Interpreting the Concept of Ngalap Berkah as Pesantren Tradition in the Perspective of Santri

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Abstract
Discussion on the tradition of Pesantren is critical and needs to be studied in more depth. This is because the study never ceases to be debated both from the historical side and its characteristics. This goal aims to understand three things: First, the existence of students viewed from the point of historicity through the study of the sociology of religion in Indonesia. Second, the paradigm of the concept of barakah is rooted in the world of Pesantren. Third, understanding the concept of barakah that internalizes students to take action in tabarruk or ngalap berkah social practices. The method used is through a literature study approach, examining the texts of articles with similar themes based on the theory of symbolic interactionism. Data collection is carried out by selection, classification, and categorization. The results found three things: First, in the study of the sociology of religion, Santri is an essential element in the Indonesian subculture called Pesantren. The existence of Santri is the typical determinant of a Pesantren. Second, the concept of barakah that students understand is very diverse; some call it ziyādatul kboir, the Grace of God, miracles, benefits, and an amulet. In this case, the variety of meanings is adjusted to each insight and experience of Santri in Pesantren. Third, the concept of ngalap berkah becomes a tradition in Pesantren as a form of social practice of Santri which starts from the understanding of each Santri. The term tabarrukan is divided into two parts, namely in the form of ta'zīm and sam'an wa thā'atan. The conclusion of this paper shows that these three aspects (santri, barakah, and ngalap berkah) are a unity that cannot be validated in forming a pesantren.

Keywords: ngalap berkah, santri, pesantren tradition.

Introduction
The urgent discussion regarding the concept of ngalap berkah in pesantren is gripping to review. Because this theme contains elements of uniqueness in the world of pesantren (Setiawan, 2023). Here is a need to understand the pesantren paradigm, which still maintains its image through traditions that are preserved today. Three things show the urgency of this title that needs to be discussed: First, conceptually, the study provides insight into the treasures of
pesantren from several perspectives, especially the concept of *barakah* (Jamaludin Kafi, 1992). Second, functionally, the study of the ngalap berkah of tradition needs to be studied more deeply so as not to be trapped in modernization (Syarif & Gaffar, 2019). Third, in a contributory way, this study provides a theoretical contribution in the form of the theory of symbolic interactionism as outlined in the social behavior of students in *ngalap berkah* (Derung, 2017).

Pesantren will not be separated from all social phenomena related to the environment, both Kiai and Santri. Throughout its history, Pesantren has been one of the oldest educational institutions in the religious field that have distinguishing elements from other education systems, namely Kiai, Santri, mosques, or lodges (Maunah, n.d.). Pesantren contribution as an institution of Islamic education cannot be separated from the map of the historical process of education development in Indonesia as a whole, especially in moral education, which later crowded so-called “character education”. In fact, the pesantren also played a role in the history of Indonesian independence and became the main witness of the spread of Islam in the archipelago. Even the pesantren, as delivered by Kiai Sahal Mahfudh, serve not only as institutions of education and religious and social institutions but also have a central role in the development of society (Hakim & Aksa, 2021, p. 197).

As a differentiator, Pesantren focuses on the religious world both in its traditional and religious systems (Zuhaerini, 1986). Modernization of Pesantren is the focus of the transformation of *salafis* into *khalafis* (Kibtiyah, 2022) (Huda & Bustam, 2023). In other words, there are currently two types of Pesantren typologies, namely salaf and modern. However, traditionally, the modernization that occurs does not become a barrier for every Pesantren to strengthen existing traditions and culture (Syahri, 2022) (Hasanah, 2022).

Call it a *barakah* that is closely related to tradition at pesantren. *Barakah* is often understood as a sacred thing and has its power and can also affect the lives of students in pesantren. Barakah is considered to have a good orientation and be a source of happiness. The *barakah* insight for students cannot be separated from the experience gained at the Pesantren. The *barakah* orientation is allocated or stimulated to social symptoms involving students' knowledge of Pesantren. The purpose of this evocation is to be an evocative or an encouragement that is used as a foundation in carrying out specific actions. *Barakah* has a whole and varied meaning in pesantren; in addition to leading a good life, *barakah* is also interpreted as a path to success. One of the things that
needs to be considered is that the charisma and glory possessed by Kiai and knowledge about Islam become the attraction of students to chant blessings.

*Ngalap berkah* is an action that is also interpreted as a certificate, and "fairy" is a matter related to events and behavior, which is interpreted as behavior. The word behavior is used by Weber for actions that have a subjective meaning (gemeintersinn) (Maunah, n.d.). For students, everything that is taught and conveyed by teachers in Pesantren is something that must be done and believed, so that no form of rejection occurs. The labeling of pious Santri lies in uploads and sendiko dawuh to the Kiai or *ustadz* and its *ustadzah*. This is where barakah is present and is understood as a stimulus for students to manut Kiai by not expecting wages when serving. As stated earlier, Pesantren has characteristics that are different from formal education in general (Dhofier, 2011). This paper aims to explore the meaning of *barakah* that has evocation and impact on the life of students in pesantren, including on students' social actions. The urgency of this study is how to peel the meaning of *barakah* that has been thick and ingrained in the world of Pesantren and has become a tradition.

This research uses a qualitative approach with the literature study method, which looks at several writings that have similar themes related to the tradition of Pesantren on the side of *barakah* or *ngalap berkah* (Zed, 2008). Literature research is a very supportive reference by examining sources in the form of books, articles, or documents. The following articles are appropriate and relevant to the theme of *barakah* that is the reference for writing this article, including: "Ngalap Berkah dalam Perspektif Etika Sufistik" (Setiawan, 2023), “Barakah Kiai dan Kebabagiaan Santri Milenial” (Pardodi Maba & Intan Cahyani, 2021), “Konsep Barokah dan Evokasinya pada Tindakan Sosial Santri Mahasiswa” (Syihabuddin, 2021), “Konsep Barakah dalam Tradisi Pendidikan Islam” (Rabi’ah & Agustina, 2021), and “Ngalap Barakah Minuman Bekas Kiai Kajian Living Hadis Teori Sosial Emile Durkehim” (Rahman, 2022).

All similar studies above discuss *barakah*, but there are differences in several aspects. First, this paper is more inclined and focuses on the meaning of barakah by each Santri. Second, Santri is the only subject in exploring the meaning of barakah. Finally, the concept of *ngalap berkah* is focused on the social actions of santri. So, this research will specifically discuss the study of Santri as an important figure and supporter of the running and progress of the Pesantren. Then, enter the concept of *barakah* that is glorified by santri with various understandings and meanings. So, santri reaches the point of application to social action in the form of *tabarruk* or *ngalap berkah*. 
Results and Discussion
Studying Santri through the Perspective of Religion Sociology in Indonesia

The study of Islamic society, especially the Pesantren community in Indonesia, will always be closely related to the work of Clifford Geertz as an introduction. Throughout its history, it has been said that students have a narrow and broad meaning. The narrow meaning says that students are those who study at pesantren. Meanwhile, the broad meaning of Santri is Javanese people who embrace Islam and who carry out worship such as prayer, recitation, going to mosques, and so on (Geertz, 2014). In the 1950s to 1960s, Geertz classified students into two models, namely old-fashioned (traditional) and modern (modernist). Meanwhile, Zamakhshyari Dhofier classified the figure of Santri into two parts, namely Santri muqim and Santri kalong.

Santri muqim means a student or Santri who chooses to stay at a pesantren and wants to explore religion more specifically under the auspices of his Kiai or teacher. Meanwhile, Santri kalong is a student who has a house or is domiciled in an area close to the Pesantren and commutes from home to the Pesantren (Dhofier, 2011). Santri in Pesantren supports the implementation of Pesantren education because Santri is one of the typical determinants of Pesantren. With this intention, students who study religious science in Pesantren who will later become religiously devout also have noble morals. Pesantren is the shelter of every student sent by his parents to understand the issues of religion and, at the same time run and apply them in daily life.

The term Santri is defined as a learner who is in a state of totality when studying. Of course, this is based on every experience obtained, which is certainly not the same as their partial learning as the education system in Indonesia in general (formal). Therefore, because of the uniqueness of the Pesantren, Abdurrahman Wahid or Gus Dur calls it a subculture of Indonesian society (Whid, 2001). The subculture of Pesantren is related to five pillars, namely Kiai, santri, mosques, lodges, and kitab kuning.

In the context of santri, the study of the sociology of religion cannot be separated from the study of society because, in essence, santri are part of society. Sociologists study this through the scientific branch of the sociology of religion. In the aspect of morality, the students have emphasized the importance of character education (akhlaqul karimah) which is usually reflected through the attitude of tawadhu' towards the Kiai, bowing when meeting the Kiai and other manners that characterize the morals of the students. The last aspect that must
be attached to students is the aspect of spirituality. This aspect is related to the identity of students as part of a religious community who are seen as role models. The spiritual aspect is related to the habit of students to always get closer to Allah in every condition (Widiaturrahmi, 2022).

**Barakah Paradigm: A Meaning of Santri**

Despite the modernization of Pesantren, barakah still exists today and will continue to be an enduring concept that is a tradition in the pesantren environment. Barakah is one of the things that cannot be separated from the culture in Pesantren (Asa, 2023). The concept of barakah is the spirit of Santri to carry out all existing activities as a form of self-serving in Pesantren, especially in Kiai. The term barakah contains diverse and varied definitions. Barakah means increasing a good (ziyādatul khoīr). Ontologically, barakah is God's secret emanation from Him and is intended for whomever he wants (Setiawan, 2023). The Qur'an explains the meaning of barakah not explicitly, both in terms of space and time associated with barakah.

In its meaning, Santri has a variety of meanings in defining the concept of barakah, whose understanding results from the various backgrounds of knowledge and experience experienced. Some understand that barakah is an abundant blessing; in this case, the scope is vast, both material and spiritual (Inayah, 2022). If classified, the meaning of barakah is generally divided into two types by students: First, barakah, which directly descends from Allah (Ulfah & Farid, 2023). Second, the barakah is obtained through the intermediaries of pious people. Thus, barakah has an essential value for every student, as well as a need to seek the pleasure of Allah in each individual.

As stated by Shaykh al-Zarnuji in his book *Ta'lim al-Mutaallim*, which is a reference book for learning in various pesantren. There is a particular discussion about respect for knowledge and experts, as well as procedures on how to respect Kiai or teachers in pesantren (Az-Zarnuji, 2004). Not only the book of *Ta'lim al-Mutaallim* but there are also several other reference books such as *Adab al ‘Alim wa al-Muta'allim*, *Ayyuba al-Walad*, *Akhlak lil Banin*, *Taysir al-Kholaq*, the like. The yellow book patterned Salafi tradition always provides insight through the perspective of the meaning of the contents of the book so that it becomes a personal understanding that also has implications for every meaning of barakah (Musthafa, 2020).

In the book literature (*kitab kuning*), for example, Imam al-Ghazali explains the meaning of barakah as the pleasure given by Allah to His servants who have
Barakah includes material and spiritual blessings, such as security, tranquillity, health, wealth, children, and age. Al-Ghazali's other book, Minhajul Abidin, which is based on *tasawwuf*, also discusses *barakah*, which is part of the virtues obtained by a believing and pious servant (Al-Ghazali, 1111). Al-Ghazali's other book, Minhajul Abidin, which is based on *tasawwuf*, also discusses *barakah*, which is part of the virtues obtained by a believing and pious servant (Al-Ghazali, 1989). Further explanation of *barakah* is found from various backgrounds and experiences of students while in Pesantren (Alfauzi & Choiriyah, 2022).

The following are some of the identification results related to the meaning of Santri towards the concept of *barakah*: First, broadly speaking, the Pesantren community agrees that the meaning of *barakah* is *ziyādatul khoīr*, which means increasing a good thing. Santri, who feels barakah in this, will feel a kindness that continues to flow both in attitude and material while at the boarding school or when he has left the pesantren. Second, barakah is a Mercy of Allah revealed to pious people. Third, barakah is likened to a miracle that has never been experienced by students, who view *barakah* as something great (Bashori et al., 2022). His is in line with the thoughts of a Santri huffadz, Abdi Ndalem, from one of the pesantren, who expressed his thoughts as follows:

“I interpret barakah as a miracle, where my Qur'an memorization is blessed by Allah. This miracle always makes me amazed at the power of Allah in giving something extraordinary. Because for me, not everyone feels such a thing”. (Santri huffadz and Abdi Ndalem in Pesantren, personal communication, November 11, 2023).

Fourth, barakah is useful, and some students consider that barakah will be obtained when students provide their scientific benefits to others. This can also be found, in fact, through *ustadz* or *ustadžah* who teach or serve in the pesantren; they interpret *barakah* as the benefits of studying at the pesantren. As some pesantren teachers said follows:

“In interpreting a blessing, we believe that a blessing is a benefit that brings us to this point. Where once we only studied with Abah Yai, now we can contribute and devote ourselves to passing on the knowledge we have gained to our younger siblings. So, it can be said that blessing is a benefit”. (Asatidz in Pesantren, personal communication, November 10, 2023).

Finally, barakah is likened to an amulet or something sacred, and not all people get blessings from God. Some Sufi students, for example, interpret barakah as a sacred thing. So, the blessing is considered something that cannot be expressed in words other than an amulet (Syihabuddin, 2021).
Together, we can understand that cancer is something that cannot be reached through the five senses, but its benefits can be felt. Barakah is a paradigm that students believe with the specificity of its meaning. The terminology of the barakah level is always juxtaposed with the various experiences of Santri when in Pesantren. In line with this understanding, the meaning of students' barakah is also often associated with the presence of a Kiai figure who is the best in the boarding school. Kiai has information, professional expertise, and moral strength, whose personality charm is used as a role model and source of inspiration for students (Alfia Miftakhul Jannah et al., 2021).

Chart 1. The Barakah Concept Model in Santri Meaning

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\begin{align*}
\text{Barakah} & \quad \text{ziyādatul khūr} \\
& \quad \text{God's Grace} \\
& \quad \text{A miracle} \\
& \quad \text{Benefit} \\
& \quad \text{Amulet}
\end{align*}
\]

**Ngalap Berkah Tradition: Social Practice of Santri in Pesantren**

Religion is part of the cultural system that always leads to human thoughts and feelings, so it becomes the root of an action to interpret the reality faced (Geertz, 1989). Pesantren is a religious education reference system in Indonesia whose scientific tradition has never shifted from its essence (Misbah & Bahru Rozi, 2022). This is what motivates every student to continue to strive to achieve his or her status of piety in the Pesantren environment.

In the world of Pesantren, *ngalap berkah* is a form of social practice that is familiar to students. This tradition has been inherent since long ago and has become a characteristic in every Pesantren. The tendency to chant blessings in Pesantren is not just a discourse but has become a necessity for every student (Supe’i & Al Ayubi, 2022). Looking at the root meaning of the phrase "*ngalap berkah*" can be seen from each meaning of the word. For example, in the Big Indonesian Dictionary, the word ngalap means "alap," which means taking or
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asking. Barakah, or blessing, was born from Arabic, a sentence structure derived from tabarruk, which means praying for a blessing. At the same time, al-Barakah means all the goodness of tabarruk, which means seeking blessings. Then, the concept of blessing is a form of action to obtain barakah or goodness.

Ngalap berkah in the Pesantren tradition can be seen through the movements of each student in studying at the Pesantren. As for practice, students use methods to recite blessings in various ways according to their respective abilities. The first is the attitude of ta'dzim Kiai, which is to respect Kiai in any circumstances and conditions. When reciting with a Kiai, a student listens carefully, or when a Kiai walks, the student is obliged to stand with his head respectfully lowered (Al-Hadiq, 2022). In line with the thoughts of santriwan, who is one of Kiai's drivers, he said:

“...If you want to gain Yai's pleasure, you must obey and bow to him, and if your Yai looks at you, you must bow. That is one of your respects for him and it will bring you blessings”. (Santri as Kiai's drivers in Pesantren, personal communication, November 8, 2023).

Furthermore, ngalap berkah can also be passed by sendiko dawuh or sam'an wa tho'atan. Both of these are interpreted for Santri as an effort to obtain barakah from Kiai. Santri must submit to all the words of the Kiai and obey what is ordered as a form of responsibility of a student (Azizah & Iswahyudi, 2022). Usually, the application is in the form of Santri devotion to Kiai and Pesantren (Maghfiroh & Hanurawan, 2021). This is the same as what was expressed by teachers in the pesantren, such as ustaz and ustazah whom I interviewed. They stated as follows:

“Being a santri must be submissive and obedient to what the Kiai offers, a form of submission and sami'na wa atha'na becomes a santri's effort to get blessings. Because not everyone has the opportunity to devote themselves to pesantren. Alhamdulillah, we were entrusted by Kiai to become administrators in the pesantren. Love is the key to building sincerity in service”. (Asatidz in Pesantren, personal communication, November 10, 2023).

The devotion of Santri becomes a form of ta'dzim business to the teacher which is an important thing in obtaining the blessing of knowledge (Khoiriyah, 2023). There is also a form of ngalap Santri blessing carried out by drinking former Kiai drinks, which are considered very barakah and are also believed to influence the intelligence of Santri (Rahman, 2022). Such things are usually done by students who go to salafi Pesantren. Another tradition says, that blessings can also be obtained through a pilgrimage to the tomb of God's guardian or pious people (Najib, 2020).
Through the various *ngalap berkab* methods above, it can be understood that in the pesantren, there is a relationship phenomenon between Kiai and Santri. Every student's knowledge is inseparable from everything close to his skill, both in terms of transmitted science and spoken word (Rofidah & Syam, 2021). Because it cannot be denied, every student must have a close relationship with the teachers in the pesantren. The culture that has been radicalized in each Pesantren will continue to be preserved and passed on to the next students. The values of student compliance are internalized in each of them as a form of *khidmah* (Wibowo, 2021).

Such Santri behavior is not spontaneous behavior as a response or stimulus as in adherents of radical behaviorism but based on the consciousness that is in line with the conception of symbolic internationalism. G.H. Mead argues that humans are individuals who have their own abilities in terms of language whose behavior and attitude cannot be equated with other creatures; that is what is meant in the theory of symbolic interactionism (George Ritzer, 2016). Suppose it is related to the social actions of students related to *blessing* in this theory. In that case, it is not justified that blessing behavior is solely in response to the stimulus in the form of Kiai orders. However, there are intermediaries in the form of interpretations or processes. In this case, it is related to the experience of students when in Pesantren.

In the Pesantren culture, of course, symbols will continue to exist and become a tradition. Similar to the concept of *ngalap berkab*, *tabarruk* is a form of symbol in the Pesantren that cannot be separated from the Pesantren community. Although each student can determine the meaning of barakah for himself, he can also choose the form of action to be carried out as well as his distinctive style to achieve a barakah. Thus, students who choose to fight are the result of thinking and going through the process of finding symbolic meaning (Djakfar, 2020). Various traditions and ethics of Pesantren have become a form of the multicultural concept of every Pesantren.
The concepts of *ta’zim* and *sam’an wa thā’atan* are two different concepts in Pesantren, which both discuss the relationship between Santri and Kiai when juxtaposed with Pesantren. *Ta’zim* is an attitude of respect for Santri addressed to Kiai. The main focus is to emphasize the attitude of respect and respect for the main characters in the Pesantren. At the same time, *sam’an wa thā’atan* is an attitude of listening and obeying the Kiai. Everything Santri hears from Kiai becomes an obligation to do or follow up (Azmi, 2018). Although there is a difference, the two terms give the meaning of respect and respect for a teacher or Kiai as an essential figure in Pesantren. When students have these two concepts, they will become people who are religious, polite, and respectful of others.

Something important in looking at the concept of barakah in Pesantren is exploring how the interaction that occurs between Santri and Kiai can also be seen through the personality of the students themselves. Barakah has a variety of meanings that have been explained in the previous discussion. The concept of barakah is believed to be the life orientation of every student in the Pesantren to achieve happiness.

**Conclusion**

The meaning of *barakah* for santri can be concluded through various forms of understanding of students according to the experience of each individual. *Barakah* is a sacred form. Although, in reality, *barakah* has no form, its essence
can be felt. Even if rationalized, cancer does not fall into a category. From here, *barakab* is believed to be something mystical because it is close to things beyond the reach of modern human reason. However, through the traditional approach of Pesantren, it can be proven that *barakab* is still believed and its existence is believed. The existence of this *barakab* concept is the reason why students continue to maintain the tradition of ngalap berkah in Pesantren.

The *ngalap berkah* tradition has a relationship with students' understanding. A different understanding of *barakab* will have implications for Santri's different social actions to obtain *barakab*. This blessing is categorized into two types, first related to the term *ta’zim*, and second related to *sam’an wa thā’atan*. Tabarruk or ngalap berkah will continue to be carried out and radicalized at pesantren, both *salafī* and *khalafī*. Apart from the modernization of the running Pesantren, this practice tradition has a deep-rooted theological and historical foundation, so that even in the modern era, the ngalap berkah tradition still survives and dialogues with this up-to-date situation.

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