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The Ritual Tradition of Esoteric Scientific Practices in Islamic Boarding Schools: A Study of *Khizib Kubro Ismul Haq's* Practical Book

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Abstract

This paper examines the ritual tradition of esoteric scientific practices in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), with a focus on the practical teachings outlined in the *Kitab Amalan Khizib Kubro Ismul Haq*. The study employs a qualitative research approach, utilizing library research methods. The primary data source is the *Kitab Amalan Khizib Kubro Ismul Haq*, along with supporting literature such as books, academic articles, and journals relevant to the research topic. Data collection is carried out through documentation, and content analysis is used for data analysis, incorporating techniques of data condensation, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The research findings reveal three main points. First, Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) are key institutions in preserving and developing Islamic traditions, including esoteric scientific practices. Second, esoteric practices are often misunderstood or negatively stigmatized due to a lack of comprehensive understanding, where the outward forms of the practices are emphasized over their deeper meanings. Third, the esoteric practices within *pesantren* share common ground with Sufism, as both emphasize inner spiritual transformation and the unveiling of hidden truths, with the ultimate aim of attracting benefits and avoiding harm for the practitioner. This paper aims to offer a fresh perspective on the esoteric ritual traditions in Islamic boarding schools and contribute to a deeper understanding of their role in Islamic spiritual practices.

Keywords: *Esoteric Scientific Practices, Islamic Boarding Schools, Khizib Kubro Ismul Haq, Spiritual Rituals, Islamic Traditions.*

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Introduction

Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) play a pivotal role in preserving and transmitting Islamic knowledge, with a strong emphasis on both religious and esoteric scientific practices.¹ These institutions are not only centers of formal Islamic education but also spaces where deeper spiritual and mystical traditions are taught and practiced.² Within *pesantren*, students (*santri*) engage with classical Islamic texts, which include a rich tradition of esoteric knowledge, aiming to achieve inner transformation and spiritual growth.³ The significance of *pesantren* in Islamic education is thus multifaceted, as it encompasses both the transmission of foundational religious teachings and the cultivation of advanced, mystical practices.⁴ Furthermore, the educational approach in *pesantren* can vary, reflecting either traditional methods or more contemporary influences, often shaped by curricula from both the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Religious Affairs.⁵

Another type of Pesantren is Pesantren-based education combines physical, intellectual, and mental education such as esoteric knowledge⁶, which is massive in Indonesian milieu. That is why looking for those are significant in order to gaining the whole picture about Pesantren practices both as a cultural perservation⁷ and social development.⁸ In fact, Pesantrens are also one of the Islamization medium in Indonesia as well as a place for establishing Islamic traditions in the archipelago.⁹ Some examples of the previous statements like the traditions of Sufism, *Tariqah*, wisdom such as *wafaq*, *rajab*, *bizib* and other ritual traditions that are very thick and still preserved in Pesantren milieu until now¹⁰, so that Pesantren becomes one of the main pillars in reviving and developing all these traditions in the religious cirmustance of *santri*, Kyai (teacher/ religion leader), and the surrounding community¹¹, and also benefits directly from religious participation.¹²

Look at that deeply, the esoteric knowledge is one of the main attractions for the process of Islamization in Indonesia, especially Indonesian people who are known to be ascetic, making it easier to adjust and introduce its teachings. In Islam, it is known that the esoteric knowledge

¹ Rubaidi Rubaidi dkk., "Resisting the Surge of Salafism among Malay and Javanese Muslims: The Dynamics of the Tarekat Naqshbandiya and Qadiriya Wa Naqshbandiya in Promoting Peaceful Islam in Riau Sumatera," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam* 13, no. 1 (8 Agustus 2023): 1–31, <https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2023.13.1.1-31>.

² M. Amin Syukur dan Abdul Muhaya, "ECONOMIC MOVEMENTS WITHIN SUFISM IN JAVA: A Case Study on Qadiriya and Naqsyabandiyah Sufi Orders," *JOURNAL OF INDONESIAN ISLAM* 9, no. 2 (16 Desember 2015): 229–56, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2015.9.2.229-256>.

³ Moch Muwaffiqillah dkk., "Faith in Flux: Navigating Laypeople's Post-Secular Religiosity in the Pandemic Era," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam* 14, no. 1 (1 Juni 2024): 26–51, <https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2024.14.1.26-51>; Wahidul Anam dkk., "Quo Vadis Hadith Studies in Islamic Boarding Schools in Al-Jabiri's Perspective," *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 2 (2024): 290–314.

⁴ Fahmi Irfani dkk., "The Other Sides Of Pesantren: Magical Practices Around Pesantren In Banten," *Akademika : Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 26, no. 2 (17 Desember 2021): 311–24, <https://doi.org/10.32332/akademika.v26i2.3694>.

⁵ Teguh Budiharso, Syamsul Bakri, dan Sujito Sujito, "Transformation of Education System of the Pesantren in Indonesia from the Dutch Colony to Democratic Era," *Journal of Social Studies Education Research* 14, no. 4 (22 Desember 2023): 179–206.

⁶ Chatia Hastasari, Benni Setiawan, dan Suranto Aw, "Students' communication patterns of islamic boarding schools: the case of Students in Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta," *Heliyon* 8, no. 1 (2022): e08824, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e08824>; Agus Riwanda, Mukhammad Zamzami, dan Abdullah Hosseinieskandian, "Exploring The Esoteric Dimension Of Islamic Education Through Khidmah Students' Motivation," *Penamas* 36, no. 2 (30 November 2023): 217–32, <https://doi.org/10.31330/penamas.v36i2.652>.

⁷ Lukman Hakim, "Pesantren as the Identity of Islamic and Cultural Education in West Java," *Al-Isblab: Jurnal Pendidikan* 15, no. 4 (26 Oktober 2023): 4578–86, <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v15i4.3369>.

⁸ Sa'dullah Assa'idi, "The Growth of Pesantren in Indonesia as the Islamic Venue and Social Class Status of Santri," *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research* 21, no. 93 (30 April 2021): 425–40, <https://doi.org/10.14689/ejer.2021.93.21>.

⁹ Yusuf Hanafi dkk., "The new identity of Indonesian Islamic boarding schools in the 'new normal': the education leadership response to COVID-19," *Heliyon* 7, no. 3 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e06549>.

¹⁰ Lukmanul Khakim, "Tradisi Riyadhah Pesantren," *Al-Isnad: Journal of Islamic Civilization History and Humanities* 1, no. 1 (2020): 42–43.

¹¹ Muhamad Yusuf dkk., "The Role of Anak Jalanan At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School in Internalizing the Values of Religious Moderation to College Students in Bandung," *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 23, no. 1 (2023): 132–56, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jiif.v23i1.15358>.

¹² Risti Permani, "The presence of religious organisations, religious attendance and earnings: Evidence from Indonesia," *Journal of Socio-Economics* 40, no. 3 (2011): 247–58, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.soccc.2011.01.006>.

occupies a separate part of the discipline, where part of the esoteric knowledge is connected to the tasawwuf literature. The basic concept of Sufism is based on intuition and taste, so Sufis reveal that, “*man lam yadzuq lam ya’rif*” means that who does not experience (feel) then he will not understand (know). Through that reason, it can be said that the concept of Sufism is not only at the theoretical level but also based on the empirical level (experience).

Although the esoteric knowledge and Sufism knowledge are connected to each other, it does not only concern matters of the heart, but beyond that it also involves special rituals (in Islam known as *riyadhab*). *Riyadhab* is an effort made by a *salik* (person who is taking a spiritual path) on an ongoing basis in controlling *lust* with the aim of finding and achieving potential for the spiritual self, which results in cleanliness of heart and clarity of mind so that it is able to capture and reflect the light of Godhood, so that *riyadhab* can also be simplified as the fruit of pious training for a *salik* in achieving self-perfection or *insan kamil*.¹³ In addition, the esoteric knowledge and Sufism knowledge is also inseparable from *hizib-hizib* that contain a set of prayers owing *sir* (secrets). It has also a purpose in certain conditions, which are often used to attract a benefit and reject a harm for the practitioners.

The positive esoteric knowledge will always synergize with Islamic mysticism (*tasawwuf-tariqa*)¹⁴, so that the esoteric will always be perfected and balanced by Sufism in order to keep the purity of soul rather than the impurity. As a proof, it can be seen from the many Sufi scholars who authored the book of *hikmah* (esoteric knowledge), for example, Imam Abu Hasan Ash-Shadzili who authored the book *Sirrul Jalil*, then Shaykh Ahmad bin Ali al-Buni authored the book *Manba’u Ushulil Hikmah*, then Shaykh Ahmad Ad Dairobi authored the book *Mujarobat*, then Abuya Sayyid Muhammad bin Alwi al-Maliki who authored the book *Syawariqul Anwar* and the most famous one is another essay from Shaykh Ahmad bin Ali al-Buni, namely *Syamsul Ma’arif Kubro* which contains many prayers such as *wafaq*, *rajab*, and *hizib-hizib*, which are widely practiced by Ulama to take a virtue in order to advantaging themselves and others.

Indonesia is home to the largest Islamic education system in the world.¹⁵ The tradition of esoteric knowledge is quite thick and mushrooming in many Indonesian Pesantren, where this tradition is preserved until now, even closer to the community, which is manifested in everyday life. One of the pioneers in the preservation and teaching of esoteric knowledge in Indonesia is *Ismul Haq Pesantren* located in Mojokerto and initiated by Dr. (HC) KH. Bahrul Ulum, S.Ag, M.IH., who is the *Mujiz* (an esoteric teacher) and caretaker of the *Ismul Haq Nahdlatul Ulama Central Dzikir and Taklim Majlis Mojokerto*. There, he leads publishes a book of practices that can be learned, namely *Khizib Kubro*, which summarizes many *hizibs* and practices in bundle of prayers that have many virtues practiced for people who have taken *Ijazah* and *Asma’ Khizib*. That activity is generally performed on every night of 1 Muharram (1 *Syura*) at *Ismul Haq Pesantren* regularly.

The esoteric knowledge consisting *wafaq*, *rajab*, *isim* and *hizib* practices has recently become very popular in the community. Moreover, the clerics teach it in Pesantren. Unfortunately, the stereotypes of commoners in general still assume wrongly related to the esoteric knowledge

¹³ Khakim, “Tradisi Riyadhab Pesantren,” 48; Doli Witro, “Islamic Religious Education in the Family to Strengthen National Resilience of Surah at-Tahrim Verse 6 Perspective,” *Al-Muaddib: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial dan Keislaman* 4, no. 2 (2019): 306–15, <https://doi.org/10.31604/muaddib.v4i2.306-315>.

¹⁴ Fitri Yanti dkk., “Acculturation of Religion and Culture Within Muslim Sundanese Society in West Java,” *Al-Albab* 13, no. 1 (2024): 115–33, <https://doi.org/10.24260/alalbab.v13i1.2977>.

¹⁵ M. Niaz Asadullah dan Maliki, “Madrasah for girls and private school for boys? The determinants of school type choice in rural and urban Indonesia,” *International Journal of Educational Development* 62, no. April 2017 (2018): 96–111, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2018.02.006>.

recently. Some argue that esoteric knowledge is a science affiliated with *ghaib* (unseen matters), *keburafat* (unorthodox beliefs) and *jumud* (the exegeration of strict attitudes). So that, it is contrary to Islamic law.¹⁶ There are still many persons who stigmatize the esoteric knowledge as being closely related to mysticism which tends to be negative, this is due to their lack of understanding of the esoteric knowledge which only assesses the shell but does not study the content. So that the paper aims to explore more deeply the essence of the esoteric knowledge tradition that developed in Pesantren, one of which is Pesantren of *Ismul Haq* Mojokerto. This Pesantren highly contributes in preserving Indonesian Islamic tradition and traditional Islamic knowledge.

Method

This article uses qualitative research methods.¹⁷ This article is a library research.¹⁸ The source of data comes from library data such as the *Kitab Amalan Khizib Kubro Ismul Haq*, which develops in Islamic Boarding Schools regarding the study of Wisdom Science. The data is also supported by data from book literature, scientific articles (journals), etc. related to the research topic. The data collection technique used in this research is documentation, namely tracing the necessary data or materials originating from libraries and the internet in the form of book literature, scientific articles (journals), etc.¹⁹ Meanwhile, in the process of data analysis, the author uses content analysis which is used in a study that is an in-depth discussion of the content of written information combined with interpretation through various existing findings and references.²⁰ The next data analysis technique uses qualitative analysis methods. Data analysis is a systematic process of collecting and integrating information from data collection techniques, namely documentation. To improve understanding, this process includes categorising data, summarising in sections, synthesising data, looking for patterns, selecting important findings, and developing conclusions. In addition, data analysis techniques are also supported by Miles et al. qualitative data analysis techniques, namely data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.²¹

Result and Discussion

Biography of K.H. M. Bahrul Ulum and the Establishment of *Ismul Haq* Pesantren

Pesantren (Islamic boarding school)²² are Islamic da'wah institutions that introduce Islamic sciences to *santri*²³, and the surrounding community in order to have a good understanding and

¹⁶ Herdi Maulana, Lilik Andaryuni, dan Maisyarah Rahmi Hasan, "Penggunaan Rajah dan Waqaf Sebagai Azimat Pelaris Dagangan dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam (Studi Kasus Pasar Berkat di Loa Janan Ilir)," *QONUN: Jurnal Hukum Islam Dan Perundang-Undangan* 5, no. 1 (2020): 1–2, <https://doi.org/10.21093/qonun.v4i1.1995>.

¹⁷ J. W Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2014).

¹⁸ J W Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Tradition* (London: Sage Publications, 1998); John Ward Creswell, *A Concise Introduction to Mixed Methods Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication, 2014).

¹⁹ Nursapia Harahap, "Penelitian Kepustakaan," *Jurnal Iqra'* 8, no. 1 (2014): 68, <https://doi.org/10.30829/iqra.v8i1.65>.

²⁰ Seto Mulyadi dan Heru Basuki, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif Mix Method* (Depok: Raja Grafindo, 2020), 247.

²¹ Matthew B. Miles dan A. Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis (a Source book of New Methods)* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1984); Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, dan Johnny Saldaña, *Qualitative data analysis: a methods sourcebook* (California: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2014); Muhamad Yusuf dkk., "The Role of Islamic Boarding Schools in Student Empowerment: Study of Anak Jalanan At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School in Bandung Regency," *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences* 45, no. 3 (2024): 779–90, <https://doi.org/10.34044/j.kjss.2024.45.3.09>.

²² Asa'ari Asa'ari dkk., "Religious Radicalism Prevention Model in Ma'had Al-Jami'ah at State Islamic Universities," *Nadwa: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 16, no. 1 (2022): 71–92, <https://doi.org/10.21580/nw.2022.16.1.13871>.

²³ Mhd. Rasidin dkk., "Analysing the Pesantren Tradition of Arranged Marriages from the 'Kupi Fatwa Trilogy' Perspective," *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 9, no. 1 (2024): 285–308, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jhi.v9i1.8436>; Restu Prana Ilahi, Muhamad Yusuf, dan Doli Witro, "Komunitas Belajar Sebagai Model Pendidikan Agama pada Institusi Keagamaan Pesantren untuk Meningkatkan Karakter Berbicara Santri," *el-Tarbawi* 15, no. 1 (2022): 107–26, <https://doi.org/10.20885/tarbawi.vol15.iss1.art5>; Andri Nurjaman dkk., "Usaha Pondok Pesantren At-Tamur Dalam Memahamkan Moderasi Beragama Pada Pesantren Kilat Lintas Iman Tahun 2019," *Lentera: Jurnal Diklat Keagamaan Padang* 6, no. 1 (2022): 1–19.

basics of Islamic sciences such as *fiqh*, Al-Qur'an, hadith, tauhid and others, so that they can become human individuals who are *salam* (safe), *hasanah* (good), and *thayyibah* (good sentences) and obtain the pleasure, *rahman* and *rahim* of Allah Swt. Islamic boarding schools certainly have traditions, routines and practices that must be carried out by the students who live in them such as *mudzakaroh*, fasting, prayer, wirid, *hizib*, etc. *Hizib* itself is a type of wirid and a collection of prayers that are systematically read regularly and selected from the verses of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad Saw. It is also one of the routine practices of scholars and *waliyullah* to get closer to Allah and to take advantage of a particular purpose. One of the Islamic boarding schools that teaches the science of wisdom and the practice of *hizib-hizib* is the Foundation of Ismul Haq Mojokerto Islamic Boarding School, which holds recitations, *kubro khizib* certificates and healer training every night of 1 Muharram (1 Suro) taught by Dr. (HC) KH. Bahrul Ulum, S.Ag, M.H.I., who is the Mujiz and Caretaker of the Ismul Haq Majlis Dzikir and Taklim Nahdlatul Ulama²⁴ Mojokerto Centre.

K.H. M. Bahrul Ulum often known as Gus Bahrul was born in Tuban, December 18, 1973 in Semampir Hamlet, Sembungrejo Village, Merakurak District, Tuban Regency, East Java. He is the second son of four siblings, his father named KH. Nurkhozim and his mother named Hj. Dewi Khalimah. In the process of learning Islamic knowledge, since childhood he has studied at the Darul Ulum Tuban Pesantren, which is a Pesantren owned by his own grandfather, KH. Jaelani Maulana, who is a descendant of Kyai Klop Telu, one of the descendants of Sheikh KH. Mutamaqin.²⁵ One of Pesantrens that teaches the esoteric knowledge and the practice of *hizib-hizib* is the Ismul Haq Pesantren, which holds recitations, *kubro khizib* certificates and healer training every night of 1 Muharram (1 Syurā) taught by KH. Bahrul Ulum, who is the *Mujiz* and Caretaker of the *Ismul Haq* Nahdlatul Ulama Central Dzikir and Taklim Majlis.

In 1985 after graduating from junior high school, he continued his studies at Ma'had Ilmi Asyar'i Sarang Rembang, Central Java, under the care of KH. Faqih Imam and K.H. Umar Faruq Imam while attending Madrasah Diniyah Ghojaliyah Asyafi'iyah under the care of K.H. R. Maimun Zubaer Sarang Rembang Central Java, until 1988. He continued to study at the At-Taufiq Sambong Dukuh Pesantren located in Jombang under the care of Drs. K.H. Samsul Ma'arif until 1989 and often accompanied Drs. K.H. Samsul Ma'arif to follow Ijazah *Ismul Haq* to K.H. M. Shodiq and K.H. Zamzami in Madiun. Furthermore, in 1990 he continued to learn at Tebuireng Pesantren in Jombang under the tutelage of K.H. Yusuf Hasyim who is the son of K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari, a founder of Nahdlatul Ulama in Indonesia. In fact, in 1991 Gus Bahrul was appointed as the coordinator of the *Ismul Haq* Branch of the Tebuireng Jombang Pesantren and the *Ismul Haq* Style Trainer at the At-Taufiq Jombang Pesantren. In 1994 and after graduating from

²⁴ Nahdlatul Ulama (read: NU –established in 1928, See Syaifiq Hasyim, “Fatwas and Democracy: Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI, Indonesian Ulema Council) and Rising Conservatism in Indonesian Islam,” *TRaNS: Trans-Regional and -National Studies of Southeast Asia* 8, no. 1 (2020): 21–35, <https://doi.org/10.1017/trn.2019.13>; Andri Nurjaman dkk., “Nahdlatul Ulama Theological Basis in Accepting the Concept of Guided Democracy 1959-1965,” *FiTRAH: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu-ilmu Keislaman* 8, no. 2 (2022): 345–62, <https://doi.org/10.24952/fitrah.v8i2.5964>; Asep Achmad Hidayat dkk., “Nahdlatul Ulama in Facing the Guided Democracy 1959-1965: an Overview of Social and Political Factors,” *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan* 20, no. 2 (2022): 567–98, <https://doi.org/10.31291/jlka.v20i2.1069>. Indonesia's largest Islamic organization, See Alexander Arifianto, “Nahdlatul Ulama and Its Commitment Towards Moderate Political Norms: a Comparison Between the Abdurrahman Wahid and Jokowi Era,” *Journal Of Global Strategic Studies* 1, no. 1 (2021): 77–114, <https://doi.org/10.36859/jgss.v1i1.573>; Ishomuddin Ishomuddin, “Construction of Socio-Cultural and Political Orientation of The Followers of Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in the Post Reform Era in East Java Indonesia,” *Global Journal of Politics and Law Research* 2, no. 2 (2014): 39–51.–). See also, Abdullah Firdaus dkk., “The Political-Religious Ijtihad of Nahdlatul Ulama on the Concepts of Guided Democracy, Nasakom, and Manipol-Usdek (1959-1965),” *Khazanah: Jurnal Studi Islam dan Humaniora* 21, no. 1 (2024): 121–42, <https://doi.org/10.18592/khazanah.v22i1.10287>.

²⁵ M. Tarmizi dan A. S. Turob, *Kitab Amalan Khizib Kubro* (Mojokerto: Jamiyah Dzikir Ismul Haq NU Pusat Mojokerto, 2020), 5–6.

TebuirengPesantren, he continued to learn at IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya by taking the Aqidah Philosophy (Sufism) study program until he got his Bachelor's degree in 1998.

During his studies in Surabaya, he was active in Jam'iyah *Ismul Haq*, and he was appointed as a *mujiz Ismul Haq* by KH. M. Shodiq until 1999. A few years later, he was appointed a *mujiz* by Drs. KH. Masrukhin bin KH. Zamzami to develop *Ismul Haq*. A year after the appointment, he was taken as a son-in-law by KH. M. Shodiq married to his first daughter, Hj. Zulia Istifadah. Since 2000 he actively participated in managing Padepokan and Majelis Ta'lim *Ismul Haq*, to establish the *Ismul Haq* Pesantren which was inaugurated on Sunday, April 22, 2021. It is located in Kowang Hamlet, Gebangsari Village, Jatirejo District, Mojokerto Regency, East Java. In 2002, Padepokan and Majelis Ta'lim *Ismul Haq* were inaugurated as Jamiyah *Ismul Haq* Nahdlatul Ulama Mojokerto Center by the *Lembaga Dakwah Nahdlatul Ulama* or Nahdlatul Ulama Dakwah Institute (LDNU) of the Executive Board of Nahdlatul Ulama (PBNU) Indonesia.²⁶

Gus Bahrul Ulum expects the presence of a Pesantren that can fulfill the needs of a dynamic society in educational scope because it is the core of resource development²⁷, besides that, it is also a social and religious field, especially in the field of developing esoteric knowledge and medicine which is taught through several media such as *dhikr*, including *biḥib-biḥib*, prayers of *asma'* and *rajab*. The objectives of Pesantren establishment include:²⁸ *First*, trying to increase faith and piety by increasing worship to Allah; *Second*, developing martial arts and other social activities; *Third*, obeying the authoritative laws in nation; *Fourth*, trying to increase and implement faith and honesty.

Sanad (Transmission Paths) of Mujiz Dzikir Ismul Haq

In demanding knowledge *sanad* is something that is very important.²⁹ In hadith science is known as *Sanad* is the people who convey the hadith that are interconnected with each other until finally to the Prophet Saw.³⁰ The following is a systematic sequence of the *Mujiz* lineage of the *Ismul Haq Dzikir*.³¹

List Number	Name	List Number	Name
1.	Allah swt. (Forgiving of all the wrongs of His servants)	19.	Sayid Alwi
2.	Gabriel Angel	20.	Sayyid Abdul Malik
3.	Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).	21.	Amir Abdullah Khan
4.	Sayyidina Ali a.s.	22.	Ahmad Sheikh Jalal-Sultan-Arifin Sheikh Ismail Ibn Saiyid Abdur Qadir (RA) 18th descendant of the Prophet

²⁶ Tarmizi dan Turob, 6–10.

²⁷ Md Shahjalal dkk., "Madrasa student's health-related quality of life and its associated factors: a cross-sectional study from Bangladesh," *Scientific Reports* 14, no. 1 (2024): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-65677-y>.

²⁸ Nilna Rahmayanti, "Sejarah perkembangan Yayasan Pondok Pesantren Ismul Haq Gebangsari Jatirejo Mojokerto 2001-2017" (UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2018), 16–18.

²⁹ Dudi Permana dkk., "Studi Komparatif atas Pemikiran Ignaz Goldziher dan Joseph Schacht tentang Kritik Hadis," *Diroyah: Jurnal Ilmu Hadis* 6, no. 1 (2021): 55–63, <https://doi.org/10.15575/diroyah.v6i1.14217>; Muhammad Nasrulloh dan Doli Witro, "Pemikiran Syuhudi Ismail tentang Paradigma Hadis Tekstual dan Kontekstual: Sebuah Tinjauan Umum," *An-Nida'* 46, no. 1 (2022): 1–24, <https://doi.org/10.24014/an-nida.v46i1.19226>.

³⁰ Doli Witro, "Urgency Rijalul Posting in Preventing Hoax: Quranic Perspective," *Islamic Communication Journal* 5, no. 1 (2020): 38–49, <https://doi.org/10.21580/icj.2020.5.1.5451>.

³¹ Bahrul Ulum, *Kitab Panduan Majelis Dzikir dan Taklim Jam'iyah "Ismul Haq" Nahdlatul Ulama* (Mojokerto: Jamiyah Dzikir Ismul Haq NU Pusat Mojokerto, 2013), 14.

			Muhammad, buried in Pulau Besar, Melaka (Melaka Museum information)
5.	Sayyidina Husayn a.s.	23.	Jamaludin Al-Husain Sheikh Jumadil Kubro Jamaludin Agong (Trowulan Mojokerto)
6.	Imam Ali Zainal Abidin	24.	Maulana Ibrahim Asmoro (Tuban, East Java)
7.	Muhammad Al-Baqir	25.	Sunan Ampel (Surabaya, East Java)
8.	Imam Ja'far Ash-Shadiq	26.	Sunan Bonang (Tuban, East Java)
9.	Ali Al-Uraidhi	27.	Syarif Hidayatullah Sunan Gunung Djati (Cirebon, West Java)
10.	Muhammad An-Naqib	28.	Raden Sahid/Sunan Kalijogo (Demak, Central Java)
11.	Isa Ar-Rumi	29.	Sheikh KH. Rifa'i (Ditaskah Prophet Hidir a.s. in Lake Toba, Sumatra after returning to study from the Middle East)
12.	Ahmad Al-Muhajir	30.	KH. Abdullah Alm.
13.	Syarif Ubaidillah	31.	KH. Namru Alm.
14.	Syarif Alwi	32.	KH. Bahri Alm. (Madiun)
15.	Sharif Muhammad	33.	Sheikh KH. Zamzami bin KH. Shiddiq
16.	Syarif Alwi	34.	Drs. KH. Masrukhin M. Pd.I bin Zamzami
17.	Sharif Ali Khali' Qasam	35.	KH. M. Shodiq bin Sya'i
18.	Muhammad Shahib Marbath	36.	KH. M. Bahrul Ulum S.Ag., M.HI bin KH. Nurkhozin (Mijiz)

Whereas, the conditions for becoming *Mujiz Kamil* include:³²

No.	Requirements	No.	Requirements
1.	Obtain the blessing of permission and be appointed by the previous <i>Mujiz</i> , witnessed by 3 or more people who can be trusted in sharia law.	8.	You must be able to distinguish between your personal needs and the needs of the community (<i>congregation / students</i>).
2.	Knowing the obligations of <i>fardhu ain</i> : One must know the obligations that are required of him such as prayer, zakat of personal income as a <i>Mujiz</i> teacher or professional zakat, knowing the laws of trade and so on, knowing the <i>obligatory</i> , <i>impossible</i> and <i>jai'z</i> attributes for Allah and His Messenger.	9.	Not loving the worldly life and can control his lust (<i>riyadlotun nafsi</i>), such as eating, drinking and sleeping less, and his behavior centralizes in prayers, fasting, charity, generosity.
3.	<i>Arif billah</i> (adepts of <i>Ma'rifah</i> of Allah) aligned <i>ablusunnah waljama'ah</i> .	10.	Have the praiseworthy attitude, patience, gratitude, resignation, believe in God, generous, <i>qana'ah</i> , affectionate, philanthropist.
4.	Understand the ins and outs of lust and how to control and cure it.	11.	Do not take and corrupt in untitled wealth from <i>his</i> family and (<i>congregation / students</i>), not greedy for

³² Ulum, 12–13.

			what is in the hands of his family and students, if there are families and students who are more successful such as wealth and so on, do not arise envy, resentment and desire to own.
5.	He must be expert in all the knowledge (preferably <i>Ismul Haq</i> knowledge of <i>tawhid</i> , <i>tasawwuf</i> , <i>akhlak</i> and <i>Ismul Haq</i> martial arts) that his students need.	12.	Must be able to distinguish between personal property and community donations, if the donation is obligatory, the law is built on <i>waqf</i> land, otherwise it is forbidden to be privately owned, that it is passed on to his children and grandchildren.
6.	Prioritizing <i>ummah</i> rather than their own needs.	13.	If the goal is to deviate from sharia law, the student (<i>santri</i> or congregation) is obliged to let go and look for another <i>Mujiz</i> Teacher who fits the criteria that is <i>mu'tabar</i> .
7.	His body and soul as well as some of his property must be endowed in the path of Allah, for the benefit of the people (<i>congregation / students</i>).		

Stages of Learning Esoteric Knowledge

As for how to learn the esoteric knowledge, *wirid* and *hiżib*, it is not easy in the way of either practicing or getting virtues, it takes consistency in going through many of *its riyadhah*. There are numerous steps to be committed for obtaining esoteric knowledge, including:³³

First, have a strong and firm intention, must not be half-hearted, must be fully convinced of what will be practiced, if the intention is half-hearted then it will not be successful in learning the esoteric knowledge; *Second*, must be under the guidance of a teacher; *Third*, must get *ijazah* (certificate of authenticity) in esoteric knowledge from the teacher, where *ijazah* is a statement or blessing of a teacher to his student to be able to learn his knowledge.

Fourth, must take *riyadhah* accompanied by fasting, which is a training process to master the theories of the practice, in training students are trained hard and disciplined *to be istiqamah*, such as fasting, *wirid tabaruk*, *hiżib* and *asrar*, so students will always remember Allah SWT.; *Fifth*, those which have been taken will impact on students attitude, namely *istiqamah*. It is being firm and able to carry out the teacher's orders in studying and practicing esoteric values.

After practicing the esoteric knowledge, the goals direct to the goodness, success, safety and healing. In addition, the main goal is able to get closer and find out Allah (*wuṣūl lillah*).

Level of *Asma' Ismul Haq's Ijazah*

The level of *asma'* is not singular in which the practices could be varied in multi social circumstance. That is way understanding them is significant to gather whole values of it. The level of *Asma' Ismul Haq's Ijazah* consists of seven levels in total, namely:³⁴

³³ Udin Juhrocin, "Analisis Urf Terhadap Tradisi Mempelajari Ilmu Hikmah (Kanuragan) di Kalangan Para Kiyai di Pondok Pesantren," 2021, 14.

³⁴ Ulum, *Kitab Panduan Majelis Dzikir dan Taklim Jam'iyah "Ismul Haq" Nabdlatul Ulama*, 38–39.

First, *Asma' Dhiker* of Allah. This kind of *ijazah* is a collective religious reciting of *Asma' al-Dzikirullah* (*Ismul Haq*), with the verbal *dhiker*, breath, *sirr* (secretly in the heart), physical and spiritual *dhiker* so that students can be consistent in remembering Allah Swt., Furthermore, the practitioner will acquire the virtue (*ma'unnah*) of *kanuragan* or inner strength (knowledge that functions for self-defense), which is useful for overcoming problems that endanger themselves, surviving physical and mental attacks such as misleading mystical behaviors. Second, *Asma' Ketan* (Pulut). *Asma' Ketan* (Pulut) connects with a strong reflex movement (response) power, in times of danger it automatically has the sensitivity to avoid and avoid, has immune power from blunt and sharp objects, has the power to treat patients from a distance of both physical and mental illnesses. Third, *Asma' Punggung* (shoulder blade). *Asma' Rajah Punggung* will be useful for immunity and treatment, attacked from behind can automatically reject the opponent's attack from behind without resistance, thus making the opponent slammed/ bounce (rejected) by itself. For treatment that can be done is by taking *Asma'* from the back (shoulder blades) starting with the *dhiker* (remember) of Allah's memorization then the right hand takes *Asma'* from the back (shoulder blades) then blows on the patient's target (patient).

Fourth, *Asma' Dada* (chest). *Asma' Rajah Dada* (chest) will be useful for medical immunity attacked from the front can automatically reject the opponent without a fight, thus making the enemy bounce/ slammed (rejected) by itself, also useful for treatment, by taking *asma'* from the chest with the beginning of the *dhiker* of Allah blow on the target patient (patient). Fifth, *Palm Rajah*. The *Asma' rajah* of the right palm penetrates to the left palm, so it is useful for immunity and *mahabbah*, warding off blows from sharp/ blunt martial arts. *Mahabbah* towards commerce, business, trade. *Mahabbah* just by shaking hands with business partners moves Jinn/ subtle beings, has the power when treating someone just by holding hands. Sixth, *Asma' Face*. *Asma' face* benefits to have strength in the face so that it looks handsome, beautiful, admired by anyone, even radiating rays of *mahabbah* to friends and foes. To deal with anyone with the various communities. And Seventh, Specialty Level. At the special *ijazah*, a student will take *Tabib Ismul Haq's Ijazah*, where he will be able to master various concepts as well as the practice of the esoteric knowledge, especially in the treatment of esoteric experts.

The Tradition of Esoteric or *Hikmah* Knowledge in Pesantren

Esoteric knowledge refers to teachings and practices intended for or understood by a select group, often characterized by their hidden or secretive nature. The term “esoteric” originates from the Greek word “esōterikos,” meaning “inner” or “within,” contrasting with “exoteric,” which denotes knowledge accessible to the general public.³⁵ The relationship between *Pesantren* and *tarekat* (Sufi orders) is pivotal in imparting esoteric knowledge. In Java, for instance, *Pesantren* often function as places where the exoteric dimensions of Islam are taught, while *tarekat* provide structured paths for establishing the esoteric dimensions. This symbiotic relationship allows students to delve deeper into spiritual practices, fostering a comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings. Esoteric knowledge is part of a discipline that has connections with Sufism. Some parts of esoteric knowledge that are widely known include *wafaq*, *raja*, *isim*, *hizib* and others.

³⁵ John Beck, “Powerful knowledge, esoteric knowledge, curriculum knowledge,” *Cambridge Journal of Education* 43, no. 2 (Juni 2013): 177–93, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2013.767880>.

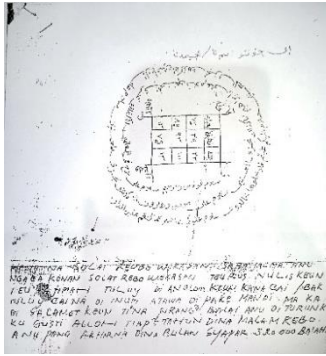


Figure 2: Example of Wafaq/Isim Rebo Wekasan KH. Ahmad Toha Mustawi

Source Personal Collection.

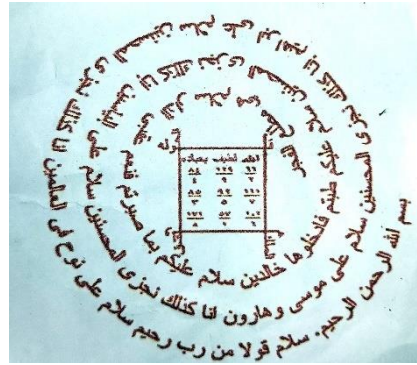


Figure 1: Example of Rebo Wekasan Wafaq/Isim KH. Kiagus Akbar Saman

Source Personal Collection.

Esoteric knowledge is a spiritual practice based on verses of the Quran, certain prayers, *hiẓib* accompanied by inner *riyadhah* to get closer to Allah Swt., and cleanse the soul from various impurities of the heart. The key in the esoteric knowledge is to attribute all the virtues to get the help and mercy of Allah Swt., so that in living, one is given safety, success, ease, happiness and all the good things needed, also so that one can *wushul* and *makrifat* to Allah Swt. Therefore, the essence of the esoteric knowledge is basically to get closer and surrender oneself completely to Allah, so that one does not feel capable at all, that he is nothing. As in the phrase *Ḥanqalah*, there is no power and effort that a person can do essentially except for the sake of Allah, the Almighty.³⁶

Getting closer and surrender to Allah Swt., both in esoteric and tasawwuf discourses, needs to build a connection and vibration to Allah Swt., usually a *Salik*, a people who walks in the path, goes through the recitation of *dhikr*. Some of recitations that have been taught by K.H. Kiagus Akbar Saman who is:

لا إله إلا الله لا موجد إلا الله

“In diu kieu ayeuna, abdi tapak damel Allah.”

لا إله إلا الله لا معبود إلا الله

“Dina qudrot anu ieu, abdi bakti ka dzat Allah.”

لا إله إلا الله لا مطلوب إلا الله

“Dipidamel kalakuan, pedah parentah dzat Allah.”

لا إله إلا الله لا مقصود إلا الله

“Dipidamel kalakuan, malah ridhona dzat Allah “

So from the meaning of *dhikr* can be taken wisdom that everything that exists and happens in his life in this world, essentially everything has been arranged by Allah.

The practice of *dhikr* (remembrance of God) is central to Sufi traditions and plays a pivotal role in facilitating esoteric knowledge (*ma'rifah*). Engaging in *dhikr* involves the repetitive invocation of divine names or phrases, aiming to purify the heart and mind, thereby fostering a deeper connection with the divine. This spiritual discipline is believed to lead to heightened states of consciousness, enabling practitioners to access hidden or inner dimensions of spiritual reality.³⁷

Scholarly analyses highlight that through consistent *dhikr*, Sufis seek to transcend the material realm, achieving closeness to God. This proximity is often associated with experiences

³⁶ Juhrodin, “Analisis Urf Terhadap Tradisi Mempelajari Ilmu Hikmah (Kanuragan) di Kalangan Para Kiyai di Pondok Pesantren,” 9.

³⁷ Roger Walsh, ed., “Reviving Wisdom: What Will It Take?” In *The World's Great Wisdom: Timeless Teachings from Religions and Philosophies* (State University of New York Press, 2013), 243–250, <https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.18254820>.

such as dreams, visions, and intuitive knowledge (*ma'rifah*), which are considered manifestations of esoteric understanding. Furthermore, the transformative impact of dhikr is evident in its ability to elicit emotional and embodied connections to the transcendent realm of divine reality and truth. Such experiences constitute the core of esoteric knowledge in Sufism, as they move beyond intellectual comprehension to direct, experiential awareness of the divine.³⁸

Some examples of this practice was visualized in Islamic History, such as Al-Ghazali who Bridged Islamic theology, philosophy, and Sufism, emphasizing that true knowledge involves inner enlightenment (*ilm ladunni*). Another one is Ibn Arabi: Known for his esoteric ideas, such as *wahdat al-wujud*, which delve into the mystical unity of existence. And the last one is Jalaluddin Rumi: Used esoteric symbolism in his poetry to describe divine love and the soul's journey.³⁹

According to Imam Al-Jurjani, the meaning of *al-Hikmah* linguistically means knowledge accompanied by charity (action), or words that are logical and clean from vanity. Someone who is an expert in esoteric knowledge is referred to as *al-Hakim*, or people whose words and actions are in accordance with what was taught by the Prophet Muhammad Saw. So in another sense, esoteric knowledge is a science that guides humans to recognize the teachings of Allah and His Messenger, so that they can know more deeply about the teachings of Islam. In the Pesantren itself, the science of wisdom is one part of the Pesantren tradition that cannot be separated and is still taught and preserved today.⁴⁰

In the process of learning esoteric knowledge, one of the things that must be considered is a *ijazah* and also the guidance of a teacher which is manifested in the term *sanad*. So as the scholars explained that the person who learns knowledge without a clear *sanad* from the teacher is like a person who collects firewood in the dark of the night, he carries a binder of firewood on which there are venomous snakes while he himself does not realize and know it. Then the urgency of the science of *sanad* itself according to Imam Abdullah bin Al-Mubarak is that the series of *sanads* is part of religion, because if it were not for maintaining the *sanad*, surely anyone would be able to say whatever he wanted to say. So the *sanad* and the teacher are very important and decisive⁴¹, a *sanad* that does not break its lineage is like a weapon for a believer.⁴²

Analysis of Esoteric Studies in the Practical Book of *Khizib Kubro Ismul Haq*

One part of the science of wisdom among others is *hizib* which is a type of *wirid* (practice) which contains a collection of prayers arranged systematically and regularly derived from a selection of verses of the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad Saw. In *Ismul Haq* Islamic Boarding School, the concept of wisdom is known as *Ismul Haq*, which is a series of divine science/ tauhid (*ushuluddin*) combined with respiratory martial arts and in it there is also the science of blazing, so a person can become Mujiz *Ismul Haq* if he understands and must be able to convey the knowledge contained in these teachings to his students. Islam pays great attention to the prohibition of shirk

³⁸ Paulo G. Pinto, "Mystical metaphors: ritual, symbols and self in Syrian Sufism," *Culture and Religion* 18, no. 2 (3 April 2017): 90–109, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14755610.2017.1326957>.

³⁹ Bernard T. Tervoort, "Esoteric Symbolism in the Communication Behavior of Young Deaf Children," *American Annals of the Deaf* 106, no. 5 (1961): 436–80.

⁴⁰ Maulana, Andaryuni, dan Hasan, "Penggunaan Rajah dan Waqaf Sebagai Azimat Pelaris Dagangan dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam (Studi Kasus Pasar Berkat di Loa Janan Ilir)," 2.

⁴¹ Mhd. Rasidin dkk., "Reading Rasyid Ailal's Perspective on Sahih Al-Bukhari: Methodology, Criticism, and Implication for Contemporary Muslims," *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 32, no. 1 (2024): 14–25, <https://doi.org/10.24014/jush.v32i1.24685>; Andri Nurjaman, Muhamad Yusuf, dan Doli Witro, "Islamic Boarding School People in Politics (Case Study of Miftahul Huda Islamic Boarding School Manonjaya Tasikmalaya)," *Inovasi-Jurnal Diklat Keagamaan* 15, no. 2 (2021): 160–69, <https://doi.org/10.52048/inovasi.v15i2.240>.

⁴² Ulum, *Kitab Panduan Majelis Dzikir dan Taklim Jam'iyah "Ismul Haq" Nabdlatul Ulama*, 10.

(associating partners with Allah) and it is a very big sin. Therefore, *hizib*, which is a type of wirid (practice), is practised and must be within the boundaries of true *tawhid* in accordance with Islamic teachings.

In practice, one of the practices of *Ismul Haq* is *Khizib Kubro Ismul Haq*. This *hizib* can be learnt through Ijazah and also the teaching of a teacher/ Mujiz. Therefore, students who have a wrong understanding of the potential for abuse or misuse and can even cause excessive dependence on *hizib* as a worldly solution must continue to be monitored by the Mujiz. Based on *Khizib Kubro*'s book, *Ismul Haq* is actually not much different from several other esoteric books such as *Syamsul Ma'arif's book* by Sheikh Ahmad bin Ali Al-Buni, which contain *wirid* practices in the form of prayers derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. As it is known that there are many properties contained in the verses of the Qur'an, which of course have been studied and taken the meaning and virtues of *sirr* (secrets) contained in selected verses which can be used as a means to obtain success, safety, and happiness, and even cure diseases both physically and mentally.⁴³ So that, the content of *Khizib Kubro Ismul Haq* derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah have been systematically arranged with various practices and rules as well as the efficacy that will be obtained, of course with the permission and pleasure of Allah SWT. Some critics can be thrown in order to look for the special character of *Ismul Haq*'s book that several aspects perhaps have similarity with other esoteric books.

In the book, there are many practices of prayer that can be practiced, one of which is like the practice of reading *Hizib Nashri* or *Al-Qabri* and accompanied by fasting for 7 days as an absolute recommended fasting. The fast coincides with the 1st-7th of the Islamic month or the 15th-22nd and on the last night a disciple does not sleep for one day and one night. Then in the morning he makes a *feast*, eating seven eggs, with the *khizib* recited three times. After fasting for one hundred days by reciting the *khizib* once every day, then after reaching 100 days it should be recited on every Friday and then it should be fasted for three days starting from Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday until Friday night without sleeping, eating, smoking reading the *khizib* 70 times, after reading it, also reciting the practice after maghrib and dawn once, then the virtues among them are: *First*, its efficacy for *kanuragan* (spirit energy), power, recited inhale then Allah will give strength; *Second*, the family of children and wives will be in a state of peace, away from bad luck; *Third*, household harmony; *Fourth*, people are happy with someone in commerce; *Fifth*, blessed sustenance including being able to issue infaq, alms or donations to those in need and so forth.

In the tradition of esoteric knowledge that developed in Pesantren's environment. The transmission of esoteric teaching is taught by Muslim cleric to his students, with the aim that it is expected to be one of the media and a guide and provision for students after they graduate and plunge into the community in practicing their knowledge through their da'wah activities. However, teaching related to the esoteric knowledge is exclusive, which is only followed on a limited basis based on the *ijazah* process and also *sanad* (authoritative lines).⁴⁴ Therefore, the role of the teacher is very important in learning esoteric knowledge. Because learning it is related to the mind and psychology, where what is learned everything is still vague, so it needs the guidance of a teacher or *mujiz* who can guide so as not to go astray and not damage the creed and Islamic law. Because what

⁴³ Ahmad bin Ali Al-Buni, *Syamsul Ma'arif Wa Latha'if 'Awarif* (Yogyakarta: Diva Press, 2020), 5.

⁴⁴ Joseph Hill, "Sufism Between Past and Modernity," dalam *Handbook of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Lives* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 1–26, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73653-2_9-1.

you want to achieve from learning esoteric is not just worldly success, but also getting a noble place in the side of Allah Swt.⁴⁵

Conclusion

Based on the results of literature review through the content analysis method. This study found at least several conclusions including; *First*, Pesantrens become one of the main pillars in reviving and developing Islamic traditions, one of which is the tradition of esoteric discourses taught by Muslim cleric, students and the surrounding community through various practices such as *Rajah* in the form of *Wafaq/ Isim* and *Hizib* which is a collection of prayers in which there are secrets and virtues. *Second*, commoners associate esoteric knowledge with mysticism. So, they tend to be negatively stigmatized, due to their lack of understanding of the esoteric knowledge, which only assesses the shell but does not study the content. *Third*, Islamic esoteric knowledge occupies a separate part of the discipline, where some of them are connected to tasawwuf which emphasizes intuition and taste, with the aim and intention that in certain conditions, it is used to attract a benefit and reject a harm for the practitioner. *Fourth*, one of the most vocal institutions teaching and spreading wisdom in Indonesia is the *Ismul Haq's Pesantren* located in Mojokerto and initiated by K.H. Bahrul Ulum. *Fifth*, practical book namely *Khizib Kubro Ismul Haq* is one of the esoteric books in which it is not much different from several other esoteric books such as *Syamsul Ma'arif's* book by Sheikh Ahmad bin Ali Al-Buni, which contain *wirid* practices in the form of prayers derived from the Quran and Sunnah. As it is known that there are many properties contained in the Quranic verses, which of course have been studied and taken the meaning and virtues of *sirr* (secrets) contained in selected verses which can be used as a means to obtain success, safety, and happiness, and even cure diseases both physically and mentally.

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⁴⁵ Juhrodin, "Analisis Urf Terhadap Tradisi Mempelajari Ilmu Hikmah (Kanuragan) di Kalangan Para Kiyai di Pondok Pesantren," 10–11.

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