

Healthy-minded religious phenomenon in *shalawatan*: a study on the three majelis shalawat in Java

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Abstract

As a movement, *majelis shalawat* becomes religious phenomenon that recently flourish in Indonesia, particularly Java. It emerges as urban spirituality like *majelis dzikir* that previously popular among people. However *majelis shalawat* is dissimilar with *majelis dzikir* due to its characters are not sadness, sorrow, and crying; it prefer to express happiness, cheerful, and enjoying religion. These characters indicate a Healthy-minded religious phenomenon, a term which is came originally from William James and popularized by W.H.Clark. Among many *majelis shalawat* groups ini Indonesia, the three most famous and biggest are Majelis Shalawat Habib Syech (Surakarta), Habib Luthfi (Pekalongan), and Maiyah Cak Nun (Yogyakarta). This research explores characteristics of *majelis shalawat* that indicate healthy-mindedness. Furthermore, it also discovers various motivations that lead people (*jamaah*) to follow the *majelis shalawat*. Conducting qualitative method and Psychology of Religion approach, and employing interview and observation as method for data gathering, it results several findings. First, as a religious activity, *shalawatan* really depends on the role of its charismatic leader. The charisma of Habib Luthfi, Habib Syech, and Cak Nun is the main attractive factor for *jamaah* to come. It

is because the charismatic leaders have deep understanding of religious knowledge and they also are blessed with certain talent such as beautiful voice and having good skill on music. Besides that, the leaders are often giving smart joke. Second, through *shalawatan*, people feel happiness and optimistic to face their life, preferring extrovert attitudes, have more free theology, and feels conducive atmosphere for their religious growth. Those are evidences that *majelis shalawat* has healthy-mindedness characters. Third, people motivation also in attending *majlis shalawat* consist of religious escapism, strengthening solidarity and ukhuwah islamiyah, to learn more religious knowledge (*thalabul 'ilmi*), and to gain religious transformation.

Majelis shalawat sebagai sebuah gerakan merupakan fenomena keagamaan yang marak di Indonesia khususnya Jawa. Kehadirannya lebih sebagai spiritualitas urban namun tampil berbeda jika dibandingkan majelis dzikir yang terlebih dahulu populer. Majelis shalawat tidak menunjukkan cirri sendu, muram, dan tangisan seperti majelis dzikir, namun justru memperlihatkan cirri bahagia, senang, dan menikmati agama. Karakteristik beragama yang demikian oleh Clark dan William James disebut *healthy mindedness*. Dari beberapa majelis shalawat di Indonesia, tiga yang terbesar adalah Majelis Shalawat Habib Syech (Surakarta), Habib Luthfi (Pekalongan), Maiyah Cak Nun (Yogyakarta). Penelitian ini menelusuri apa saja karakteristik majelis shalawat yang merupakan indikasi *healthy-mindedness*, kemudian mengungkap pula ragam motivasi yang mendorong jamaah mengikuti majelis shalawat. Dengan menerapkan metode kualitatif dan pendekatan Psikologi Agama, dan dengan interview serta observasi sebagai alat utama pengumpulan data, penelitian ini menghasilkan beberapa temuan. Pertama, sebagai sebuah aktifitas keagamaan, majelis shalawat cukup bergantung dari peran sang tokoh utama pemimpin majelis shalawat. Karisma Habib Luthfi, Habib Syech, dan Cak Nun merupakan daya tarik terbesar bagi jamaah. Hal ini karena selain memiliki kedalaman ilmu agama, para pemimpin karismatik tersebut juga diberkahi dengan kemerduan suara dan kemampuan bermusik, bahkan humor cerdas juga sering muncul sehingga menjadi daya tarik tersendiri bagi jamaah. Kedua, dengan mengikuti majeliss halawat, jamaah merasakan kebahagiaan dan optimism dalam menatap kehidupan, mereka bersikap lebih ekstrovet, berteologi secara lebih bebas, dan merasakan situasi yang mendukung untuk perkembangan keberagaman mereka. Hal-hal tersebut menandakan bahwa majelis shalawat memiliki karakter *healthy-mindedness*. Ketiga, motivasi jamaah dalam mengikuti

majlis shalawat, yaitu untuk mendapatkan jalan keluar yang agamis, menguatkan silaturahmi dan ukhuwah islamiyah, mencari ilmu (*thalabul 'ilmi*), dan untuk mencapai transformasi keagamaan.

Keywords: *Religion of healthy-mindedness; Majelis shalawat; Motivation; Psychological approach*

Introduction

The emergence of *majelisdzikir* in the last two decades was important phenomenon in Indonesian muslim society. *Majelisdzikir* with purification of soul (*tazkiyatunnafs*) was the earliest wave. In *majelisdzikir*, people are usually asked to remember their sins while consider the mighty power of God. The goal is to notice people so they realize their abjection and anxious for atonement. To indicate their atonement, people used to cry during the closing prayer. Closing prayer is usually known as the core of the *dzikir* activity. This kind of *majelisdzikir* is very popular. To mention some of them are *majelis dzikir* Ustad Arifin Ilham, Abdullah Gymnastiar, and so on.

Recently, however, a new and different preference occurs; groups of *majelisdzikir* are overcast while *majelisshalawat* emerges as a new wave in several regions. There are obvious differences between *majelis dzikir* and *majelis shalawat*. *Majelis dzikir* is mass religious activity that seems unhappy, sad, pessimistic, and self-judging. In contrary, *majelisshalawat* is joyful, fun, optimistic, and expressing the love to God and His Messenger through songs with happy and energetic music, simple and popular lyrics, and used to use local language. Some of *majelisshalawat* are identical with “laugh at himself” method as reverse to “judging himself”, though they have the similar goal. The goal is confessing sin and begging the mercy of God, however they use different way, one is tend to cheerless and the other is happy and full of joke. It is interesting to know the relation between fun-method with the emergence of *majelis shalawat*.

Modernization and transformation of religious life also occur in *majelis shalawat*. The process of rationalizing in modernization strengthens modern religious expression, giving new arrangement and values.¹ *Majelisshalawat*, in its common appearance, is categorized in spiritual movement in global and modern era. It emerges even in the days when secularized world distrusts religion. *Majelis shalawat*, with its psychological influence to the followers, is hard to be said as typical or simple phenomenon. Because it obviously different with other popular entertainment.

There are many *majelisshalawat*; the very well known groups are *Majelis ShalawatHabibSyech* (Surakarta, Central Java), *Majelis Shalawat Habib Lutfi* (Pekalongan, Central Java) and *Majelis Shalawat Maiyah Cak Nun* (Yogyakarta). This three famous groups become the subject of this study. *Majelis Shalawat* led by Habib Muhammad Lutfi bin Ali bin Yahya, a charismatic ulama in Pekalongan, has been attended by 25.000 people in Februari 5th, 2014. *Majelis shalawat* of Habib Luthfi that is also known as *Majelis Maulid Kanzus* has 60 places of gathering in Pekalongan and surrounding cities. In Surakarta, other famous ulama, *Habib Syech bin Abdul Qodir bin Abdurrahman Assegaf* has also many followers and fans who call themselves “Syekher Mania”. The other famous group is *Majelis Shalawat Maiyahin Yogyakarta* that led by Emha Ainun Nadjib or Cak Nun.

The three *majelisshalawat* have similarity on their fun way during *shalawat* gathering. The joyful and fun way in religious activity or “enjoy religion” is, according to James and Clark, a healthy mindedness. William James dan W.H.Clark characterize healthy mindedness with optimistic and happy in practicing religion. This is opposite of sick soul that practicing religion by feeling burdened and suffered. In this study, *shalawatan* at glance is categorized in healthy mindedness type. After fur-

¹ Ahmad Muttaqin, *Hybrid Spirituality and Religious Efficacy of Yogyakarta Spiritual Center*, Ph.D Thesis, Griffith: University of Western University.

ther research it found that some indicators of healthy mindedness present in *majelisshalawat*. In order to serve more evidences, this study captures the followers' perspective especially on their motivation and their religious transformation after following the *shalawatan* activity. Therefore, this paper explores elements of healthy mindedness in *shalawatan*, people motivations to join *majelis shalawat*, and psychological transformation aspects among people after following *shalawatan* activity.

According to W.H. Clark, the two most quoted chapters in work of William, *The Varieties of Religious Experiences*, are *The Religion of Healthy-Mindedness* and *The Sick-Soul*. These chapters portray two types of religious expression. Clark acknowledges, this theory is not out of date, although it formulated by James some decades ago. It is because James proposes a descriptive dichotomy that copes with various religious lives along history, and gives implication to both figure and religious people who want to understand the expression of religious life.

The theory was formulated by William James and developed by experts on religious psychology field, including Walter Houston Clark. Categorizing religious expressions into healthy mindedness and sick soul is their main thesis.² Sick soul is a term to determine attitude that place religion and life as burden and suffering, while healthy mindedness means attitude that optimistic and happy in undergoing religion. Clark proposes some characteristics of healthy mindedness: a) optimistic and happy, b) extrovert and unreflective, c) usually associate to the more free theology, and d) conducive to the phases of religious growth.³ These characteristics are theoretical framework to identify whether *jamaah shalawatan* is classified in healthy mindedness religious phenomenon.

² William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, New York: Longmans. Mentor ed. New American Library, 1958, 79.

³ Walter Houston Clark, *The Psychology of Religion: an Introduction to Religious Experience and Behavior*, New York: Macmilan Company, 1968, 155.

For better understanding of that problem, I perceive that psychological construction concerning religious attitude of *jamaah* (*majelisshalawat* members and participants) since early engagement to the group until present day is quite important. Therefore, I need to observe more about people's religious motivation and the changing or transformation that they feel. Definition of religious motivation in Islamic Psychology is continuation from Psychology. In general, motivation means all drive, desire, need, and a sort of energy that direct behavior.⁴

Besides considering motivation, this research also observes the changing or religious transformation among *jamaah*. Religious transformation is changing in three ranges: a) the changing on religious affiliation from one religion to another, b) the increase of concern from less attention on religion to be more religious, c) the changing of commitment in one religion, for example from *abangan* to *santri*.⁵ In this research, religious transformation is mainly focused to the third range, i.e. the shifting of commitment in Islam among *jamaah* of *majelisshalawat*.

Finally, this study compares religious transformation among three *majelisshalawat*. The differences may happen consider to fact that *majelisshalawat* is not monolithic. It compares: a) method that is used by each *majelisshalawat*, b) knowledge and values conducted during *shalawatan*, and c) the effect to religious transformation among *jamaah*.

Although the main focus of this research is religious-psychological aspect among *jamaahmajelisshalawat*, it does not detach the aspect activism (movement). It will tie to sociological and anthropological aspects of *majelisshalawat*. And even for some extent, normative aspects such as *fiqh* is

⁴ Harold Koontz O Donnel dan Heinz Weichrich, *Management*, McGraw Hill Kogakuska, 1980, 115. See also Abdul Mujib and Jusuf Mudzakir, *Nuansa-Nuansa Psikologi Islam*, Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2001, 243.

⁵ Subandi, *Psikologi Dzikir: Studi Fenomenologi Pengalaman Transformasi Relijius*, Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2009, 48.

more or less will be discussed, particularly to see the basic principle of *majelis shalawat* leaders in prioritizing certain religious practice.

Overview on Three Majelis Shalawat

Majelis Shalawat Ahabul Musthofa Habib Syech, Surakarta

Majelis Shalawat Ahabul Musthofa (The Prophet Lover) was established by Habib Syech bin Abdul Qadir Assegaf around 1990 in Mertodranan village, Surakarta, Central Java. This *majelis* initially start with “Majelis Rotibul Haddad dan Burdah” and Maulid Simtud Duror Habib Syech bin Abdul Qadir Assegaf that asks muslim to love the Prophet Muhammad P.buh. *Majelis Shalawat Ahabul Musthofa* was conducting routine gathering in pesantrens and mosques.⁶ Habib Syech and his *Ahabul Musthofa* are often invited by many institutions both domestic and abroad. He has been invited by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to perform *shalawat* in National Palace. He was also invited to some other countries such as Hongkong, Singapura, and Malaysia.⁷

Habib Syech is very well known for his golden voice and his beautiful lyrics. Actually, most the *shalawat* lyrics are taken from three fundamental *shalawat* books, i.e. al-Barzanji, al-Diba’i, and al-Burdah. Some songs taken from “Cinta Rasul” album, and some lyrics are from other ulama such as Gus Dur and Habib Luthfi.⁸ Even, some *shalawat* lyrics were created by his pupil and colleagues. For example, ‘*shalawat NU*’ was made by his close pupil, Joko Purwanto.⁹

The great name of *Ahabul Musthofa* is never detached from its founder, Habib Syech. He is one of 16 siblings, the son of the late Habib Abdul Qadir bin Abdurrahman Assegaf, an imam (priest) of Masjid Jami’

⁶ Subandi, *Psikologi Dzikir...*, 9.

⁷ Interview with Habib Abdullah, October 29, 2014.

⁸ Nur Rosyid, “*Bershalawat Bersama Habib...*”, 9.

⁹ Interview with Joko Purwanto, October 30, 2014.

Assegaf in Pasar Kliwon Surakarta.¹⁰ Habib Syech does not study at pesantren. However, he has deep religious knowledge and very fluent in Arabic. He learns religious knowledge from his father and his uncle, Habib Ahmad bin Abdurrahman Assegaf from Hadramaut. Habib Syech also learns much from Habib Muhammad Anis bin Alwi Al-Habsyi. By his guidance, Habib Syech grows to be very persistent person in teaching *shalawat*.

Majelis Kanzus Shalawat Habib Luthfi, Pekalongan

Kanzus *Shalawatis* a central building at the home base of Habib Muhammad Luthfi Ali bin Yahya, or familiar with Habib Luthfi. This building is usually used to hold religious as well as social activities. Built in 1997, this building is big enough to be center of teaching and chanting *shalawat*.¹¹ However, in every Friday (Jumat Kliwon) morning, this building is unable to load *jamaah*, because thousands *jamaah* from many regions gather in that building and its surrounding to join the *shalawat*. The thousands people in this place makes the authority close part of the road so the traffic is interrupted. Many people stay for hours in front of Kanzus building, although the sun burns their skin or sometimes rain drops showering them. They keep stay on their place to wait the charismatic Habib Luthfi, while their lips chant *tahlil* and *shalawat*. When Habib Luthfi came to give sermon people were listening enthusiastically. Besides giving sermon in Pekalongan, Habib Luthfi is also frequently invited to many other cities. In one occasion, he was also singing *shalawat* together with Habib Syekh.

¹⁰ Habib Abdul Qadir bin Abdurrahman Assegaf is known as *'alim* (honored ulama). He passed away in second *rakaat* of Salat Jumat. Interview with Habib Abdullah Assegaf, October 29, 2014.

¹¹ <http://www.kanzus-sholawat.com/p/profil.html>. November 1, 2014.

As Habib Syekh with his Ahbabul Musthofa, Majelis Kanzus *Shalawat* also really depends on the figure of its founder, Habib Luthfi. His fullname is Habib Muhammad Luthfi Ali bin Yahya. He was born, November 10th, 1946. His mother is a *syarifah*. It is title for a woman who is descendent of the Prophet Muhammad Pbuh.¹² When HabibLuthfi was young, he was nomadic student who learn from many teachers.¹³

Nowadays as a *mursyid* (great priest of tasawuf), Habib Luthfi is well known as the leader of Tarekat Syadziliah. In the same time, he is also *mursyid* to many other tarekat such as Naqshabandiyah al-Khalidiyah, al-'Alawiya, al-Idrusyiah, al-'Atha'iyah, al-Hadadiah, Yahyawiyah, Qadiriya wa Naqshabandiyah, and Tijaniyah. Therefore, he has privilege to approve *talqin dzikr (bai'at lisan)* from new member of those tarekats. Considering his integrity and leadership, later he was nominated to be *rais idaroh* (chief in national level) for *Jam'iyah Ahlith Thariqoh al-Muktabaran an-Nahdliyyah* (Association of Tarekat Muktabarah Nahdhlatul Ulama) that is usuallyshorthanded as JATMAN.¹⁴

Although HabibLuthfi is so eventful, he is still able to give routine lecture to his pupil in tarekat and to public. The course (*jamaah pengajian*) *Jami 'al-Ushul al-Tariq al-Aulia* is usually held every Friday(Jumat Kliwon) morning in Kanzus *Shalawat* building, Pekalongan. Besides this tarekat lecturing, he also gives kitab kuning lecturing. HabibLuthfi used to use two famous books among many KitabKuning literatures: *Ihya 'Ulumuddin* (held every Thursday evening) and *Fathul Qarib* (every Wednesday morning). Habib Luthfi also leads a special lecture for women every Sunday morning. In many other occasions, he is frequently invited to give speech (*tausiyah*) in many cities in Indonesia. Even, to give public lecture in aca-

¹² <http://www.habiblutfi.net/profil.html>. November 12, 2014.

¹³ Achmad Zaenal Arifin, "Transformasi Tarekat Konvensional di Indonesia: Bertasawuf Ala Habib Muhammad Luthfi Bin Yahya", *Sosiologi Reflektif*, volume 7, No. 2, April 2013,13-14.

¹⁴ Achmad Zaenal Arifin, "Transformasi Tarekat"....., 13-14.

demic meeting is not something new for him. He often invited to be speaker at seminar, workshop, symposium, and so on.¹⁵

Not only a charismatic leader in tarekat, HabibLuthfi also known as nationalist figure. He often reflects his nationalist view when giving speech in many different places in Indonesia. He also composes a patriotic song entitled “*Cinta Indonesia*” (Love for Indonesia). When President SBY visited the Maulid event in KanzusShalawat, HabibLuthfi give welcome speech and reaffirms his loyalty to the country by saying “for the sake of Allah, I will defend and stand for NKRI.” HabibLuthfi gives resuscitation to the people so they can understand the nation-state ideology and love their own country.¹⁶

HabibLuthfi is also known as pluralist figure. HabibLuthfi has ever give speech in “Sarasehan Polres Kota Pekalongan dengan Forum Komunikasi Umat beragama dan Lintas Agama”. In front of inter-faith leaders from Christian, Hinduism, and Confucianism community, HabibLuthfi emphasized the significance of unity among religious people of all religions in Indonesia. He also accentuated to all religious communities to be tolerant and not force their own ideology to the other.¹⁷ Habib Luthfi has close relationship to many other communities, including interfaith communities. Kyai Adib Zein, close friend of Habib Luthfi, said that many people including non-muslim give high respect to Habib Luthfi.¹⁸

Majelis Shalawat Maiyah Emha Ainun Nadjib, Yogyakarta

MajelisShalawat Maiyah was established at a night before Sidang Istimewa MPR 2001 committed, precisely at July 31st2001. When political tension

¹⁵ Achmad Zaenal Arifin, “Transformasi Tarekat”...., 16.

¹⁶ <http://lutfi.web.id/habib-luthfi-bin-ali-bin-yahya-sang-penyebar-cinta-tanah-air/>. Diakses pada 15 November 2014.

¹⁷ <http://www.nu.or.id/a,public-m,dinamic-s,detail-ids,44-id,45937-lang,id>. November 15, 2014.

¹⁸ Interview with Kyai Adib Zein, November 1, 2014.

in Jakarta was going unbearable, Emha Ainun Nadjib and his Kyai Kanjeng (a music group), held a special event “Sholawatan Maulid” that took place in his own home.¹⁹

Actually, this kind of event is often held, however the name ‘*maiyah*’ is something new. In its development, *maiyah* does not refer to a group, stream, or school of thought, but essentially means togetherness to have spirit that God is always along with people.²⁰ The word *maiyah* is an Arabic term that means “together; unbreakable togetherness.” Emha Ainun Nadjib or familiarly called Cak Nun, explaining *maiyah* through conceptual ‘triangle of love’; God, the Prophet and mankind.²¹ Although it was declared formally in 2001, the embryonic phase of *maiyah* can be traced back to 1993 when established Kyai Kanjeng. Together with his Kyai Kanjeng Cak Nun goes around the country, intensively after Reformation Era in 1998.

In *maiyah*, the musicians and singers do not perform on the stage like common music concert, they circling in the middle of space whether indoor or outdoor. Everyone who comes actually is the part of the performance, they can contribute as musician and singer as well, and they are not merely audiences. Everyone including musician and even the ensembles bonds together toward God.²²

By this kind of togetherness, Cak Nun and Kyai Kanjeng cultivate *maiyah* in broader contexts. First of all, they ask people to do everything

¹⁹ Miyu K, “Cak Nun Mengajak Orang Timur Revolusioner”, <http://www.mataharineews.com/nasional/sosial-budaya/2580-cak-nun-mengajak-orang-timur-revolusioner.html>. November 1, 2014.

²⁰ Miyu K, “Cak Nun Mengajak Orang Timur Revolusioner”, <http://www.mataharineews.com/nasional/sosial-budaya/2580-cak-nun-mengajak-orang-timur-revolusioner.html>. November 1, 2014.

²¹ Ari Rahmawati, dkk., “Makna Kebahagiaan pada Jamaah Maiyah, Komunitas Bangbangwetan Surabaya”. [Psikologi.ub.ac.id/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/jurnal.docx](http://psikologi.ub.ac.id/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/jurnal.docx). November 1, 2014.

²² Cover of Emha Ainun Nadjib dan Kiai Kanjeng Album, *Maiyah Tanah Air*, Musica Studio, 2001.

together with God, and second, to be together with everyone who love togetherness. Therefore, *maiyah* can also mean commitment of nationalism, maturity on multiculturalism, wisdom on pluralism, and vanishing economic inequality. Because when some are very rich and some other too poor, it does not mean togetherness, it is not *maiyah*.²³

Maiyah does not move into certain exclusive paradigm. *Maiyah* is probably look like a *pengajian*, however it different with common *pengajian* that teach people literally base on classic readings. In *maiyah*, people are asked to be tolerant, live together, having spirit of life, and compete in goodness. Therefore, *jamaah maiyah* is not only muslim, some of them non-muslim and even some multi-faith figures have ever come to *maiyah*. With his unique accent Cak Nun said: “this event is not only for muslim, but for all mankind whether muslim or not, the normal ones and the insane, and even for *jin*, *setan*, *dhemit*, *gendruwo* (names of ghost and evil in Javanese) if they want to be good guy, so they are welcome, our hands are open.”²⁴

Cak Nun and Kyai Kanjeng has schedule for *maiya*han in some regions. Every region may have different name of event for *maiyah*. The names and schedule are as follow:

City	Name of <i>Maiyah</i> event	Date, Month
Jombang	<i>Pengajian Padhang Mbulan</i>	15 Qomariyah
Yogyakarta	<i>Mocopat Syafa'at</i>	17 every month
Semarang	<i>Gambang Syafa'at</i>	25 every month
Jakarta	<i>Kenduri Cinta</i>	Not fixed date
Bandung	<i>Tali Kasih</i>	Not fixed date

Maiyah is also conducted abroad. Some countries that have invite Cak Nun and Kyai Kanjeng are Malaysia, Korea, and Egypt. In 2005, Cak

²³ Cover of Emha Ainun Nadjib dan Kiai Kanjeng Album, *Maiyah Tanah Air*, Musica Studio, 2001.

²⁴ Miyu K, “Cak Nun Mengajak Orang Timur Revolusioner”, <http://www.mataharineews.com/nasional/sosial-budaya/2580-cak-nun-mengajak-orang-timur-revolusioner.html>, November 1, 2014.

Nun and Kiai Kanjeng performed in Australia, United States, Italy, UK, Germany, and some other European countries.²⁵

In Yogyakarta, Maiyahan or “Mocopat Syafaat” held every 17 in each month. It starts about 08.00 PM and finish by 03.00 AM (after Isya until almost shubuh). Maiyahan tries to deconstruct understanding of values, communication patterns, cultural interaction method, education for the way of thinking, but interrupted with performing art such as music and poetry declamation. It also tries to find solution of social problems.²⁶ *Majelis Shalawat* Maiyah Cak Nun is always full with audiences. Cak Nun is the biggest magnet who attracts people to come. His speech is enlightening, actual, enjoyable, and *gaul* (with youth sense of humour).

Cak Nun has ever been contribute to some activities abroad, such as Teater Workshop in Philippine (1980), *International Writing Program* in Iowa City, United States (1981), Teater Workshop in PETA Philipine, *International Poetry Reading* in Rotterdam (1984), Festival Horizonte III in West Berlin, Germany (1985), and visited some European countries for more than one and a half year. He was also editor of *Indonesian side* that published in Bangkok, Thailand.²⁷

The Characteristics of majelis shalawat

In general, the three *majelis shalawat* have characteristic in conducting *shalawat*:

Central role of the charismatic leader

Habib Syech, Habib Luthfi, and Cak Nun are founder and leader of each *majelis shalawat*. They have the most significant role in their own *majelis*. In *shalawat* performance, they are very attractive to *jamaah*. Without them

²⁵ Emha Ainun Nadjib dan Kiai Kanjeng, *Greets England*, Yogyakarta: Progress, 2005.

²⁶ <http://www.biografitokohdunia.com/2011/03/emha-ainun-nadjib-yang-akrab-dipanggil.html>. October 18, 2014.

²⁷ Jabrohim, *Tahajjud Cinta...*, 29.

it is almost impossible for the *majelis* to succeed as today. The forum will not full of people if the charismatic leaders never exist. They are super star who are always waited for their coming. Succeed to attract enormous amount of people reflects their personal enchantment. Habib Syech, Habib Luthfi, and Cak Nun have special qualities on: charisma, depth Islamic knowledge, golden voice, and rhetoric as well as communication skill.

Charisma is special thing in a person that stem from emotional trait or irrational, and over the power and ability of common people.²⁸ Max Weber uses the term charisma to explain a sort of personal influence in society. A leader is called charismatic when he/she is known as gracefully person, a state of being attractive and able to drive people to conjoin.²⁹

In Weber analysis, charisma consists of personal characteristics that inspire people who going to be a follower.³⁰ According to Martin van Bruinessen, charisma based on spiritual power and ability to give blessing due to the relation with the other world and even the grave yard is also able to give blessing.³¹ Therefore, charismatic leadership often drive into the cult worship to the leader.³²

The three leader of *Majelis Shalawat*, Habib Syech, Habib Luthfi and Cak Nun are charismatic, thus it is easy for them to attract many followers. Comparing them sociologically, Habib Luthfi and Habib Syech probably more charismatic than Cak Nun. Moreover, most of Habib Luthfi

²⁸ Ayub Ranoh, *Kepemimpinan Kharismatis*, Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1999, 74.

²⁹ Elizabeth K. Nottingham, *Agama dan Masyarakat: Suatu Pengantar Sosiologi Agama*, Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 1997, 156.

³⁰ Doyle Paul Johnson, *Teori Sosiologi Klasik dan Modern*, Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka, 1994, 229.

³¹ Martin van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning: Pesantren dan Tarekat*, Bandung: Mizan, 1995, 20.

³² Muh. Syamsuddin, "Kiai dan Politik: Keterlibatan Kiai Madura dalam Politik Praktis", *Jurnal Sosiologi Reflektif*, Volume 7, Nomor 2 (April 2013), 56.

and Habib Syech followers are from traditional Islam (*nahdhliyin*), while Cak Nun followers are rational muslim. In fact, charismatic leader usually grows among traditional muslim like NU community.

The power of Habib Luthfi and Habib Syech charisma can be seen at attitude *jamaah* to them. Many people see them as *waliyullah*. Some *jamaah* of Habib Luthfi and Habib Syech come *tongalap berkah* (try to get blessing) from the Habib. As the evident, many *jamaah* bring mineral water in an opened bottle while listen to *pengajian*. They hope the *berkah* influences the water. Even, some people bring the bottle close to the Habib to have prayer from Habib. Many of them stand for long time in a line just to have opportunity to kiss the Habib hands. The charisma power of the two habib is also because they are descendants of Rasulullah SAW.

Joyful method of dakwah

Attractive power of *majelis shalawatan* Habib Syech, Habib Luthfi, and Cak Nun is the method that enjoyable. The followers acknowledge that important factor. They conduct *dakwah* with simple and fluent language with smart joke that make the audience laugh out loud. It is going to exaggerate when music group perform *shalawat* and other songs with various genre of music.³³

Deep understanding on religion

Jamaah majelis shalawat think that Habib Syech, Habib Luthfi, and Cak Nun are ulama who have deep and broad religious knowledge. It is reflected from *jamaah* statement that their motivation to come to the *majelis shalawat* is for learning or study to enrich their religious knowledge. It is said to be right that Habib Syech, habib Luthfi, and Cak Nun have deep religious knowledge. As ulama, religious knowledge is the ab-

³³ Interview with Athiful Khoiri, November 20, 2014.

solute requirement. They will never be a great ulama if do not master religious knowledge.

Religious knowledge of Habib Syech, habib Luthfi, and Cak Nun is the result of their educational background. Habib Syech for example, while was doing his business, he learned from prominent ulama in Saudi Arabia. Similar with him, HabibLuthfi also learned from religious teachers in *haramain* (Mecca and Madina). He also studied in many pesantrens. Does not much different with the two ulama, Cak Nun also got his religious knowledge from pesantrens and religious based schools. Cak Nun is also cultural figure who very active in writing. He has done many works. HabibLuthfi, although not as productive as Cak Nun, also writes some influential works.

Beautiful voice and music skill

None deny that the three *majelis shalawat* leaders are blessed with golden voice. Habib Syekh has very beautiful voice and able to astonishing thousands people. Some TV and radio stations play *shalawatan* songs from their albums. ADI TV, a local station in Yogyakarta regularly broadcasts Shalawat Maiyah Cak Nun. CDsand DVDsare also sold out in public market. Those are the evidences that their way on *dakwah* is acceptable for people.

Rhetoric and communication skill

Habib Syech, Habib Luthfi and Cak Nun have excellent rhetoric and communication skill. Although they never conduct special course on it, such as public speaking course and so forth, they master it very well. Their speech astonished people so the audience will not move from their seats.

Cak Nun, for example, has fluent rhetoric. He is a good orator. His speech is very strong and expressive. He also has goodsense of humor, so

the atmosphere is quiet good. Sometime he looks like comedian, but sometimes charismatic. Smart jokes *often* adorn his speech. Many audiences laugh out loud when listen to his speech. Therefore, almost none who fall asleep when listening his speech. At the late of night to very early morning, number of audience is not lessening but summing up.

Meanwhile, Habib Luthfi and Habib Syech with his poise speech make people's heart feels peaceful. Although their rhetoric is not as strong as Cak Nun, they are also able to astonish people. Habib Luthfi usually calm while speaking, but touch people heart impulsively. It is probably because his sufism approach. He is a *mursyid*, a great teacher in *tarekat*. Different with Habib Luthfi, Habib Syech gives less speech but spent much time to sing *shalawat*. Although only spends limited speech, he looks powerful when gives speech.

Audience enthusiasm

Audiences of *shalawatan* are not coming from a region where it takes place, many of them are from other cities. They voluntary spend a lot of money for transportation and accommodation. Some audiences stay in a luxury hotel a night before the *shalawatan* event be hold. Their enthusiasm is also expressed with their early attendance to the spot where the event takes place. They try to go as earliest as they can just to have a front seat. They ungrudgingly sit on the floor just to get closer while listen to the *tausiyah* (sermon) and chant *shalawat*. Sometime they neglect sun burn and rain. Besides that, their enthusiasm is also expressed in their seriousness to chant *shalawat*. They sing together while raise their both hands up as expression of begging to God. In a great performance, many audiences hoist flag of *majelis shalawat*. The atmosphere is not quite different with a mega concert of big music band. Audiences seem to be happy, joyful, and satisfied.

Healthy-mindedness religious phenomenon

Considering William James' theory of sick soul and healthy-mindedness,³⁴ it can be explained that *Majelis shalawat* led by Habib Luthfi bin Yahya, Habib Syech As-Segaf, and Emha Ainun Najib (Cak Nun) have method of dakwah with healthy-mindedness characteristic. This research findings about the three *majelis shalawat* based on *healthy-mindedness* characteristics are mentioned as follow:

Optimistic and happy

Body gesture for piousness is often identical with calm, lack of moving, and casting the head down. It seems socially constructed that the high level of religiosity should be expressed in that way. In other words, cheerful, joyful, and happy are not expression of mature religiosity. It is different with healthy-mindedness point of view, in which happy and optimistic are the main features of healthy-mindedness religiosity.

Flourishing *majelis dzikir* with *tazkiyatun nafs* characteristic in 1990s to 2000s, escalates the method of dakwah that is characterized by sadness, cries, and moan of prayer. Feeling abject, be nothing in front of God, dread of afterlife and hell tortures, feeling impolitic, far from god, and so on, are the main themes of dakwah with *tazkiyatunnafs* inclination. This method was very popular and won people attention, especially those who are urban and educated residences. However, people who dislike that method were not a little. Therefore the emergence of *majelis shalawat* fulfills some people needs for another kind of *dakwah* that different with *tazkiyatun nafs* trend.

Majelis shalawat is more identical with atmosphere of happiness with songs and *shalawat*. It is also closer to optimistic way in religiosity rather

³⁴ William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, New York: Longmans. Mentor ed. New American Library, 1958, 79.

than self-judging, fear, and pessimistic. During observation, phenomena of healthy-mindedness are obviously uttered by *jamaah* when they sing, moving their shoulders and head, along with the sound of music *hadrah* and *Kyai Kanjeng*. Happiness and free from burden are expressed on the faces of *jamaah*. This happiness is one of important reason that reattracts them to come over and over again to *majelis shalawat*. Some of them proclaim that they love the happy atmosphere.

The same phenomena happen among *Jamaah* of Habib Syekh, especially for his fanatic fans namely *Syekher Mania*. Happiness are on their faces, indeed, flags of *Syekher Mania*, Red and White National flag, and NU's flag, hoist during the *shalawatan* event held. According Habib Syekh, this method of *dakwah* is a strategy to promote Islam in a sweet way. He hold a principle that Islam is a sweet religion because it is religion of blessing for universe (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*), therefore it has to be offered with a sweet way, not by vicious face and violent, nor judging other as infidels.³⁵ Besides happiness religiosity that is expressed by music, lyrics, and songs, healthy mindedness also appears on optimistic view when they do self-introspection and look forward their future of religiosity.

Extrovert

Extrovert personality usually characterized with openness, happy, easy to interact with others, honest, and brave to confess own fault. *Majelis shalawat* and its teaching has this pattern. Extrovert character also appears in their openness to accept others. It is obviously happen in *majelis shalawat* Habib Syekh and Cak Nun when they ask *jamaah* to go on the stage, to sit with him during the event. Inside the *jamaah* community, extrovert character is also constructed through borderless interaction since all *jamaah*, no matter who they are, are positioned equally.

³⁵ Interview with Habib Syekh, Oktober 8, 2014.

Free theology

In theological discourse, *majelis shalawat* is not rigid as puritanical muslim group. *Majelis shalawat* recognizes the grey area; it does not see every problem only in black and white dichotomy option. Ability to accommodate the weakness of other is a characteristic in *majelis shalawat* theology. The leader used to understand that many people in society are lay and non-expert in religious knowledge. While, the way to lead them into brighter and enlightened people will not succeed if practicing hard and coercive method. Therefore, the leader of *majelis shalawat* usually prior sympathy, humanize, and respectful ways, even to the other different perspectives. Through this way, the first part to be attracted is the heart. When the heart already felt glad, comfort, and interested, it continues with injection of the content or religious knowledge. This process is impossible to be conducted when the theology is rigid. Therefore every *majelisshalawat* prefer to use more free type of theology.

The free theology is usually respect local culture and tradition. It does not against the culture frontally, but tries to color it smoothly. It does not reject influences from other cultures but screen and respond to it positively. With a free theology, people usually more inclusive and tolerant to the others. These characters already exist in *majelis shalawat*. No wonder if *majelis shalawat* seems easy to attract lay people. People do not worry and feel comfort because they believe that no blaming and judging in this *majelis*. They optimistic to be knowledgeable and will be guided in improving faith and goodness in their life.

Conducive for the phases of religious growth

Majelis shalawat becomes a very conducive garden for religious growth. The three former characteristics—optimistic and happy, extrovert, and free theology- creates special atmosphere inside *majelis shalawat*. *Jamaah*

always feel welcome, no worry of blaming and judging, feel always in brotherhood and sisterhood, enjoy openness milieu, cheerful, and fun with music, poetry, *shalawat*, and teaching that enlightening and entertaining. This kind of situation is very conducive for every person's religious growth in *majelis shalawat*.

Motivation of jamaah shalawatan

Description above discusses external aspects of *jamaahshalawatan*. Following is explanation about internal aspects for *jamaahshalawatan*, particularly their motivation. Motivation in this discussion includes motivation among *jamaah* of *majelisshalawat* HabibSyech, HabibLuthfi, as well as Cak Nun.

Religious escapism

One of motivation that was found among *jamaah* is motivation to move depressed psychological condition into composed and happy condition. This new psychological condition may temporary occur and probably persists for long period. Temporary calm down is usually achieved when someone wanders in *dzikir* and *shalawat*. However after the activity is ended, then he/she backs to the daily condition, so the sorrow that they suffer come back into mind. Therefore, *shalawatan* is merely temporary solution, just escapism.

Realizing these facts, the leader of *shalawat* and his team want to make sure that *shalawatan* is not merely temporary solution. They add the event with more contents. They combine exciting part and *tausiah* (sermon). In *tausiah*, *jamaah* are usually asked to realize certain problem that probably being faced by *jamaah* at that time. Practically, *tausiah* runs as psychotherapy with Gestalt method. In Gestalt, therapeutic is conducted through recall emotive and traumatic memory of the past to the present day, then help someone to take his/her own responsibility. According to

Gestalt perspective, traumatic past events are unfinished problem, therefore it must be brought to the present to be solved. *Tausiah* utilizes to recall problems that disturbing psychic, after that, the best solutions are offered. The solution offering, according to Gestalt approach is by “play projection”.³⁶ Religious preachers often use this method, including in *majelis shalawatan*. Play projection is a method implemented to *jamaah* by displaying traumatic experience that probably has been pulled to other side by *jamaah*. The way to display this experience is by telling other’s story that similar with *jamaah* experience. The preacher usually tells story of apostles (shahabat nabi), the saints (waliyullah), and other good persons (*shalihin, habaib, asatid*). Through this method, traumatic experience can be drawn to present time, without feeling judged. By lesson learnt in the story, *jamaah* listen offered solution for their problems. After solution are given, the preacher also give hope. The heart that full of hope is covered by happiness through chanting *shalawat*. This method is obviously practiced by *majelis shalawat*, particularly by Habib Luthfi.

In *majelis shalawat* led by Cak Nun, the same method actually is also implemented. Never forgot, Cak Nun also prays for everyone. Cak Nun prayer sounds so straightforward and based on real needs of *jamaah*. Habib Syech also does the same way in closing prayer after performance. The prayer that represents the heart voices of lay people make everyone who listen it feeling much love to Habib Syech, therefore they become loyal follower for Habib Syech.

Tholabul ilmi

Ulama are heir of prophet (*al ‘ulama warasatu al anbiya*). The slogan derived from hadith is lifetime. Ulama always seen as clean source of water

³⁶ Gerald Corey, *Teori dan Praktik Konseling & Psikoterapi*, Bandung: Refika Aditama, 2013, 117.

where many people take some for drink the knowledge. Therefore, wherever ulama makes *majelis*, there many *thulab* (students) come to get the knowledge or to understand deeper the knowledge that they already got.

Habib Luthfi, Habib Syech, and Cak Nun are ulama who has deep religious knowledge. Even, Habib Luthfi and Cak Nun are known as active writers who religious and nationalist. No wonder if many people including government officer, middle class persons, and university students respect habaib and Cak Nun as great teacher. Intellectuals also often take part in their religious forum.

Opinion that ulama is the light of knowledge is also expressed by one oh Habib Syech friend, K.H. Abdullah Sa'ad. The young kyai in a gathering Wednesday Night in Habib Syech home base tells about the significance of the ligh in human life. He tells about his recent experience when almost get motorbike accident because there was a biker who has not lamp on his bike. He put this experience as *ibrah* (lesson learnt) that everyone who walks in the dark without lamp will hurt himself and hurt the others. Therefore everyone has to walk with light, the light is knowledge, and the source of knowledge is ulama.³⁷

Motivation to have learning (*thalabul 'ilmi*) expressed by some *jamaah* when being asked about the goal of following *majelis shalawatan*. Start from that motivation, many of them enlightened intellectually and spiritually.³⁸

Having knowledge, experience, and enlightening is motivation for *jamaah* so they come routinely to *majelis shalawat*. They always come as long as there is nothing avoid. Whenever they unable to attend *majelis shalawat*, they feel lose out because they does not accept new knowledge.

³⁷ Told by KH. Abdullah Sa'ad at Pengajian Rutin Malam Kamis in Habib Syech's House. Surakarta.

³⁸ Interview with Irham, November 21, 2014.

The same disappointment is felt by one of Habib Luthfi student. The loss is like a student who does not go to school so he is left behind.³⁹

Religious transformation

As has been mention above, Religious transformation is changing in three ranges: a) the changing on religious affiliation from one religion to another, b) the increase of concern from less attention on religion to be more religious, c) the changing of commitment in one religion, for example from *abangan* to *santri*.⁴⁰ In this research, religious transformation is mainly focused to the third range, i.e. the shifting of commitment in Islam among *jamaah* of *majelis shalawat*. The transformations are changing in attitude, behavior and commitment to religious values. In this context, transformation is observed through subjective acknowledgement of *jamaah*, not by quantitative research.

Jamaah majelis shalawat acknowledge the change in medium level, significance, and even drastic change. One of them said that following *majelis shalawat* makes her closer to god. In attitude aspect she is willing to be a good person while in behavior level she only does a good act toward other people.⁴¹ Transformation also appears on shifting of religious life principle to the clear and fixed goal. A *jamaah* feels that he has clearer view on religion know better how to do religious life of conducts in daily activities. He does not longer percept religion as a burden and realize that to be religious is simple.⁴² It is obvious that *jamaah* more relax and enjoying religion. His view that religion is easy and not a burden does not mean that he underestimates religion, but merely an attitude to

³⁹ Interview with Kyai Adib Zein, November 7, 2014.

⁴⁰ Subandi, *Psikologi Dzikir: Studi Fenomenologi Pengalaman Transformasi Relijius* Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2009, 48.

⁴¹ Interview with Asni Arifah, November 17, 2014.

⁴² Interview with Endri, November 8, 2014.

see a religion positively. His calm in practicing religion does not mean he gets laziness but to be more realistic and be better in community (shalih sosial). It is a positive transformation.

Transformations among *jamaah* are not always the result of brief process, but accumulation of the gradual processes. It can be accumulation of intensive religious experiences. Although their intensity to follow *shalawatanis* quiet fax and seldom, the most often is once in a week, the impressive religious experience traces longtime persistence influence.

Strengthening ukhuwah islamiyah

Motivation that has been acknowledged by all *jamaah* is going to strengthen brotherhood and sisterhood as muslim community. Togetherness is usually constructed when a number of people have certain similarity such as similar in hobby, goal, physical mark, origins, idealism, and ideology. When a number of persons who have similarity gather, the possibility to create certain togetherness or brotherhood is bigger. It is that actually happen in *jamaah shalawatan*. Some findings indicate how the togetherness and brotherhood become a motivation.

Some of *jamaah* acknowledge that their motivation is to bind brotherhood with many other muslims who also present in the same religious activity. Some said they should create brotherhood because they are pupils of the same guru and love the same ulama. At least, they are similar since they love the same prophet and obeying the same god that was already enough reason to bind brotherhood and togetherness.

As participant observer, there was no trouble to have friendship with *jamaah* of *majelis shalawat*. Some *jamaah* who become friends love to share their experience. It went so easy because there was trust since we meet in the same religious activity. This conditional similarity is obviously great factor for having trust and relationship. *Jamaah* easy to know and to in-

troduce each other because the prejudice is disappear since they conditionally appear in the same activity they love. In this context, *ukhuwah islamiyah* is easily built.

Although as a motivation *ukhuwah islamiyah* is possibly occur personally, *majelis shalawat* and the leaders also play significant role in building motivation of *ukhuwahislamiyah*. For example, *habaib* who lead *shalawat* often said: people who love *rasulullah* deserve *syafaat* from the Prophet in the Day of Judgment. They all will be gathered in *mahsyar* under one umbrella so they save from the heat of super solar that so close to us. It means that all prophet lovers are brother and sister. This understanding that cultivate by *ulama* motivates *jamaah* to strengthen *ukhuwah Islamiyah*.

Explaining deeper the motivation, it employs phenomenological approach to put the data from the subject as phenomenon *ansich*, those are what the subject feel and experience. However, phenomenology suggests that a phenomenon is not the final truth since the deeper meaning unveiled yet. Researcher has to find the meaning behind the phenomena. By more intensive participative observation, in found that there was a “super motivation” behind those various motivations. The super motivation is to get “*barokah*” (blessing).⁴³ Phenomena of seeking *barokah* is clearly expressed when *jamaah* try hard to sake hand and kiss the hand of charismatic leader, the *habib* who leads *shalawatan*. *Jamaah* spent much time to line up, and even leave their job or duty just to have chance to touch, sake, and kiss the *habib* hand.

⁴³ *Barakah* in Arabic means God’s grace. According to the Qur’an, God can confer grace to people, place and time. For instance, God have mercy people from among the prophets and saints. While the Kaaba, Jerusalem is an example of a place endowed. There are also certain blessed times. Arif Zamhari, *Rituals of Islamic Spirituality: A Study of Majelis Dhikr Groups in Esat Java*, Canberra: Australian National University 2010, 86-87.

Concluding remark

Based on discussion above, this research draws conclusions as follow: *first*, as a deep rooted tradition in Indonesia, *shalawat* has important role today. Reemergence of many *majelis shalawat* is going along with the decrease of *majelis dzikir* that characterized by monotone, pessimistic, and sadness nuance. In contrary, *majelis shalawat* as the method of dakwah with healthy mindedness characteristics interests many people. Among many *majelis shalawat* in Indonesia, there are three the most famous *majelis shalawat*: *Majelis Shalawat Habib Syech As-Segaf* (Surakarta), *Majelis Shalawat Maiyah Cak Nun* (Yogyakarta), and *Majelis Kanzus Shalawat Habib Luthfi* (Pekalongan).

Second, as a religious event, *shalawatan* in each *majelis shalawat* depends to role of the leader. Charisma of the leader is the main attractive factor for the followers. Moreover, every leader as special talent especially in music skill and blessed with golden voice. Besides that, the charismatic leader also has broader religious knowledge, intellectuality, and often gives smart jokes.

Third, important phenomena of this research are activities and expression as the evidence of healthy mindedness in religiosity. *Jamaah majelis shalawat* have happiness and optimistic view, extrovert character, more free theology, and good atmosphere for their religious growth.

Fourth, the most significant finding in this research is various internal motivations in *jamaah*. At least there are four internal motivations: religious escapism, strengthening relationship and *ukhuwah islamiyah*, to get knowledge (*thalabul 'ilmi*), and religious transformation.

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