthier and improve their immune. They have more endurance on their physical and psychological beings.

"The benefit of the fasting is evidence, in which we become more physically and psychological healthy" (Interviewed with Syafaah).

Another psychological impact felt by students is the feeling of internal comfort and peace

"For me, first, I feel happy first. Second I am satisfied that I completed the fasting, and third I feel internal comfort and calm, and I thank Allah that I experience internal peace as the result of fasting" (Interviewed with Ula).

One of the students suggest the benefits of the *dalai al khairat* fasting as she learnt from her teacher.

(Those who are used to reciting the praises and greeting to the prophet Muhammad smell good even though they have died. Their prayer will be accepted by Allah had they consistently recite praises and greeting to the prophet.

In addition, Alamul Yaqin points out that fasting in *Dalail* soften the hearth due to the recitation of praises and greeting to the prophet.

***Dalail Al-Khairat*: The Oldest Practice, Motivations, And Well Being**

***Dalail Al-Khairat* As The Oldest Practice**

The relationship between religion and fasting is indeed very close, this also shows that the tradition of fasting is a tradition obliged to the people before the time of the Prophet Muhammad (Surah Al-Baqarah: 183). However, later on the practices of fasting have been transformed by Islamic adherents through their interpretation of the text. *Dalail* fasting is a form of fasting originating as a sign of love for the Messenger of Allah by reciting praying and greeting in the *Dalail al-Khairat* ritual. Other non-obligatory fasting are the Thursday and Monday fasting, Daud fasting (a kind of fasting performed by Prophet David), and some others. *Dalail* fasting is widely practiced in various regions (Jalil, 2015), such as the Islamic Boarding School of Peta, Tulungagung, API Boarding School, Tegalrejo Magelang, Futuhiyyah Islamic Boarding School, Mranggen, even by other students scattered in various Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. However, the Jekulo Boarding School is a central boarding school which is known for its *dalail* fasting, and became a reference center because after Kyai Ahmad Basyir died, a diploma was given to his three sons to continue the *dalail* tradition. In fact, once a year during the anniversary of *muallif dalail* and Ahmad KH Basyir, those who do the *Dalail* gathered in Kudus and were given a final diploma.

Fasting of *Dalail al-Khairat* was a part of fasting practiced by the *tarekat* group (a learning group based on certain interpretation of the Islamic principles)-the members of the *tarekat* were trained to be concerned with fulfilling the obligatory acts and avoid doing forbidden actions. They focus more on being cautious on their practices). One characteristic of the *tarekat* is the scientific transmission of *sanad* (the chain of transmission) which is very well preserved. However, the *dalai* is not affiliated with a particular *tarekat*. The *tarekat* has been emerging in almost all parts of Indonesia, such as Aceh with the term *Dalae* (special ways of chanting) which has dated back to the 17th century. In the Javanese island alone, the *dalai* is consistently recited and it seems to be more popular in Indonesia. The *dalail* is recited by people involving in various *tarikah*. However, the *Dalail al-Khairat* is well known when it is referred to a book, it is not very well known as the act of fasting. As the *dalail al-khairat* is challenging not many practice this particular fasting though. It is also aggravated by the requirement to also include the recitation of *wirid* and *zikir* while doing the fasting.

Ideological And Pragmatic Motivation Of The Fasting

As a devout Muslim, fasting is a medium to have spiritual strength and to gain emotional attitudes. In this case, Santriwati (female students of the boarding school) who practiced the *Dalail al-Khairat* fasting tends to be motivated by these two reasons: ideological and pragmatic reasons. For students who are ideologically minded, fasting in addition to enhancing their spiritual well-being also has an emotional impact which results in mental tranquillity and physical health, which in turn improve the quality of life of a person (Young et al., 2010). In line with that, Abdel-Khalek (2014) explains that faith gives satisfaction and happiness, and improves one's religiosity. Likewise the quality of life can be influenced by one's religiosity through strengthening faith or religiosity, every individual to behave according to the values set by religious teachings (Celasin et al., 2011; Rambod & Rafii, 2010; Stamm, 2010). This motivation allows students to keep fasting although this kind of fasting does not have a basis in religious principles.

The second tendency is pragmatic motivation. Some perform fasting of *Dalail al-Khairat* because of their solidarity towards their fellow students. This is because they have lived together in the boarding school. This also performed out of their obedience to their teachers. The social capital of the cleric enables the Muslim leaders to influence general communities. In addition, trust, values, and norms influence the performance of fasting (Ariyanto et al., 2012). Some students are found to perform the *Dalail al-Khairat* fasting for pragmatic purpose, in which they feel not at ease not being fasting while others as expressed by Nuri (2014), in the case of the performance of pilgrimage, which was initially emphasized worship, turned to be business oriented.

***Dalail Al-Khairat* Fasting: Well Being And Religious Satisfaction**

Female students experience more challenges than do male students in performing the *dalail* fasting. These differences are due to physiological, psychological, sexual, career, and future aspects (Dagun, 1992; Muqoyyidin, 2013). This issue has been previously revealed in the finding sections. There are two main factors leading to female students' challenges in performing the fasting. First, the psychological perspectives, in which female students were positioned as weak and emotionally unstable. Women tend to be marginalized and seen as inferior and lower position in leadership and spirituality compared to the male students, and this is parallel with many religious adherents' perspectives (Anshori, 2015). Although in the current time more women are pursuing tertiary education to support their careers and to secure good position, most communities still place them as inferior. This influences the way these female students' perform the fasting.

Second is the biological perspective. Biologically speaking, there are differences between male and female. There are differences in terms of physical aspects, such as height, breast, hair, internal and external genital organs, and hormonal types that affect variations physical characteristics (Nurhayati, 2012). Another physical characteristic that distinguishes women from men is the fact that women experience menstruation, pregnancy, giving birth and breastfeed. This is a challenge for female students in practicing *dalail* fasting continuously. Therefore, for this reason, married women face challenges more than those of male Muslims.

In addition to the challenges of the *dalail al-khairat* fasting, it also gives positive implications both in terms of physical and spiritual aspects. Students suggest that the fasting give them inner satisfaction and happiness as stated by Ryff and Singer (Mayasari, 2014) that religiosity is one of the factors that influence one's well-being. Likewise, the practice of fasting in *Dalail* as a form of worship, according to Glock (Mayasari, 2014), is one of the religious dimensions related to attitudes, and they have been fixed by religion, such as worship, baptism, confession, fasting, praying or performing special rituals on holy days. In addition, the practices of fasting also shape one's attitudes and religiosity. They are also confident that their practice of fasting will benefit them in the live and the hereafter.

CONCLUSION

The fasting of *Dalail al-Khairat* has been enculturized in a *pesantren*; it has been a tradition practiced by the *santri*. However, it is not commonly practiced by general Muslims, since the *dalail al- khairat* fasting is a non-obligatory fasting and it is an extreme activity to carry out. However, it is practiced by some Muslim students and they are committed with it. Prior to performing the fasting, students request the diploma that allows them to perform the fasting. This suggests that the teacher or the supreme leader of the *pesantren* play significant role to the continuity of this kind of fasting. The fasting is performed a long with the recitation of remembrance to Allah and praising of the prophet Muhammad PbuH.

There two motivations underlying students performing fasting: the ideological and the pragmatic motivation. The ideological motivation drives them to committed with the fasting for the sake of receiving the blessing of Allah, and in turns allows them to gain internal peace. The pragmatic motivation drives students to perform fasting for their solidarity toward their fellow students. As most students are performing fasting, some students see it necessary to do the same, and this also reflects their obedience toward their teachers' request.

Female students suffer from high complexities in performing the fasting. First, the psychological condition of women lead to their complexities to do fasting. This is so since they are positioned as inferior in the wider community. They are seen as weak and emotionally unstable shape the way these women students performing fasting. The other challenges encountered are in term of biological condition. Biologically there are physical differences between women and men, such as menstruation, childbirth for those who are married, and breastfeeding. This problem is inevitable, which shape the way these female students carrying the fasting. However, the students admit that the fasting allows them to become better Muslims.

The study of fasting has been widely conducted and researchers both from the practical aspects and aspects of worship. *Dalail* fasting is one of the fasting performed by many individually or communally in Indonesia.

Therefore, further studies exploring kinds of non-obligatory fasting performed by the Indonesians should carried out to have an in-depth understanding on variations of fasting performed.

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