

Riyadah and Khidmah: Ngalap Barakah Practices in Pesantren Life as a Foundation for the Success of Islamic Education

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Abstract

Barakah, as a primary aspiration in the pursuit of knowledge, plays an important role in *pesantren* life. However, practices intended to obtain barakah give rise to diverse forms of behavior among *pesantren* communities, some of which are regarded by the wider public as excessive or even taboo. This study aims to map the practices through which *pesantren* communities seek barakah. It employs a qualitative research design, with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings show that the practices of seeking barakah can be mapped into two main categories: *khidmah* and *riyadah*. This study is expected to provide education and practical guidance for the general public and new *santri* in understanding the practice of seeking barakah. The continuity of *ngalap barakah* practices in *pesantren* life represents an effort to preserve cultural traditions within the intellectual history of Islam. *Ngalap barakah* through *khidmah* and *riyadah* also demonstrates conceptual and procedural parallels with traditions found across religions. The tradition of *ngalap barakah* thus serves as a means through which *santri* seek blessings from a *kiai* during their intellectual and spiritual journey in the *pesantren*.

Keywords: *Ngalap Barakah, Khidmah, Riyadah, Pesantren Culture.*

INTRODUCTION

The presence of barakah in Islamic education within *pesantren* is believed to be a key to serenity in life, both inside the *pesantren* and in society.¹ *Pesantren* communities understand barakah as “Ziyadatul khoir 'a kulli sya'iiin,” meaning an increase in goodness in all things.² For *pesantren* communities, barakah serves as both a foundation and an objective in everyday activities.³ Given this importance, *pesantren* as Islamic educational

¹ “Berkah Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an Kajian Tentang Objek Yang Mendapat Keberkahan,” n.d., accessed December 11, 2024, <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/bitstream/123456789/38090/2/AHMAD%20KUSAERI-FU.pdf>.

² Lailatur Rofidah and Nur Syam, “Fenomenologi Relasi Santri-Kiai Di Pesantren: : Motif Nata Sandal Di Kalangan Santri,” *Jurnal TARBAWI* 10, no. 1 (2021): 1, <https://doi.org/10.36781/tarbawi.v10i1.159>.

³ M. Amirur Rahman, “Ngalap Barokah Minuman Bekas Kiai Kajian Living Hadis Teori Sosial Emile Durkheim,” *Musala: Jurnal Pesantren dan Kebudayaan Islam Nusantara* 1, no. 2 (2022): 2, <https://doi.org/10.37252/jpkin.v1i2.172>.

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institutions consistently instill the meaning and role of barakah in every learning activity.

Belief in the value of barakah among *pesantren* communities gives rise to diverse practices that have become traditions in *pesantren* life. This tradition is known as “*ngalap barakah*.” It forms part of the Islamic intellectual heritage through which knowledge and adab are transmitted in *pesantren* and represents a civilizational legacy that has existed from the time of the Prophet to the present.⁴ Barakah is not merely expressed as a theological belief but is also embodied in concrete practices that become part of *santri* culture.⁵ In practice, several unique and noteworthy traditions can be observed, such as competing for the *kiai*'s leftover drink.⁶ *Santri* may also rush to turn and arrange the *kiai*'s sandals so that they are ready to wear when he attends a religious study session. These behaviors are only a small illustration of *ngalap barakah* practices in the *pesantren* environment.

This study is supported by Nur Hayati's research, which concludes that obtaining barakah is closely associated with acts of service. *Santri* may serve their *kiai* in various ways.⁷ Other studies also indicate that several kinds of rituals may be performed in the pursuit of barakah.⁸ Tammulis found that kissing the hand of an ulama is also believed to bring barakah because an ulama is regarded as a pious person before Allah SWT.⁹ Hanifa Fajriyah further found that the presence of Gus Dur's tomb as an object of *ngalap barakah* within the Tebuireng *Pesantren* area provides benefits not only to the *pesantren* but also to the surrounding community. This is reflected in the emergence of unintended place branding that has contributed to the local economy.¹⁰

Iqbal Maulana's research likewise shows that the buka luwur tradition at the tomb of Sunan Kudus is believed to bring barakah.¹¹ Beyond the ritual itself, grave visitation, buka luwur, and the distribution of nasi barakah constitute forms of respect for Sunan

⁴ Siti Huzaimah and Ahmad Mukhlisin, “Interaksi *Santri* nDalem Dalam Memaknai Ngalap Berkah Di Pondok *Pesantren* Walisongso Sukajadi Lampung,” *JAWI* 3, no. 1 (2020): 59–82, <https://doi.org/10.24042/jw.v3i1.7037>.

⁵ Rahman, “Ngalap Barokah Minuman Bekas *Kiai* Kajian Living Hadis Teori Sosial Emile Durkheim.”

⁶ *Unjukan* refers to a beverage served to a *kiai* as a form of hospitality during an event. It is conceptually similar to *daharan*, with the main difference being the form of the offering: *unjukan* generally refers to drinks, whereas *daharan* refers to food.

⁷ Nur Hayati and Arifia Retna Yunita, “Nilai-Nilai Barokah Dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam di *Pesantren* Zainul Hasan 2 Tambelang Krucil Probolinggo,” *Andragogi: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Agama Islam* 3, no. 2 (2021): 2, <https://doi.org/10.33474/ja.v3i2.13896>.

⁸ Jamhari Jamhari, “The Meaning Interpreted: The Concept of Barakah in Ziarah,” *Studia Islamika* 8, no. 1 (1970), <https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v8i1.696>.

⁹ Tammulis Tammulis et al., “Jabat Tangan Dengan Cium Tangan Kyai Untuk Keberkahan Dalam Perspektif Quran,” *Ulu-muddin: Jurnal Ilmu-Keislaman* 11, no. 1 (2021): 115–28, <https://doi.org/10.47200/ulumu-dudin.v11i1.773>.

¹⁰ Hanifa Fijriah and Evawani Ellisa, “The Role of ‘Ngalap Barokah’ in Rapid Urban Development: Case Study of Tebuireng, Jombang,” *Journal of Islamic Architecture* 7, no. 2 (2022): 233–42, <https://doi.org/10.18860/jia.v7i2.16385>.

¹¹ *Buka Luwur* is a tradition of replacing the cloth covering the tomb of Sunan Kudus, held annually on the 10th of Muharram in the Hijri calendar. In addition to communal prayers and the replacement of the cloth, the tradition is followed by the distribution of *nasi barakah* (blessed rice) to the surrounding community.

Kudus as an Islamic preacher.¹² Similarly, Nur Hijja Fiddari's research on *bilaruhi* fasting demonstrates that *tirakat* influences Emotional Spiritual Question (ESQ) and contributes to improving *santri* concentration in learning and memorization.¹³ In addition to *bilaruh tirakat*, Zaenal Arifin's study of *uzlah* describes it as a form of *santri* meditation involving restraint from desire and worldly temptations in order to draw closer to Allah SWT.¹⁴

Although many studies have examined the concept of barakah, relatively few have focused on detailed mapping of the activities believed to bring it. Most previous studies discuss barakah primarily in theological and normative terms. Based on this research gap, an ethnographic study that maps the various ways of seeking barakah within *pesantren* is important. This study complements previous research on the meaning of barakah and on the importance of practices believed to bring blessings.

This study examines behaviors believed to generate barakah based on the culture that develops within *pesantren*. It aims to classify *ngalap barakah* practices in *pesantren* life and to present them as possible models for understanding the pursuit of barakah beyond the *pesantren* community.

METHOD

This qualitative study aims to map behaviors believed to bring barakah. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observational data were obtained from phenomena encountered directly by the researchers during fieldwork at HM Al-Mahrusiyah Lirboyo *Pesantren* in Kediri City. Documentary data were also collected from the *pesantren's* social media platforms.

Interview data were obtained from informants relevant to the topic, including *abdi ndalem*, *santri*, and alumni. The planned interview with the *pesantren* leader could not be conducted because of the informant's schedule and the difficulty of arranging a suitable time. In addition to interviewing *pesantren* figures, the researchers also sought information from representatives of other religious traditions. The only interfaith informant available to provide information was a church worship leader.

Interviews with a pastor and a biblical theologian had to be cancelled because the scheduled interview coincided with a pastors' meeting at the church, while time constraints prevented the researchers from returning for another interview. Interviews were conducted at HM Al-Mahrusiyah Lirboyo *Pesantren*, at the residence of the church worship leader, and, at the request of several informants, online via WhatsApp.

¹² Iqbal Maulana, "Ngalap Berkah Tradition (A Case Study of the Ritual of Visiting the Grave and Buka Luwur of Sunan Kudus's Tomb)," *JUSPI (Jurnal Sejarah Peradaban Islam)* 8, no. 1 (2024): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.30829/juspi.v8i1.15978>.

¹³ Nur Hijja Fiddari and Moh Turmudi, "Tirakat Puasa Bilaruh Sebagai Upaya Mengembangkan ESQ (Emotional Spiritual Question) *Santri* Pondok *Pesantren* Lirboyo HM Putri Al Mahrusiyah," *Indonesian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 1, no. 3 (2020): 197–210, <https://doi.org/10.33367/ijhass.v1i3.1519>.

¹⁴ Zaenal Arifin and Mayashofa Rhoyachin, "â€Uzlah Practice to Enhance *Santri*â€™s Mentality and Spirituality," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 5, no. 2 (2019): 201–10, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v5i2.5793>.

This study applies a participatory ethnographic approach to *pesantren* education in order to map the culture and traditions of *ngalap barakah* in the *pesantren*.¹⁵ Relevant literature was identified using the Publish or Perish application with keywords such as *ngalap barakah*, *pesantren* tradition, and *khidmah*. The books and journal articles obtained were then combined to facilitate data synthesis and to enable the development of broader analytical themes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Barakah is a fundamental aspect regarded as a key to success within *pesantren* communities.¹⁶ Many aspects of *santri* life are shaped by the shared aspiration to obtain blessings. It is therefore common for *santri* to actively seek *barakah*.¹⁷ They employ different ways and practices to obtain the *barakah* they desire.

Barakah through Riyadah

Several distinctive practices are performed by *santri* in their pursuit of *barakah*. The researchers observed some *santri* avoiding rice, even though rice is the staple food of most Indonesians, and consuming corn rice instead. This practice is known as *ngrowot* and is regarded as a form of *riyadah* among *santri*.¹⁸ In relation to *riyadah*, some *pesantren* communities also practice *bilang* fasting by avoiding meat and all forms of animal protein.¹⁹

Seeking *barakah* through *riyadah* is not limited to fasting as a means of restraining desire; it may also involve practicing certain *wirid* that have been formally authorized through *ijazah*. One such practice is *tawasulan*, performed before studying by invoking the authors of the texts and the teachers in the chain of learning.²⁰ *Santri* also consistently recite *sab'ul munjiyat* every day in the hope of receiving ease in understanding and practicing the knowledge they study.

The difference between *riyadah* through *wirid* and through fasting lies in their respective processes. Fasting is a way of seeking *barakah* through self-restraint, thereby cultivating obedience and closeness to the Creator. *Wirid*, meanwhile, seeks blessings through *istiqamah* in remembering, praising, and supplicating to God; whether one's wishes are fulfilled sooner or later, their fulfillment is understood as a blessing. The underlying orientation of every form of *riyadah* practiced by *santri* is to become obedient

¹⁵ Koes Winarno, "Memahami Etnografi Ala Spradley," *Jurnal SMART (Studi Masyarakat, Religi, Dan Tradisi)* 1, No. 2 (2015), <https://doi.org/10.18784/Smart.V1i2.256>.

¹⁶ Hayati And Yunita, "Nilai-Nilai Barokah Dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam Di *Pesantren* Zainul Hasan 2 Tambelang Krucil Probolinggo."

¹⁷ Samsul Arifin, "Berkah Dalam *Berkhidmah* Sebagai Etos Kewirausahaan *Santriwati* Dalam Meraih Kesempurnaan Dan Kebermaknaan Hidup," *Proceeding of International Conference on Engineering, Technology, and Social Sciences (ICONETOS)* 4, no. 1 (2025): 1.

¹⁸ M. Ikhwanudin et al., "Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Islam Dalam Puasa *Ngrowot*," *Assyfa Journal of Islamic Studies* 1, no. 1 (2023): 41–50, <https://doi.org/10.61650/ajis.v1i1.168>.

¹⁹ NW, *Interview*, in Pondok *Pesantren* HM Al-Mahrusiyah Lirboyo at July 2025

²⁰ *Tawasulan* is a ritual of offering prayers for teachers, religious scholars, and authors of classical Islamic texts, with the intention of seeking ease and divine assistance in carrying out a good endeavor. It is commonly performed before beginning a study session. In essence, *tawasulan* serves as a means through which a person presents a supplication to God in the hope that a particular need or intention will be fulfilled.

servants who are close to Allah SWT and to attain both worldly and spiritual blessings.²¹

Pesantren education with a Salafi background consistently preserves *pesantren* cultural heritage, particularly traditions with educational and spiritual value. *Sowan* and *tawasulan* are practices regarded by many *santri* as almost obligatory.²² The culture of *tawasulan* functions as a means of maintaining *ta'alluq batiniyah*, or an inner spiritual connection, between teacher and student.²³ *Tawasulan* also shows certain parallels with prayer practices in Catholic and Orthodox Christianity.²⁴

This interpretation refers to 1 Timothy 2:5 in the Bible, which explains that there is one God and that Jesus is the sole mediator between human beings and God.²⁵ Accordingly, when praying, congregants offer praise to earlier sacred figures and to Jesus as mediators between themselves and God.²⁶

Tawasulan is a form of *ngalap barakah* through *riyadah* in the form of *wirid*. In addition to *tawasul*, *wirid* practices may include *sab'ul munjiyat*, *manaqib*, *maulid ad-diba'i*, and various prayers and specific *hizb* that have been transmitted through *ijazah*.²⁷ *Wiridan* is another term used for *dhikr*.²⁸

From a psychological perspective, *dhikr* may help regulate mental and spiritual states and contribute to emotional stability.²⁹ *Dhikr* functions as an effort to bring awareness of the divine into every aspect of life, both in speech and action, thereby reaching a state of inner calm associated with *tawakkal*.³⁰ Comparable devotional practices among Christians may take the form of daily prayer, meditation, personal

²¹ Muhammad Anwar Idris, "Konstruksi Puasa Waqi'ah," *Jurnal Living Hadis* 5, no. 1 (2020): 17–39, <https://doi.org/10.14421/livinghadis.2020.2168>.

²² Mursyid Al Haq, "Analisis Tawasul dan Kebutuhan Manusia Terhadap Ritual Keagamaan," *Journal Garasi Buku and Obrolan Keilmuan* 1, no. 2 (2023): 121–35, <https://doi.org/10.62475/afqd1383>.

²³ *Ta'alluq batiniyah* refers to a spiritual connection between a teacher and a student. Its presence may be reflected in the extent to which a student's conduct corresponds with the knowledge and guidance received from the teacher. A student who maintains *ta'alluq* with a teacher is believed to receive continuing spiritual guidance in daily life, which is understood as a manifestation of *barakah* arising from maintaining this inner bond.

²⁴ Hery Budi Yosef, "Kajian Doa Menurut Alkitab dan Relevansinya Dalam Kehidupan Kekristenan," *VISIO DEI: JURNAL TEOLOGI KRISTEN* 6, no. 1 (2024): 53–61, <https://doi.org/10.35909/visiodei.v6i1.512>.

²⁵ Yuwita Despriyantje et al., "Kristus Sebagai Jembatan: Peran Kristus Dalam Memediasi Perjumpaan Dengan Allah," *Jurnal Silih Asah* 1, no. 2 (2024): 2, <https://doi.org/10.54765/silihasah.v1i2.30>.

²⁶ In the Christian practice described here as analogous to *tawasulan*, praise is offered to earlier revered figures and to Jesus, who are regarded as being closer to God and as serving a mediating role in prayer.

²⁷ *Ijazahan* refers to an authorization or spiritual transmission granted to graduates or *santri* who have completed a course of education in a *pesantren*. It commonly takes the form of permission to practice particular *wirid* or other forms of *tirakat*. Such practices are generally undertaken when a person has a specific intention or need to pursue.

²⁸ *Dhikr*, etymologically, means remembrance, particularly the remembrance of Allah. It refers to remembering and invoking Allah through practices such as reciting *tasbih*, *tahmid*, *tahlil*, verses of the Qur'an, and prayers recommended by the Prophet.

²⁹ Umar Latif, "Dzikir Dan Upaya Pemenuhan Mental-Spiritual Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an," *At-Taujih : Bimbingan Dan Konseling Islam* 5, no. 1 (2022): 1, <https://doi.org/10.22373/taujih.v5i1.13729>.

³⁰ Ainur Rofiq dan Sutopo, "Tafakur dan Dzikir dalam Mencapai Ketenangan Hidup," *Conseils : Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling Islam* 3, no. 1 (2023): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.55352/bki.v3i1.170>.

devotion, and praise and worship.³¹ In 1 Thessalonians 5:17 appears the instruction “pray continually”; Psalm 34:1 contains the statement “I will bless the Lord at all times”; and Joshua 1:8 likewise addresses remembering God and His words.³²

The aim of dhikr is understood as attaining fortune or blessings from God, whose name is remembered continually.³³ The prayer taught and regularly recited by Christian congregations is known as the Lord's Prayer.³⁴ Based on Paul's letters in the Bible, prayer is understood as a means of building a closer relationship with God in order to receive divine power and love, and therefore should be practiced with humility and sincerity.³⁵

Another form of *riyadah* is fasting. There are various forms of voluntary fasting, ranging from relatively light to more demanding practices. Common examples include *bilaruhi* fasting, Monday–Thursday fasting, the fasting of Dawud, *ngrowot* fasting, *mutih* fasting, and others. From a psychological perspective, ascetic fasting practices such as *bilaruh* are considered capable of developing ESQ (Emotional Spiritual Question). Although not every *santri* who practices *bilaruh* experiences an increase in ESQ, some demonstrate greater emotional stability because they understand fasting as an exercise in restraining desire.³⁶

Tirakat also parallels the Hindu ritual of *upawasa*, which is practiced to perfect *brata*. *Upawasa*, another term for fasting, involves restraining desire in order to draw closer to God. Such restraint is understood as a means of self-improvement. *Upawasa* is practiced for one day, training practitioners to control desire and thereby facilitating spiritual closeness to God.³⁷

Tirakat as a process of restraining desire also shows similarities with *tapa* in Javanese spiritual practice, as represented in the teachings of *Serat Kawulo Pamoring Gusti*, which aim at drawing closer to God. *Tapa* in this Javanese tradition also displays parallels with Islamic Sufism in terms of its aims, methods, process, and underlying

³¹ *Alkitab Terjemahan Baru*, 2022nd ed. (Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia, 2022). Dalam 1 tesalonika 5:17, mazmur 34:1, yosua 1:8

³² Among Christians, practices comparable to *wiridan* may take the form of daily prayer, namely the habit of praying in the morning and evening to communicate with God and seek guidance; biblical meditation, which involves reading and reflecting on biblical passages to deepen one's understanding of God's word; personal devotion, which involves setting aside dedicated time for prayer to strengthen one's relationship with God; and praise and worship through devotional songs.

³³ Eirene Ilmiawati Rindi, *Makna Doa Menurut Perspektif Paulus Dalam Surat-Suratnya Dan Implementasinya Terhadap Kehidupan Orang Percaya*, 3, no. 1 (2022).

³⁴ Jonar T. H. Situmorang, *Doa Bapa Kami Bukan Sekadar Doa Liturgi: Menjadikan Doa Bapa Kami Sebagai Gaya Hidup Doa Sehari-hari* (PBMR ANDI, 2021).

³⁵ Rindi, *Makna Doa Menurut Perspektif Paulus Dalam Surat-Suratnya Dan Implementasinya Terhadap Kehidupan Orang Percaya*.

³⁶ Nur Hijja Fiddari and Moh Turmudi, “Tirakat Puasa Bilaruh Sebagai Upaya Mengembangkan ESQ (Emotional Spiritual Question) Santri Pondok Pesantren Lirboyo HM Putri Al Mahrusiyah,” *Indonesian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 1, no. 3 (2020): 3, <https://doi.org/10.33367/ijhass.v1i3.1519>.

³⁷ Nendia Pratama Baihaqi, “Praktik Dan Pemaknaan Upawasa Bagi Masyarakat Hindu (Studi Di Desa Balinuraga, Kec. Way Panji, Lampung Selatan)” (Diploma, Uin Raden Intan Lampung, 2022), <https://Repository.Radenintan.Ac.Id/20815/>.

meaning.³⁸ If *tirakat* is understood as restraining desire and attachment to worldly things, it also resembles Christian asceticism.³⁹ Ascetic practice may likewise involve fasting as a means of controlling desire and avoiding worldly luxury.⁴⁰

Riyadah and the practices described above must be accompanied by *istiqamah*. *Istiqamah* is commonly understood as steadfastness or consistency on the path of truth in accordance with the teachings of Allah SWT.⁴¹ In Christianity, a comparable idea is expressed through faithfulness or perseverance.⁴² Faithfulness to God and perseverance in faith represent forms comparable to *istiqamah* in the Christian tradition.⁴³

Barakah through Khidmah

Ngalap barakah through *khidmah* represents a second major path alongside *riyadah* in *pesantren* life. *Khidmah*, understood as service and respect toward knowledge and teachers, is a frequently chosen way of seeking barakah.⁴⁴ In *pesantren*, *khidmah* is often expressed through *sendiko dawuh*, namely obedience to a teacher's instructions and prohibitions as long as they do not conflict with Islamic law.⁴⁵ One form of *khidmah* is becoming an *abdi ndalem* who directly assists the *kiai* with various responsibilities. The essence of *khidmah* is *manut*, or willing obedience; some *santri* even regard compliance with *pesantren* regulations as a genuine form of *khidmah*.⁴⁶

One distinctive phenomenon observed in this study was *santri* competing for a cup of coffee left by the *kiai* after a religious lesson. They were also seen promptly arranging the *kiai*'s sandals so that they were ready to wear when he attended a gathering. The researchers further observed male *santri* tending the *kiai*'s livestock while reviewing their memorized *nadzom* from *madrasah diniyah* lessons. Many other distinctive practices were identified, reflecting the large *pesantren* population and the variety of *ngalap barakah* practices carried out within it.⁴⁷

Ngalap barakah through *khidmah* is practiced for various reasons. *Sami'na wa*

³⁸ Arif Shofiullah, "Konsep tapa dalam perspektif tasawuf (kajian serat Pamoring Kawula Gusti karya Raden Ngabehi Ronggowarsito)" (undergraduate_thesis, UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, 2024), <http://perpustakaan.uingudur.ac.id/>.

³⁹ Asceticism is a form of spiritual discipline aimed at attaining spiritual wholeness through a way of life modeled on Jesus Christ.

⁴⁰ Haryadi Sarjono Dan Heppy Yohanes, "Asketisme Dalam Perspektif Kristen Sebuah Pengantar," *Ritornela - Jurnal Teologi Pentakosta Indonesia* 2, No. 3 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.54403/Rjtpi.V2i3.51>.

⁴¹ Muhammad Harfin Zuhdi, "Istiqomah Dan Konsep Diri Seorang Muslim," *RELIGIA* 14, No. 1 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.28918/Religia.V14i1.36>.

⁴² A person who remains steadfast and faithful in faith and devotion to God is believed to receive salvation and the crown of life. In this context, salvation and the crown of life are presented as conceptually comparable to *barakah* in Islam, as both refer to the attainment or increase of goodness.

⁴³ *Alkitab Terjemahan Baru*. Injil Matius 24:13, Yakobus 1:12

⁴⁴ NR, Interview, di Pondok Pesantren HM Al-Mahrusiyah Lirboyo, at July 2025.

⁴⁵ Rizal Fathurrohman and Ahmad Arifi, "Khidmah in Transition: Santri, Kiai, and Social Transformation in Pesantren," *Nadwa: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 18, no. 2 (2024): 227–44, <https://doi.org/10.21580/nw.2024.18.2.21107>; Barlian Fajri and Naser Ali Abdulghani, "Symbolic Interactionism Between Students and Caregivers in Pesantren," *Al-Jadwa: Jurnal Studi Islam* 5, no. 1 (2025): 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.38073/aljadwa.3310>.

⁴⁶ KM, Interview, Motives and Meanings Behind Barokah's Behavior, in Pondok Pesantren HM Al-Mahrusiyah Lirboyo, at July 2025

⁴⁷ Observasi di Pondok Pesantren HM Al-Mahrusiyah Lirboyo Kota Kediri pada Juli-Agustus 2025

atho'na represents an expression of genuine *khidmah*; in Javanese usage it is also called *sendiko dawuh*, referring to obedience to the instructions given by the *kiai*.⁴⁸ One manifestation of *sendiko dawuh* in *pesantren* is becoming an *abdi ndalem*. This practice is experienced as a form of direct *tarbiyah* from the *kiai* that trains *santri* in obedience. *Santri* also value being personally known by a learned figure such as the *kiai* and by members of the *ndalem* family.

In formal education, *khidmah* may be compared with service learning.⁴⁹ John Maxwell presents a view consistent with this concept in the statement, “servanthood is the soul for developing people,” arguing that service is central to human development.⁵⁰ Several elements are required within the concept of service learning.⁵¹ This perspective is also consistent with Zamakhsyari Dhofier's description of *pesantren* education, which is not merely oriented toward personal interests, power, wealth, or other worldly aims.⁵²

The scope of *khidmah* includes honoring knowledge and those who possess it, a practice that has become part of *pesantren* culture. Honoring knowledge may be expressed by consistently applying it in all aspects of life and by treating books of learning according to their respected status.⁵³ Examples include placing religious books on a table rather than on the floor, studying in a state of ritual purity, and covering the *awrah*. The basis for honoring knowledge and its scholars is explained in *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* by Shaykh al-Zarnuji.⁵⁴

A person of knowledge in this context refers to a *kiai* who acts as a *murabbi*, educating and nurturing the spiritual life of *santri* during their residence in the *pesantren*.⁵⁵ The tradition of honoring people of knowledge has parallels with educational principles in Christian literature. Christians may understand teachers as servants or co-workers of God in the field of education who help fulfill a divine mandate. This view

⁴⁸ Rofidatul Hasanah et al., “Sami’na Wa Atho’na Philosophy In The Process Of Accounting Education Based On Islamic Boarding Schools,” *Jurnal Riset Akuntansi Dan Bisnis Airlangga* 7, no. 2 (2022): 1380–94, <https://doi.org/10.20473/jraba.v7i2.40437>.

⁴⁹ Muhammad Shalahuddin et al., “Aktualisasi Konsep *Khidmah* Di Pondok *Pesantren* (Studi Kasus Di Pondok *Pesantren* Al-Mardiyah Bahrul Ulum Tambakberas Jombang),” *Mujalawat: Multidisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies* 3, no. 1 (2025): 1.

⁵⁰ “Dika-Agustia-Indrati-756-763.Pdf,” n.d., accessed July 28, 2025, <https://pasca.um.ac.id/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Dika-Agustia-Indrati-756-763.pdf>.

⁵¹ First, reflection refers to students' self-development through increased experience and lessons in *adab* exemplified by the teacher. Second, relationship refers to the connection between teachers and students that contains an element of mutual benefit. Third, reality refers to the needs of the target community, which should be aligned with the values of Islamic education.

⁵² Mumu, “Budaya *Pesantren* Dan Pendidikan Karakter Pada *Pesantren* Salaf: (Studi Kasus di Pondok *Pesantren* Al Munawwar arnujiyyah Tasikmalaya),” *HASBUNA : Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 6, no. 1 (2025): 129–41, <https://doi.org/10.70143/hasbuna.v6i1.485>.

⁵³ Sayid Ahmad Ramadhan and Hendra Sucipto, “Adab Terhadap Ilmu Perspektif Imam Al-Ghazali,” *AL-MURABBI: Jurnal Studi Kependidikan Dan Keislaman* 10, no. 2 (2024): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.53627/jam.v10i2.5297>.

⁵⁴ Dede Linda Lindawati et al., “Analisis Adab Mencari Ilmu Dalam Kitab Ta’lim Muta’allim Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Pendidikan Karakter Di SMAIT Harapan Umat Karawang,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Profesi Pendidikan* 6, no. 2 (2021): 254–64, <https://doi.org/10.29303/jipp.v6i2.205>.

⁵⁵ Siti Arafat, “Analisis Peran Guru Agama Islam Dalam Pengembangan Pendidikan Agama Islam Di SD Inpres Ende 16,” *NUSRA: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Ilmu Pendidikan* 5, no. 4 (2024): 1655–60, <https://doi.org/10.55681/nusra.v5i4.3213>.

gives rise to the principle that teachers deserve respect comparable to that shown to parents. Respecting teachers may therefore be understood as part of faith because it reflects obedience to divine teaching.⁵⁶

The concept of *khidmah* to a *kiai* in seeking barakah also has parallels with the Hindu teaching of *catur marga yoga*.⁵⁷ The closest correspondence lies in *karma marga yoga*, which teaches selfless work and the surrender of the results of one's work entirely to God.⁵⁸ This indicates that *khidmah* in Islam and this Hindu teaching share an emphasis on total commitment and sincerity.⁵⁹

The practice of honoring knowledge and its scholars in *pesantren* is also often expressed through *sanadan* events.⁶⁰ A commonly cited principle states that whoever studies without a teacher has Satan as a teacher and that such knowledge cannot be properly accounted for.⁶¹ In Qur'anic studies, *sanad* refers to direct encounters between teacher and student in transmitting knowledge of the Qur'an so that what the student receives corresponds accurately to what the teacher intends to convey.⁶² A clear scholarly *sanad* therefore helps ensure that the knowledge obtained can be traced and academically or religiously accounted for.⁶³

Al-Ghazali argues that learning is realized through active interaction between teacher and student, in their respective roles as transmitter and recipient of knowledge, thereby creating a process of knowledge transfer.⁶⁴ *Sanad* is also understood more specifically through face-to-face transmission (*talaqqi*), whether in *sorogan* or

⁵⁶ Kiki Debora and Chandra Han, *Pentingnya Peranan Guru Kristen dalam Membentuk Karakter Siswa Dalam Pendidikan Kristen: Sebuah Kajian Etika Kristen*, n.d.

⁵⁷ *Catur Marga Yoga* consists of four paths for drawing closer to God. *Bhakti Marga Yoga* is the path of devotion through worship and reverence for God and all creation. *Jnana Marga Yoga* is the path of knowledge through learning, sharing, and applying knowledge in life. *Karma Marga Yoga* is the path of selfless action by surrendering the results of one's work entirely to God. *Raja Marga Yoga* is the path of spiritual discipline through ascetic practice or meditation.

⁵⁸ I. Dewa Gede Darma Permana, "Urgensi Pengamalan Ilmu Pengetahuan Yang Mulia Di Tengah Era Revolusi Industri 4.0 Dalam Perspektif Hindu," *Satya Widya: Jurnal Studi Agama* 6, no. 1 (2023): 14, <https://doi.org/10.33363/swjsa.v6i1.910>.

⁵⁹ I. Dewa Gede Darma Permana, "Urgensi Pengamalan Ilmu Pengetahuan Yang Mulia Di Tengah Era Revolusi Industri 4.0 Dalam Perspektif Hindu," *Satya Widya: Jurnal Studi Agama* 6, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.33363/swjsa.v6i1.910>.

⁶⁰ *Sanad* is a central component of the *pesantren* tradition of seeking knowledge and refers to knowing the chain through which knowledge is transmitted. The origin and transmission of the knowledge being studied should form a clear and continuous chain extending back to the Prophet Muhammad. A *sanadan* event is an occasion on which this chain of teachers is recited from the earliest teacher to the most recent, with the chain understood to be continuous (*muttasil*). Such events are commonly held after students complete their madrasah diniyah education.

⁶¹ Muhammad Hamid and Syamsul Bakri, "Urgensi Sanad Dalam Meningkatkan Profesionalitas Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education Studies (INJURIES)* 1, no. 2 (2023): 61–69, <https://doi.org/10.61227/injuries.v1i2.18>.

⁶² Mohamad Redha Mohamad, "Sanad Surah Al-Fatihah: Amalan Pengijazahannya Di Malaysia: Sanad for Surah al-Fatihah: The Practice of Its Ijazah in Malaysia," *QIRAAT: Jurnal Al-Quran Dan Isu-Isu Kontemporari* 5, no. 2 (2022): 2, <https://doi.org/10.53840/qiraat.v5i2.52>.

⁶³ Pentingnya Sanad Keilmuan dalam Islam, Gus Reza Ahmad Zahid, Youtube NU Online, Mei 2022, diakses pada 14 Juni 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehSiFqBXPic>

⁶⁴ Asep Hermawan, *Konsep Belajar Dan Pembelajaran Menurut Al-Ghazali*, 1 (2014).

bandongan systems.⁶⁵ Sanad is a central issue in the transmission of hadith because it is used to assess the quality of hadith and their transmitters.⁶⁶ The importance of *sanadan* events and of knowing one's scholarly chain lies in ensuring that the knowledge acquired is valid, authentic, and continuously connected to the Prophet Muhammad, thereby preserving the chain of knowledge within the Islamic intellectual tradition.⁶⁷

According to KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, the transfer of knowledge represents the highest level of *khidmah* to knowledge. He emphasizes that teaching is an important religious vocation and that the rank of a teacher is among the noblest positions held by believers. Without teachers, generations of knowledgeable people would not emerge, particularly in the field of religious knowledge.⁶⁸ In this discussion, the figure of the teacher is not merely a transmitter of knowledge, but also a believer who practices what is known, teaches what has been practiced, and acts according to the guidance given to students.⁶⁹ A teacher's rank is not elevated merely by teaching without practice; it is elevated when knowledge and action are successfully integrated.⁷⁰

Imam Abu Hanifah is presented as an example of putting knowledge into practice before teaching it to students. When teaching a life of simplicity, he first practiced what he intended to teach by living simply for forty days.⁷¹ The importance of practicing one's knowledge also has parallels in Hindu teaching, where applying acquired knowledge is regarded as one of the steps toward drawing closer to God, or *Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa*.⁷²

Hindu teaching discusses this theme through *catur marga yoga*. The parallel lies in the understanding that applying knowledge is a means of approaching God through *jnana marga yoga*, involving learning, sharing, and implementing the knowledge acquired.⁷³ In Christianity, a teacher's use of knowledge may be expressed through the

⁶⁵ Muhammad Hamid and Syamsul Bakri, "Urgensi Sanad Dalam Meningkatkan Profesionalitas Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education Studies (INJURIES)* 1, no. 2 (2023): 61–69, <https://doi.org/10.61227/injuries.v1i2.18>.

⁶⁶ Muhammad Anshori, "Kajian Ketersambungan Sanad (Ittiṣāl Al Sanad)," *Jurnal Living Hadis* 1, no. 2 (2016): 2, <https://doi.org/10.14421/livinghadis.2016.1123>.

⁶⁷ Hamid and Bakri, "Urgensi Sanad Dalam Meningkatkan Profesionalitas Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam," 2023.

⁶⁸ Adabul Alim Wal Muta'alim, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari

⁶⁹ Barokah melimpah dalam *Khidmah* kepada ilmu, KH. Reza Ahmad Zahid, Youtube NU Gress Channel, Mei 2025 diakses pada 15 Juli 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bMkkaSR9VhU>

⁷⁰ Iwan Ridwan, "Tugas Dan Etika Guru Smk Dalam Perspektif Hadis Tarbawi," *Vanos Journal of Mechanical Engineering Education* 1, no. 2 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.30870/vanos.v1i2.1017>.

⁷¹ Abu Dawud Ulinnuha Arwani et al., "Nilai-Nilai Akhlak Dalam Wasiat Abu Hanifah Terhadap Yusuf Bin Kholid As-Samti Dan Relevansinya Bagi Guru Pondok Pesantren," *Didaktika: Jurnal Kependidikan* 13, no. 3 (2024): 3, <https://doi.org/10.58230/27454312.768>.

⁷² *Catur Marga Yoga* consists of four paths for drawing closer to God. *Bhakti Marga Yoga* is the path of devotion through worship and reverence for God and all creation. *Jnana Marga Yoga* is the path of knowledge through learning, sharing, and applying knowledge in life. *Karma Marga Yoga* is the path of selfless action by surrendering the results of one's work entirely to God. *Raja Marga Yoga* is the path of spiritual discipline through ascetic practice or meditation.

⁷³ I. Dewa Gede Darma Permana, "Urgensi Pengamalan Ilmu Pengetahuan Yang Mulia Di Tengah Era Revolusi Industri 4.0 Dalam Perspektif Hindu," *Satya Widya: Jurnal Studi Agama* 6, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.33363/swjsa.v6i1.910>.

formation of students' character. In the Bible, character education can be understood as living obediently before God and striving to do what glorifies God.⁷⁴ This is consistent with the ethics and responsibilities of teachers in *hadith tarbawi*, which emphasize practicing knowledge while cultivating students' morals and character.⁷⁵

Character education forms part of the vision, mission, and objectives of Islamic education.⁷⁶ *Pesantren* are not only places for learning religion but also institutions that seek to respond to moral degradation.⁷⁷ Such vision and mission become principles and references for educators in realizing the essence of education.⁷⁸ This orientation is also consistent with key concepts in the philosophy of Islamic education, namely *ta'lim*, *ta'dib*, and *tarbiyah*.⁷⁹

Although *ngalap barakah* continues to be preserved in *pesantren*, some groups oppose or reject such practices.⁸⁰ Wahhabi-oriented groups, for example, may regard certain understandings of *barakah* as impermissible and may consider *tawasul* through *ulama* to constitute *shirk*.⁸¹ These disagreements are often framed through debates over *bid'ah*.⁸² *Bid'ah* itself has been classified into commendable and blameworthy forms.⁸³ In *Nahdliyin* thought, practices categorized as *bid'ah* may be accepted when they bring benefit, whereas Wahhabi approaches tend to reject religious practices that are understood as having no precedent in the Prophet's time.⁸⁴

Differences of interpretation among Muslim groups are common; at the same time, the concept of *ngalap barakah* also displays parallels with practices in other religious traditions. The practice of seeking a learned person's leftover drinking water can

⁷⁴ Debora and Han, *Pentingnya Peranan Guru Kristen dalam Membentuk Karakter Siswa Dalam Pendidikan Kristen: Sebuah Kajian Etika Kristen*.

⁷⁵ Ridwan, "Tugas Dan Etika Guru Smk Dalam Perspektif Hadis Tarbawi."

⁷⁶ Citra Anisa and Rahmatullah Rahmatullah, "Visi Dan Misi Menurut Fred R. David Dalam Perspektif Pendidikan Islam," *Evaluasi: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 1 (2020): 70–87, <https://doi.org/10.32478/evaluasi.v4i1.356>.

⁷⁷ Haidar Putra Daulay Et Al., "Visi, Misi, Tujuan Dan Fungsi Pendidikan Islam," *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Hadi* 6, no. 1 (2020): 136–50, <https://doi.org/10.54248/alhadi.v6i1.1118>.

⁷⁸ Saiful Falah, "Esensi Guru Dalam Visi-Misi Pendidikan Melalui Optimalisasi Manajemen Pendidikan Karakter Pada Peserta Didik," *Islamic Management: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 01 (2021): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.30868/im.v4i01.1175>.

⁷⁹ Sekar Harum Pratiwi et al., *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam: Telaah Mengenai Makna Pendidikan (Tarbiyah, Ta'lim, Ta'dib, Tadris, Da'wah, Irsyad, Tadbiir, Tazkiyah, Uswah)* | *JIIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan*, n.d., <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v7i2.3397>.

⁸⁰ Rofhani Rofhani, "Melacak Gerakan Radikal Islam Dari Wahabisme Ke Global Salafisme," *Religio Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama* 5, no. 1 (2015), <https://doi.org/10.15642/religio.v5i1.589>.

⁸¹ Asep Nahrul Musadad Dan Ismangil Ngarfillah, "Polemik 'Ahli Bid'ah' Dalam Wacana Ulūmul Hadīṣ: Evaluasi Ibnu Hajar al-ʿAsqalāny Terhadap Status Riwayāt al-Muṭṭadi," *UNIVERSUM* 10, no. 1 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.30762/universum.v10i1.219>.

⁸² *Bid'ah* refers to an innovation in Islamic religious tradition that developed after the time of the Prophet; in this usage, a practice that did not exist during the Prophet's lifetime but is practiced in later periods may be classified as *bid'ah*.

⁸³ Desi Yusdian et al., "Studi Analisis Sosio Historis Pergeseran Makna Bid'ah Di Kalangan Ulama," *Indonesian Research Journal on Education* 4, no. 4 (2024): 1516–26, <https://doi.org/10.31004/irje.v4i4.1402>.

⁸⁴ Wasisto Raharjo Jati, "Tradisi, Sunnah dan Bid'ah: Analisa Barzanji Dalam Perspektif Cultural Studies," *el Harakah: Jurnal Budaya Islam* 14, no. 2 (2012): 226–42, <https://doi.org/10.18860/el.v14i2.2315>.

be compared with aspects of Eucharistic liturgy in Christianity.⁸⁵ The Eucharist is understood as a means through which Christians seek blessing through consecrated food.⁸⁶ Communion in the Eucharistic celebration is received by congregants as a means of experiencing the presence of Jesus in their lives, so that divine blessing is understood to accompany them in their daily journey.⁸⁷

The discussion above indicates that different religious traditions contain concepts that can be compared with the idea of blessing. The key notion lies in the phrase “*an increase in goodness in all things*.” Although the forms and practices of seeking blessings differ, they share an orientation toward well-being and happiness in worldly and spiritual life. Within *pesantren*, *ngalap barakah* practices can be mapped into two main categories. First, barakah is sought through *khidmah*, both to knowledge and to those who possess knowledge. Second, barakah is sought through *riyadah* or *tirakat*, which aims to restrain worldly desire through practices such as *wirid* and fasting.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that *ngalap barakah* practices in *pesantren* can be broadly classified into two main pathways: *khidmah* and *riyadah*. The pursuit of barakah through *khidmah* is manifested in service to knowledge and to those regarded as bearers of knowledge, particularly *kiai* and teachers. Such practices include obedience to the teacher, serving as *abdi ndalem*, respecting books and other sources of knowledge, maintaining the scholarly chain of transmission (*sanad*), and applying knowledge in everyday life. In this context, *khidmah* functions not only as physical service but also as an educational process through which *santri* cultivate obedience, respect, sincerity, and moral responsibility.

Meanwhile, *ngalap barakah* through *riyadah* is generally practiced through fasting, *wirid*, *tawasulan*, *dhikr*, and other forms of spiritual discipline intended to control worldly desires, strengthen spiritual commitment, and bring *santri* closer to God. The findings also indicate that several elements of *khidmah* and *riyadah* have contextual similarities with practices found in other religious traditions, particularly in relation to service, ascetic discipline, prayer, meditation, and the pursuit of divine blessing. These similarities, however, should be understood as comparable religious expressions within different doctrinal frameworks rather than as complete theological equivalences. Overall, *ngalap barakah* functions as an important cultural and educational mechanism for transmitting values, strengthening teacher–student relationships, preserving *pesantren* traditions, and shaping the spiritual and moral character of *santri*.

⁸⁵ Ian Jovi Sianturi et al., “Ritus Komuni Dan Ritus Penutup: Analisis Teologis Dan Refleksi Sejarah Tata Perayaan Ekaristi,” *Aggiornamento* 4, no. 01 (2023): 01, <https://doi.org/10.69678/aggiornamento40120-33>.

⁸⁶ Don Bosco Karnan Ardijanto, “Perayaan Ekaristi Sebagai Sumber Dan Puncak Seluruh Hidup Kristiani,” *JPAK: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Katolik* 20, no. 1 (2020): 1, <https://doi.org/10.34150/jpak.v20i1.255>.

⁸⁷ Communion refers to bread and wine that have been blessed by a priest or pastor. In the Eucharistic celebration, these elements are understood as representing the body and blood of Christ; receiving Communion therefore serves as a means of experiencing the presence of Jesus in the believer's life.

This study is limited by its focus on a single *pesantren* context, HM Al-Mahrusiyah Lirboyo, which may not fully represent the diversity of *ngalap barakah* practices across Indonesian *pesantren*. The study also faced limitations in informant access, particularly because direct interviews with the *pesantren* leader could not be conducted, while the cross-religious comparison remained exploratory and was based on limited informants and supporting literature. Future research should therefore involve multiple *pesantren* with different cultural and theological backgrounds, include a broader range of informants such as *kiai* and representatives of other religious traditions, and employ comparative ethnographic approaches to examine more deeply how blessing, service, ascetic practice, and religious mediation are understood across different religious communities.

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