

**BASMALAH AS A PROTECTION FOR BALĀ: THE TRADITION OF WRITING  
BASMALAH EVERY 1 MUHARRAM AT ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS AL-  
MAHRUSIYAH LIRBOYO KEDIRI**

**Rina Dewi Umayah**

UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, Indonesia  
nadhifakhanza8@gmail.com

**Ahmad Zainal Abidin**

UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, Indonesia  
ahmadzainal7474@gmail.com

**Ita Rahmania Kusumawati**

Universitas Hasyim Asy'ari Tebuireng Jombang, Indonesia  
itajombang111@gmail.com

DOI 10.32505/at-tibyan.v7i2.3314		
Submitted: 25-09-2021	Revised: 08-11-2021	Accepted: 18-12-2022

**Abstract**

This paper discusses one of the unique phenomena of the living Quran, which is the tradition of writing Basmalah every 1 Muharram at the Al-Mahrusiyah Islamic Boarding School Lirboyo Kediri, which is done 113 times on a piece of paper, individually, without being known to others, and without speaking. This study explains how the santri (students) of Pondok Pesantren Al-Mahrusiyah practice the Basmalah tradition, the basis of the practice, and how the tradition is understood. Using a descriptive phenomenological method, this paper finds: first, this practice is carried out in a series of events, such as the reading of the end and the beginning of the year prayers followed by the giving of *ijazah*, then the santri (students) practice this tradition individually. Second, the basis used by the santri (students) refers to the *Kanzūl an-najāh wa surūr* and *Khazīnatu al-Asrār* and *Ḥasiyah Tafsīr al-Baiḍāwī* books. Third, based on the reading of Frazer's theory, it can be found that: 1) from the aspect of the Law of nature: the tradition of writing basmalah is prayer and hope or an effort to protect one's self to God, 2) from the principle aspect: santri write basmalah on a paper by writing which is attributed to certain phenomena, 3) from the practice side: using a series of prayers, and consists of several taboos that must be avoided, such as not being allowed to speak while writing basmalah. Overall, the above phenomenon shows the function of the Qur'anic verse as *lidafi-l-al-balā* (repelling reinforcements), *tahsīn* (fortress or protection), and *jalbīl manā fi'* (getting benefit).

**Keywords:** *living Qur'an, tradition, writing basmalah, Al-Mahrusiyah, Frazer.*

### Abstrak

Tulisan ini membahas salah satu fenomena unik dari living Quran, yaitu tradisi penulisan basmalah setiap 1 Muharram di Pondok Pesantren Al-Mahrusiyah Lirboyo Kediri, yang dilakukan sebanyak 113 kali pada selembar kertas, secara sendiri-sendiri, tanpa diketahui orang lain, dan tanpa berbicara. Kajian ini menjelaskan bagaimana santri Pondok Pesantren Al-Mahrusiyah mengamalkan tradisi basmalah, dasar pengamalannya, dan bagaimana tradisi tersebut dipahami. Dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif fenomenologis, tulisan ini menemukan: pertama, pengamalan ini dilakukan dalam rangkaian acara, seperti pembacaan doa akhir tahun dan awal tahun yang dilanjutkan dengan pemberian ijazah, kemudian para santri (mahasiswa). mempraktekkan tradisi ini secara individu. Kedua, dasar yang digunakan para santri (mahasiswa) mengacu pada kitab *Kanzūl an-najāh wa surūr* dan *Khazīnatu al-Asrār* dan *Ḥasiyah Tafsīr al-Baiḍāwī*. Ketiga, berdasarkan pembacaan teori Frazer, dapat ditemukan bahwa: 1) dari aspek hukum alam: tradisi menulis basmalah adalah doa dan harapan atau upaya untuk melindungi diri kepada Tuhan, 2) dari prinsip aspek: santri menulis basmalah di atas kertas dengan tulisan yang dikaitkan dengan fenomena tertentu, 3) dari sisi praktik: menggunakan rangkaian doa, dan terdiri dari beberapa pantangan yang harus dihindari, seperti tidak boleh berbicara saat menulis basmalah. Secara keseluruhan, fenomena di atas menunjukkan fungsi ayat Al-Qur'an sebagai *lidafi-l-al-bala* (menolak bala), *tahsīn* (benteng atau perlindungan), dan *jalbīl manāfi'* (mendapatkan manfaat).

**Kata kunci:** *living Qur'an, tradisi, penulisan basmalah, Al-Mahrusiyah, Frazer.*

### Introduction

The santri (students) at the Al-Mahrusiyah Islamic Boarding School have their way of welcoming the 1st of Muharram. This information was obtained from previous research and supported by observations at the Al-Mahrusiyah Islamic Boarding School Lirboyo Kediri. Al-Mahrusiyah is an Islamic boarding school in East Java, a unit under the Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School, Kediri. Al-Mahrusiyah Islamic Boarding School was founded in 1988 by KH. Imam Yahya Mahrus Ali, grandson of KH. Abdul Karim.<sup>1</sup> Al-Mahrusiyah Islamic Boarding School has a hereditary tradition and is regularly certified every 1 Muharram, writing Basmalah 113 times on a piece of paper.<sup>2</sup> This practice is done individually without the knowledge of others, and it is forbidden to speak when writing it. This tradition has been carried out for generations by the caregivers of the Al-Mahrusiyah Islamic boarding school to ward off reinforcements or as a talisman to ward off thieves.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tim Pembukuan, *Historiografi Al-Mahrusiyah* (Kediri: Mahrusiyah Press, 2015), 18.

<sup>2</sup> Based on the results of observations of a series of traditional basmalah writing events at PP al-Mahrusiyah on 19-20 August 2020.

<sup>3</sup>The results of the interview with the advisor of the girl's boarding school on August 12, 2020.

According to Syamsuddin, theoretically, the reception or public acceptance of the Qur'an and Islamic teachings can be seen in the practices or traditions carried out for generations to elements of the verses of the Qur'an or Islamic teachings.<sup>4</sup> From Sahiron's observations quoted by Mujahidin, the phenomenon that reflects the everyday life of the Qur'an is to make pieces of the verses of the Qur'an or some quotes from certain verses as wall decorations for homes, mosques, tombs, and even kiswah cloth.<sup>5</sup> This practice can also be in the form of amulets which contain fragments of verses from the Qur'an, which are carried everywhere by their owners to be used as shields, repulsions, or as a means of repelling enemy attacks and other evil elements.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, according to Rafiq, this reception can be seen in how a person receives, responds, utilizes, and uses the Qur'an.<sup>7</sup>

Studies on Islamic boarding schools, in general, have been widely scattered, such as those carried out by Ahmad Baidhowi et al., who discussed health theology in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren),<sup>8</sup> Laifa Annisa et al., who discussed the resilience and vulnerability of Islamic boarding schools during a pandemic,<sup>9</sup> Zainudin Syarif, et al. who wrote about the response of Islamic boarding schools in Madura related to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile, on a different side, the study of the reception of the Koran in the Indonesian Muslim community was carried out by Lien Iffah and Ahmad Rafiq, studying the reception of the Koran in the ma'iyah community.<sup>11</sup> Hilda Nurfuadah also mentioned the tradition of writing basmalah in Islamic boarding schools. At-Tarbiyatul Wathoniyah Cirebon. Meanwhile, Indah Lestari discussed the tradition of reciting basmalah during basmallah fasting in Purbalingga.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Anwar Mujahidin, "Analisis Simbolik Penggunaan Ayat-Ayat Al-Qur'an Sebagai Jimat Dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat Ponorogo," *Jurnal Kalam* 10, no. 1 (2016), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24042/klm.v10i1.159>.

<sup>5</sup> Ayis Mukholik, "The Variation of the Quran Reception 21St Century in Central Java Indonesia," *IJASOS- International E-Journal of Advances in Social Sciences* III, no. 7 (2017): 268, <https://doi.org/10.18769/ijasos.309686>.

<sup>6</sup> Mujahidin, "Analisis Simbolik Penggunaan Ayat-Ayat Al-Qur'an Sebagai Jimat Dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat Ponorogo.", 46.

<sup>7</sup> Abdul Fatah, "Living Qur'an: Tradisi Wirid Al-Ma'tsūrāt Di SMAIT Abu Bakar Boarding School, Kulon Progo," *Jurnal At-Tibyan: Jurnal Ilmu Alqur'an Dan Tafsir* 5, no. 1 (2020): 4, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32505/at-tibyan.v5i1.1398>.

<sup>8</sup> Ahmad Baidowi et al., "Theology of Health of Quranic Pesantren in the Time of COVID-19," *HTS Theologese Studies / Theological Studies* 77, no. 4 (2021): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i4.6452>.

<sup>9</sup> & Mochamad Iqbal Nurmansyah Laifa Annisa Hendarmin, Ida Rosyidah, "Pesantren during the Pandemic: Resilience and Vulnerability," *Studia Islamika: Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* 28, no. 3 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v28i3.24994>.

<sup>10</sup> Zainuddin Syarif, Syafiq A. Mughni, and Abd Hannan, "Responses of Pesantrens in Madura Towards the Covid-19 Pandemic," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 15, no. 1 (2021): 47–74, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2021.15.1.47-74>.

<sup>11</sup> Ahmad Rafiq Lien Iffah Naf'atu Fina, "The Reception of the Qur'an in Popular Sufism in Indonesia: Tadabbur among the Ma'iyah Community," in *Communities of the Qur'an: Dialogue, Debate and Diversity in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Emran Badawi (Oneworld, 2017).

<sup>12</sup> Indah Lestari, *Tradisi Pembacaan Basmalah Pada Puasa Bismillah Di Madin Sirajuth Thalibin, Purbalingga*, Skripsi (Semarang: UIN Walisongo, 2021).

Whereas the studies on the commemoration of 1 Muharram were written by Faizin,<sup>13</sup> Tanti with his research at Gedibrah Tomb, Tambak Agung Village, Klirong District, Kebumen Regency,<sup>14</sup> Dalmenda with his research Tabuik Tradition at Kota Pariaman,<sup>15</sup> Endang with his article about the Tabot Tradition in Bengkulu.<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, research on the commemoration of 1 Muharram in Islamic boarding schools was also carried out by Rodianti at Al-Munawwaroh Islamic Boarding School Kepahiang.<sup>17</sup>

From some of the literature reviews above, it can be seen that research on the 1 Muharram tradition has both studied a ceremonial tradition that developed in certain areas regarding the 1 Muharram commemoration. The only difference between them is the material object. Meanwhile, research on the 1 Muharram commemoration in Islamic boarding schools is still relatively small, so there are several interesting reasons to research the above phenomenon.

First, the Al-Mahrusiyah Islamic Boarding School is one of the Islamic boarding schools that annually continues to carry out the tradition of writing Basmalah on 1 Muharram. Second, the tradition is believed to have magical powers as a form of practicing the Qur'an in the lives of the santri (students) of the Al-Mahrusiyah Islamic Boarding School. Third, this tradition is carried out uniquely, without speaking and without the knowledge of others.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the tradition of writing basmalah, which is carried out every 1 Muharram by the santri (students) of the al-Mahrusiyah Islamic boarding school, will be studied from the perspective of James George Frazer's theory of sympathetic magic.

Data collection techniques for this study were conducted through interviews<sup>19</sup>, observation<sup>20</sup>, and documentation methods<sup>21</sup> were used to see the tradition of writing

<sup>13</sup> Mochammad Arif Faizin, "1 Suro 1 Muharam Dan 1 Januari," *Jawa Pos Radar Blitar*, 2009,1.

<sup>14</sup> Tanti Wahyuningsih, "Persepsi Masyarakat Terhadap Tradisi Suran Di Makam Gedibrah Desa Tambak Agung Kecamatan Klirong Kabupaten Kebumen," *Jurnal Pendidikan, Bahasa, Sastra Dan Budaya Jawa Universitas Muhammadiyah Purworejo* 3 (2013).

<sup>15</sup> Dalmenda, "Makna Tradisi Tabuik Oleh Masyarakat Kota Pariaman (Studi Deskriptif Interaksionalisme Simbolik)," *Jurnal Antropologi FISIP Universitas Andalas* 18 (2016).

<sup>16</sup> Endang Rochmiatun, "Tradisi Tabot Pada Bulan Muharam Di Bengkulu; Paradigma Dekonstruksi," *Jurnal Tamaddun: Jurnal Kebudayaan Dan Sastra Islam* 14, no. 2 (2014): 179–88.

<sup>17</sup> Rodianti, "Manajemen Dakwah Dalam Pelaksanaan Program Keagamaan Santri Di Pondok Pesantren Al-Munawwaroh Kepahiang" (Bengkulu: IAIN Bengkulu, 2018), 31.

<sup>18</sup> Analysis of the results of written interviews with Lia Fatra and Arwina on August 12, 2020.

<sup>19</sup> Interviews were conducted by referring to the interview guide to informants at the location. The selection of informants is determined by purposive sampling technique, by selecting informants with certain considerations that have been determined since the beginning of the study. The informants consisted of 6 people: 1 advisor for the Al-Mahrusiyah female boarding school, 1 female boarding school administrator, 3 male female Islamic boarding school administrators, and 1 female student.

<sup>20</sup> Observations are carried out in two ways: first, participatory observation or conducted by researchers by being directly involved from beginning to end; and second, non-participatory observation that is carried out without being directly involved. The observation lasted for 2 weeks, starting from 8-22 August 2020.

<sup>21</sup> The documents studied were in the form of texts and photographs related to the tradition of writing basmalah every 1 Muharram at the Al-Mahrusiyah Islamic Boarding School. The text consists of

basmalah in terms of ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Research data were analyzed using Frazer's magical method. The Law of nature, principle, and practice methods are used to provide an overview of how the practice of writing the basmalah tradition is carried out, knowing the basic understanding of santri (students) in carrying out the tradition, and how the tradition of writing basmalah every 1 Muharram is interpreted through J.G Frazer's theory of sympathetic magic.

### Basmalah Writing Practice

Al-Qur'an is the holy book of Muslims which is great and sacred. Whoever reads and practices it will get blessings (barakah) daily.<sup>22</sup> This blessing is also believed by the santri (students) of the Al-Mahrusiyah Islamic Boarding School. Although logically, this barakah is difficult to explain, it is this reason that makes the tradition of writing Basmalah every 1 Muharram still exist among the santri (students) of Al-Mahrusiyah Islamic Boarding School. They believe that writing Basmalah on 1 Muharram will bring blessings from the Qur'an.<sup>23</sup> The tradition of writing Basmalah is carried out every 1 Muharram in several events. First, as a year-end prayer; second, the practice of the tradition of writing Basmalah as part of the verses of the Qur'an; third, as showing the Law of nature and its principle. Here is the description.

Before entering 1 Muharram, the santri (students) perform the Asr prayer in the congregation, which is led directly by the zuriyyah (family) of the Al-Mahrusiyah Islamic boarding school. After performing the Asr prayer, zuriyyah will lead the santri (students) to read a series of prayers, including the end-of-year prayer, three times:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ ﴿١﴾ اللَّهُمَّ مَا عَمِلْتُ مِنْ عَمَلٍ فِي السَّنَةِ  
 الْمَاضِيَةِ وَمَنْ تَرَضُهُ ﴿٢﴾ وَتَسِيئَتُهُ وَمَنْ تَنْسَهُ ﴿٣﴾ وَحَلَمْتُ عَنِّي مَعَ قُدْرَتِكَ عَلَى عُقُوبَتِي ﴿٤﴾ وَدَعَوْتَنِي إِلَى  
 التَّوْبَةِ بَعْدَ جَزَاءَتِي عَلَيْكَ ﴿٥﴾ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ مِنْهُ فَاعْفِرْ لِي اللَّهُمَّ وَمَا عَمِلْتُ مِنْ عَمَلٍ تَرْضَاهُ وَوَعَدْتَنِي  
 عَلَيْهِ الثَّوَابَ وَالْعُفْرَانَ فَتَقَبَّلْهُ مِنِّي ﴿٦﴾ وَلَا تَقْطَعْ رَجَائِي مِنْكَ يَا كَرِيمُ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ ﴿٧﴾ وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ  
 تَعَالَى عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ ﴿٨﴾

After reading the year-end prayer, zuriyyah gave a lecture about the virtues of the month of Muharram while waiting for the maghrib prayer. At the end of the lecture, zuriyyah gave an *ijazah* to write basmalah to the students. It is not known for

---

the archives of the Al-Mahrusiyah pesantren, the text of the rajah, and other related texts. In this case, the photo becomes visual information from the implementation of the tradition of writing basmalah.

<sup>22</sup> Ahmad Dahlan, Afifi Hasbunallah, and Ahmad Luthfi Hidayat, "A Sociological Approach to the Quran: Contemporary Interactions Between Society and the Quran (Jam'iyah Qur'aniyyah) in Indonesia," *KnE Social Sciences*, 2022, 477, <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v7i8.10767>.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with advisor of Pondok Putri on August 12, 2020.

certain whether there are specific criteria regarding the person who must provide an *ijazah*, as stated by the student informant, Retno Wati:

"I don't know, madam, are there any special requirements regarding people who can give *ijazah* (certificates) in writing this basmalah. Because so far, only *zuriyyah* (ndalem families) have certified this practice."<sup>24</sup>

After the *ijazahan* (certificate awarding process) is complete, it is followed by the Maghrib prayer in the congregation. After doing *dhikr* after prayer, *zuriyyah* guides the students to read the beginning of the year prayer, beginning by reading the basmalah at the beginning of each reading, followed by reading the verse of the chair 360 times, and reading the following prayer 300 times:

اللَّهُمَّ يَا مُخَوِّلَ الْأَحْوَالِ حَوِّلْ حَالِي إِلَى أَحْسَنِ الْأَحْوَالِ بِحَوْلِكَ وَقُوَّتِكَ يَا عَزِيزُ يَا مُتَعَالٍ ﴿١﴾ وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ  
تَعَالَى عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

And the last one is to read the end-of-the-year prayer:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١﴾ اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَاةً تَمْلَأُ حَزَائِنَ اللَّهِ نُورًا ﴿٢﴾ وَتَكُونُ لَنَا وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ  
فَرَجًا وَفَرْحًا وَسُرُورًا ﴿٣﴾ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَسْلِيمًا كَثِيرًا ﴿٤﴾ اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ الْأَبَدِيُّ الْقَدِيمُ الْأَوَّلُ ﴿٥﴾  
وَعَلَى فَضْلِكَ الْعَظِيمِ وَكَرِيمِ جُودِكَ الْعَمِيمِ الْمُعْوَلِ ﴿٦﴾ وَهَذَا عَامٌ جَدِيدٌ قَدْ أَقْبَلَ ﴿٧﴾ أَسْأَلُكَ الْعِصْمَةَ فِيهِ مِنْ  
الشَّيْطَانِ وَأَوْلِيَايَاهِ ﴿٨﴾ وَالْعَوْنَ عَلَى هَذِهِ النَّفْسِ الْأَمَّارَةِ بِالسُّوءِ ﴿٩﴾ وَالْإِشْتِعَالَ بِمَا يُفْعَرُّنِي إِلَيْكَ زُلْفَى ﴿١٠﴾ يَا  
ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ ﴿١١﴾ وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ ﴿١٢﴾

The tradition of writing basmalah is certified to all Al-Mahrusiyah Islamic boarding school students. However, the implementation is carried out individually, so whether or not the practice of this tradition is returned to each student. The time for writing basmalah starts from the Maghrib call to prayer or after the appearance of the new moon on that day until before the Maghrib call to prayer the next day.

Several provisions must be made during the process of writing this basmalah. *"People who practice it must be in a state of purity or have ablution, cover the genitals, face the Qibla, and complete it in one majlis. You can't move, and you can't talk."*<sup>25</sup> In addition to these provisions, other informants also mentioned additional provisions, such as: *"How to write basmalah, the ba is written long, the sin is clear, the mim and ba' must also have holes. Then after it is written, it is immediately folded and stored so*

<sup>24</sup> Written interview via whatsapp with Retno Wati on August 12, 2020.

<sup>25</sup> Written interview via WhatsApp with Lia Fatra on August 12, 2020.

that it cannot be seen or seen by others,<sup>26</sup> the informant said that Basmalah's writing must be updated every year, so it can be said that the active period is one year.<sup>27</sup>

Another informant said about the reason for writing that much basmalah. According to him, the number of basmalah written in this amaliah is 113 times. The number is determined from the number of surahs in the Qur'an, 114 surahs, all of which begin with the Basmalah lafadz, except for one letter, Surah at-Taubah. So that begins with basmalah, only 113 letters.<sup>28</sup> The medium used is a sheet of paper, "but the paper should not be lined."<sup>29</sup> When writing basmalah, it is accompanied by counting the number, but the calculation cannot be repeated or only done once. If you forget or have doubts about the amount written, it is forgiven (being *ma'fu*), and the smallest amount is taken in the calculation. If in writing, there are letters' mim and ha' that are not hollow and the writing of colons is coupled, then the writing of basmalah must be repeated from the beginning. According to the informant, the purpose of this tradition of writing Basmalah every 1st Muharram is to *lidafi al-bala* (reject *bala*), taḥsyīn (fortress of self), and jalbūl manā fi' (to getting benefit). The students believe that the tradition of writing Basmalah is a form of tabarruk with verses from the Qur'an.<sup>30</sup>

### The Basics of Santri's Understanding of Al-Qur'an Verses Used in the Basmalah Writing Tradition

For this discussion, the authors conducted research using the interview method with several Al-Mahrusiyah Islamic Boarding School students. From the students' answers about the phenomenon of the tradition of writing basmalah, the researcher then compared the students' understanding with the arguments that became the basis of the informants' answers. The author found some information as follows:

The reason why the basmalah verse is used in this tradition is that basmalah has many virtues, such as the informant's explanation:

"That's why in the book *Khazīnatu al-Asrār*, there is a chapter entitled *faḍāil al-basmalah al-syarīfah*. It contains the benefits of bismillah, not the procedure for writing it. What are the getting benefits of basmalah? Yes, like the interpretation in Surah Muhammad verse 15, which states that the Prophet's *kanjeng* entered the 2nd door in Heaven and asked the angel Gabriel: "Why does this river appear in the letter Mim, what is this? That's how it is."<sup>31</sup>

The interpretation of basmalah meant by the informant is that in Heaven, clear water flows out of the hole in the letter mim in the word "*bismi*." A river of milk comes out of the letter ḥā in the pronunciation "Allah", the river *khamr* appears from

<sup>26</sup> Written interview via WhatsApp with Arwina on August 12, 2020.

<sup>27</sup> Live interview with daughter's counselor on August 12, 2020.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Wawancara via *whatsApp* dengan Ustadz Beni pada tanggal 12 Juli 2021 pada pukul 22.24

the letter mim in the word "ar-rahmān", and the river that comes out of the letter mim in lafaz ar-rahīm. The four rivers come out of the basmalah lafaz.<sup>32</sup>

...الملك هل نظرت قلت نعم قال انظر ثانيا فلما نظرت ورأيت مكتوبا أربعة أركان القبة بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم رأيت نهر الماء يخرج من ميم بسم الله ونهر اللبن يخرج من هاء الله ونهر الخمر يخرج من ميم الرحمن ونهر العسل يخرج من ميم الرحيم فعلمت أن أصل هذه الأنهار الأربعة من البسملة...

Another informant said that if the writing of basmalah is correct, then later in Heaven, they will feel the source of the spring:

“Sok neng Suwargo iku bolongan huruf mim karo ha’ iku tempate metune banyu. Koyok banyu madu, arak, lan liyane. Pokok sumbere metune banyu sok neng Suwargo yo teko mim karo ha’. Makane lek nulis bismillah mim karo ha’ e kudu bolong, sok neng Suwargo adewe ape ngombe opo lek bolongane banyu buntet.”<sup>33</sup>

Means:

"Later in heaven, the hole huruf mim with ha' is the source of the emergence of water, such as mauld, wine, and others. Anyway, the water source in Heaven will be from the letter's mim and ha'. So, in writing bismillah, the mim and ha' must be perforated, because in Heaven, what will we drink if the water source is dead?"

Aside from the interpretation above, writing basmallah as a 'tool' to reject logs is quite reasonable because, according to Fahrudin al-Razi, basmallah is used at the beginning when doing everything (bismillah ibtida'a kulli syai'). This meaning shows that as God's servants, humans do not have power because all power belongs only to God. So that any power comes from God.<sup>34</sup> In this regard, the writing of basmallah as a wasilah for rejecting timber finds its relevance.

Information regarding the time, amount, and getting benefits of writing basmalah on 1 Muharram, which all informants explained referred to the *Kanzūl an-najāh wa surūr* book:<sup>35</sup>

من المَجْرَبَاتِ الصَّحِيحِهِ – كما في (نعت البدايات وتوصيف النهايات) للسيد الشريف ماء العينين – :  
(أَنَّ مِنْ كَتَبَ (بِسْمَلَةَ) فِي أَوَّلِ الْمَحْرَمِ مِئَةَ ثَلَاثِ عَشْرَةَ مَرَّةً. لَمْ يَنْلِ حَامِلُهَا مَكْرُوهُ فِيهِ وَلَا فِي أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ مَدَّةَ عَمْرِهِ.

<sup>32</sup> Muhammad Ḥaqī An-Nazīfī, *Khazīnatu Al-Asrār Jafīlatu Al-Aẓkār* (Lebanon: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1971), 101.

<sup>33</sup> Interview via WhatsApp with Ustadz Syahroni on July 13, 2021 at 18:41.

<sup>34</sup> Yuzaidi dan Winda Sari, “NILAI-NILAI OPTIMISME DALAM ISTI’ADZAH DAN BASMALAH (STUDI TAFSIR AR-RAZI),” *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 18, no. 1 (2019), 13 <http://jurnal.uinsu.ac.id/index.php/ushuluddin/article/view/5723>.

<sup>35</sup> ‘Abdul Ḥamīd Muḥammad ‘Alī ibn ‘Abdul al-Qōdir al-Quds al-Makiy As-Syafi’ī, *Kanzūl An-Najāh Wa Surūr* (Lebanon: Darul Khawi, 2009), 74.

The advisor of the Al-Mahrusiyah Islamic Boarding School stated that the information regarding the time of the implementation of the tradition of writing basmalah, which was carried out at the beginning of the month of Muharram is contained in the book of *Khazīnatu al-Asrār Jafīlatu al-Azkār*<sup>36</sup>:

ومن كتبها في أول يوم من المحرم في ورقة مائة وثلاث عشرة مرة وحملها لا يناله سوء ولا مكروه هو وأهل بيته  
مدة عمره

The month of Muharram marks the beginning of the day or year in the Islamic (Hijri) calendar. Starting each activity by reciting basmallah is a religious suggestion. So that the writing of the basmalah at the beginning of the month of Muharram, which the students carried out at the Al-Mahrusiyah Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School, is very relevant. According to Maududi, someone who does this practice will receive protection from Allah and avoid all evil or disaster.<sup>37</sup>

Information regarding the writing of the letter ba' must be long, the letter sin must be clear, and the letter mim must be perforated as a form of respect for the Qur'an contained in the book *Ḥasiyah Tafsīr al-Baiḍāwī*.<sup>38</sup>

طولوا الباء وأظهروا السين ودوروا الميم تعظيما لكتاب الله

As explained by the informant:

"That, if I'm not mistaken, is the opinion of the caliph, Umar bin Abdul Aziz. It is in the book *Ḥasiyah Tafsīr al-Baiḍāwī*. The aim is to glorify the Qur'an."<sup>39</sup>

### Frazer's Theory Analysis in the Tradition of Writing Basmalah Every 1 Muharram

James George Frazer said that when a tradition or custom of action is carried out correctly, the result will manifest as expected.<sup>40</sup> The tradition of writing basmalah on 1 Muharram at the al-Mahrusiyah Islamic boarding school is examined in more depth. Through Frazer's theory of sympathetic magic, one can understand the way one's thinking is used to influence forces outside of oneself. In Frazer, magic is a picture of a primitive society dependent on nature in carrying out their lives. When nature does not go according to their expectations, they will try to understand and change it. The path they took was by Frazer called sympathetic magic,<sup>41</sup> which is understood as the

<sup>36</sup> An-Nazīlī, *Khazīnatu Al-Asrār Jafīlatu Al-Azkār*, 107.

<sup>37</sup> Muhammad Sulaiman, "An Exposition of the Concepts of Basmalah and Its Relevance to the Life of Contemporary Muslim Society," *AL-YAQEEN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC STUDIES FUDMA* 1, no. 1 (2020), 4. <http://journal.fudutsinma.edu.ng/index.php/alyaqjis/article/view/2389/0>.

<sup>38</sup> Syekh Muhyidin Zadah, *Ḥasiyah Tafsīr Al-Baiḍāwī. Juz 1*. (Turki: Maktabah al-Haqiqoh, 1998), 45.

<sup>39</sup> Interview via WhatsApp with Ustadz Beni on July 12, 2021 at 21:45.

<sup>40</sup> Daniel E. Pals, *Seven Theories Of Religion* (Yogyakarta: iRCiSoD, 2018), 65.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

universe that will work because of influences that come from the outside. In this case, Frazer agrees with his teacher, Tylor, that when things sympathetically arise in mind, primitive society must combine it with the real (non-mental) external world, whose amalgamation is reflected physically or tangible. So in looking at the tradition of writing basmalah using Frazer's sympathetic magic perspective, the following can be explained:

## 1. Law of nature

- a. Influence: is the behavior of individuals or groups to influence nature and humans and expect reciprocity from that behavior.<sup>42</sup> In this case, this behavior is the phenomenon of writing basmalah, which, if done on 1 Muharram, will bring God's protection from harm<sup>43</sup>, as explained by the informant above that the purpose of the tradition of writing basmalah is *lidafif balā* (rejecting balā), *tahshin* (fortress), and *jalbīl manāfi'* (gain getting benefit).
- b. Sympaty: an attempt to attract attention to get something. Frazer said that nature works according to influences from outside or from a sense of "sympathy."<sup>44</sup> This is manifested by students who try to pray solemnly, with the hope that their prayers will soon be answered.<sup>45</sup>

## 2. Principle

Frazer found a more scientific finding than Tylor, that is, the relationship created by sympathy, which consists of two-three types as follows:<sup>46</sup>

- a. Immitate: an imitation did to influence nature or imitate the state to be achieved, by connecting two things with the same principle.<sup>47</sup> In the tradition of writing basmalah, the writing of the letter's mim and ha' must be perforated. This is an imitation of the four rivers in Heaven, which flow through the holes of the two letters, so by writing these letters, the writer will be able to enjoy the water of the four rivers.<sup>48</sup>
- b. Contact: is a direct relationship between the actor and the totem. In the tradition of writing basmalah, a santri treats the totem (paper written on the basmalah) by placing it in a holy place or in a container that can be carried everywhere, such as a wallet and others.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> Faisal Ansori, "Agama Dan Magis Sebagai Acuan Masyarakat Muslim Dalam Dunia Bisnis Di Era Modern," *Jurnal Panangkaran: Jurnal Penelitian Agama Dan Masyarakat* 4, no. 1 (2020): 49–71, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.14421/panangkaran.2020.0401-03>.

<sup>43</sup> Based on the results of the interview with the advisor of the female cottage on August 12, 2020.

<sup>44</sup> Pals, *Seven Theories Of Religion*, 2018, 63.

<sup>45</sup> Based on observations of a series of basmalah writing traditions at PP al-Mahrusiyah on August 19-20, 2020.

<sup>46</sup> Pals, *Seven Theories Of Religion*, 2018, 64.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Analysis of the results of the interview via WhatsApp with Ustadz Syahroni on July 13, 2021 at 18:41 WIB.

<sup>49</sup> Analysis of the results of a written interview via WhatsApp with Arwina on August 12, 2020.

2. Practice: in practicing magical rituals like this, certain individuals and groups cannot be separated from aspects of religious spirituality.

The sacredness contained in magic can be found in the following practices,<sup>50</sup> for example:

1. A spell or mantra is a reading that is recited when carrying out a tradition that is considered to contain supernatural powers. In the tradition of writing basmalah, the mantra used is the end of the year prayer and the beginning of the year prayer.<sup>51</sup>
2. Tabo: primitive peoples had two unique habits that caught the attention of some anthropologists such as Tylor, Frazer, and Freud. In his book Totem and Taboo, Freud wrote that making animals or plants as sacred objects or "totems" is a habit. The second habit is the "taboo" custom, which is something they think is "forbidden" or "not allowed."<sup>52</sup> Thus, a taboo can be interpreted as a taboo or prohibition when carrying out a tradition. In the tradition of writing basmalah, for example, there are several taboos, such as not being allowed to speak and not being known to others when writing it, and having to be completed in one assembly or not moving from place to place.<sup>53</sup>
3. Tradition: is a procedure for the implementation of a custom. In the tradition of basmalah, there are several special procedures, such as writing the letter *ba* long, writing the letter *sin* clearly, and writing the letters *mim* and *ha* with a hole.<sup>54</sup>
4. Magiction is the handler or leader of a tradition that is carried out. The tradition of writing basmalah is led by the *zuriyyah* or the family of the Islamic boarding school.<sup>55</sup>

Al-Qur'an is a holy book that has many alternative names. As explained by Muhammad Ḥaqqī an-Nazīlī, the Qur'an has 55 names with various supporting reasons.<sup>56</sup> Sheikh Jala also expressed thiṣluddīn as-Suyuṭi in his book *al-Itqān fi 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*. Most of these names indicate the nature and function of the Qur'an. Some of them are *al-kitāb*, *al-furqān*, *az-zikr*, *al-ḥukm*, *al-hudā*, *as-Syifā'*, and so on.<sup>57</sup> From the analysis of Frazer's theory of sympathetic magic, the tradition of writing basmalah shows the function of the Qur'an as *al-furqān*. Although *al-furqān* is defined as a

---

<sup>50</sup> Ansori, "Agama Dan Magis Sebagai Acuan Masyarakat Muslim Dalam Dunia Bisnis Di Era Modern", 21.

<sup>51</sup> Analysis of observations on a series of basmalah writing traditions at PP al-Mahrusiyah on August 19-20, 2020.

<sup>52</sup> Pals, *Seven Theories Of Religion*, 2018, 117.

<sup>53</sup> Analysis of the results of the interview via WhatsApp with Lia Fatra and Arwina on August 12, 2020.

<sup>54</sup> Analysis of the results of the interview via WhatsApp with Ustadz Beni on July 12, 2021 at 21:45.

<sup>55</sup> The results of observations on a series of traditional basmalah writing events at PP al-Mahrusiyah on August 19-20, 2020.

<sup>56</sup> Muhammad Ḥaqqī An-Nazīlī, *Khazīnatu Al-Asrār Jalīlatu Al-Aẓkār* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1971), 7.

<sup>57</sup> Nur Faizah, *Sejarah Al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: CV Artha R, 2008), 101.

separator or differentiator, in context, al-furqān is closer to the meaning of help.<sup>58</sup> This is in accordance with the purpose of this tradition of writing basmalah, which is to ask for help from Allah SWT to avoid getting caught and fortify oneself from danger.

### Conclusion

The results of this study can provide an understanding that the tradition of writing basmalah is not only done as a talisman but also to understand the messages contained in the Qur'an. The most important thing is to find the relationship between the texts, which is the basis of the practice of this phenomenon among students. Based on the research that the author has described above, it can be concluded that:

*First*, the traditional procession of writing Basmalah every 1 Muharram at the Al-Mahrusiyah Islamic Boarding School begins with a series of year-end prayer readings, early-year prayers, and 360 chair verses. *Second*, the series of events continued with the practice of writing basmalah, which was carried out individually, starting from the Maghrib call to prayer on that day until before the Maghrib call to prayer the next day. Based on predetermined rules, writing basmalah 113 times on paper is done in a holy state, facing the Qibla, not moving, and without speaking. *Second*, the behavior of students in practicing the tradition of writing basmalah is taken from the Qur'an, hadith, and the opinions of previous scholars contained in the works of classical scholars, such as the book *kanzūl an-najāḥ wa surūr*, *Khazī natu al-Asrār*, and *Ḥasiyah Tafsīr al-Baidāwi*.

*Third*, judging from the theory of Sympathetic magic J.G. Frazer, the tradition of writing basmalah every 1 Muharram at Al-Mahrusiyah Islamic Boarding School shows three things, that is 1) law of nature, the tradition of writing basmalah is a habit of students in praying, hoping, and asking for protection from God; 2) the principle of tradition: write the basmalah on a piece of paper and make it a totem that allows it to be carried everywhere. The writing on the basmalah totem describes four river flows that come out of the letters contained in the lafaz, and 3) practice: reading several prayers before doing the tradition of writing basmalah and obeying various prohibitions and appeals made when writing, namely the prohibition of speaking, the prohibition of letting others know when writing, and the obligation to complete the writing in one place. The procedure for writing basmalah is also guided by the *zuriyyah* of the Al-Mahrusiyah Islamic Boarding School.

---

<sup>58</sup> Faizah., 104-105.

## REFERENCES

- ‘Abdul Ḥamīd Muḥammad ‘Alī ibn ‘Abdul al-Qōdir al-Quds al-Makiy As-Syafiī. *Kanzūl An-Najāh Wa Surūr*. Lebanon: Darul Khawi, 2009.
- An-Nazīlī, Muhammad Ḥaqqī. *Khazīnatu Al-Asrār Jafīlatu Al-Aẓkār*. Lebanon: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1971.
- Ansori, Faisal. “Agama Dan Magis Sebagai Acuan Masyarakat Muslim Dalam Dunia Bisnis Di Era Modern.” *Jurnal Panangkaran: Jurnal Penelitian Agama Dan Masyarakat* 4, no. 1 (2020): 49–71. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.14421/panangkaran.2020.0401-03>.
- Baidowi, Ahmad, Ahmad Salehudin, Abdul Mustaqim, Saifuddin Z. Qudsy, and Nurul Hak. "Theology of Health of Quranic Pesantren in the Time of COVID-19." *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 77, no. 4 (2021): 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i4.6452>.
- Dahlan, Ahmad, Afifi Hasbunallah, and Ahmad Luthfi Hidayat. "A Sociological Approach to the Quran: Contemporary Interactions Between Society and the Quran (Jam'iyah Qur'aniyyah) in Indonesia." *KnE Social Sciences*, 2022, 476–84. <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v7i8.10767>.
- Dalmenda. “Makna Tradisi Tabuik Oleh Masyarakat Kota Pariaman (Studi Deskriptif Interaksionalisme Simbolik).” *Jurnal Antropologi FISIP Universitas Andalas* 18 (2016).
- Faizah, Nur. *Sejarah Al-Quran*. Jakarta: CV Artha R, 2008.
- Faizin, Mochammad Arif. “1 Suro 1 Muharam Dan 1 Januari.” *Jawa Pos Radar Blitar*, 2009.
- Fatah, Abdul. “Living Qur’an: Tradisi Wirid Al-Ma’tsūrāt Di SMAIT Abu Bakar Boarding School, Kulon Progo.” *Jurnal At-Tibyan: Jurnal Ilmu Alqur’an Dan Tafsir* 5, no. 1 (2020): 1–19. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32505/at-tibyan.v5i1.1398>.
- Laifa Annisa Hendarmin, Ida Rosyidah, & Mochamad Iqbal Nurmansyah. "Pesantren during the Pandemic: Resilience and Vulnerability." *Studia Islamika: Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* 28, no. 3 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v28i3.24994>.
- Lestari, Indah. *Tradisi Pembacaan Basmalah Pada Puasa Bismillah Di Madin Sirajuth Thalibin, Purbalingga*. Skripsi. Semarang: UIN Walisongo, 2021.
- Lien Iffah Naf’atu Fina, Ahmad Rafiq. "The Reception of the Qur'an in Popular Sufism in Indonesia: Tadabbur among the Ma'iyah Community." In *Communities of the Qur'an: Dialogue, Debate and Diversity in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Emran Badawi. Oneworld, 2017.
- Mujahidin, Anwar. “Analisis Simbolik Penggunaan Ayat-Ayat Al-Qur’an Sebagai Jimat Dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat Ponorogo.” *Jurnal Kalam* 10, no. 1 (2016). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24042/klm.v10i1.159>.
- Mukholik, Ayis. "The Variation of the Quran Reception 21St Century in Central Java Indonesia." *IJASOS- International E-Journal of Advances in Social Sciences* III, no. 7 (2017): 268–268. <https://doi.org/10.18769/ijasos.309686>.
- Pals, Daniel E. *Seven Theories Of Religion*. Yogyakarta: iRCiSoD, 2018.
- Pembukuan, Tim. *Historiografi Al-Mahrusiyah*. Kediri: Mahrusiyah Press, 2015.

- Rochmiatun, Endang. "Tradisi Tabot Pada Bulan Muharam Di Bengkulu; Paradigma Dekonstruksi." *Jurnal Tamaddun: Jurnal Kebudayaan Dan Sastra Islam* 14, no. 2 (2014): 179–88.
- Rodianti. "Manajemen Dakwah Dalam Pelaksanaan Program Keagamaan Santri Di Pondok Pesantren Al-Munawwaroh Kepahiang." Bengkulu: IAIN Bengkulu, 2018.
- Sari, Yuzaidi dan Winda. "Nilai-Nilai Optimisme Dalam Isti'adzah Dan Basmalah (Studi Tafsir Ar-Razi)." *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 18, no. 1 (2019). <http://jurnal.uinsu.ac.id/index.php/ushuluddin/article/view/5723>.
- Sulaiman, Muhammad. "An Exposition of the Concepts of Basmalah and Its Relevance to the Life of Contemporary Muslim Society." *Al-Yaqeen International Journal Of Islamic Studies Fudma* 1, no. 1 (2020). <http://journal.fudutsinma.edu.ng/index.php/alyaqjis/article/view/2389/0>.
- Syarif, Zainuddin, Syafiq A. Mughni, and Abd Hannan. "Responses of Pesantrens in Madura Towards the Covid-19 Pandemic." *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 15, no. 1 (2021): 47–74. <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2021.15.1.47-74>.
- Wahyuningsih, Tanti. "Persepsi Masyarakat Terhadap Tradisi Suran Di Makam Gedibrah Desa Tambak Agung Kecamatan Klirong Kabupaten Kebumen." *Jurnal Pendidikan, Bahasa, Sastra Dan Budaya Jawa Universitas Muhammadiyah Purworejo* 3 (2013).
- Zadah, Syekh Muhyidin. *Ḥasiyah Tafsīr Al-Baiḍāwī. Juz 1*. Turki: Maktabah al-Haqiqoh, 1998.
- Interview with PP Putri Al-Mahrusiyah advisor, Mrs. Nur Wahidah on August 12, 2020
- Written interview via WhatsApp with the PP Putri Al-Mahrusiyah Administrator Lia Fatra on August 12, 2020
- Written interview via WhatsApp with the administrators of the Madrasah Diniyah PP Putri Al-Mahrusiyah Arwina on August 12, 2020
- Written interview via WhatsApp with PP Putri Al-Mahrusiyah Retnowati students on August 12, 2020
- Interview via WhatsApp with the Management of Madrasah Diniyah PP Putra Al-Mahrusiyah Ustadz Beni on July 12, 2021 at 21.45 WIB
- Interview via WhatsApp with the Management of Madrasah Diniyah PP Putra Al-Mahrusiyah Ustadz Syahroni on July 13, 2021 at 18:41 WIB