

# Impact of Fasting as *Riyadhah* on Self-Control Among Islamic Boarding School Students in Yogyakarta

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## Abstract

Most Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) students believe that learning is not enough for them to benefit from their knowledge. *Riyadhah*, which involve fasting for a minimum of 3 years, is believed to be a common practice among students. During *riyadhah*, they train themselves to refrain from eating, drinking, anger, and things that break the fasting. It is vital to analyze the impact of these practices on students. This study examines the impact of fasting on self-control using a case study approach with 3 informants who practised *riyadhah* for years. The results showed that fasting trains students to control themselves and their emotions, giving meaning to gratitude and patience in life. Furthermore, *riyadhah* fasting increased emotional intelligence and self-maturity.

**Keywords:** *riyadhah* fasting; self-control; emotional intelligence

# Dampak *Riyadhah* Puasa pada Pengendalian Diri Santri Pondok Pesantren di Yogyakarta

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## Abstrak

Sebagian besar santri pondok pesantren meyakini bahwa untuk mendapatkan kebermanfaatannya ilmu mereka tidak cukup hanya belajar saja. Aspek lain yang mereka yakini harus dijalani adalah *riyadhah* yang salah satu bentuknya dengan puasa selama minimal tiga tahun. Selama melaksanakan *riyadhah* puasa ini, santri melatih diri untuk menahan makan, minum, marah, dan hal-hal yang dapat membatalkan puasa. Penelitian ini menganalisis dampak *riyadhah* puasa pada pengendalian diri. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus dengan tiga informan yang mengamalkan *riyadhah* puasa selama bertahun-tahun. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *riyadhah* puasa berperan dalam melatih santri untuk mengendalikan diri, melatih pengendalian emosi, dan memberi pemaknaan syukur dan sabar dalam hidup. Selain itu, *riyadhah* puasa juga meningkatkan kecerdasan emosional dan membentuk kematangan diri.

**Kata kunci:** *riyadhah* puasa; pengendalian diri; kecerdasan emosional

## INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding school students (*santri*) believe that there are three inseparable things in gaining knowledge: *mudzakarah* (learning), *khidmah* (serving) and *riyadhah* (concerning behavior).<sup>1</sup> These inseparable things will determine students success or failure in seeking knowledge. *Mudzakarah* is a common practice for students in

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Informant 3, student or *santri* practising *riyadhah* fasting at an Islamic boarding school in Yogyakarta, June 5, 2020.

educational institutions, such as *Islamic boarding school*. *Khidmah* could be devoted to teachers or knowledge, while *riyadhah* is only taught in *pesantren* education institutions.

Each Islamic boarding school has a different *riyadhah* method for its students to help controlling ego and desire. Consequently, when they complete education, students with great attention to *mudzakarah* will have good intellectual abilities, while those who are active in *khidmah* will devote themselves to society. Students with emphasis on *riyadhah* will become individuals with clean heart, mind, and behavior. According to *al-Ghazali*, this last thing is called *tazkiyatun nafs*, which means cleansing oneself, soul, and body from reprehensible traits.<sup>2</sup>

One form of *riyadhah* by Islamic boarding school students in Yogyakarta is fasting. This is refraining from something that cancels it from *fajr* (dawn) to *maghrib* (sunset), including eating, drinking, anger, lustful and dirty thoughts, sexual intercourse, and others.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, students practicing *riyadhah* fasting must control their lust, emotions, desires, and behavior from inappropriate things according to Islamic teachings.

This study examines the role of *riyadhah* fasting as a method of self-control. This is strange when people fast for a long period without a specific purpose and impact. Fasting *riyadhah* requires its performers to restrain from all biological desires and carried out for years, giving them a unique psychological experience.

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<sup>2</sup> Aliah B. Purwakania Hasan and Abas Mansur Tamam, "Konseling Adiksi Narkoba Di Pesantren Dengan Pendekatan Tazkiyatun Nafs Imam Al-Ghazali," *Konseling Religi: Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling Islam* 8, no. 2 (2017): 293-314, <https://doi.org/10.21043/kr.v8i2.2754>.

<sup>3</sup> Isma'īl R. Al Fārūqī, *Islam: Religion, Practice, Culture & World Order* (Herndon, Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2012), 35-39.

Several studies showed that fasting positively affect subjective well-being<sup>4</sup> including the santri's happiness.<sup>5</sup> Other study showed a significant difference between happiness before and after Ramadan fasting.<sup>6</sup> Another study further showed that there is a significant correlation between religiosity, health, and happiness.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, there is also a relationship between fasting and anger regulation level.<sup>8</sup>

Previous research showed is a relationship between fasting and self-control processes. Self-control could be defined as how individual manage emotions and desires. Since fasting was associated with the control concept, self-concept and self-control significantly correlated with the meaning of life.<sup>9</sup> However, specific research describing the relationship between fasting and self-control was limited. Based on this background, this study aimed to bridge these two concepts by

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<sup>4</sup> Ali Asghar Bayani, Robabeh Esmaili, and Ghorbanali Ganji, "The Impact of Fasting on the Psychological Well-Being of Muslim Graduate Students," *Journal of Religion and Health* 59, no. 6 (December 1, 2020): 3270-75, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-018-00740-3>; Rahel Stocker et al., "Fasten - Auswirkungen Auf Körper Und Psyche," *Praxis* 108, no. 9 (July 1, 2019): 593-97, <https://doi.org/10.1024/1661-8157/a003254>; Teodora Kiryakova-Dineva, Ruska Krasteva, and Yana Chankova, "Synergetic Effects Between Fasting, Well-Being and Anti-Consumption Within the Walls of Orthodox Monasteries and Outside Them," *British Food Journal* 121, no. 7 (January 1, 2019): 1467-79, <https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-04-2018-0243>.

<sup>5</sup> Pipih Muhopilah, Witrin Gamayanti, and Elisa Kurniadewi, "Hubungan Kualitas Puasa Dan Kebahagiaan Santri Pondok Pesantren Al-Ihsan," *JPIB: Jurnal Psikologi Islam Dan Budaya* 1, no. 1 (2018): 5-56, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpib.v1i1.2071>.

<sup>6</sup> Seyed Ali Mousavi et al., "The Effects of Fasting on the Level of Happiness in the General Population of Kermanshah, Iran," *Journal of Nutrition, Fasting and Health* 3, no. 1 (March 1, 2015): 29-34, <https://doi.org/10.22038/jfh.2015.4350>.

<sup>7</sup> Ahmed M. Abdel-Khalek, "Quality of Life, Subjective Well-Being, and Religiosity in Muslim College Students," *Quality of Life Research* 19, no. 8 (October 1, 2010): 1133-43, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11136-010-9676-7>.

<sup>8</sup> Very Julianto and Pipih Muhopila, "Hubungan Puasa Dan Tingkat Regulasi Kemarahan," *Psymphatic: Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi* 2, no. 1 (2015): 32-40, <https://doi.org/10.15575/psy.v2i1.445>.

<sup>9</sup> Muhammad Ghozali Ma'ruf, "Hubungan Konsep Diri Dan Self Control Dengan Kebermaknaan Hidup," *Indonesian Psychological Research* 1, no. 1 (January 19, 2019): 11-24, <https://doi.org/10.29080/ipr.v1i1.166>.

analyzing how *riyadhah* fasting correlate with happiness, anger regulation, self-control, and life meaning among santri.

## **METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study perspective<sup>10</sup> to find a relationship between *riyadhah* fasting and self-control. Efforts to examine this relationship are closely related to Islamic boarding schools' physical, psychological, social, and cultural aspects. Therefore, this research uses a qualitative approach to understand the research subjects, including behavior, experience, location, motivation, and action.<sup>11</sup>

The case study research method was used to study the situation and position background of an event and the interaction of a given social unit environment intensively.<sup>12</sup> In this case, the study subject is *a riyadhah* fasting practitioner for years. The research subjects could be individuals, groups, institutions, or communities. Although it is relatively limited, the variables and focus studied are very broad in dimensions.<sup>13</sup> A case study is an in-depth analysis of a particular social unit. Hence, this research describes the findings from informants due to their interaction with an Islamic boarding school environment and

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<sup>10</sup> Thomas A. Schwandt and Emily F. Gates, "Case Study Methodology," in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc., 2017).

<sup>11</sup> Susanne Kaae et al., "Development of a Qualitative Exploratory Case Study Research Method to Explore Sustained Delivery of Cognitive Services," *Pharmacy World & Science* 32, no. 1 (October 13, 2009): 36, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11096-009-9337-5>.

<sup>12</sup> Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie and Nancy L. Leech, "Generalization Practices in Qualitative Research: A Mixed Methods Case Study," *Quality & Quantity* 44, no. 5 (August 1, 2010): 881-92, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-009-9241-z>.

<sup>13</sup> Arch G. Woodside and Elizabeth J. Wilson, "Case Study Research Methods for Theory Building," *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing* 18, no. 6/7 (January 1, 2003): 493-508, <https://doi.org/10.1108/08858620310492374>.

the awareness formed. The research results provide a broad and in-depth description of a particular social unit.<sup>14</sup>

The informants were three Islamic boarding school students in Yogyakarta that were undergoing *riyadhah* fasting for years. Research observations were carried out in one of the complexes at the boarding school. Data were collected through observation and interviews and were then reinforced using secondary literature. Disclosure of data was carried out using a descriptive approach by exploring and clarifying a social reality which forms data in a certain natural context.<sup>15</sup> This was followed by displaying secondary data sources from other studies to confirm the field findings.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

For some Islamic boarding school communities and Javanese Muslims, fasting is not only a form of *sharia* implementation. Instead, it has become part of the tradition to get closer to the God the Creator.<sup>16</sup> Three informants in this study have different *riyadhah* fasting. Informant 1 stated that he was undergoing *riyadhah dahr* fasting, also known as *nahun* fasting. This fasting should be carried out for three years with a special reciting practice every day based on an *ijazah* or *Kyai* permission. When it is stopped even for one day, the practitioner should repeat from the beginning, except when fasting is

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<sup>14</sup> Sudhakar Teegavarapu, Joshua D. Summers, and Gregory M. Mocko, "Case Study Method for Design Research: A Justification" (ASME 2008 International Design Engineering Technical Conferences and Computers and Information in Engineering Conference, American Society of Mechanical Engineers Digital Collection, 2009), 495–503, <https://doi.org/10.1115/DETC2008-49980>.

<sup>15</sup> James A. Holstein, "Advancing a Constructionist Analytics," in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc., 2017).

<sup>16</sup> Johan Saputra, "Ngrowot Dan Tazkiyatun Nafs (Studi Manfaat Ngrowot Untuk Pembersihan Jiwa Di Kalangan Santri Asrama Perguruan Islam (API) Pondok Pesantren Salaf Tegalrejo Magelang Jawa Tengah)" (Master thesis, Yogyakarta, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2018), <http://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/32436/>.

prohibited. Fasting is prohibited during two days of Eid (Eid al-Fithr and Eid al-Adha) and days of *tasyrik* days (three days after Eid al-Adha).

Informant 3 stated that he had been practising *riyadhah* fasting for nine years since 2011, as well as *riyadhah dalail*. This is because a *dalail* fasting practitioner should practice *shalawat* reading and the prayer in the *dalailul khairat* book every day. This fasting should be observed for a minimum of three years without interruption. However, Informant 3 has been practising the fasting for almost nine years without stopping.

The *riyadhah* carried out by Informant 2 is the *dahr* fasting that needs to run for at least one year without breaking. After one year, when Informant 2 still wants to continue fasting, he was asked to return to the *Kyai* to obtain the *ijazah*. Previously, Informant 2 had performed a *mutih* fasting, a *riyadhah* in which a practitioner only eats rice without spices and plain water. According to Informant 2, this fast is very difficult, and they are only able to perform it for 20 out of the required 41 days.

There are other forms of fasting in Javanese tradition, including *ngebleng*, *pati geni*, *kungkum*, *ngalong*, *samber nyawa*, *ngeluwang*, and *ngrowot*. They all aim to practice spiritual sensitivity, as well as lust and self-control. Furthermore, every *riyadhah* fasting needs to be based on a *Kyai* or spiritual teacher's *ijazah*, with some prayers and practices that should be read. People believe that a *riyadhah* practitioner may not be strong and insane when it is not based on a message.<sup>17</sup>

## **NAFS: A LITTLE BABY THAT SHOULD BE WEANED**

The Holy Qur'an mentioned that the *nafs* that can be the source of all badness as *al-nafs al ammarah bi al-su'* (*nafs* that continues to push

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with Informant 1, June 5, 2020.

towards evil). Since *nasf al-syaithaniyyah* is very strong, Rasulullah PBUH called it flowing with the human bloodstream.<sup>18</sup> Rasulullah's trickery is very great that only a very *wara'* (careful not to go overboard) person is able to escape it.<sup>19</sup>

Human need, which inspires a person into action, arises from intuition or worry. According to Al-Ghazali, there are four types of intuition that whisper to the heart. First, the whisper of the heart called *khatir* comes from Allah SWT, filled with goodness. Second, the whisper of the heart usually received by humans is called lust, from which arises the desire for everything, including heaven or reward. Third, the whisper of the Angel Mulhin, which brings goodness, is an advisor to people and is also called *irshad* (guidance). In other languages, it is also called knowledge of *ladunni*, *al-'ilm al-yaqin*. Fourth, the devil's whisper called *waswasah* or *khatir an-nafs* is a misleading evil that hinders goodness.<sup>20</sup>

The *nafs* is like a baby being weaned, struggling when requested is not given.<sup>21</sup> *Riyadhah* fasting is essential as a method of controlling lust and self. This is because it helps one understand the nature of fasting and the importance of controlling lust, which has the potential to destroy (*muhlikah*). Self-control is the ability to actively and deliberately regulate, limit, or delay emotional impulses, thoughts, or behaviors to achieve greater future rewards.

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<sup>18</sup> Narrated by Al-Bukhari No. 3281 and Muslim No. 2175.

<sup>19</sup> Haidar Bagir, *Buku Saku Tasawuf* (Bandung: Mizan : Pustaka IIMaN, 2006), 46-47.

<sup>20</sup> Ömür Karsli, "The Meaning, Position and Limit Problem of Intuition in Al-Ghazali [Gazalî de Sezginin Anlami, Konumu Ve Siniri Sorunu]," *The Journal of Academic Social Science Studies* 9, no. 62 (January 1, 2017): 497-509, <https://doi.org/10.9761/JASSS7263>; Hatice P. Kemahlı, "Four Inclinations in Human Nature: Evaluated in Light of Al-Ghazzâlî's Concept of the Heart," *Spiritual Psychology and Counseling* 2, no. 1 (2017): 9-30, <https://doi.org/10.12738/spc.2017.1.0016>.

<sup>21</sup> Zakiyuddin Al-Mundziri, *At-Tarhib Wa At-Tarhib*, 3th Edition, vol. 1 (Cairo, Egypt: Maktabah Musthafa Al-Babi Al-Halbi, 1968), 286.



The primary purpose of *riyadhah* fasting is to practice *nafs* control, self-control and become spiritual. In Sufism, several *maqamat* or paths are followed by a *salik* to achieve a certain spiritual position before Allah. This position is obtained through hard work of worship, earnest fight against lust (*mujahada*), and spiritual practices (*riyadhah*) for a *salik* (practitioner) to achieve character nobility (manners).<sup>22</sup>

Sufism recognizes theoretical (*nazhari*) and practical ('*amali*) aspects. The practical aspects of Sufism include how humans relate to themselves, the world, and God. In this case, attaining noble Islamic morals requires a *salik* (seeker) to transcend the three educational domains, including cognitive (intellectual), affective (emotional) and practice.<sup>23</sup> Realizing the importance of good character is not enough due to a significant lust disturbance (*al-nafs al-ammarah bi al-su'*) that continuously seduces humans. Therefore, a strict practice discipline (*riyadhah*) is needed for cognitive awareness and emotional excitement to truly create Islamic morals.

Being involved with a religion can promote self-control in general as suggested by previous works.<sup>24</sup> Other studies also indicates

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<sup>22</sup> Nur Indah Rahmawati, "Terapi Jiwa Dan Pembentukan Sikap Positif "Wara" Melalui Puasa Sunnah," *Konseling Edukasi : Journal of Guidance and Counseling* 1, no. 1 (December 4, 2017): 148-68, <https://doi.org/10.21043/konseling.v1i1.4433>; Alif Mu'arifah and Sri Mulyani Martaniah, "Hubungan Keteraturan Menjalankan Sholat Dan Puasa Senin Kamis Dengan Agresivitas," *Humanitas: Indonesian Psychological Journal* 1, no. 2 (2004): 10-24, <https://doi.org/10.26555/humanitas.v1i2.20278>; Bagir, *Buku Saku Tasawuf*, 131-32.

<sup>23</sup> Garry W. Trompf, "Gnostic Islam: Transformations of Classic Gnostic Speculation in Muslim Thought | Trompf |," *Journal for the Academic Study of Religion* 33, no. 2 (2020): 119-33, <https://doi.org/10.1558/jasr.42429>; Dejan Aždajić, "Theology in Action: Gaining Interdisciplinary Insights from a Sufi Perspective," *Practical Theology* 13, no. 5 (September 2, 2020): 452-65, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2020.1778250>; Bagir, *Buku Saku Tasawuf*, 41-43.

<sup>24</sup> Kevin Rounding et al., "Religion Replenishes Self-Control," *Psychological Science* 23, no. 6 (June 1, 2012): 635-42, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797611431987>; Michael E. McCullough and Brian L. B. Willoughby, "Religion, Self-Regulation, and Self-Control: Associations, Explanations, and Implications," *Psychological Bulletin* 135, no. 1 (2009): 69-93, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0014213>.

the importance of fasting for controlling selves which in turn beneficial for social life.<sup>25</sup> Islam teaches Muslims to resist the desire for something when they want it. Fasting teaches that the desires related to consumption and those from emotions need to be controlled.

## SELF-CONTROL CONCEPT

Self-control is the individual's ability to override or change mental reactions to stop unwanted behavior or refrain from acting impulsively without long-term thinking. It is also the ability to delay the desire to obtain smaller results for bigger future outcomes. In other words, self-control is the ability to expect long-term happiness with a greater achievement value. It is reflected in the ability to let go of this direct desire. Hence, self-control is a change in behavioral patterns that prevent or inhibit the dominant response.<sup>26</sup> Self-control is related to the cognitive role of a person in the prevention of risky behavior.<sup>27</sup>

The two main self-control aspects are effort and inhibition of oneself from internal and external impulses. This strategy allows a person to create an environment and certain standards compatible with their long-term goals. An example of such a strategy is proactive avoidance. People with high self-control behave to avoid temptation and, when given a choice, they choose what they need. Avoiding

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<sup>25</sup> Ellen Watkins and Lucy Serpell, "The Psychological Effects of Short-Term Fasting in Healthy Women," *Frontiers in Nutrition* 3 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2016.00027>; Mohammad Akram, "Meaning and Significance of Fasting in Comparative Perspective – A Study with Special Reference to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam," *Hamdard Islamicus* 39, no. 2 (2021): 37-60.

<sup>26</sup> Marleen Gillebaart, "The 'Operational' Definition of Self-Control," *Frontiers in Psychology* 9 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01231>.

<sup>27</sup> Ragwan Mohsen Alaydrus, "Membangun Kontrol Diri Remaja Melalui Pendekatan Islam dan Neuroscience," *Psikologika: Jurnal Pemikiran dan Penelitian Psikologi* 22, no. 2 (July 1, 2017): 15-27, <https://doi.org/10.20885/psikologika.vol22.iss2.art2>.

temptation early enough enhances self-control because the regulations applied to minimize the incidences of impulsive behavior.<sup>28</sup>

## ASPECTS OF SELF-CONTROL IN FASTING

### Fasting to Control Emotions

The real purpose of fasting is to refrain from worldly egos, self-control and to control spiritual lust. This aligns with what was conveyed by informant 2. At the beginning of fasting, Informant 2 was easily ignited by emotions when there are disturbing things, as seen in the following statement:

“They usually tend to be emotional. They are in the habit of never fasting. Therefore, when they really want to reproach when fasting, they withstand it until they break the fast. When it is sunset, they eat, and the anger disappears. Their emotions are controlled, and they adjust themselves.”<sup>29</sup>

This excessive emotional charge was restrained and controlled because Informant 2 realized he was a *shaim* (a fasting person). He also realized that one of the benchmarks for the success of a *shaim's* fasting was controlling emotions. This awareness made Informant 2 withstand anger, though it was heavy and required practice to get used to. The heavy burden as a *shaim* was also recognized by Informant 1.

“Humans cannot escape from desire and lust. They only control, but they cannot throw away. *Riyadhah* fasting is beneficial in

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<sup>28</sup> Iris K. Schneider, Marleen Gillebaart, and André Mattes, “Meta-Analytic Evidence for Ambivalence Resolution as a Key Process in Effortless Self-Control,” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 85 (November 1, 2019): 103846, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2019.103846>; Kaitlyn M. Werner and Marina Milyavskaya, “Motivation and Self-Regulation: The Role of Want-to Motivation in the Processes Underlying Self-Regulation and Self-Control,” *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 13, no. 1 (2019): e12425, <https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12425>.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Informant 2, June 5, 2020

learning to control lust. A burden of being a *shaim* is not easy. Moreover, during the day when the weather is hot, a friend brings a drink, they are also tempted. However, they are used to it because 3 years is a adjusting period for someone. The results are felt in the fourth or fifth year, where the lust is more restrained. Life does not have to be monotonous, there are variations, but don not let it get out of the corridor and its boundaries.”<sup>30</sup>

Self-control is the ability to cultivate good behavior, cognitive management, and sound decision-making. This includes the ability to control emotions and frustrations.<sup>31</sup> In other words, people with self-control can manage stimuli and respond to their abilities. This aspect has two indicators: self-regulation and stimulus modifiability<sup>32</sup>. Self-regulation or the ability to decide whether to control the situation individually or use external sources. In this case, fasting is in the first position, whereby the individual controls the situation through their abilities.<sup>33</sup>

The ability to modify the stimulus or to know how and when unwanted stimulus have to be faced and to be diverted.<sup>34</sup> The ability to control good behavior is trained by performing *riyadhah* fasting. It helps them in controlling the stimulus by choosing the right response

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<sup>30</sup> Interview with Informants 1, June 5, 2020.

<sup>31</sup> Yahya Ad and Megalia Megalia, “Pengaruh Konseling Kognitif Behavior Therapy (CBT) Dengan Teknik Self Control Untuk Mengurangi Perilaku Agresif Peserta Didik Kelas VIII Di SMPN 9 Bandar Lampung Tahun Pelajaran 2016/2017,” *KONSELI: Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling (E-Journal)* 3, no. 2 (2016): 133–46.

<sup>32</sup> Mukhtar, Syamsu Yusuf, and Amin Budiamin, “Program Layanan Bimbingan Klasikal Untuk Meningkatkan Self-Control Siswa,” *Psikopedagogia Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling* 5, no. 1 (June 1, 2016): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.12928/psikopedagogia.v5i1.4473>.

<sup>33</sup> Ma’ruf, “Hubungan Konsep Diri Dan Self Control Dengan Kebermaknaan Hidup.”

<sup>34</sup> Ratna Wulaningsih and Nurul Hartini, “Hubungan Antara Persepsi Pola Asuh Orang Tua Dan Kontrol Diri Remaja Terhadap Perilaku Merokok Di Pondok Pesantren,” *Jurnal Psikologi Klinis Dan Kesehatan Mental* 4, no. 2 (2015): 119–26.

to eliminate emotional outbursts. This ability is needed to implement positive values and achieve life happiness.

An informant explained another fasting that influences fluctuating feelings in of the one who practice fasting (*shaim*). Informant 3, having been fasting for almost 9 years, continuously practices the *shalawat* contained in the *Dalalilul Khairat*, a famous book for students in Islamic boarding school.<sup>35</sup> The Kyai who gave certificate to practice fasting emphasized that reciting the *shalawat* would help calm the heart.

“There was a belief that fasting make the body hot and the heart unrest. However, beside fasting, I also perform other practices, such as *wirid* and *shalawat*. It tends to make the heart calm. Accordingly, when I do *riyadhah* fasting, I tend to control my anger. When I feel blessed, I am happy. But when I get something wrong, I just feel a sadness normal. Overall, I tend to feel normal just by being happy and enjoying my life.”<sup>36</sup>

*Riyadhah* fasting and *shalawat* create happiness and serenity in the soul. Informant's fasting for 3 years fills them with happiness, and they enjoy life journey in pleasant and unpleasant situations.

### **Fasting to Practice Patience and Gratitude**

In Arabic, the word *shabr* has the same meaning as *imsak*, *man'u* or *kaffu*, which means restrain or prevent.<sup>37</sup> Fasting, which comes from the word *shaum*, also implies *imsak*, *man'u* and *kaffu*, which means restrain or prevent.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, *riyadhah* requires one to refrain from

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<sup>35</sup> Abdul Jalil, “Modal Sosial Pelaku Dalail Khairat,” *Dialog* 38, no. 1 (June 30, 2015): 41-50, <https://doi.org/10.47655/dialog.v38i1.33>.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Informants 3, June 5, 2020.

<sup>37</sup> Ahmad Warson Munawwir, *Kamus Al-Munawwir Arab-Indonesia Terlengkap* (Surabaya: Pustaka Progressif, 1997), 760.

<sup>38</sup> Munawwir, 843.

eating, drinking, anger, immorality, and other things that invalidate fasting as an indirect method of practicing patience.

People that perform the *riyadhah* fasting are trained the whole day to be patient when hungry, control anger, and avoid immorality. Therefore, when the time to break the fast comes, they are grateful for the fortune received, the pleasure of eating, and all the gifts of Allah SWT. Patience and gratitude were obtained by *shaim*, as explained by Informant 1:

“Because I used to endure hunger, I learned two things: patience and gratitude. Patience is useful in any difficult conditions, and being grateful every time I have something to eat.”<sup>39</sup>

Al-Ghazali in *Minhaj Ath-Thalibin* stated 3 kinds of patience, including when undergoing trials, obedience, and refraining from immorality.<sup>40</sup> Alquran in *At-Tahrim surah* explains that *whoever is obedient to Allah, Allah will guide him to a way out and give him a fortune from an unexpected way*. Al-Ghazali interpreted the verse as whosoever obeys Allah by undergoing patience, Allah guides them out of difficult situations (trials).<sup>41</sup> Piety could be defined by obeying Allah's commands and avoiding immorality. In this case, patience includes undergoing trials, obedience, as well as refraining from immorality, and their practice is in the *riyadhah* fasting.

Essentially, fasting is self-control from the prohibited things and contains patience, perseverance, and exercising the practitioner's heart. Previous research showed that there is an aspect of self-control

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<sup>39</sup> Interview with Informants 1, June 5, 2020.

<sup>40</sup> Indrawati Noor Kamila and Ujang Endang, “Relevansi Tujuan Pendidikan Islam Dengan Konsep Sabar Menurut Imam Al-Gazâli Dalam Kitab *Ihya Ulumuddin*,” *Tarbiyat Al-Aulad : Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini* 1, no. 2 (May 15, 2018): 59–70.

<sup>41</sup> Imam Abu Hamid Muhammad Al-Ghazali, *Minhaj Al-Abidin Ila Jannati Rabbi'l-Alamin: The Path of the Worshipful Servants to the Garden of the Lord of All the Worlds*, trans. Muhtar Holland (Oakland Park, Florida: Al-Baz Publishing, 2011).

in fasting.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, good fasting leads the practitioner to a higher level of happiness.<sup>43</sup> Informant 1 feels grateful for any fortune as a gift from Allah, apart from the patience learned. Moreover, they felt more appreciative of the little things in life. As Allah says: "*lain syakartum laazidannakum, wa lain kafartum inna 'adzabi lasyadid*; If you are all grateful, I will certainly add (fortune), and if you are kufr (blessings), then (please know that my *adzab* is very painful)". Also, Allah views that when there are many things in life to be grateful for, it increases true happiness, according to what is felt.

"... related to the happiness, people have different opinion. The important thing is the grateful for any grace. I was trained to be grateful for abundant wealth. It should not be any incident that is not correlated with patience and gratitude. It is trained how they were patient when hungry. When it is time to break the fast, they should be grateful for everything, regardless of the amount, whatever its form. I have to be grateful for everything."<sup>44</sup>

*Riyadhoh* fasting trains one to care for others, apart from practicing patience and gratitude. A *shaim* is hungry and thirsty, trains their soul to relax, listen to inner voices, and exercise self-introspection. There are still many people with difficulties in eating even a single bite. However difficult the test was, *shaim* trained to feel what they felt. This was felt by Informant 2.

"After undergoing fasting, about true happiness, that power trains them to be sensitive, to feel what people whose lives are harder than what they feel. When people eat for a living, by fasting they try to feel what they feel, at least by eating less. From

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<sup>42</sup> Haidar Djemai et al., "Self-Coping Strategies Among Jordanian Athletes During Ramadan Fasting: A Questionnaire Proposal," *Asian Journal of Sports Medicine* 11, no. 4 (December 31, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.5812/asjasm.105569>.

<sup>43</sup> Mehdi Zare Bahram Abadi et al., "The Effect of Islamic Fasting in Quran on Spiritual Intelligence and Happiness of Fasting Persons," *Quran & Medicine* 1, no. 3 (2012): 66-70, <https://doi.org/10.5812/quranmed.8030>.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Informant 1, June 5, 2020.

there, they are grateful for Allah's blessings, as they enjoy them, at a minimum. <sup>45</sup>

### **Fasting to Increase Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional intelligence is the ability to feel a person, and its key lies in one's honesty to listen to their heart. Conscience is a guide for one's action and what to follow. People with high emotional intelligence quickly establish and build relationships with others. Hence, a person's emotional intelligence is reflected in their social skills.<sup>46</sup>

There are two essential aspects that determine human behaviour: the mind (*'aql*) and heart (*qalb*). Moreover, intellect is useful for reasoning the base and *kauniyah* verses.<sup>47</sup> The heart is the leader of all body organs, determines human personality, and controls good as well as bad compulsive behavior.<sup>48</sup> The *hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad SAW stated that there is a lump of flesh in humans and, when it is good, it is for the whole body. When it is damaged, then the whole body is damaged. That lump of meat is a heart.

There are five components in emotional intelligence, including self-introduction, self-control, motivation, empathy, and social skills.<sup>49</sup> These components are the benchmarks for a person's emotional intelligence. The authors mentioned the components of self-control, while empathy has been discussed in the statement by Informant 2.

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<sup>45</sup> Interview with Informant 2, June 5, 2020.

<sup>46</sup> Putri Damayanti and Haryanto Haryanto, "Kecerdasan Emosional dan Kualitas Hubungan Persahabatan," *Gajah Mada Journal of Psychology (GamaJoP)* 3, no. 2 (February 7, 2019): 86-97, <https://doi.org/10.22146/gamajop.43440>.

<sup>47</sup> Al-Ghazali, *Minhaj Al-Abidin Ila Jannati Rabbi'l-Alamin: The Path of the Worshipful Servants to the Garden of the Lord of All the Worlds*.

<sup>48</sup> Alaydrus, "Membangun Kontrol Diri Remaja Melalui Pendekatan Islam dan Neuroscience."

<sup>49</sup> Damayanti, P., & Haryanto, H. (2019). Kecerdasan Emosional dan Kualitas Hubungan Persahabatan..., p. 9.



Regarding the self-introduction component, Informant 1 stated that *Riyadhah* fasting means practising self-recognition and identifying what needs should be met.

"When they only eat one plate, why eat two plates? What for? Those trained during fasting know better which ones are their needs, which ones are their desires. Also, the problem of clothes, when they suppose that they already have 7 sarongs, 10 clothes for example, then look at the shop, someone is interested in it, there is a desire to buy, and finally comes back again, to "those needs," is it true they need clothes? Wear that? " well, it would be more sensitive later. The benefits of fasting get you to know yourself better. "<sup>50</sup>

Knowing yourself and being sensitive to actual needs to be met, fasting familiarizes Informant 1 in making various crucial life decisions. Informant 1 is also able to set the priority scale of needs.

"Later, the relation to decisions related to what needs they buy is what they really need. At least you know, what are the benefits of *Riyadhah* fasting for yourself, you know what needs should be met and which ones should be abandoned. "<sup>51</sup>

The faster and more diligent person is always sensitive and listens to everything with their heart, developing their emotional intelligence.

### **Fasting Builds Self Maturity**

A *Shaim* is able to recognize himself through emotional intelligence, controls emotions, and determines life priorities. Regularity in fasting during these years gave birth to psychological maturity. This is achieved when a person accepts themselves and utilize their abilities according to their social function. Psychological

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<sup>50</sup> Interview with Informant 1, June 5, 2020.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Informant 1, June 5, 2020.

or emotional maturity has several indicators, including emotional stability and development, social adjustment, integrated personality, and self-freedom.<sup>52</sup>

Emotional stability relates to people that are not easily frustrated and are able to embrace problems. On the other hand, emotional development is related to feeling comfortable with the current condition, never feeling bad luck, not blaming others for one's own mistakes, and never tiring from the conditions experienced. Social adjustment concerns the ability to adapt to interacting with anyone. Moreover, integrated personality relates to someone not pessimistic about their life and admits their shortcomings. On the other hand, self-freedom relates to someone free to make behavioral choices without coercion.<sup>53</sup>

Hence, a mature person is able to achieve a happy life. Some of these indicators were felt by Informant 1 after undergoing the *Riyadhah* fasting for three consecutive years. They became trained and found happiness in life according to their understanding. Informant 3 said:

"What is clear is that when they are fasting, they know better, when humans are weak, very weak, there is nothing. They do not eat a day, they are limp. They realize that they are weak human beings. There is no reason to be proud, feel great, 'admire themselves, be proud of themselves. They do not have many thoughts. In living this life they are calm, slow, and not easily

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<sup>52</sup> Yasmin Nindiyasari and Tin Herawati, "The Relation of Emotional Maturity, Family Interaction and Marital Satisfaction of Early Age Married Couples," *Journal of Family Sciences* 3, no. 2 (2018): 16-29, <https://doi.org/10.29244/jfs.3.2.16-29>.

<sup>53</sup> K.P. Sheeja, A. Arunmozhi, and N.M. Francis, "Study on the Effect of Emotional Maturity on Marital Adjustment Among Couples in Kerala," *Journal of Critical Reviews* 7, no. 17 (2020): 1351-58, <https://doi.org/10.31838/jcr.07.17.174>; A. Saffarpour and M. Sharifi, "Comparing Emotional Maturity and Marital Satisfaction in Married Men Having Healthy and Unhealthy Inference from Their Family-of-Origin Employed in Tehran Oil Company," *Life Science Journal* 10, no. SUPPL. 7 (2013): 152-59.

stressed by the surrounding pressure. Because are used to facing the pressure of hunger, should be trained for at least 3 years.”<sup>54</sup>

Informant 2 became more *Nrimo Ing Pandum* (fully accepting themselves) pleased with Allah's decrees, whether good or bad. In understanding the true happiness in life, informant 2 stated that after *Riyadhah* fasting, they became calmer and no longer under the control of external factors.

“True happiness is when they do not have many thoughts. In living this life, they are calm, slow. Not easily stressed by environmental pressures. After undergoing this exercise through fasting, because they are used to facing the pressure of hunger. For example,, when they only need to eat one plate, why should they eat two plates? Therefore, there would be no full sense of belonging. In the sense of being greedy, it would surely die by itself because it is accustomed to living, as it is, living simply is not necessary, not having to have this, having this, which is of no benefit and dirty thoughts. Self-control is more honed.”<sup>55</sup>

## CONCLUSION

For those performing *Riyadhah* fasting, it is not only a verbal ritual, though they intend to practice *lillahi ta'ala* when fasting. The *Riyadhah* fasting, which they lived for years, is also self-control education. Worshipping requires them to refrain from excessive eating and drinking, controlling emotions, and exercising sensitivity to their environment.

All self-control practices carried out continuously for three or more years eventually lead to emotional intelligence development. This is because, by fasting, they are able to contemplate, interpret life and hear what the heart says (*qalb*). They mature psychologically,

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<sup>54</sup> Interview with Informant 1, June 5, 2020.

<sup>55</sup> Interview with Informant 2, June 5, 2020.

become patient with trials, give thanks for every blessing, accept themselves, and use it for ultimate simple happiness.

Qualitative research with a case study approach is still limited to the number of informants and the diversity of their behavior. Research on Islamic studies needs to be conducted to examine how Islamic institutions' education answers the challenges of changing times. At this time of mental health problems, there is a tendency for Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) due to technological development and increased access to digital information.

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