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## The Tradition of *Mutih* Fasting Before Marriage: Spiritual Education for Prospective Brides and Grooms.

### **Abstract:**

*Mutih* fasting is a fasting tradition for the bride before the wedding ceremony in Purwokerto, Pati village, Central Java. This study aimed to describe the implementation and meaning of *mutih* fasting undertaken by prospective brides and to find out the value of *mutih* fasting spiritual education for the brides. This qualitative descriptive study was conducted from August to December. Data were collected by using observation and interviews. The obtained data were analyzed using the phenomenology approach. The results showed that *mutih* fasting was carried out by the bride at her house in a seclusion of three or seven days. The dialogue between Islam and Java was good in this tradition. Kejawan element was found in the selection of the *sabur* and *ifrar* menus, which only consumed white rice and water. The practice of *mutih* fasting was allowed with the intention to get closer to Allah. For prospective brides, fasting was interpreted as an inner preparation by cleansing the heart and soul in order to get wedding success and blessings. Physically, it was interpreted as an effort to suppress appetite so that the bride and groom looked more beautiful and their aura radiated. Another finding showed that spiritual education was a process of self-purification (*Takballi*) for the bride and groom, adorning themselves with noble character (*Taballi*), and feeling togetherness with Allah (*Tajalli*). After this *tirakat*, it was hoped that the bride and groom had physical and spiritual readiness to enter domestic life, became a pious wife with a clean soul, behaved well and wisely, and received God's protection and help.

**Keywords:** *Mutih fasting, Bride, Javanese tradition, Islam*

## INTRODUCTION

A wedding is a sacred and special event for the bride and groom. Marriage is a contract to justify the relationship between women and men in order to realize the happiness of a family life that is filled with a sense of peace with the blessings from Allah SWT. Each tribe in Indonesia has a unique culture related to rituals ahead of the transition from adolescence to marriage. Marriage as a socio-religious institution, in practice, cannot be separated from the traditions and local wisdom of each region.

Traditions are customs carried out across generations and are carried out continuously, becoming part of everyday life. Tradition is tied to the cultural values, norms, laws, and religious magic of the community that is preserved. Tradition shows how community members behave, both in practical and in supernatural lives, as well as religious life that regulates how humans relate to humans or carries out other social interaction activities or from one group to another (Heru, A., 2018). In the end, the tradition was developed into a system that has norms as well as regulates sanctions for violations. One of the unique traditions leading up to the wedding is the *mutih* fasting performed by the prospective brides.

Fasting comes from the Arabic language *Shama-Yashumu-Shauman*, which means *Imsak* or holding back. In the terminology, it is refraining from eating, drinking, and other things that can invalidate it, starting from sunrise to sunset and accompanied by intentions at night (Fiddari & Turmudi (2020). The verse of Al-Qur'an that justifies fasting is QS. Al-Baqarah verse 183, which means "O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you so that you become pious." In Islam, there are four laws of fasting namely obligatory, *sunnah*, *makruh*, and haram. Compulsory fasting includes Ramadan, Qadla ', Kaffarat, and nadzar fastings. Makruh fasting specializes on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday. Friday is a Muslim holiday, Saturday is a Jewish holiday, and Sunday is a Christian holiday. Haram fasting is carried out on days that are forbidden to fast, namely fasting on Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha and Tasyriq day. Sunnah fasting includes Arofah fasting and Daud fasting, and others (Al-Zuhaili, 2003).

Fasting in Islam is done as a form of self-approach (*taqarrub ila Allah*) to expect pleasure from Allah SWT. Fasting is a *madrasa* of morality and can be used as a training tool to forge various kinds of commendable qualities. Fasting is a *jihad* against lust, warding off the temptations and seductions of the devil that sometimes comes to mind. Fasting can get a person used to having patience with something forbidden, suffering, and difficult that sometimes arise (Idris, M., 2020). While in the Javanese tradition, fasting is done in order to get the magical knowledge you want to master. Javanese tradition recognizes *tirakat* to achieve certain goals and knowledge that can be beneficial for personal, family, and environmental life, both for fellow humans and nature. One of the efforts to realize this desire is by fasting. In the Javanese tradition, there are 18 fasting traditions, namely *fasing mutih*, *ngeruh*, *ngebleng*, *pati geni*, *ngelowong*, *ngrowot*, *nganyep*, *ngisdang*, *ngepel*, *ngasrep*, *senen kemis*, *wugon*, *tapa jejeg*, *lelana*, *tapa kungkum*, *ngalong*, *ngeluwang*, and *weton* (Ariyanti, 2020).

In the Javanese culture, fasting is a form of acculturation of religion with local culture. This refers to the beliefs of the Javanese people before Islam entered Indonesia. They already had certain beliefs. Hindu and Javanese traditions had developed and were deeply rooted in society. *Kejawen* fasting was one of the traditions that had been developed long before the arrival of Islam to Java for various purposes (Fiddari & Turmudi, 2020). After Islam entered Indonesia, there was intercultural interaction and the Islamization of traditions. *Mutih* fasting, one of the Javanese traditions, has the influence of Islam in the way of its implementation.

Research on *Mutih* fasting has been done from various perspectives. Heru, A. (2018) showed that the fasting procedure in Pati before marriage is not mandatory and there is also no strict prohibition. *Mutih* fasting before marriage is allowed with the intention of absolute fasting and with the aim of reducing the turmoil of lust and also as tawassul in a request to Allah.

Amaliah, N. (2018) examined the representation of cultural meaning in the Betawi Piara and Tangas Traditions. It was found that the *piara* and bridal tangas traditions were expressions of gratitude for having been given a life partner. This tradition was carried out with the aim of caring for the

prospective bride to look beautiful and beautiful on the wedding day. The bride and groom were encouraged to fast *mutih* by not eating fried foods or salty foods. *Mutih* fasting was believed to have benefits for the bride and groom at the aisle. The bride and groom looked beautiful and did not sweat a lot when they were on the aisle.

Research conducted by Rohimma (2018) on people's perceptions of the tradition of pre-marriage fasting in terms of Islamic law confirms that fasting is a symbol of concern and ascetic practice, a means of strengthening the mind and seeking mystical knowledge. This fasting is also carried out before marriage. The people believed that it was necessary to fast *mutih* in order to be given the ease and success of carrying out the intention. In addition to avoiding colored or flavored foods, there is also a *mutih* fasting for women before marriage in the form of being prohibited from looking in the mirror, leaving the house, dressing up, and so on. The older people believed that if this fasting is done, the bride will be protected from harm and be more beautiful because her aura radiated more when doing makeup.

Heru (2018) and Rohimma's research (2018) looked at the perspective of Islamic law, whereas Amaliah (2018) focused on cultural studies. In contrast to the research above, the present study aimed to examine it from the perspective of Islamic education; how *mutih* fasting becomes a vehicle for the mental and spiritual preparation of the bride and groom before the marriage contract is carried out. The treasures of Javanese culture combined with Islam in *mutih* fasting are an important and interesting fact to study. This study aimed to (1) describe the implementation of *mutih* fasting and its meaning conducted by prospective brides in Purwokerto Village, Tayu, Pati, Central Java, and (2) find out the value of *mutih* fasting spiritual education for brides and grooms.

This study used a qualitative research approach. Researchers conducted field research in Purwokerto Village, Tayu, Pati, Central Java, from September to December 2021. Data were collected by in-depth interviews and observations. Interviews with 8 informants (e.g., religious leaders, traditional leaders, prospective brides, and the families of the prospective brides) were conducted. The observation was used on the implementation of the *mutih* fasting by the bride and groom. The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's model through three stages namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (2005).

To reveal the meaning of *mutih* fasting, it was revealed by the use of a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology sought to understand how humans constructed meanings and important concepts within the framework of intersubjectivity. Phenomenology assumed that people actively interpreted their experiences and tried to understand the world with their personal experiences (Littlejohn, 2009:57).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Implementation of Mutih Fasting for Prospective Bride and Groom in Purwokerto Village

In Purwokerto village, Tayu sub-district, Pati district, the majority of the population were traders and farmers. Others become teachers and employees. The geographical location was bordered to the north by Gesengan Village, the east adjacent to the village of Pundenrejo, the south side with Bendakaton Kidol Village, and the west side with Ngablak village. The area was 314 hectares with a population of 3,985 people consisting of 1,484 heads of families with a composition of 1,942 men and 2,043 women.

Institutionally, it included one Kelurahan, three Rukun Warga (community units), 22 Rukun Tetangga (neighborhood association), and the Rural Community Empowerment Institution (LPMK). The majority of the population of Purwokerto village were Muslim, so the religious atmosphere was very attached. There were religious educational institutions, namely two *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* (Elementary School), Islamic-based PAUD, *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (Junior High School level), and several Islamic boarding schools. Before a child went to PAUD, they studied religious material at the Al-Qur'an Education Institution (TPQ) (Observation in Purwokerto village, October 2021).

The religious organization that residents participated in was Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). This could be seen from the many activities of *Yasinan*, *Berjanjen*, *Tablilan*, *Bancaan*, *Tablil* for 7 days, *Tablil* for 40 days, *Tablil* for 100 days, *Tablil* for 1000 days, Haul Kiai Abdul Mukit, and the tradition of Marriage and Circumcision to the accompaniment of Tambourines. Organizations under NU, namely Fatayat, Muslimat, and Pemuda Ansor were also actively organizing various activities. In addition to religious traditions, the community also preserved traditions that had existed since the time of their ancestors, one of which was *mutih* fasting tradition for prospective brides when they wanted to get married. The implementation of this tradition did not reduce the harmony in social life, always side by side in any case, both worship and other traditions and activities (Observation in Purwokerto village, October 2021).

*Mutih* fasting is fasting by refraining from eating or drinking other than white foods. The implementation of *Mutih* fasting in Purwokerto Village, Tayu District, Pati Regency, Central Java, based on the results of interviews with informants was not known when it started because this tradition had been carried out for generations (Interview with Rahima, October 2021).

The stages of *Mutih* fasting were as follows. First, the bride-to-be was guided by a blowpipe (the person who regulated customs and traditions in the village) so that there were no mistakes when carrying out traditions. Second, one week before the wedding, the bride was secluded or experienced *pingitan*. *Pingitan* was one of the traditions in the Javanese traditional wedding procession, where the prospective bride was prohibited from leaving the house or meeting the prospective groom for a predetermined time. This seclusion aimed to prepare the bride and groom, built trust and patience between the two and avoided various dangers that might occur. Third, the bride performed *Mutih* fasting for one week or three days with her parents. The number of days in *Mutih* Fasting (seven or three days) depended on the health condition of the bride and groom. The hope of this *Mutih* fasting could make the bride look beautiful, elegant, and *mangling* (different from ordinary days) in the wedding ceremony. Fourth, the bride and groom carried out *mutih* fasting such as Ramadan fasting, which was not allowed to eat, drink, and talk about something that was not useful and other fasting prohibitions according to Islamic teachings. The difference was that the iftar menu was limited to rice plus salt and clear white drinks or mineral water. Other than that, it was not allowed. The all-white menu was a symbol of self-purification towards a clean new page in the life of building a new household (Interview with Idris, November 2021).

The procedures for carrying out *mutih* fasting in Purwokerto Village, Tayu District, Pati Regency, Central Java, were based on: (1) During the *mutih* fast the bride was kept in seclusion in the house with the intention of avoiding any danger that could occur at any time; (2) *mutih* fasting began with the intention of *mutih* fasting; (3) after the intention to *mutih* fasting, the bride and groom ate *sabur* by eating and drinking white foods and drinks; (4) fasting was carried out throughout the morning and afternoon until the evening; (5) at Maghrib time, the prospective bride broke their fasting by eating and drinking plainly and salt could be added to give a touch of taste; (6) *mutih* fasting was done for

one week or three days according to the needs of the bride and her health condition; and (7) avoiding taboos when fasting by not eating side dishes and drinking other than mineral water. If these taboos were carried out, *mutih* fasting to open the aura would be canceled (interview with Rahmad 25 September 2021).

Those who were involved in this *mutih* fasting, the prospective brides, were guided by a blowpiper who played a role in directing the fasting procedures carried out during the seclusion process. *Penyumpit* gave directions to families who wanted to get married about the importance of seclusion, and *Mutih* Fasting. The decision to follow tradition depended on the individual bride and groom. However, the family had a dominant influence in the decision of the bride and groom to follow this tradition. Likewise, bridal make-up when fitting clothes gave advice for the bride and groom to do *mutih* fasting (interview with Idris, November 2021).

In the field, the majority of brides and grooms carried out this tradition if their health or physical condition was good. However, if the bride and groom were physically unwell or underweight, the duration of fasting was reduced from seven days to three days. If three days were also not possible, they might not do *mutih* fasting. In some cases, this tradition was replaced by the mother of the bride. There were concerns that if you did not do the *Mutih* Fasting, your makeup would look normal. In some cases, the bride's parents accompanied their daughter to fast in an effort to ask Allah to pray for success and ease during the wedding.

Abstinences that should not be carried out during *mutih* fasting were not to eat and drink other than white foods and beverages. Examples of foods and drinks that were recommended when carrying out *mutih* fasting were white rice and mineral water. These taboos moved from the *mutih* philosophy, abstaining from eating something that caused high blood pressure when they wanted to hold a wedding tradition. Marriage should be run with a happy feeling and a good aura, not bad emotions. If the taboo was done, the fast would be invalidated (Results of an interview with Rahima, October 2021).

*Mutih* fasting was held at the bride's house one week before the marriage ceremony. In general, the community supported and preserved this tradition, because, apart from respecting and appreciating ancestral culture, it was believed to be able to open the aura of the bride (Interview with Rahima, October 2021).

The purpose of *mutih* fasting according to the informant was (1) to open the aura of the bride so that, when carrying out the wedding procession, her aura could be *mangling*, (2) to get closer to Allah SWT who had provided sustenance; (3) to ask for prayers to be given success when carrying out various wedding processions to avoid various dangers; and (4) to respect the customs inherited from the ancestors by preserving them so that the application of facial makeup at the wedding looked beautiful, graceful and elegant. *Mutih* Fasting was understood as a ritual to break the prestige and bring out the aura of the bride (Interview with Sinta, October 2021).

Faizah also conveyed the same thing that the purpose of fasting was to get closer to Allah SWT who had given blessings to the bride, to detoxify the body of the bride so that harmful substances in the body were removed, to express gratitude for all the blessings and graces, and to ask for prayers to Allah SWT to give success and convenience during the wedding (Interview with Faizah, October 2021).

The meaning of the bride and groom to *Mutih* fasting was to whiten themselves like a new paper. A form of a parable that the bride and groom would run a new life that was clean and holy, so they needed mental preparation by cleaning their hearts and souls in order to get blessings. Fasting



was also to detoxify the body from negative substances where the bride and groom did not leave the house as well as to raise the confidence of the bride and groom. Physically, *Mutih* Fasting endeavored to suppress appetite, so that the bride and groom could slim down, the bride's make-up would look more beautiful, her aura would radiate and spread, and she would appear *mangling* (looked different from the daily look). The application of make-up looked elegant and beautiful because when doing *mutih* fasting, self-cleaning occurred. This became important as the first step in organizing or starting a new life with a new hope (Interview with Rahima, October 2021).

### **Mutih Fasting: Religious and Cultural Discourse**

There were five important points to observe in the implementation of the *Mutih* Fasting. First, *Mutih* Fasting was a cultural tradition packaged in religious practice. A tradition was a habit or custom carried out from generation to generation from ancestors which then became part of everyday life required to be preserved as an important heritage. In addition, carrying out a tradition was a form of respect for the former. Judging from its origin, *mutih* fasting did not come from direct Islamic teachings (Rohimma, 2018). This habit or ritual was a form of development of Islamic teachings that were adapted into local traditions and rituals in Java.

*Mutih* Fasting in Purwokerto Village was a product of religious dialogue with culture. The people were Muslims with a strong Javanese culture. In the context of Javanese culture, *mutih* fasting came from the word *mutih* in the Javanese language, meaning white. This implied that fasting was done by avoiding foods and drinks other than white color. At first, *Mutih* was someone who fasted by consuming only white rice and mineral water, even if it was only salt or sugar complement. Fasting was carried out for 24 hours (a full day) so that the people only ate and drank once a day. The implementation could be done with an odd number of days and could reach 40 days. The name of *mutih* came from the type of food and drink consumed during *tirakat*. *Mutih* symbolized self-purification, both body and soul. Therefore, *mutih* fasting was conceptualized as a way for a person to whiten or purify the body and soul from sins that had been committed by undergoing certain practices for its attainment. In addition, *mutih* was also interpreted as a way to get rid of negative energy, related to the attainment of mysticism or supernatural science.

Aulia (2009) explained that one of the sciences in Kejawen belief obtained by *mutih* fasting as a *tirakat* was Estu Pamungkas Science. In addition, the teachings included Ajian Kudup Melati and Aji Brajalimat. *Mutih* Fasting was a form of ritual or habit by not eating and drinking other than white, in this case, white rice and water. *Mutih* Fasting was known and circulated among people in the Java area (Rohimma, 2018). In its development, it was carried out for various purposes, one of which was the preparation of the bride and groom before the wedding.

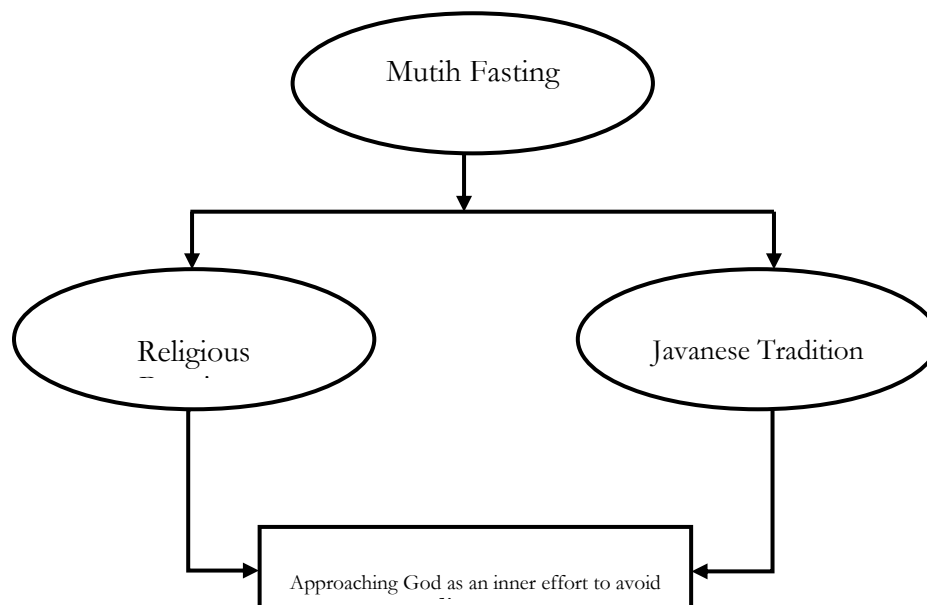
In the practice of this *mutih* tradition, there was a cultural and religious dialogue. The dialogue appeared in several forms, namely: (1) the fasting procedure did not follow the Javanese tradition, but was in accordance with the provisions of Islamic jurisprudence, namely the intention of fasting to get closer to Allah from dawn to sunset (adhan maghrib) by doing the sunnah of fasting, namely sahur at dawn. end of time and breaking of time at the beginning; (2) follow the provisions of *fiqh* in terms of which invalidated the fast; (3) the Kejawen element was found in the selection of the *sahur* and *iftar* menus, which only consumed white food and beverage (e.g., white rice and water). Adding salt was allowed in this *Mutih* fasting practice.

In Islamic *Fiqh* discourse, *mutih* fasting was the same as fasting in general, namely by refraining from all lusts such as eating, drinking, and having sex. The difference was that someone who was

fasting did not eat or drink anything other than white rice and water without side dishes. The polemic of *Mutih* Fasting was on the existence of supernatural things because it had become a tradition for the Javanese people to obtain supernatural abilities. On the other hand, the essence of fasting was one of the recommended acts of worship. Rasulullah SAW never gave the shari'ah to his people to do *mutih* fasting. In addition, there was also no evidence in Al-Qur'an regarding the recommendation of *mutih* fasting. The implementation of *mutih* fasting was not necessarily worshiping because, if it was done with intentions that were not in accordance with the Shari'ah or even until there were things that were prohibited by religion, then of course it was not allowed. On the other hand, if a person performed *mutih* fasting with the intention of Allah SWT to cleanse his heart and to increase his piety and faith, then it was permissible and had the value of worship.

Every fasting carried out in accordance with the provisions of the syara' law that had no guidance for its implementation was included in the category of absolute sunnah fasting and the intention was absolute fasting. Thus, the law of *mutih* fasting was not included in Sunnah or obligatory cases, but absolute fasting was allowed in Islam as long as the intention is for Allah and not because of things that were prohibited by religious law (Bahts Masail LBM NU Surabaya, 2009).

In the pesantren tradition, it was also known as *Mutih* Fasting for *tirakat*. The word *tirakat* was the answer to the Arabic word *tariqah* which meant "the path that is passed". Indonesian then absorbed this word into *tirakat* and *tirakatan*. *Tirakat* meant undergoing spiritual practice to achieve something desired. Also called *riyadhab*, it was to carry out the behavior of controlling and curbing lust. In a pesantren society, *tirakat* combined restraint and control of lust (*riyadhab*) and taking a certain path (*thoriqat*) to achieve what was desired. This practice was obtained by means of a diploma from the teacher. The detailed way of doing *tirakat* could vary between each actor, depending on how the diploma was given by the teacher. It was believed by the community that undergoing *tirakat* could make spiritual qualities closer to God and wishes could be granted.



**Fig. 1. The Interaction of Tradition and Religion**

On the one hand, the implementation of *mutih* fasting was expected so that at the time of the wedding, the bride would be beautiful and her aura would come out with beautiful makeup. On the

other hand, fasting was an expression of gratitude for the blessings and graces of Allah SWT, as well as being a medium for worship to draw closer to Allah SWT and ask for protection so that the wedding ceremony could run smoothly. There were two dimensions united in this tradition, namely physical and psychological, soul and body, material and spiritual, and religion and culture. *Mutih* fasting had various benefits for prospective brides who wanted to get married as long as they did not deviate from religious values. The implementation of *mutih* fasting was intended with the intention of getting closer to Allah SWT and getting *ridho* to start a new life so as to avoid various problems.

### **Mutih Fasting: Spiritual Education for Bride and Groom**

Humans were equipped by God with two main things namely physical and spiritual aspects. The body required food, drink, distribution of biological needs, clothing, shelter, jewelry, and others. Spirituality, on the other hand, required peace, serenity, compassion, and love. The Sufis asserted that the true essence of man was his spirituality. It was the estuary of all virtues. Physical happiness was very dependent on spiritual happiness. Meanwhile, spiritual happiness was not tied to the outer human form. Marriage was an important event for every human being because it was a transitional phase from adolescence to adulthood, from living alone to being married. This change necessitated physical and spiritual preparation for the bride and groom. Inner preparation by arranging the heart, straightening intentions, and strengthening the soul to accept a partner with various strengths and weaknesses. This required a process of self-reflection. In Javanese tradition known as *Pingitan* did not leave the house within a week before the marriage contract. In the *Pingitan*, *Mutih* fasting was carried out. *Mutih* Fasting was a form of *riyadah*, *tirakat*, or spiritual education of the bride and groom.

Spiritual education was a process of personality education based on the individual's condition of affective and spiritual intelligence (Mulkan, 2002). In line with this definition, Ali Abd al-Hamid Mahmud explained that spiritual education was a process of fostering one's spiritual aspects in order to give birth to a variety of commendable attitudes and to become a useful person, both for the individual himself and the community (Langko, A., 2014). Spiritual education was the transmission of transcendent religious teachings in the context of forming individual human personalities who had individual piety and social piety (Istiani, N., & Islamy, A., 2018). Sa'id Hawa as quoted in Aziz (2017) said that spiritual education was an effort to cleanse the soul towards Allah SWT: from a dirty soul to a clean soul, from a non-shari'a mind to the Shari'a ones, from a hard heart to a calm and healthy heart, from negligent worship to a spirit that knows Allah SWT (*'arif*), always exercising the rights to worship Allah SWT, from obeying the rules of the Shari'a to a physical one who always held Shari'a laws.

In the process of spiritual education, the Sufis introduced three stages namely *Takballi*, *Taballi*, and *Tajalli* (Istiani, N., & Islamy, A., 2018). First, at *takballi* stage, a person tried to rid himself of all despicable traits and behaviors, both inner and outer. This stage was the initial stage in passing the path of Sufism. This stage was oriented to keep away the reprehensible nature in a person so as not to interfere with his relationship with Allah because various despicable and immoral qualities could cover (e.g., hijab) a sense of closeness to Allah.

The first step in taking care of the heart was to cleanse the heart of attachments to the world. The heart must be emptied of the love of the world. In the context of *Mutih* fasting, there were spiritual values that were closely related to education or character building for the bride and groom. Fasting whose core practice was *imsak* (restraint) was not just holding back things that could break the fast, such as eating, drinking, and having sex during the day. However, intrinsically, it made individuals able

to manage themselves not to indulge their lustful desires, including keeping words from lying, talking about other people's disgrace, or harsh and hurtful words. The dimensions of fasting were not only seen as physical worship by holding back hunger and thirst, but also spiritual worship by actualizing the cleansing of the heart and soul from various impurities. *Taballi* became the foundation of spiritual education (Halimah, S., 2020).

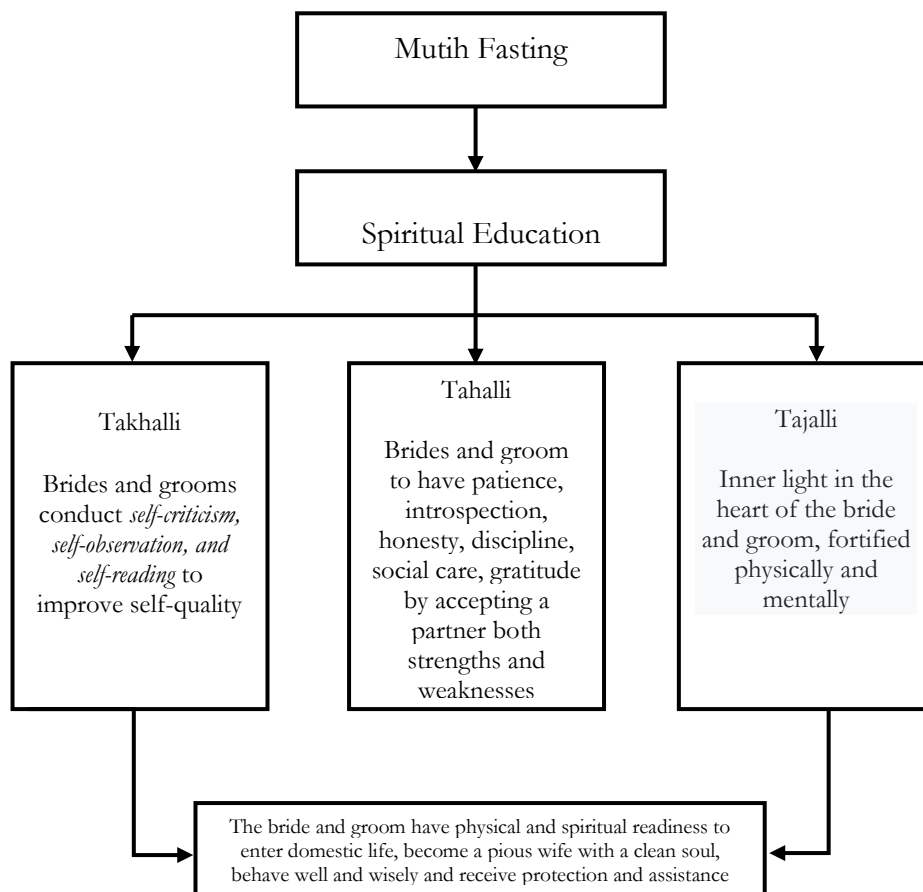
The existence of *Mutib* fasting for the bride and groom, with the selection of a menu that was not delicious, was expected to be a means of educating the bride and groom to have patience, perseverance in facing challenges and problems such as *tirakat*, able to control lust, which in the end gave birth to the character of a wife who took care of herself and abstained from inappropriate behavior, both in the context of religion and social norms. At this stage, the bride and groom had the opportunity to do self-criticism, self-observation, and self-reading to improve their quality. On the physical aspect, a Muslim who did fasting would always refrain from eating and drinking. While on the psychological aspect, a Muslim who did fasting obeyed the rules and trained himself to leave despicable traits, such as lying, *takabbur*, swearing, *hasad*, jealousy, and *riya'*. Fasting also had a positive impact on psychology, mental resilience, self-control, stress control, and psycho-physio therapy.

The second stage was *tahalli*. After self-purification, the next process was to decorate oneself with commendable nature and obedience in carrying out religious orders. The commendable nature and behavior in this *taballi* stage, among others, were repentance, asceticism, patience, pleasure, fairness, kindness, forbearance, helping, a guide to the truth, and other commendable traits and actions. At this stage, the heart should always be busy with *dhikr* and remembering Allah. By remembering Allah, it would bring peace. There was nothing to be afraid of except the release of Allah from his heart.

The divine qualities that were absorbed in the *takballi* stage form *akblaqul karimah* that emerged from his self-awareness as a caliph and 'Abdullah. The servant of Allah in his role in the family and social life for a prospective bride was to be a pious wife, a good mother, full of love and wisdom, and a teacher for the community. *Mutib* Fasting educated the bride and groom to have (1) temperament patience which was trained through self-control from everything that broke the fast solely to worship Allah SWT, (2) honesty was marked by adhering to the rules of fasting, even if it violated, it was not known to humans; (3) introspection, an attitude of feeling supervised by God. Obedience in leaving the prohibition of fasting was a form of awareness of Allah's supervision; (4) discipline, there were two aspects of the discipline, namely the discipline of time to use time as well as possible in the context of devotion to Allah SWT, therefore fasting and other worship in Islam were determined by time. When dawn came, eating and drinking, as well as husband and wife relationships, were stopped to start fasting. Time-disciplined people felt that it was better to wait than be late. Meanwhile, when Maghrib came, you must immediately eat and drink to end the fasting even though you had to delay the Maghrib prayer for a while. Therefore, we were highly demanded to make effective use of time and discipline in law; (4) social care trained each individual to be more concerned with their social conditions. The order to refrain from eating and drinking all day was a form of physical and psychological exercise so that Muslims could feel how our brothers and sisters had difficulty getting food due to financial constraints; and (5) gratitude was grateful for the favors obtained from Him. In this context, gratitude carried out a marriage with readiness to accept a life partner with various strengths and weaknesses (Mukmin, 2017).

The third was *tajalli*. This stage was the peak stage that the *Salik* (travelers of the spiritual path) yearned for. *Tajalli* was a phase in which a person could feel a massive sense of divinity until various

human traits disappeared until a rabbinic awareness emerged. In this stage, a person was not only carrying out the commands of his Lord but also felt the delicacy, closeness, longing, and even togetherness with His Lord. At this stage, there was the awareness of the absence of matter in the self (*fana'*) and the existence of the spiritual world (*baqa'*). The description of the explanation of the three stages above showed that the process of achieving the spiritual level in the Sufistic paradigm was a consistent and continuous process. The three stages in the form of *takballi*, *tahalli*, and *tajalli* were stages that were closely correlated with the process of spiritual education in one's own life that could be carried out independently. Therefore, it was not an exaggeration to say that these three stages could be a medium of andragogy education in the process of spiritual education (Istiani, N., & Islamy, A., 2018).



**Fig. 2. Spiritual Education for Bride and Groom**

## CONCLUSION

*Mutih* Fasting is carried out by the prospective brides at her home in a seclusion condition for three or seven days. The dialogue between Islam and Javanese culture was found in the fasting procedure according to the provisions of Islamic jurisprudence. The Kejawan element was revealed in the selection of the *sabur* and *iftar* menus, which only consume white foods (e.g., white rice and water). The practice of *Mutih* fasting is allowed with the intention of absolute fasting to get closer to Allah. For prospective brides, fasting was interpreted as an inner preparation by cleansing the heart

and soul in order to get success and blessings. Physically, it is interpreted as an effort to suppress appetite, so that the bride and groom look more beautiful and their aura radiates and spreads.

Spiritual education in this tradition is a process of self-purification (*Takballi*) for the bride and groom, adorning themselves with noble character (*Taballi*), and feeling togetherness with Allah (*Tajalli*). After this *tirakat*, it is hoped that the bride and groom will have physical and spiritual readiness to enter domestic life, become a pious wife with a clean soul, behave well and wisely, and receive God's protection and help.

The results of this study provide a theoretical contribution to the harmony of dialogue between Islam and Javanese culture in Muslim society with the background of the religious organization of Nahdlatul Ulama'. This study needs to be followed up by examining the pattern of dialogue between Islam and Javanese culture in the background of other religious organizations.

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## **2. Bukti Konfirmasi Review dan Hasil Review (24 November 2022)**





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Yth. Penulis Jurnal Penelitian

Salam...

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#Reviewer 1 :

Title

**Saran judul lebih spesifik "The Tradition of *Mutih* Fasting Beside on Analysis Spiritual Education"**

Abstrac

Usahakan penulisan abstrak lebih menggambarkan penelitian yang dilakukan...teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini apa? serta hasil yang menjawab pertanyaan penelitian ini apa?

Keywords

Ambil 4 kata yang sangat mencerminkan penelitian...misalkan yang diungkapkan terkait pendidikan spiritualnya tapi disini tidak ada

## INTRODUCTION

Pendahuluan dimulai dengan menjelaskan berbagai term dalam penelitian yang dilakukan...lantas apa yang membedakan puasa mutih di Purwokerto dengan daerah lain?

pertanyaan selanjutnya, kenapa puasa mutih ini diteliti khususnya pada tataran pendidikan spiritual ada apakah? serta bagaimana pelestarian budaya ini dilakukan sebagai bentuk akulturasi budaya?

setidaknya hal-hal tersebut perlu diungkap dalam latar belakang ini, pembaca belum melihat kenapa ini penting untuk dikaji, selain dari khazanah budaya tapi aspek edukasi yang seperti apa yang ditampilkan

Dalam latar belakang ini pula belum ada teori yang secara spesifik dituangkan oleh peneliti, apakah ini antara agama dan budaya atau ini mengenai tasawuf dalam Islam...

Penulisan metodologi pula perlu diperbaiki, ketika pendekatan fenomena apa yang kemudian menjadi fenomena dalam penelitian ini subjek dan objeknya apa...bisa menjadi novelty dengan pendekatan yang digunakan tetapi perlu mengungkapkan lebih lanjut.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Implementation of Mutih Fasting

kalo memang menggunakan perspektif pengantin bagaimana dengan pandangan masyarakat sekitar. peneliti sudah mendeskripsikan dengan baik, nah apakah terkait kajian mutih ini juga menjadi salah satu tema yang diajarkan di sekolah terkait budaya di purwokerto misalkan, atau bagaimana agency dari pihak pemerintah dalam melestarikan pelaksanaan puasa mutih...saya kira perlu juga mengungkapkan makna di balik puasa mutih ini, sehingga pertanyaan yang membedakan mutih di satu wilayah dengan wilayah lainnya berbeda, contoh misalkan di sunda ada mutih selain nasi ya makan bubur

### Mutih Fasting: Religious and Cultural Discourse

Pelu diperkuat analisisnya dengan teori2 yang mendasarinya....misalkan teori budaya gertz, atau teori akulturasi yang ada...saya kira untuk mengungkap teori tasawuf ini perlu dilansakan kepada pandangan2 Ibnu Arabi atau misalkan Saad Zarabi mengenai tasawuf moderen....pijakan ini sangat kuat untuk menentukan analisis pendidikan spiritual yang seperti apa....

Sangat disarankan menggunakan analisis pendidikan tasawuf moderen...sy agak sangsi dengan hasil ini sesuai dengan konsep al Ghazali,,apakah lantas meaning terhadap tajali ini dirasakan oleh pengantin???

## CONCLUSION

Apa pendidikan spiritual yang terkandung dalam puasa mutih? secara spesifik belum diungkap dalam penelitian ini...takhalli, tahali, dan tajali adalah sebuah proses yang dilakukan

## REFERENCES

Belum ada teori yang kuat yang mendukung penelitian ini, jurnal-jurnal barat sudah banyak mengkaji aspek spiritual dan budaya sehingga bisa menjadi referensi yang memperkuat penelitian ini....

Over all penelitian ini menarik....

#Reviewer 2 :

## Abstract

Pa bagian ini dibuat lebih sederhana tidak banyak pengulangan penjelasan...pada intinya apa hasil dari penelitian ini dapat kaitkan dengan pendidikan spiritual di dalamnya

## INTRODUCTION

A wedding is a sacred and special event for the bride and groom. Marriage is .... Sunnah fasting includes Arofah fasting and Daud fasting, and others (Al-Zuhaili, 2003).

3 Paragraf ini terlalu naratif sekali dan banyak definisi, 3 paragraf ini dapat disederhanakan mengenai pernikahan yang dilakukan di Indonesia sangat erat kaitannya dengan tradisi lokal yang ada di masing-masing daerah, yang mana tradisi lokal tidak terlepas dari makna yang terkandung di dalamnya.

Heru (2018) and Rohimma's research (2018) looked at the perspective of Islamic law, .....

Pada aspek ini perlu penekanan novelty dari penelitian ini apa dari yang telah ada sebelumnya, selain dalam khazanah nusantara antara agama dan budaya bagaimana aspek pendidikan spiritual dalam hal ini tasawuf menjadi konsen dalam penelitian ini...selanjutnya apa kontribusi penelitian ini khususnya pada aspek pendidikannya

This study used a qualitative research approach. Researchers conducted field research in Purwokerto Village, Tayu, Pati, Central Java, from September to December 2021...

cek di abstrak mana yang sesuai

To reveal the meaning of *mutih* fasting, ..... experiences (Littlejohn, 2009:57)

langkah lebih baik jika pada bagian metodologi selain menjelaskan bahwa penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologis, kenapa pula pendekatan ini yang dipilih....aspek metodologi belum secara utuh menggambarkan bagaimana digunakan untuk menjawab pertanyaan penelitian

## Implementation of Mutih Fasting

pada bagian ini sudah sangat deskriptif hanya saja perlu didukung dengan literatur yang mendukung data penelitian

## Mutih Fasting: Religious and Cultural Discourse

Pada analisis yang lebih dalam..pada aspek ini, bagaimana agama dan budaya ini kemudian dapat diterima masyarakat yang notabene itu merupakan tradisi kejawaan. selanjutnya belum digali aspek-aspek dari pemaknaan mutih itu sendiri sehingga nantinya akan ketemu maqasid atau tujuannya baik dalam kacamata agama dan kacamata budaya akan sama

In the pesantren tradition, it .... wishes could be granted.

peneliti ketika mengemukakan argumen ini perlu didukung dengan referensi yang lebih kaya. dalam beberapa literatur Islam konsepsi tirakat itu sangat luas hanya sebagian kecil yang kemudian mengangkat mutih. perlu literatur yang menguatkan....

#### Mutih Fasting: Spiritual Education for Bride and Groom

Secara keseluruhan ini menarik hanya sebagai pengkaji tasawuf banyak hal yang memang belum singkron dengan hasil penelitian yang dilakukan penulis...

konsep takhali, takhali dan tajali ini merupakan salah metode tasawuf ahlaki dari al ghazali...

yang lebih dikritisi dalam hal ini adalah bagaimana setiap pemaknaan dalam tradisi mutih ini sehingga bisa ditarik kepada ketiga aspek tadi

selanjutnya bagaimana implementasi pendidikan spiritual yang diambil dari tradisi mutih ini belum diungkap dalam penelitian ini

#### **CONCLUSION**

temuan terpenting apa dalam penelitian ini belum secara spesifik diungkap apakah pemaknaan akan mutih itu sendiri, atau antara agama dan budaya atau bahkan nilai pendidikan spiritualnya masih belum memberikan jawaban dari pertanyaan penelitian

#### **REFERENCES**

Silahkan menambahkan referensi khususnya dari jurnal-jurnal, secara keseluruhan referensinya masih minim

3. Bukti konfirmasi submit revisi, artikel yang diresubmit, dan penyesuaian citasi Mendeley (28 Desember 2022)



**Mutimmatul Faidah** . <mutimmatulfaidah@unesa.ac.id>  
to Jupe ▾

Dec 28,

Assalamualaikum

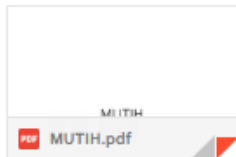
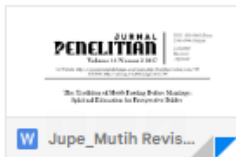
Mohon maaf terlambat dari jadwal. Berikut kami kirimkan artikel yang sudah direvisi. Saya berharap dapat diproses lebih lanjut untuk publish tahun ini. Saya sertakan juga hasil cek Turnitin mencapai 12 per

Wassalam

Mutim Faidah

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## The Tradition of *Mutih* Fasting Before Marriage: Spiritual Education for Prospective Brides

### **Abstract:**

*Mutih* fasting is a fasting tradition for the bride before the wedding ceremony in Purwokerto, Pati village, Central Java. This study aimed to describe the implementation and meaning of *mutih* fasting undertaken by prospective brides and to find out the value of *mutih* fasting spiritual education for the brides. This qualitative descriptive study was conducted from August to December 2021. Data were collected by using observation and interviews. The obtained data were analyzed using the phenomenology approach. The results showed that the practice of *mutih* fasting allowed them to get closer to Allah. For prospective brides, fasting was interpreted as an inner preparation by cleansing the heart and soul to get wedding success and blessings. Physically, it was interpreted as an effort to suppress appetite so that the bride looked more beautiful and their aura radiated. Another finding showed that spiritual education was a process of self-purification (*Takballi*) for the bride, adorning themselves with noble character (*Taballi*), and feeling togetherness with Allah (*Tajalli*). After this *tirakat*, it was hoped that the bride had physical and spiritual readiness to enter domestic life, became a pious wife with a clean soul, behaved well and wisely, and received God's protection and help.

**Keywords:** *Mutih fasting, Bride, Javanese tradition, Islam*

## INTRODUCTION

A wedding is a sacred and special event for the bride. Each tribe in Indonesia has a unique culture related to rituals ahead of the transition from adolescence to marriage. Marriage as a socio-religious institution, in practice, cannot be separated from the traditions and local wisdom of each region. Tradition is tied to the cultural values, norms, laws, and religious magic of the community that is preserved. Tradition shows how community members behave, both in practical and supernatural lives, as well as religious life that regulates how humans relate to humans or carry out other social interaction activities from one group to another (Heru, A., 2018). One of the unique traditions leading up to the wedding is the *mutih* fasting performed by the prospective brides.

Fasting comes from the Arabic language *Shama-Yashumu-Shauman*, which means *Imsak* or holding back. In the terminology, it is refraining from eating, drinking, and other things that can invalidate it, starting from sunrise to sunset and accompanied by intentions at night (Fiddari &

Turmudi (2020). Fasting in Islam is done as a form of self-approach (*taqarrub ila Allah*) to expect pleasure from Allah SWT. Fasting is a *madrasa* of morality and can be used as a training tool to forge various kinds of commendable qualities. Fasting is a *jihad* against lust, warding off the temptations and seductions of the devil that sometimes comes to mind. Fasting can get a person used to having patience with something forbidden, suffering, and difficult that sometimes arise (Idris, M., 2020).

While in the Javanese tradition, fasting is done to get the magical knowledge you want to master. Javanese tradition recognizes *tirakat* to achieve certain goals and knowledge that can be beneficial for personal, family, and environmental life, both for fellow humans and nature. One of the efforts to realize this desire is by fasting. In the Javanese tradition, there are 18 fasting traditions, namely *fasing mutih*, *ngeruh*, *ngebleng*, *pati geni*, *ngelowong*, *ngrowot*, *nganyep*, *ngisdang*, *ngepel*, *ngasrep*, *senen kemis*, *wugon*, *tapa jejeg*, *lelana*, *tapa kungkum*, *ngalong*, *ngelumwang*, and *weton* (Ariyanti, 2020).

In the Javanese culture, fasting is a form of acculturation of religion with the local culture. This refers to the beliefs of the Javanese people before Islam entered Indonesia. They already had certain beliefs. Hindu and Javanese traditions had developed and were deeply rooted in society. *Kejawen* fasting was one of the traditions that had been developed long before the arrival of Islam to Java for various purposes (Fiddari & Turmudi, 2020). After Islam entered Indonesia, there was intercultural interaction and the Islamization of traditions. *Mutih* fasting, one of the Javanese traditions, has the influence of Islam in the way of its implementation.

Research on *Mutih* fasting has been done from various perspectives. Heru, A. (2018) showed that the fasting procedure in Pati before marriage is not mandatory and there is also no strict prohibition. *Mutih* fasting before marriage is allowed with the intention of absolute fasting and reducing the turmoil of lust and also as tawassul in a request to Allah.

Amaliah, N. (2018) examined the representation of cultural meaning in the Betawi Piara and Tangas Traditions. It was found that the *piara* and bridal tangas traditions were expressions of gratitude for having been given a life partner. This tradition was carried out to care for the prospective bride to look beautiful and beautiful on the wedding day. The bride was encouraged to fast *mutih* by not eating fried foods or salty foods. *Mutih* fasting was believed to have benefits for the bride on the aisle. The bride looked beautiful and did not sweat a lot when they were on the aisle.

Research conducted by Rohimma (2018) on people's perceptions of the tradition of pre-marriage fasting in terms of Islamic law confirms that fasting is a symbol of concern and ascetic practice, a means of strengthening the mind and seeking mystical knowledge. This fasting is also carried out before marriage. The people believed that it was necessary to fast *mutih* in order to be given the ease and success of carrying out the intention. In addition to avoiding colored or flavored foods, there is also a *mutih* fasting for women before marriage in the form of being prohibited from looking in the mirror, leaving the house, dressing up, and so on. The older people believed that if this fasting is done, the bride will be protected from harm and be more beautiful because her aura radiated more when doing makeup.

Heru (2018) and Rohimma's research (2018) looked at the perspective of Islamic law, whereas Amaliah (2018) focused on cultural studies. In contrast to the research above, the present study aimed to examine it from the perspective of Islamic education; how *mutih* fasting becomes a vehicle for the mental and spiritual preparation of the bride before the marriage contract is carried out. The treasures of Javanese culture combined with Islam in *mutih* fasting are important and interesting facts to study. This study aimed to (1) describe the implementation of *mutih* fasting and its meaning conducted by prospective brides in Purwokerto Village, Tayu, Pati, Central Java, and (2) find out the value of *mutih*



fasting spiritual education for brides and s. *A contribution in the field of education is that this study strengthens that fasting becomes an educational means of shaping the mind and souls of individuals.*

This study used a qualitative research approach. Researchers conducted field research in Purwokerto Village, Tayu, Pati, Central Java, from August to December 2021. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and observations. Interviews with 8 informants (e.g., religious leaders, traditional leaders, prospective brides, and the families of the prospective brides) were conducted. The observation was used on the implementation of *mutih* fasting by the bride. The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's model through three stages namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion (2005).

To reveal the meaning of *mutih* fasting was revealed by the use of a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology sought to understand how humans constructed meanings and important concepts within the framework of intersubjectivity. Phenomenology assumed that people actively interpreted their experiences and tried to understand the world with their personal experiences (Littlejohn, 2009:57). *Phenomenology was chosen because this study wanted to know Mutih according to the perpetrator's view. In this context, the researcher interviewed the bride as the perpetrator of the Mutih fasting to interpret this tradition from her perspective. In addition, interviews with families and village leaders who are the support system of this tradition to find out how family and community support brides, the importance of this tradition being carried out, and the meaning of this tradition.*

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Implementation of Mutih Fasting for Prospective Bride in Purwokerto Village

In Purwokerto village, Tayu sub-district, Pati district, the majority of the population were traders and farmers. Others become teachers and employees. The geographical location was bordered to the north by Gesengan Village, the east adjacent to the village of Pundenrejo, the south side by Bendokaton Kidol Village, and the west side by Ngablak village. The area was 314 hectares with a population of 3,985 people consisting of 1,484 heads of families with a composition of 1,942 men and 2,043 women.

Institutionally, it included one Kelurahan, three Rukun Warga (community units), 22 Rukun Tetangga (neighborhood association), and the Rural Community Empowerment Institution (LPMK). The majority of the population of Purwokerto village was Muslim, so the religious atmosphere was very attached. There were religious educational institutions, namely two *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* (Elementary School), Islamic-based PAUD, *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (Junior High School level), and several Islamic boarding schools. Before a child went to PAUD, they studied religious material at the Al-Qur'an Education Institution (TPQ) (Observation in Purwokerto village, October 2021).

The religious organization that residents participated in was Nahdlotul Ulama (NU). This could be seen from the many activities of *Yasinan*, *Berjanjen*, *Tablilan*, *Bancaan*, *Tablil* for 7 days, *Tablil* for 40 days, *Tablil* for 100 days, *Tablil* for 1000 days, Haul Kiai Abdul Mukit, and the tradition of Marriage and Circumcision to the accompaniment of Tambourines. Organizations under NU, namely Fatayat, Muslimat, and Pemuda Ansor were also actively organizing various activities. In addition to religious traditions, the community also preserved traditions that had existed since the time of their ancestors, one of which was the *mutih* fasting tradition for prospective brides when they wanted to get married. The implementation of this tradition did not reduce the harmony in social life, always side by

side in any case, both worship and other traditions and activities (Observation in Purwokerto village, October 2021).

*Mutih* fasting is fasting by refraining from eating or drinking other than white foods. The implementation of *Mutih* fasting in Purwokerto Village, Tayu District, Pati Regency, Central Java, based on the results of interviews with informants was not known when it started because this tradition had been carried out for generations (Interview with Rahima, October 2021).

The stages of *Mutih* fasting were as follows. First, the bride-to-be was guided by a blowpipe (the person who regulated customs and traditions in the village) so that there were no mistakes when carrying out traditions. Second, one week before the wedding, the bride was secluded or experienced *pingitan*. *Pingitan* was one of the traditions in the Javanese traditional wedding procession, where the prospective bride was prohibited from leaving the house or meeting the prospective for a predetermined time. This seclusion aimed to prepare the bride, built trust and patience between the two and avoided various dangers that might occur. Third, the bride performed *Mutih* fasting for one week or three days with her parents. The number of days of *Mutih* Fasting (seven or three days) depended on the health condition of the bride. The hope of this *Mutih* fasting could make the bride look beautiful, elegant, and *mangling* (different from ordinary days) in the wedding ceremony. Fourth, the bride carried out *mutih* fasting such as Ramadan fasting, which was not allowed to eat, drink, or talk about something that was not useful and other fasting prohibitions according to Islamic teachings. The difference was that the iftar menu was limited to the rice plus salt and clear white drinks or mineral water. Other than that, it was not allowed. The all-white menu was a symbol of self-purification towards a clean new page in the life of building a new household (Interview with Idris, November 2021).

The procedures for carrying out *mutih* fasting in Purwokerto Village, Tayu District, Pati Regency, Central Java, were based on: (1) During the *mutih* fast the bride was kept in seclusion in the house to avoid any danger that could occur at any time; (2) *mutih* fasting began with the intention of *mutih* fasting; (3) after the intention to *mutih* fasting, the bride ate *sabur* by eating and drinking white foods and drinks; (4) fasting was carried out throughout the morning and afternoon until the evening; (5) at Maghrib time, the prospective bride broke their fasting by eating and drinking plainly and salt could be added to give a touch of taste; (6) *mutih* fasting was done for one week or three days according to the needs of the bride her health condition; and (7) avoiding taboos when fasting by not eating side dishes and drinking other than mineral water. If these taboos were carried out, *mutih* fasting to open the aura would be canceled (interview with Rahmad 25 September 2021).

Those who were involved in this *mutih* fasting, the prospective brides, were guided by a blowpipe who played a role in directing the fasting procedures carried out during the seclusion process. *Penyumpit* gave directions to families who wanted to get married about the importance of seclusion, and *Mutih* Fasting. The decision to follow tradition depended on the individual bride. However, the family had a dominant influence on the decision of the bride to follow this tradition. Likewise, bridal make-up when fitting clothes advised the bride to do *mutih* fasting (interview with Idris, November 2021).

In the field, the majority of brides and s carried out this tradition if their health or physical condition was good. However, if the bride were physically unwell or underweight, the duration of fasting was reduced from seven days to three days. If three days were also not possible, they might not do *mutih* fasting. In some cases, this tradition was replaced by the mother of the bride. There were concerns that if you did not do the *Mutih* Fasting, your makeup would look normal. In some cases,

the bride's parents accompanied their daughter too fast to ask Allah to pray for success and ease during the wedding.

Abstinenances that should not be carried out during *mutih* fasting were not to eat and drink other than white foods and beverages. Examples of foods and drinks that were recommended when carrying out *mutih* fasting were white rice and mineral water. These taboos moved from the *mutih* philosophy, abstaining from eating something that caused high blood pressure when they wanted to hold a wedding tradition. Marriage should be run with a happy feeling and a good aura, not bad emotions. If the taboo was done, the fast would be invalidated (Results of an interview with Rahima, October 2021).

*Mutih* fasting was held at the bride's house one week before the marriage ceremony. In general, the community supported and preserved this tradition, because, apart from respecting and appreciating ancestral culture, it was believed to be able to open the aura of the bride (Interview with Rahima, October 2021).

The purpose of *mutih* fasting according to the informant was (1) to open the aura of the bride so that, when carrying out the wedding procession, her aura could be *mangling*, (2) to get closer to Allah SWT who had provided sustenance; (3) to ask for prayers to be given success when carrying out various wedding processions to avoid various dangers; and (4) to respect the customs inherited from the ancestors by preserving them so that the application of facial makeup at the wedding looked beautiful, graceful and elegant. *Mutih* Fasting was understood as a ritual to break the prestige and bring out the aura of the bride (Interview with Sinta, October 2021).

Faizah also conveyed the same thing that the purpose of fasting was to get closer to Allah SWT who had given blessings to the bride, to detoxify the body of the bride so that harmful substances in the body were removed, to express gratitude for all the blessings and graces, and to ask for prayers to Allah SWT to give success and convenience during the wedding (Interview with Faizah, October 2021).

The meaning of the bride to *Mutih* fasting was to whiten themselves like a new paper. A form of a parable that the bride would run a new life that was clean and holy, so they needed mental preparation by cleaning their hearts and souls to get blessings. Fasting was also to detoxify the body from negative substances when the bride did not leave the house as well as to raise the confidence of the bride. Physically, *Mutih* Fasting endeavored to suppress appetite, so that the bride could slim down, the bride's make-up would look more beautiful, her aura would radiate and spread, and she would appear *mangling* (looked different from the daily look). The application of make-up looked elegant and beautiful because when doing *mutih* fasting, self-cleaning occurred. This became important as the first step in organizing or starting a new life with a new hope (Interview with Rahima, October 2021).

A review of Islamic law regarding *Mutih* fasting before marriage according Khusna riset (2021), although it is not included in Islamic teachings, when viewed from the purpose of white fasting, it does not conflict with Islamic values. Because actually *Mutih* fasting is a form of request or prayer from the bride and groom to Allah so that their marriage will get *sakinah mawaddah warahmah* happiness and get safety in the world and the hereafter.

### **Mutih Fasting: Religious and Cultural Discourse**

There were five important points to observe in the implementation of the *Mutih* Fasting. First, *Mutih* Fasting was a cultural tradition packaged in religious practice. A tradition was a habit or custom

carried out from generation to generation by ancestors which then became part of everyday life and required to be preserved as an important heritage. In addition, carrying out a tradition was a form of respect for the former. Judging from its origin, *mutih* fasting did not come from direct Islamic teachings (Rohimma, 2018). This habit or ritual was a form of development of Islamic teachings that were adapted into local traditions and rituals in Java.

*Mutih* Fasting in Purwokerto Village was a product of religious dialogue with culture. The people were Muslims with a strong Javanese culture. In the context of Javanese culture, *mutih* fasting came from the word *mutih* in the Javanese language, meaning white. This implied that fasting was done by avoiding foods and drinks other than white color. At first, *Mutih* was someone who fasted by consuming only white rice and mineral water, even if it was only salt or sugar compliment. Fasting was carried out for 24 hours (a full day) so that the people only ate and drank once a day. The implementation could be done within an odd number of days and could reach 40 days. The name *mutih* came from the type of food and drink consumed during *tirakat*. *Mutih* symbolized self-purification, both body and soul. Therefore, *mutih* fasting was conceptualized as a way for a person to whiten or purify the body and soul from sins that had been committed by undergoing certain practices for its attainment. In addition, *mutih* was also interpreted as a way to get rid of negative energy, related to the attainment of mysticism or supernatural science.

Aulia (2009) explained that one of the sciences in Kejawen's belief obtained by *mutih* fasting as a *tirakat* was Estu Pamungkas Science. In addition, the teachings included Ajian Kudup Melati and Aji Brajalimat. *Mutih* Fasting was a form of ritual or habit by not eating and drinking other than white, in this case, white rice and water. *Mutih* Fasting was known and circulated among people in the Java area (Rohimma, 2018). In its development, it was carried out for various purposes, one of which was the preparation of the bride before the wedding.

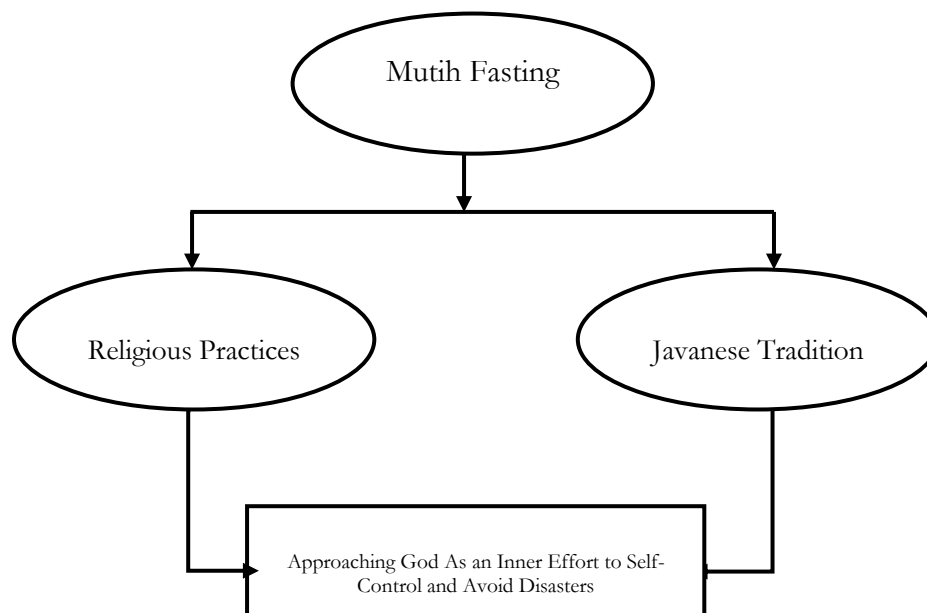
In the practice of this *mutih* tradition, there was a cultural and religious dialogue. The dialogue appeared in several forms, namely: (1) the fasting procedure did not follow the Javanese tradition, but was following the provisions of Islamic jurisprudence, namely the intention of fasting to get closer to Allah from dawn to sunset (adhan maghrib) by doing the sunnah of fasting, namely sahur at dawn. end of time and breaking of time in the beginning; (2) follow the provisions of *fiqh* in terms of which invalidated the fast; (3) the Kejawen element was found in the selection of the *sahur* and *iftar* menus, which only consumed white food and beverage (e.g., white rice and water). Adding salt was allowed in this *Mutih* fasting practice.

In Islamic *Fiqh* discourse, *mutih* fasting was the same as fasting in general, namely by refraining from all lusts such as eating, drinking, and having sex. The difference was that someone who was fasting did not eat or drink anything other than white rice and water without side dishes. The polemic of *Mutih* Fasting was on the existence of supernatural things because it had become a tradition for the Javanese people to obtain supernatural abilities. On the other hand, the essence of fasting was one of the recommended acts of worship. Rasulullah SAW never gave the shari'ah to his people to do *mutih* fasting. In addition, there was also no evidence in Al-Qur'an regarding the recommendation of *mutih* fasting. The implementation of *mutih* fasting was not necessarily worshiping because, if it was done with intentions that were not following the Shari'ah or even until there were things that were prohibited by religion, then of course it was not allowed. On the other hand, if a person performed *mutih* fasting with the intention of Allah SWT to cleanse his heart and to increase his piety and faith, then it was permissible and had the value of worship.

Every fasting carried out under the provisions of the sharia law that had no guidance for its implementation was included in the category of absolute sunnah fasting and the intention was absolute fasting. Thus, the law of *mutih* fasting was not included in Sunnah or obligatory cases, but absolute fasting was allowed in Islam as long as the intention is for Allah and not because of things that were prohibited by religious law (Bahts Masail LBM NU Surabaya, 2009).

*Mutih* fasting which is a Kejawen tradition can be accepted by this community. This acceptance is the product of cultural and Islamic dialogue. In the concept of Islam, fasting is part of self-approach to Allad and also a means of controlling lust. The compatibility of this tradition with the procedures for fasting in Islam is the entry point for this tradition to be accepted by the community. For *Mutih* Fasting, there is no debate between this tradition and religion. This is because the perpetrators interpret fasting as a form of exercise of the body, soul and heart, inflating self-worth and submission to God. The meeting point of religion and culture for practitioners in the meaning that fasting forms strength in self-control and dispels external disturbances

In the pesantren tradition, it was also known as *Mutih* Fasting for *tirakat*. The word *tirakat* was the answer to the Arabic word *tariqah* which meant "the path that is passed". Indonesian then absorbed this word into *tirakat* and *tirakatan*. *Tirakat* meant undergoing spiritual practice to achieve something desired. Also called *riyadhah*, it was to carry out the behavior of controlling and curbing lust. In a pesantren society, *tirakat* combined restraint and control of lust (*riyadhah*) and took a certain path (*thoriqat*) to achieve what was desired. This practice was obtained utilizing a diploma from the teacher. The detailed way of doing *tirakat* could vary between each actor, depending on how the diploma was given by the teacher. It was believed by the community that undergoing tirakat could make spiritual qualities closer to God and wishes could be granted.



**Fig. 1. The Interaction of Tradition and Religion**

On the one hand, the implementation of *mutih* fasting was expected so that at the time of the wedding, the bride would be beautiful and her aura would come out with beautiful makeup. On the other hand, fasting was an expression of gratitude for the blessings and graces of Allah SWT, as well

as being a medium for worship to draw closer to Allah SWT and ask for protection so that the wedding ceremony could run smoothly. There were two dimensions united in this tradition, namely physical and psychological, soul and body, material and spiritual, and religion and culture. *Mutih* fasting had various benefits for prospective brides who wanted to get married as long as they did not deviate from religious values. The implementation of *mutih* fasting was intended to get closer to Allah SWT and get *ridho* to start a new life to avoid various problems.

### **Mutih Fasting: Spiritual Education for Bride**

Humans were equipped by God with two main things namely physical and spiritual aspects. The body required food, drink, distribution of biological needs, clothing, shelter, jewelry, and others. Spirituality, on the other hand, required peace, serenity, compassion, and love. The Sufis asserted that the true essence of man was his spirituality. It was the estuary of all virtues. Physical happiness was very dependent on spiritual happiness. Meanwhile, spiritual happiness was not tied to the outer human form. Marriage was an important event for every human being because it was a transitional phase from adolescence to adulthood, from living alone to being married. This change necessitated physical and spiritual preparation for the bride. Inner preparation by arranging the heart, straightening intentions, and strengthening the soul to accept a partner with various strengths and weaknesses. This required a process of self-reflection. In the Javanese tradition known as *Pingitan* did not leave the house within a week before the marriage contract. In the *Pingitan*, *Mutih* fasting was carried out. *Mutih* Fasting was a form of *riyadah*, *tirakat*, or spiritual education for the bride.

Spiritual education was a process of personality education based on the individual's condition of affective and spiritual intelligence (Mulkan, 2002). In line with this definition, Ali Abd al-Hamid Mahmud explained that spiritual education was a process of fostering one's spiritual aspects to give birth to a variety of commendable attitudes and to become a useful person, both for the individual himself and the community (Langko, A., 2014). Spiritual education was the transmission of transcendent religious teachings in the context of forming individual human personalities who had individual piety and social piety (Istiani, N., & Islamy, A., 2018). Sa'id Hawa as quoted in Aziz (2017) said that spiritual education was an effort to cleanse the soul towards Allah SWT: from a dirty soul to a clean soul, from a non-shari'a mind to the Shari'a ones, from a hard heart to a calm and healthy heart, from negligent worship to a spirit that knows Allah SWT (*'Arij*), always exercising the rights to worship Allah SWT, from obeying the rules of the Shari'a to a physical one who always held Shari'a laws.

In the process of spiritual education, the Sufis introduced three stages namely *Takballi*, *Taballi*, and *Tajalli* (Istiani, N., & Islamy, A., 2018). First, at *takballi* stage, a person tried to rid himself of all despicable traits and behaviors, both inner and outer. This stage was the initial stage in passing the path of Sufism. This stage was oriented to keep away the reprehensible nature in a person so as not to interfere with his relationship with Allah because various despicable and immoral qualities could cover (e.g., hijab) a sense of closeness to Allah.

The first step in taking care of the heart was to cleanse the heart of attachments to the world. The heart must be emptied of the love of the world. In the context of *Mutih* fasting, there were spiritual values that were closely related to education or character building for the bride. Fasting whose core practice was *imsak* (restraint) was not just holding back things that could break the fast, such as eating, drinking, and having sex during the day. However, intrinsically, it made individuals able to manage

themselves not to indulge their lustful desires, including keeping words from lying, talking about other people's disgrace, or harsh and hurtful words. The dimensions of fasting were not only seen as physical worship by holding back hunger and thirst, but also spiritual worship by actualizing the cleansing of the heart and soul from various impurities. *Taballi* became the foundation of spiritual education (Halimah, S., 2020).

The existence of *Mutib* fasting for the bride, with the selection of a menu that was not delicious, was expected to be a means of educating the bride to have patience, and perseverance in facing challenges and problems such as *tirakat*, able to control lust, which in the end gave birth to the character of a wife who took care of herself and abstained from inappropriate behavior, both in the context of religion and social norms. At this stage, the bride had the opportunity to do self-criticism, self-observation, and self-reading to improve their quality. On the physical aspect, a Muslim who fasts would always refrain from eating and drinking. While on the psychological aspect, a Muslim who did fasting obeyed the rules and trained himself to leave despicable traits, such as lying, *takabbur*, swearing, *hasad*, jealousy, and *riya'*. Fasting also had a positive impact on psychology, mental resilience, self-control, stress control, and psycho-physiotherapy.

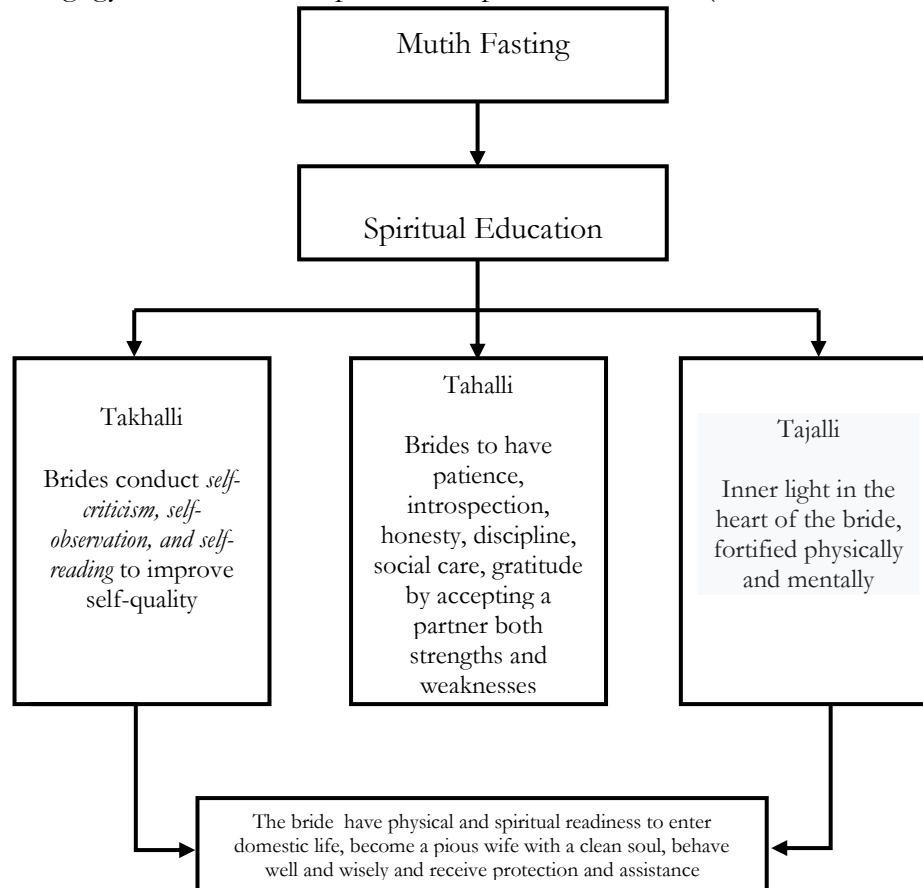
The second stage was *tahalli*. After self-purification, the next process was to decorate oneself with commendable nature and obedience in carrying out religious orders. The commendable nature and behavior in this *taballi* stage, among others, were repentance, asceticism, patience, pleasure, fairness, kindness, forbearance, helping, a guide to the truth, and other commendable traits and actions. At this stage, the heart should always be busy with *dhikr* and remembering Allah. By remembering Allah, it would bring peace. There was nothing to be afraid of except the release of Allah from his heart.

The divine qualities that were absorbed in the *takballi* stage form *akblaqul karimah* that emerged from his self-awareness as a caliph and 'Abdullah. The servant of Allah in his role in the family and social life for a prospective bride was to be a pious wife, a good mother, full of love and wisdom, and a teacher for the community. *Mutib* Fasting educated the bride to have (1) temperament patience which was trained through self-control from everything that broke the fast solely to worship Allah SWT, (2) honesty was marked by adhering to the rules of fasting, even if it violated, it was not known to humans; (3) introspection, an attitude of feeling supervised by God. Obedience in leaving the prohibition of fasting was a form of awareness of Allah's supervision; (4) discipline, there were two aspects of the discipline, namely the discipline of time to use time as well as possible in the context of devotion to Allah SWT, therefore fasting and other worship in Islam were determined by time. When dawn came, eating and drinking, as well as husband and wife relationships, were stopped to start fasting. Time-disciplined people felt that it was better to wait than be late. Meanwhile, when Maghrib came, you must immediately eat and drink to end the fasting even though you had to delay the Maghrib prayer for a while. Therefore, we were highly demanded to make effective use of time and discipline in law; (4) social care trained each individual to be more concerned with their social conditions. The order to refrain from eating and drinking all day was a form of physical and psychological exercise so that Muslims could feel how our brothers and sisters had difficulty getting food due to financial constraints; and (5) gratitude was grateful for the favors obtained from Him. In this context, gratitude is carried out in a marriage with the readiness to accept a life partner with various strengths and weaknesses (Mukmin, 2017).

The third was *tajalli*. This stage was the peak stage that the *Salik* (travelers of the spiritual path) yearned for. *Tajalli* was a phase in which a person could feel a massive sense of divinity until various



human traits disappeared until a rabbinic awareness emerged. In this stage, a person was not only carrying out the commands of his Lord but also felt the delicacy, closeness, longing, and even togetherness with His Lord. At this stage, there was the awareness of the absence of matter in the self (*fana'*) and the existence of the spiritual world (*baqa'*). The description of the explanation of the three stages above showed that the process of achieving the spiritual level in the Sufistic paradigm was consistent and continuous. The three stages in the form of *takhalli*, *tahalli*, and *tajalli* were stages that were closely correlated with the process of spiritual education in one's own life that could be carried out independently. Therefore, it was not an exaggeration to say that these three stages could be a medium of andragogy education in the process of spiritual education (Istiani, N., & Islamy, A., 2018).



**Fig. 2. *Spiritual Education for Bride***

## CONCLUSION

*Mutih* Fasting is carried out by the prospective bride at her home in a seclusion condition for three or seven days. The dialogue between Islam and Javanese culture was found in the fasting procedure according to the provisions of Islamic jurisprudence. The Kejawen element was revealed in the selection of the *sahur* and *iftar* menus, which only consume white foods (e.g., white rice and water). The practice of *Mutih* fasting is allowed with the intention of absolute fasting to get closer to Allah. For prospective brides, fasting was interpreted as an inner preparation by cleansing the heart and soul to get success and blessings. Physically, it is interpreted as an effort to suppress appetite, so that the bride looks more beautiful and their aura radiates and spreads.



Spiritual education in this tradition is a process of self-purification (*Takhalli*) for the bride, adorning themselves with noble character (*Taballi*), and feeling togetherness with Allah (*Tajalli*). After this *tirakat*, it is hoped that the bride will have physical and spiritual readiness to enter domestic life, become a pious wife with a clean soul, behave well and wisely, and receive God's protection and help.

The results of this study provide a theoretical contribution to the harmony of dialogue between Islam and Javanese culture in Muslim society with the background of the religious organization of Nahdlatul Ulama'. This study needs to be followed up by examining the pattern of dialogue between Islam and Javanese culture in the background of other religious organizations.

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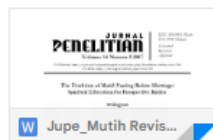
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