

***Manaqib al-Nūr al-Burhān* and Character Education in Pesantren: A Study of Nahdlatul Ulum Boarding School Kresek**

Manaqib al-Nūr al-Burhān dan Pendidikan Karakter di Pesantren: Studi pada Pondok Pesantren Nahdlatul Ulum Kresek

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Abstract: *This study aims to describe the implementation of manaqib Syaikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani in shaping students' character. It also contributes to pesantren studies by demonstrating how manaqib functions not merely as a ritual practice, but as a lived pedagogical system for the internalization of Sufi-based education. In short, these religious teachings contain spiritual, moral, and social dimensions—playing a significant role in the holistic formation of students' character. This research employs a qualitative methodology, utilizing a hermeneutic approach to interpret the meanings and values contained in the manaqib texts, and an ethnographic approach to understand the practice of manaqib within the lived experiences of the students. Through this dual approach, the meaning of manaqib is examined both from the textual dimension and from the direct experiences of its practitioners. The findings reveal that the manaqib ritual at Nahdlatul Ulum Kresek Islamic Boarding School is conducted regularly from the 1st to the 11th of Rabī' al-Ākhir. The series of activities includes fasting, zikir, reading Nūr al-Burhānī, and conducting istighāsah together. Through these practices, students are guided to internalize and develop values such as patient (ṣabr), humble (tawadḍu'), sincerely (ikhhlās), intellectual attentiveness, and social responsibility. The implementation of the manaqib tradition is shown to play a significant role in strengthening the affective and spiritual dimensions of students' character education, while simultaneously serving as a means of preserving Sufi-oriented religious traditions that constitute a distinctive identity of the pesantren.*

Keywords: Manaqib Nūr al-Burhān; Character Education; Nahdlatul Ulum Boarding School



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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan implementasi manaqib Syekh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani dalam membentuk karakter santri. Penelitian ini juga memberikan kontribusi terhadap kajian pesantren dengan menunjukkan bahwa manaqib tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai praktik ritual, tetapi juga sebagai sistem pedagogis yang hidup untuk internalisasi pendidikan berbasis tasawuf. Singkatnya, ajaran-ajaran keagamaan tersebut mengandung dimensi spiritual, moral, dan sosial yang berperan penting dalam pembentukan karakter santri secara holistik. Penelitian ini menggunakan metodologi kualitatif dengan memanfaatkan pendekatan hermeneutik untuk menafsirkan makna dan nilai yang terkandung dalam teks-teks manaqib, serta pendekatan etnografi untuk memahami praktik manaqib dalam pengalaman hidup para santri. Melalui pendekatan ganda ini, makna manaqib dikaji baik dari dimensi tekstual maupun dari pengalaman langsung para pelakunya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ritual manaqib di Pondok Pesantren Nahdlatul Ulum Kresik dilaksanakan secara rutin setiap tanggal 1 hingga 11 Rabiul Akhir. Rangkaian kegiatan tersebut meliputi puasa, zikir, pembacaan *Nūr al-Burhānī*, dan pelaksanaan istighasah secara bersama-sama. Melalui praktik-praktik tersebut, para santri dibimbing untuk menginternalisasi dan mengembangkan nilai-nilai seperti kesabaran (*ṣabr*), kerendahan hati (*tawādu'*), keikhlasan (*ikhhlās*), ketajaman intelektual, dan tanggung jawab sosial. Implementasi tradisi manaqib terbukti memiliki peran yang signifikan dalam memperkuat dimensi afektif dan spiritual pendidikan karakter santri. Selain itu, tradisi ini juga berfungsi sebagai sarana pelestarian tradisi keagamaan yang berorientasi pada tasawuf, yang menjadi identitas khas pesantren tersebut.

Kata Kunci: Manaqib *Nūr al-Burhān*; Pendidikan Karakter; Pesantren Nahdlatul Ulum

Introduction

Character education has become one of the central issues in contemporary education, particularly amid the challenges of globalization and digitalization, which have given rise to symptoms of moral decadence among students. This condition indicates that education which excessively emphasizes cognitive aspects without being balanced by moral and affective development risks producing individuals who are intellectually competent yet ethically fragile. Therefore, education can no longer be oriented solely toward the mastery of knowledge, but must also engage the domains of attitudes and behavior in order to cultivate individuals with strong moral character.¹ Within the context of Islamic education, character formation occupies a highly strategic position, as the primary objective of Islamic education is to shape individuals who possess faith (*īmān*), piety (*taqwā*), and good attitude (*akhlāq al-karīmah*) in both their personal and social lives.²

Pesantren, as a traditional Islamic educational institution, possesses distinctive characteristics in fostering students' character development. It functions not only as a center for the transmission of Islamic sciences, but also as an institution for moral and personal formation through communal life and religious practices that are

internalized in daily routines.³ The living religious traditions within pesantren serve as effective means for internalizing Islamic values that shape students' attitudes, behaviors, and life ethos.⁴ In this context, religious practices such as *zikr* and *majlis al-'ilm* are not merely ritualistic in nature, but also generate psychological and spiritual effects, including inner tranquility and self-regulation.⁵ Consequently, pesantren cultivates a spiritual habitus that plays a crucial role in the sustainable formation of students' character.⁶

Pesantren Nahdlatul Ulum Kresek (hereafter referred to as NU-Kresek) is one of the Islamic boarding schools that consistently practices the *zikir manaqib* of Syaikh Abdul Qadir as an integral part of its educational culture. The practice of reading the *manaqib* of Syaikh Abdul Qadir constitutes a Sufi tradition that has developed widely within Indonesian pesantren and functions as a medium for spiritual formation. At NU-Kresek, this tradition is not merely performed as a routine ritual; rather, it is positioned as a means of internalizing Sufi values that shape students' moral consciousness and inner discipline. For the students of NU-Kresek, the *manaqib* of *Nūr al-Burbān* is not only understood as a hagiographical text that is read periodically, but also as a spiritual guide containing exemplary values and a profound commitment to drawing closer to Allah.

According to Martin van Bruinessen, the recitation of *manaqib* is not confined to followers of the Tarekat Qadiriyyah wa Naqsyabandiyah but is also practiced beyond this group. This tradition is essentially not part of the formal liturgy of the order; nevertheless, almost all of its followers have participated in such activities at least several times. Furthermore, the recitation of *manaqib* is flexible in its implementation, as it can be conducted in various languages, including Arabic, Sundanese, and Javanese, depending on the preferences of the organizers.⁷

The distinctiveness of the *manaqib* reading practice at NU-Kresek becomes evident when compared to similar traditions in other pesantren across Indonesia. In addition to being routinely performed on the 11th day of the Javanese Legi calendar each month, the students are also required to observe a ten-day consecutive fast once a year. During this fasting period, the recitation of the *manaqib* is carried out individually during the last third of the night on a daily basis. Upon completion of the fasting period, each student is obliged to offer a rooster as a form of sacrifice, which is then prepared and consumed collectively. This patterned practice gradually cultivates the students' reflective awareness of the life journey and the substantive teachings of Syaikh Abdul Qadir. The *manaqib* text, consisting of 127 pages, is read in its entirety in a quiet atmosphere, with sincere spiritual readiness, and accompanied by complementary devotional practices such as *istighfār*, *tahlīl*, *taḥmīd*, and *tasbīḥ*. Such a model of *manaqib* recitation constitutes a distinctive tradition and is relatively rare among pesantren in Indonesia.⁸

Syaikh Abdul Qadir himself is widely recognized as a Sufi figure who emphasized the primacy of purification of the soul (*tazkiyāt al-naḥs*) and moral cultivation prior to the mastery of formal knowledge. The character education values derived from his teachings demonstrate strong relevance to the concept of holistic Islamic education. Recent studies indicate that the Sufistic virtues promoted by Syaikh Abdul Qadir—such as self-awareness (*murāqabah*), love of God (*maḥabbah*), and self-restraint—can be systematically integrated into Islamic educational practices, including those implemented in pesantren. From an educational perspective, the *manaqib* tradition is further understood as a form of *hidden curriculum* that effectively instills character values without relying on explicit, instruction-based pedagogy.⁹

Research on the tradition of the *manaqib* of Syaikh Abdul Qadir has been conducted with various analytical focuses. Khoirunnisa, in her study entitled “*The Impact of Reading Qur’anic Verses in the Manaqib Kubra of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī in Karangrejo, Metro, Lampung*,” examines the role of Qur’anic recitation within the *manaqib kubra* ritual in strengthening the spiritual life of the congregation. Her findings indicate that this practice significantly contributes to the enhancement of religious awareness and inner tranquility.¹⁰ Similar research was carried out by Aryani and Sagadah, who investigated the implications of *zikir* in *manaqib* practices for the psychological calmness of pesantren congregants. Their study demonstrates a strong correlation between the intensity of *manaqib zikir* and the participants’ inner peace.¹¹ Nevertheless, from the author’s perspective, both studies primarily emphasize psychological effects rather than examining the process of character value internalization within the pesantren educational system.

Meanwhile, Riski Ramadhan, in his article entitled “*The Significance of Implementing Dhikr Manaqib Education Based on Hidden Curriculum in Islamic Education Institutions*,” examines *zikir manaqib* from the perspective of the hidden curriculum and asserts that this practice plays a strategic role in shaping students’ religious attitudes.¹² From the standpoint of Sufi education management, Khailani Khumairoh highlights the management of Sufistic character education inspired by Syaikh Abdul Qadir within the framework of Islamic education management.¹³ This study emphasizes the importance of a systemic approach to character education; however, it remains macro in nature and does not yet empirically explore the practice of the *manaqib* tradition at the pesantren level.

Furthermore, this research identifies various educational values contained in the *manaqib*; however, it does not focus on the contextual and sustained implementation of students’ character education. Lastly, a quantitative study by Putri Auliani and Alfadhli investigates the effect of *zikir manaqib* on the psychological tranquility of congregants at Pesantren Miftahul Huda Tangerang and

finds a statistically significant influence.¹⁴ Although this study strengthens empirical evidence regarding the impact of *manaqib*, it does not examine the dimension of students' character education as its primary analytical focus.

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that there has been no study that specifically and comprehensively examines the implementation of the *amaliah manaqib* of Syaikh Abdul Qadir as an instrument of character education within the pesantren context. Previous studies have tended to emphasize the psychological and spiritual dimensions of *zikir manaqib* or to situate it within a macro-level conceptual framework. Consequently, the processes of implementation and the internalization of educational practices have not been sufficiently explored empirically. Therefore, this study tries to conceptualize *manaqib* as an embodied pedagogical system that integrates ritual, spirituality, and character formation within pesantren culture by addressing several key research questions: how is the *amaliah manaqib* of Syaikh Abdul Qadir implemented in the character education of students at Pesantren Nahdlatul Ulum Kresek; how does the process of internalizing the character values embedded in these practices take place in students' daily lives; and what specific character education values are developed through the practice of *amaliah manaqib* in this pesantren.

In line with these research questions, this study aims to analyze the implementation of *amaliah manaqib* as a medium for students' character education, to examine the internalization of Sufistic values in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors, and to identify the contribution of *amaliah manaqib* in fostering contextual and sustainable character development within the educational environment of Pesantren Nahdlatul Ulum Kresek.

Research Methodology

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method because the object of investigation consists of religious practices and character education processes that are contextual, symbolic, and rich in meaning, and therefore cannot be reduced to numerical data or quantitative variables. The implementation of *amaliah manaqib* in the pesantren represents a socio-religious phenomenon that is embedded in tradition, authority relations, and the spiritual experiences of the students. Accordingly, a qualitative approach enables the researcher to capture this reality holistically, in depth, and naturally as it unfolds in the field, while also descriptively and analytically illustrating the relationship between religious rituals and the formation of students' character. This is in line with John W. Creswell's assertion that "*qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.*"¹⁵

The hermeneutic approach is considered relevant because this study does not merely examine *manaqib* practices as ritual activities, but also positions the *manaqib* text—particularly kitab *Nūr al-Burhān* by syaikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani—as a source of character education values. Hermeneutics enables the text to be understood contextually by taking into account its historical, spiritual, and educational horizons, so that values such as exemplarity, asceticism, patience, and discipline embedded within it can be interpreted and connected to the educational objectives of the pesantren. Gadamer, through the concept of the *fusion of horizons*, explains that textual understanding is inherently dialogical and contextual.¹⁶ For this reason, the *manaqib* text is not positioned merely as a normative reading, but as a living educational text that functions actively within the practice of students' character education.

Meanwhile, an ethnographic approach is employed because the *amaliah manaqib* at NU-Kresik Islamic Boarding School constitutes a religious tradition that has been transmitted and practiced across generations, including distinctive features such as the ten-day annual fasting and the regular monthly recitation of *manaqib*. Through ethnography, the researcher is able to understand the social, symbolic, and pedagogical meanings of this tradition from the perspective of the pesantren community itself.¹⁷ This approach allows for the integration of interview data with the pesantren leader, observational findings, and textual interpretation, thereby producing a comprehensive understanding of how *amaliah manaqib* functions as a medium for internalizing character values in students' daily lives. In *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Geertz emphasizes that the task of ethnography is to provide *thick description*, namely, to explicate the meanings underlying cultural and religious practices as they are understood by their practitioners.¹⁸

Data Collection Method

The research informants consisted of one leader (*kiai*) of Pondok Pesantren Nahdlatul Ulum and twenty *takhassus* students (*santri*). The selection of the *kiyai* was based on his position as the highest authority in both scholarship and spirituality within the pesantren tradition. Furthermore, the *kiyai* is also the recipient of the *amaliah manaqib* tradition, which has been transmitted through a continuous chain of scholarly transmission (*sanad*) passed down from teacher to student across generations. In other words, the *kiyai* constitutes the root of the *manaqib* practice in every pesantren that observes it. This position makes the *kiyai* a key informant who possesses a profound understanding of the philosophical foundations, objectives, meanings, and educational values embedded within the *amaliah manaqib*.

The twenty selected *santri* were *takhassus* students who had resided (*muqim*) in the pesantren for more than three years. This consideration was based on the

assumption that a relatively longer period of residence allows for a more intensive process of value internalization compared to students who have only recently joined the pesantren. Furthermore, their continuous involvement in various *amaliah manaqib* activities, both routine and occasional, has enriched their religious experiences and suggests the presence of a significant influence of *manaqib* on their lives.

Subsequently, data collection was carried out in two stages. First, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews to obtain information regarding the participants' understanding of *amaliah manaqib*, the values embedded within it, and its influence on the formation of the students' character and everyday behavior. Second, participant observation was also employed, enabling the researcher not only to act as an observer but also to be present and actively engage in the various activities associated with *amaliah manaqib*.

Finally, to ensure the credibility and validity of the data, this study employed both source triangulation and method triangulation techniques. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from the *kiyai*, *santri*, and *Nūr al-Burhān* as the sole documentary source related to *amaliah manaqib*. Meanwhile, method triangulation was carried out by comparing the findings derived from in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. In substantive terms, the triangulation process brought together three main dimensions: (1) the character education values embedded in the text of *amaliah manaqib*, (2) the students' lived experiences and everyday behaviors directly observed within the pesantren environment, and (3) the explanations and interpretations provided by the *kiai* as the authoritative custodian of the *manaqib* tradition.

***Al-Nūr al-Burhān* Text in Character Education**

The narratives contained in *Nūr al-Burhān*, particularly those centered on the figure of Syaikh Abdul Qadir, demonstrate an integrative construction of Islamic education. Education is not understood merely as a cognitive domain, but rather as a holistic process that unites knowledge (*ilm*), moral (*akhlāq*), and spirituality. The story of Syaikh Abdul Qadir's encounter with the Prophet Khidr, for instance, cannot be hermeneutically reduced to a mere legitimation of personal *karāmah*. Instead, this narrative conveys an educational message concerning obedience to divine commandments and the preservation of inner purity of heart and mind as fundamental prerequisites in the pursuit of knowledge. Within the horizon of Islamic education, this inner dimension is regarded as decisive in determining the epistemological and ethical quality of the knowledge acquired.

Furthermore, the narrative describing the resolution of an *ijtihād* issue alongside one hundred jurists from Baghdad reinforces the epistemological orientation of the text. This account portrays knowledge as the primary source of authority and honor, rather than age, lineage, or social status. Hermeneutically, the text contains an implicit critique of social structures that ground scholarly legitimacy in external factors. The principle of intellectual meritocracy reflected in *Nūr al-Burhān* aligns with patterns of scholarly authority in classical Islamic education, as analyzed by George Makdisi. Within the *ijāzah* system, scholarly legitimacy is constructed through perseverance in learning, mastery of disciplines, and recognition by teachers, rather than through social status or institutional authority.¹⁹ Therefore, this text functions as a medium for internalizing a critical and egalitarian scholarly ethos.

Although widely known as a *sufi* gifted with supernatural abilities (*karāmah*), Syaikh Abdul Qadir nevertheless firmly upheld the principles of Islamic jurisprudence (*sharīʿah*) as the fundamental basis of Islamic religious life. This is evident in the balance between the spiritual and normative dimensions in the narrative of Iblis who claimed divinity and declared what is unlawful to be lawful. From a hermeneutical perspective, this story is not intended to affirm the personal superiority of Syaikh Abdul Qadir, but rather functions as an epistemological warning. The emphasis of *Nūr al-Burhān* on the integration of *sharīʿah* and *ḥaqīqah* is consistent with the historical pattern of mainstream Sufism which, as noted by Knysh, situates mystical experience within the framework of *tawḥīd* and adherence to *sharīʿah* in order to avoid antinomian tendencies.²⁰

Through symbolic stories, *Nūr al-Burhān* forms an understanding of the nature of knowledge, the purpose of education, and the meaning of being a dignified, knowledgeable human being.

Table 1. Educative Texts of *al-Nūr al-Burhān*

No.	Textual Form		Educational Values/Aspects
	Hagiographic Narrative	Expository Description	
1	Meeting of Sheikh Abdul Kadir and Nabi Khidir.		○ Comply with the rules. ○ Maintain the purity of heart and mind.
2	Solving problems with 100 fiqh experts from Baghdad.		○ Honor is based on knowledge, not age, ethnicity, or nationality. ○ Diligence and consistency in studying/reading.
3		Fajr prayer with Isa's ablution for 40 years, and immediately performing	○ Maintain the purity of the body. ○ Be organized and consistent (<i>istiqamah</i>).

		ablution whenever he has <i>ḥadas</i> .	
4		Extending prostration in Maghrib and muraqabah prayers until sunrise.	○ Reflection and self-introspection.
5		The knowledge of the scholars, the strategies of the kings, and the wisdom of the jurists are absolute requirements for preaching (<i>irsyād al-nās</i>).	○ Knowledge as basic capital to provide solutions or make decisions regarding other people's problems.
6	Satan claims to be God and has misled 70 members of the Tarekat except Sheikh Abdul Qadir.		○ Balance between <i>zikr</i> and <i>fikr</i> . In addition to Sufism, studying <i>tauhid</i> (monotheism) and <i>fiqh</i> (jurisprudence) as the foundations of Islam is a must.
7		Not greedy for rich people and the government.	○ Independent in carrying out scientific practices so that all forms of decisions and research results are purely the result of scientific work without interference from external parties.
8	The story of an apple given by the Caliph that was full of blood and pus.		○ Leadership responsibilities.
9		Respect the poor, sit with them, even help them wash their clothes.	○ Humanity as the basis for social equality. ○ Mutual cooperation and mutual assistance.
10		<i>Zikr</i> and <i>syukr</i> whenever receive blessings. Be patient, sincere, and rise up when have a disaster. This is because disaster is actually a test to become nobler, wiser and more mature.	○ Psychological responses and how to handle them when the heart feels happy or sad.
11		Love and hate based on knowledge (valid information) so as not to fall into lust.	○ Science as a basis and benchmark for decision making. ○ Be careful in judging others.
12	Flies refused to land on Sheikh Abdul Qadir because he had no desire for the sweetness of this		○ Studying, working, and doing good deeds must be done wholeheartedly, sincerely, and without arrogance.

	world, or even the afterlife. All his deeds were done purely for the sake of Allah.	○ Focus on the process as an essential part of all actions.
13	A mother complained because the child she was looking after only ate bread, while Sheikh Abdul Qadir himself ate chicken.	○ <i>Mujāhadat al-nafs</i> for students. ○ Self-sacrifice and devotion to knowledge.

When a student regularly reads the *manaqib* or the exemplary narratives of Syaikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani, the moral values embedded within them are gradually internalized into the subconscious. Such repetitive reading not only enriches the student’s spiritual knowledge but also shapes patterns of thought and inner dispositions. Over time, exemplary values such as sincerity (*ikhhlās*), patience (*ṣabr*), and humble (*tawādu’*) that are absorbed into this deeper level of consciousness are reflected in everyday behavior, thereby encouraging students to actualize these values concretely in their daily lives.²¹ This phenomenon indicates that understanding does not stop at the mere comprehension of the text’s meaning *per se*, but extends to its application in real-life situations. This is what Gadamer refers to as *Anwendung*—the notion that understanding always contains an element of application, through which it becomes a new and integrated meaning.²²

Even the ascetic practices of Syaikh Abdul Qadir, as depicted in the narrative of performing the dawn (*ṣubḥ*) prayer with the ablution (*wuḍū’*) of the night (*‘ishā’*) prayer for forty years, are often read literally as expressions of extraordinary spiritual distinction. However, through a hermeneutical reading that situates this episode in relation to the text as a whole, such a practice is more appropriately understood as a pedagogical symbol of *istiḳāmah* (steadfastness) and discipline. Education in *Nūr al-Burhān* is not oriented toward instant or spectacular achievements, but toward character formation through long-term consistency. This principle resonates with the concept of *ta’dīb* in Islamic education, which emphasizes habituation of values and self-discipline as the core of the educational process.²³

Social ethics occupy a central position in the *Manaqib* text, as reflected in narratives that emphasize respect for the poor, sitting together with them, and assisting in fulfilling their needs. Education, from this perspective, does not end with the cultivation of individual piety but extends toward the strengthening of social awareness and human solidarity. The values of mutual cooperation and social equality portrayed in the text indicate that the ultimate aim of Islamic education is the formation of knowledgeable individuals who actively contribute to the

realization of social justice.²⁴ Thus, education is understood as a form of social praxis oriented toward the common good.²⁵ Ethical concern is also evident in the critique of immoral political power, symbolically represented through the narrative of an apple given by the caliph that is filled with blood and pus. This story conveys the lesson that leadership is an ethical trust (*amānah*) that demands justice and moral integrity. Knowledge thus functions as an evaluative instrument in decision-making rather than as a means of legitimizing authority. Within the educational horizon, the text underscores the close interrelationship between education, leadership, and public moral responsibility.²⁶

On this basis, the educational texts contained in the kitab *Nūr al-Burhān* reflect a classical pattern of Islamic education that is not presented through systematic theoretical exposition, but rather through symbolic narratives rich in values. This mode of transmission underscores that education in the Islamic tradition is oriented not merely toward the transfer of knowledge, but more fundamentally toward the cultivation of moral, spiritual, and social consciousness in its readers. Therefore, such texts cannot be adequately understood through a purely literal or historical reading; instead, they require an interpretive approach capable of uncovering their implicit meanings and normative aims.

The *Manaqib* Practices of *al-Nūr al-Burhān* in Shaping Character Education

The *manaqib* practice has become an annual routine agenda conducted every month of Rabi' al-Thānī, from the 1st to the 11th, and is observed by the head of the pesantren together with the students of NU-Kresk Islamic Boarding School. According to the head of the pesantren, Kiai Imaduddin (hereafter called kiai Imad), the chain of transmission (*sanad*) of the *Nūr al-Burhān manaqib* practice is connected through Kiai Ishaq al-Hafidz of Grobogan and Kiai Jauhari Umar of Pasuruan, from whom the authorization (*ijāzah*) was granted in 1999. During the period from 1999 to 2009, this *manaqib* practice was performed only personally by Kiai Imad. However, since 2010, he has encouraged the students to practice the *manaqib* tradition collectively, and this practice has continued consistently up to the present day.²⁷

It should be noted that the *Nūr al-Burhān manaqib*, although containing narratives entirely centered on Syaikh Abdul Qadir, is not exclusive in nature. This devotional practice may be performed by individuals from various *ṭarīqah*, and even by those who are not affiliated with any particular *ṭarīqah*. This was conveyed by Kiai Imad, who stated that:

“Manaqib is commonly practiced by those who follow the spiritual path (ṭarīqah) of Shaykh Abdul Qadir al-Jilani. However, not all followers of the ṭarīqah practice manaqib. Likewise, not everyone who practices manaqib is necessarily affiliated with

*Shaykh Abdul Qadir's ṭarīqah. It depends on an individual's spiritual inclination and preference.*²⁸

Moreover, Kiai Imad emphasized that the implementation of the *amaliah manaqib* is accompanied by the obligation to observe fasting for ten consecutive days. This fasting is intended as a form of *riyāḍah*, or spiritual discipline, aimed at cultivating the soul and restraining human desires. In Islam, fasting indeed serves various functions and purposes. Nevertheless, fasting as a form of *riyāḍah* represents the highest objective of the act of fasting, as explained by al-Ghazālī:

وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ لِلصَّوْمِ ثَلَاثَ دَرَجَاتٍ: صَوْمَ الْعُمَمِ، وَصَوْمَ الْخُصُوصِ، وَصَوْمَ خُصُوصِ الْخُصُوصِ. فَأَمَّا صَوْمُ الْعُمَمِ فَهُوَ كَفُّ الْبَظَنِ وَالْفَرْجِ عَنِ قَضَاءِ الشَّهْوَةِ. وَأَمَّا صَوْمُ الْخُصُوصِ فَكَفُّ السَّمْعِ وَالْبَصَرِ وَاللِّسَانِ وَالْيَدِ وَالرِّجْلِ وَسَائِرِ الْجَوَارِحِ عَنِ الْآثَامِ. وَأَمَّا صَوْمُ خُصُوصِ الْخُصُوصِ فَصَوْمُ الْقَلْبِ عَنِ الْهُمُومِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْأَفْكَارِ الدُّنْيَوِيَّةِ، وَكَفُّهُ عَمَّا سِوَى اللَّهِ بِالْكَلِّيَّةِ.

*"Know that fasting consists of three levels: the fasting of the common people, the fasting of the elect, and the fasting of the elect of the elect. The fasting of the common people is restraining the stomach and the sexual organs from the fulfillment of desire. The fasting of the elect is guarding the hearing, sight, tongue, hands, feet, and all other bodily organs from sinful acts. As for the fasting of the elect of the elect, it is the fasting of the heart—that is, restraining the heart from base concerns and worldly thoughts, and completely detaching it from everything other than Allah."*²⁹

In addition, the practice of fasting is believed to facilitate and deepen devotion (*khushū'*) in supplication to Allah SWT. Then, in the time span from midnight to dawn, the students are required to read the kitab *Nūr al-Burhān* until its completion. This recitation is expected to bring blessings (*barākah*) from the *karāmah* of Syaikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani, while at the same time serving as a means of emulating exemplary stories and internalizing the spiritual values contained within the text.³⁰ The *manaqib* recitations performed consistently (*istiqāmah*) by the students do not only function as an effort to preserve and maintain the collective memory of the saintly figure, but also serve as a medium for appreciating, internalizing, and actualizing the noble moral values he has bequeathed in everyday life practices.³¹

Even the habit of consistently observing the *manaqib* fasting gradually trains students to become accustomed to performing the Monday and Thursday *sunnah* fasts. This practice cultivates self-discipline and control over base desires, so that fasting is no longer perceived as a burden, but rather as a spiritual necessity that brings inner tranquility.³² This is consistent with B. F. Skinner's reinforcement

theory, which states that human behavior is shaped through repetition accompanied by continuous reinforcement. When an activity is performed consistently and produces positive effects, it tends to develop into a habit that becomes automatic and relatively stable. This view is also supported by various contemporary studies on habit formation, which emphasize that repeated actions combined with reinforcement are key factors in the formation of habitual behavior.³³

According to al-Attas's perspective, education is understood as a systematic process of instilling *adab* that shapes a person into a knowledgeable and morally grounded individual.³⁴ In this context, the recitation of *manaqib* functions as a medium for the internalization of *adab* values through the exemplary figures of the *wali*, particularly Syaikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani. Thus, *manāqib* is not merely positioned as a historical text, but rather as an effective spiritual educational instrument in shaping the *adab* of students through a continuous process of spiritual emulation.

Interestingly, after completing the ten-day fast, the students are encouraged to bring three liters of rice and a rooster, which are then prepared, served, and enjoyed together with fellow students and members of the surrounding community. This tradition of slaughtering a rooster carries a philosophical meaning as a form of training in sacrifice (*qurbān*), albeit in a simple form, while simultaneously instilling values of sincerity, togetherness, and social concern within the students. This sense of social solidarity is further strengthened when Kiai Imad explains that a large portion of the meat resulting from the slaughter performed in conjunction with the *manaqib* fasting is distributed to the local community as an expression of gratitude for their various contributions to the students, whether intentional or unintentional. As stated by Kiai Imad:

*"Most of it is given in charity to the villagers, considering that our students (santri) have, in one way or another, imposed upon them over the years. The students pass through the villagers' land and sometimes create noise that may disturb them. Therefore, even though the villagers may never openly express any complaints, it is only proper for us to show them consideration. The students, using their own resources, give something to the villagers, however small it may be. This is not intended as repayment, for the kindness that the villagers have shown to the students can never truly be repaid. At the very least, it helps foster a sense of mutual affection and goodwill between them."*³⁵

From the perspective of Qur'anic exegesis, sacrifice (*qurbān*) essentially emphasizes the values of piety (*taqwā*) and the inherent social welfare it embodies, rather than merely the utilization of the meat itself. Ibn 'Āshūr, in his interpretation of Q.S. al-Ḥajj [22]: 37, explains as follows:

لَنْ يَنَالَ اللَّهَ لُحُومُهَا وَلَا دِمَاؤُهَا (أَيُّ لَا يَصِلُ إِلَى اللَّهِ شَيْءٌ مِنْ ذَلِكَ). وَلَكِنْ يَنَالُهُ تَقْوَىٰ
مِنْكُمْ (أَيُّ تَصِلُ إِلَيْهِ تَقْوَىٰ الْمُضْحِي، وَهِيَ امْتِثَالُ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ، وَمَا فِي ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَحْيَاءٍ شَعِيرَةٍ
عَظِيمَةٍ، وَإِفَادَةِ الْفُقَرَاءِ وَإِشَاعَةِ التَّرَاحُمِ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ

“(His statement) ‘Their flesh and their blood do not reach Allah’ means that nothing of these reaches Allah at all. ‘Rather, what reaches Him is your piety’, that is, the piety of the one who offers the sacrifice in the form of obedience to Allah’s command. Included in this are reviving the great religious symbols (*sha’ā’ir*), providing benefit to the poor, and spreading mutual compassion within society.”³⁶

Learning is understood as a relational, contextual process oriented toward social engagement in order to build well-being and social connectedness.³⁷ Thus, the practice of distributing food to the surrounding community after the *amaliah manaqib* is one form of implementing character education that effectively fosters a spirit of generosity among students. Through such sharing activities, students are not only trained to give sincerely, but are also habituated to care about the needs of others and their surrounding social environment. This practice serves as a means of internalizing character values such as empathy, responsibility, solidarity, and social concern, which are enacted concretely in everyday life. Therefore, the tradition of sharing food with the community after the *amaliah manaqib* does not merely reflect spiritual values, but also functions as an effective medium of character education in shaping students’ generosity and social awareness.

According to the testimonies of the NU-Kresek students, practicing the *manaqib* and deeply reflecting on the stories of Syaikh Abdul Qadir has led to an increase in motivation in worship, as reflected in more intensive recitation of the Qur’an, increased remembrance (*zikr*), and deeper engagement with various books taught in the pesantren.³⁸ The educational values contained in *Nūr al-Burhān* find their relevance in the context of contemporary education. Sincerity, carefulness in judging others, patience in facing trials, and love grounded in knowledge can be read as foundations of character education that respond to the modern moral crisis and the tendency to reduce education to merely a technical instrument. In this regard, the text offers an educational vision that emphasizes depth of meaning, moral integrity, and social responsibility.³⁹

Through the implementation of the *amaliah manaqib*, the NU-Kresek students experience greater ease in memorizing learning materials and understanding the contents of the kitab texts they study. The spiritual exercises practiced regularly, such as fasting, *zikir*, and the recitation of *manaqib*, also contribute to the formation of inner calm and mental clarity.⁴⁰ These conditions have a positive impact on the

students' focus and comprehension in the learning process, so that their understanding of the contents of the kitab becomes deeper and the process of memorizing materials can take place more effectively.⁴¹

As stated by an NU-Kresk student, Andreas Chandra, the *amaliah manaqib* plays an important role in facilitating the understanding of *kitab kuning*. Based on his experience, the regular recitation of *Nūr al-Burhān* is not only an act of worship, but also brings inner tranquility and clarity of thought that greatly assist the learning process.⁴² Through this action, there is a sense of blessing and ease in understanding Arabic texts, both in terms of meaning and linguistic structure. A calmer state of the heart, accompanied by proper *adab* and *tawassul* to the saints, makes the process of studying the *kitab kuning* feel lighter, deeper, and easier to comprehend.⁴³ In other words, the practice of *amaliah manaqib* gradually instills an attitude of patience in facing various situations, both within the pesantren environment and in everyday interactions. Through this process, one is trained to respond to every issue in a calmer, more mature, and wiser manner.⁴⁴

In addition, the *amaliah manaqib* also contributes to shaping an attitude of *tawāḍuʿ* or humility among the *santri*. This value of humility is reflected in daily behavior, such as the willingness of *santri* to share knowledge without regard to age or level of ability. For example, a *santri* may voluntarily help review and explain texts to other *santri* who are younger or whose level of understanding is still lower. This attitude indicates that the educational process in the pesantren is not oriented solely toward the mastery of knowledge, but also toward the formation of noble character, particularly humility, mutual respect, and concern for others.

Up to this point, it can be emphasized that the tradition of *amaliah manaqib* of *Nūr al-Burhān* at NU-Kresk, as explained by Kiai Imad (the head of pesantren), is indeed deliberately designed as a pedagogical medium for the *santri* and is rich in character education values such as social responsibility, religiosity, patience, and continuity.

Through the *fusion of horizons*, the *manaqib* tradition is seen as a pedagogical system in its capacity to bridge the historical world of Syaikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani with the educational experiences of contemporary students. Therefore, the character values identified in this study are not merely understood as a heritage passively transmitted from text to its readers, but rather as meanings that are continuously produced through the interaction between tradition, lived experience, and contemporary educational needs.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the *amaliah manaqib* of Syaikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani at Pesantren Nahdlatul Ulum Kresek plays a significant role in the process of students' character education through the integration of spiritual practices, moral values, and social awareness. The implementation of *manaqib*, which is carried out regularly through a series of fasting, *zikir*, recitation of the kitab *Nūr al-Burhānī*, and *istigasah*, is not merely understood as a religious ritual, but also as a medium for internalizing values such as patience, humble, sincerity, intelligence, and social concern. This study shows that the educational meaning of *manaqib* can be comprehensively understood from both the textual dimension and the students' lived experiences. The *manaqib* tradition is proven to strengthen the affective and spiritual dimensions of character education, while at the same time maintaining the continuity of the Sufi tradition as a distinctive identity of the pesantren in shaping well-rounded and character-driven students.

This study reinforces Skinner's theory that *amaliah manaqib* as a hidden curriculum, when practiced routinely, constitutes a form of habituation that embeds character values through continuous repetition and reinforcement. In addition, according to al-Attas, education aims to instill *adab* as the foundation for forming a knowledgeable and morally upright human being. In this regard, *manāqib* is not only understood as a religious narrative, but also as a means of spiritual education that instills values of *adab*, exemplary conduct, sincerity, and piety, thereby shaping the students' character in a holistic manner.

However, this study has limitations as it was conducted in only one pesantren and the data were obtained solely from *takhassus* students. As a result, the findings cannot be generalized to all pesantren contexts. Therefore, future research needs to be conducted in various types of pesantren with different characteristics and with more diverse samples of students, either through comparative studies or longitudinal research, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the contribution of Sufi traditions to character formation in contemporary Islamic education.

Endnotes

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7. Martin van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren, Dan Tarekat: Tradisi-Tradisi Islam Di Indonesia*, Cet. 1 (Mizan, 1995).
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21. Interview with kiai Imaduddin Utsman on 12-22-2025.
22. Gadamer et al., *Truth and Method*.
23. Muhammad Naguib al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education*, 3. impression (ISTAC, 1999).
24. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Life and Thought* (State university of New York press, 1981).
25. This interpretation emerges through a dialogue between the ethical horizon embedded within the text and various contemporary issues related to social justice, social responsibility, and human solidarity. Consequently, understanding becomes a productive process that continually renews the significance of the text within an ever-changing social context. See Gadamer et al., *Truth and Method*.
26. Fazlur Raḥmān, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, Publications of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, v. 15 (University of Chicago Press, 2017).
27. Interview with kiai Imaduddin Utsman on 22-12-2025.
28. Interview with kiai Imaduddin Utsman on 22-12-2025.
29. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, juz I (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, t.t.), 234–235.
30. It should be noted that, similar to the Javanese santri tradition recorded by Zamakhsyari Dhofier, the NU-Kresik santri also hold the belief that saints or *kiai* do not possess any authority over blessings (*barakah*). Blessing is absolutely the prerogative and will of God. However, the santri believe that God's blessings can only be attained if they obey and show respect to the *kiai*, or in this context, to Shaykh Abdul Qadir through his teachings in the book *Nur Al-Burhan*. See Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *The Pesantren Tradition: The Role of the Kyai in the Maintenance of Traditional Islam in Java* (Monograph Series Press, Program for Southeast Asian Studies, Arizona State University, 1999).
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40. In line with what Bruinessen states in the context of Sufi orders and mystical traditions, NU-Kresiek santri also view *manāqib* as an emotional and spiritual medium that has become increasingly difficult to find in the present day—making it remain strong and distinctive to this day. See Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren, Dan Tarekat*.
41. Interview with kiai Abdul Muidz on 22-12-2025.
42. Interview with Andreas Chandra on 23-12-2025.
43. Interview with Ahmad Rafly Jailani on 23-12-2025.
44. Interview with Dinda Afriani on 23-12-2025.

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