

Building the Mental of Santri Through 40 Days of Sunnah Fasting (A Study at Pondok Pesantren Darul Amanah Sukorejo Kendal)

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Abstract

Intellectual education needs to be balanced with mental development to prevent students (santri) from experiencing inner conflicts and psychosomatic disorders. Fasting is one method of purifying the soul and a source of inner peace through drawing closer to Allah SWT. The 40 day sunnah fasting practiced at Pondok Pesantren Darul Amanah Sukorejo Kendal significantly contributes to shaping students' social sensitivity, self-confidence, self-control, patience, honesty, and emotional stability. This practice serves as a preventive strategy against psychological pressure rooted in the dominance of desires, which is the main cause of mental disorders. Therefore, the 40 day fasting plays a vital role in stabilizing mental health and optimizing the development of students' personality in a productive and dynamic manner

Keywords: Mental, Santri, 40 day Fasting

Abstrak

Pendidikan intelektual perlu diimbangi dengan pembinaan mental agar santri terhindar dari konflik batin dan gangguan psikosomatis. Puasa menjadi salah satu cara penyucian jiwa dan sumber ketenangan batin melalui pendekatan diri kepada Allah SWT. Puasa sunnah 40 hari yang diterapkan di Pondok Pesantren Darul Amanah Sukorejo Kendal berkontribusi signifikan dalam membentuk kepekaan sosial, kepercayaan diri, pengendalian diri, kesabaran, kejujuran, serta stabilitas emosi santri. Praktik ini menjadi strategi preventif terhadap tekanan psikologis yang bersumber dari dominasi dorongan nafsu, yang merupakan akar gangguan mental. Dengan demikian, puasa 40 hari berperan dalam menstabilkan kesehatan mental dan mengoptimalkan pengembangan kepribadian santri secara produktif dan dinamis.

Kata Kunci: Mental, Santri, Puasa 40 Hari.

A. Introduction

Humans are born in a state of purity (fitrah), but sins can arise due to environmental influences and desires that overpower reason. Sins such as lying, cheating, corruption, and adultery go against the conscience and can damage mental health. A pious person will avoid such actions because piety (taqwa) means obeying Allah's commands and avoiding His prohibitions. Therefore, preserving one's fitrah and controlling desires are key to maintaining mental and spiritual health.¹ A vulnerable social environment encourages the emergence of aggressive and deviant behavior among students. This is evident in the decline of morals and manners that conflict with religious values and local cultural traditions,² This indicates the existence of mental health problems among the santri.

Intellectual education must be balanced with mental development to prevent santri from experiencing inner conflicts that may trigger mental disorders. Prolonged mental disturbances can affect physical health, leading to psychosomatic illnesses that cannot be cured without restoring emotional balance.³ Fasting is one method of spiritual purification taught by religion; besides being an act of worship, it also serves as a therapy for mental disorders. Through fasting and drawing closer to Allah SWT, a person can attain inner peace. Fasting plays an important role as a means of self-control in the life of a santri, especially in restraining physical and psychological impulses. An individual's inability to control internal needs can trigger mental health problems, particularly in those who are spiritually weak. Faith embedded in one's personality becomes the main instrument in shaping directed attitudes and behavior. With continuous mental guidance, individuals will be able to manage life's pressures more steadily, as faith serves as the main foundation for psychological development and in dealing with life's challenges.⁴

Fasting in the Islamic perspective functions as a defense mechanism against the dominance of desires that can disrupt the balance of human life. The practice of fasting trains individuals to develop patience, tranquility, and self-control, while also

¹ Maratua Simanjuntak, *Fasting and Prayer Build Resilient Humans*, (Jakarta: PT. Raja Grafindo Persada, 2017), 67-68.

² Mukhtar, *Islamic Religious Education Learning Design*, (Jakarta : Misaka Galiza, 2016), 3.

³ A. Nazri Adlani, *Ramadan Strengthens Mental and Emotional Resilience*, (Jakarta: PT. Raja Grafindo Persada, 217), 17.

⁴ Zakiah Daradjat, *Religious Education in Mental Development*. (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 2018), 34-37.

contributing to the enhancement of faith and piety. Psychologically, fasting is effective in preventing stress, emotional pressure, and reducing tendencies toward spiritual diseases such as envy, jealousy, hypocrisy, and arrogance. When performed with sincere faith and devotion, fasting becomes a means of stabilizing the soul and preventing mental disorders.⁵

Ideal mental health is characterized by inner peace and emotional stability, reflected in the harmonious development of personality and the individual's ability to feel at ease with themselves and others. The healing of mental disorders requires an effective spiritual approach, one of which is through the implementation of Islamic teachings such as fasting. Fasting serves as a means of heart purification and a profound spiritual therapy. An individual's inability to overcome spiritual ailments without a religious approach can lead to comprehensive mental and moral deterioration.⁶ Quoting Djamaludin Ancok in Sholeh's book, "Fasting can heal mental disorders. It can also be used to treat anxiety, insomnia, and feelings of inferiority. A person who observes fasting will avoid disgraceful acts such as arrogance, hypocrisy, envy, and hurting others. Therefore, from a preventive perspective, fasting can help prevent the emergence and potential spread of mental illness within society."⁷

The act of fasting holds deep psychological values, especially for individuals who engage in reflection and contemplation on the meaning of life. Fasting provides space for the development of empathy, self-introspection, and the deepening of spiritual and ethical values. From a psychological perspective, fasting positively contributes to emotional (feeling), cognitive (thinking), motivational (will), behavioral (action), and even spiritual aspects of a person, when practiced with patience and sincerity. When all the conditions and pillars of fasting are fully observed, it becomes a medium for holistic and transformative mental development.⁸

Pondok Pesantren Darul Amanah Sukorejo Kendal, located in RT 03/01 Ngadiwarno, Sukorejo, Central Java, is a modern Islamic boarding school that has consistently provided students with spirituality-based education since its founding.

⁵ Sururin, *The Psychology of Religion*, (Jakarta: PT. Raja Grafindo Persada, 2022), 191.

⁶ Abu Hamid Muhammad Al-Ghazali, *The Secrets of Fasting and Zakat*, Translated Muhammad Al-Baqir. (Bandung: Karisma, 2017), 40.

⁷ Moh Sholeh, *Religion as Therapy*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2015), 244.

⁸ Aslim D Sihotang, *The Relationship Between Fasting and Physical and Spiritual Health*, (Jakarta: PT. Raja Grafindo Persada, 2019), 251-254.

Under the guidance of KH. Mas'ud Abdul Qodir, the pesantren emphasizes a Sufi approach through the practice of 40 days of sunnah fasting, inspired by the teachings of the Gus Miek tarekat. This practice aims to develop the students' psychological aspects, strengthen their spiritual awareness, and build mental resilience to prevent moral deviation. The tradition of 40 days of fasting has strong historical roots, as exemplified by Prophet Musa A.S., who fasted before receiving revelation on Mount Thur Sinai. Therefore, this approach serves as an important instrument in shaping the students' character in a holistic and transcendental manner.⁹ Syaikh Ahmad Mutamakhin of Kajen undertook a spiritual discipline (tirakat) of fasting for 40 days. As cited from *Tafrikh al-Khatir*, Part Nineteen; *Lujjain Ad-Dain*, Chapter VI, Section 33: "Syaikh Abd al-Qadir once performed a *riyadhoh* (spiritual exercise) of fasting for 40 days."¹⁰

The urgency of the 40 day sunnah fasting, as exemplified by the prophets and scholars, serves as a fundamental foundation for character building among students at Pondok Pesantren Darul Amanah. This practice is expected to develop strong mental resilience and noble character (*akhlakul karimah*) as essential provisions for life within society. Therefore, it is worth exploring further how the 40 day sunnah fasting contributes to the holistic development of the students' mental well-being.

B. Literature Review

Building Mental Strength

Mens, mentis is the root of the word mental, which means soul, spirit, comfort, and enthusiasm.¹¹ Mental also refers to everything related to a person's character and inner self, and is not physical or bodily in nature.¹² According to Darajat, mental health is part of psychiatric and psychotherapeutic studies that encompass all aspects of the psyche, such as emotions, thoughts, feelings, and attitudes that shape an individual's behavioral characteristics. These aspects influence how a person responds to and manages various life situations, both pleasant and challenging.¹³

⁹ Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar Volume 1*, (Jakarta : Gema Insani, 2015), 340.

¹⁰ Muhammad Sholikhin, *Unifying Oneself with the Divine*, (Yogyakarta : Penerbit NARASI, 2022), 269.

¹¹ Kartini Kartono dan Jeni, *Mental Hygiene and Mental Health in Islam*, (Bandung: Mandar Maju, 2017), 3.

¹² Hasan Alwi, *Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language*, (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 2018), 733.

¹³ Zakiah Daradjat, *Islam and Mental Health*, (Jakarta: Gunung Agung, 2017), 38-39.

A person's mental condition can be identified through the attitudes and behaviors they display, as behavior is a direct manifestation of an individual's psychological state. Individuals with sound mental health tend to make wise life decisions and avoid actions that are harmful to themselves. Mental health is also closely correlated with emotional intelligence, which contributes to the development of noble character (*akhlakul karimah*) in both social interactions and intrapersonal relationships.¹⁴

Mental is closely related to development; mental development is a systematic process aimed at improving, developing, and maintaining an individual's psychological condition toward a healthy mental state. This process involves continuous efforts to achieve psychological stability and balance.¹⁵ Mental health, from an Islamic perspective, is reflected in the complete submission to Allah SWT and emulating the Prophet Muhammad SAW as a guide for life, thereby providing a clear direction and psychological stability.¹⁶ Islam also provides guidance on positive attitudes such as smiling, enthusiasm for seeking knowledge, valuing time, hard work, competitiveness, and helping one another, all of which contribute to mental health.¹⁷ Mental development aims to eliminate the factors that cause psychological disturbances in students in order to achieve inner peace and spiritual balance.

Mental development is a strategic effort to prevent and address various factors that cause psychological disturbances in students, with the aim of forming a healthy mental state and a peaceful spiritual life. According to Dzaky, the general goal of mental development is to create positive changes within the individual, including inner peace, openness of heart, and readiness to receive divine guidance and blessings (*taufik and hidayah*) from Allah SWT. In addition, mental development is also aimed at fostering politeness and positive behavior that benefit students in their personal lives, families, and social environments.¹⁸ Thus, mental development becomes an essential

¹⁴ Ahmad Zainal Arifin, "Moral Education and Emotional Intelligence", *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Islam*, Vol. 4, No. 2, Juli, 2016,

¹⁵ Muhammad Sholikhin, *Unifying Oneself with the Divine*, (Yogyakarta : Penerbit NARASI, 2022), 70-71.

¹⁶ Kenneth W Morgan, *Islam the Straight Path*, Translated. Abu Salamah dan Chaidir Anwar, (Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya, t.th), 1.

¹⁷ Didin Hafidhuddin dan Hendri Tanjung, *Sharia Management in Practice*, (Jakarta: Airlangga, 2019), 40.

¹⁸ Adz Dzaky, *Islamic Counseling and Psychotherapy*, (Yogyakarta: Fajar Pustaka Baru, 2017), 167-168.

foundation in the holistic development of character and psychological well-being of students.

Mental development encompasses four main aspects: the cognitive aspect (memory and thinking patterns), the spiritual aspect (religious life), the moral aspect (morality as the basis of behavior), and the physical aspect, in which mental therapy plays a role in healing illnesses not treated medically. This development is important because mental strength can enhance an individual's resilience against physical illness. Hadi emphasizes that the mental development of students significantly influences other areas of life. A healthy mind enables students to better cope with physical limitations. Therefore, the role of educators and parents in supporting mental development is crucial.¹⁹

According to Maslow and Mittleman, as cited in Burhanuddin, individuals with sound mental health exhibit characteristics such as a sufficient sense of security, rational self-assessment, and the ability to form healthy and empathetic social relationships. They possess a realistic outlook on life, can adapt well, and are not dominated by physical desires. In addition, they demonstrate self-control over ambition, the ability to learn from experience, and a high degree of personal integrity. Such individuals are also able to resist deviant group pressure and maintain their authenticity. These overall characteristics reflect an individual's readiness to face life's changes and challenges in a healthy and productive manner.²⁰

Human personality typology is divided into two categories: individuals with sound mental health and those with less stable mental health. Mentally healthy individuals find meaning in life, are able to manage their potential in a positive way, and build social relationships with humility, confidence, and empathy. On the other hand, individuals with poor mental health experience disturbances in inner peace, with varying degrees of severity, ranging from mild stress to severe mental disorders. This distinction reflects a person's level of ability in managing emotions and living life adaptively.

Mental health is influenced by two main factors: internal and external. Internal factors include faith, piety, attitude toward life's problems, balanced thinking, and an

¹⁹ Saiful Hadi, *Model for Developing the Moral and Spiritual Intelligence of Students at SMP Plus Nurul Hikmah Pamekasan, Islamuna Volume 2 Nomor 1 Juni, 2015*, <https://doi.org/10.19105/islamuna.v2i1.656>

²⁰ Yusak Burhanuddin, *Mental Health*, (Bandung, Pustaka Setia, 2021), 13-15.

individual's psychological condition. Strong faith and piety provide inner peace, enabling individuals to face life's challenges with optimism. Meanwhile, external factors such as family environment, society, education, and economic conditions also affect mental health, although internal factors tend to have a more dominant influence.²¹ Effective mental development requires a comprehensive approach, including the use of various supportive methods and means, such as fasting, to achieve the goal of sound mental health.²²

Mental development is a holistic and strategic process aimed at nurturing psychological well-being through cognitive, spiritual, moral, and physical aspects. It emphasizes inner peace, emotional intelligence, and character building rooted in faith and Islamic values. Internal factors like faith and mindset play a dominant role in shaping mental health. A comprehensive approach, including practices like fasting, supports the formation of resilient and balanced individuals.

40 Day Fasting

Fasting originates from the Arabic words (صيام – صوم), which mean abstaining or refraining from something.²³ According to Islamic law (shari'a), fasting means abstaining from food, drink, sexual relations, and all forms of desires, from dawn until sunset, in accordance with specific conditions and essential pillars.²⁴ The general type of fasting involves abstaining from food, drink, and sexual desires, while the special type of fasting includes controlling all parts of the body such as hearing, sight, tongue, hands, and feet to avoid sin. The highest level of fasting, in addition to these, involves purifying the heart from base intentions and worldly thoughts, and focusing entirely on Allah SWT,²⁵

Special fasting refers to the practice observed by righteous individuals, which involves restraining all parts of the body from committing sinful acts. To achieve the perfection of fasting, there are six essential aspects: guarding the eyes, controlling speech, refraining from listening to things disliked by religion, preventing sinful actions

²¹ Daradjat Zakiah, *Islam and Mental Health*, (Jakarta: Gunung Agung, 2017), 40-41.

²² Ahmad Zainal Arifin, "Moral Education and Emotional Intelligence", *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Islam*, Vol. 4, No. 2, Juli, 2016

²³ Usman Said, *Fiqh Science Volume I*, (Jakarta : Direktur Pembinaan Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam, t.th), 274.

²⁴ Syekh Kamil Muhammad & Muhammad Uwaidah, *Women's Fiqh*, (Jakarta., Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 2018), 231.

²⁵ Abu Hamid Muhammad Al-Ghazali, *Ihya Ulumuddin*, (Bandung: Marja, 2015), 26.

by other body parts, limiting the intake of lawful food at the time of breaking the fast, and keeping the heart filled with both hope and fear regarding the acceptance of the fast by Allah SWT.²⁶

The act of fasting is found in almost all religions and was even known by the followers of earlier faiths. This is reflected in the words of Allah SWT:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ (البقرة: ١٨٣)

O you who have believed, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become righteous." (Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:183)

The verse explains that fasting, in addition to being obligated upon Muslims, was also prescribed for the peoples and nations during the times of the previous prophets as a practice of both spiritual and physical discipline.²⁷

Fasting as a spiritual practice has been implemented across various religions and cultures. In Hinduism, Brahmin followers fast for 24 or 40 days, accompanied by the recitation of sacred texts, while the followers of Vishnu observe fasting through various extreme methods. In Buddhism, Vietnamese monks have practiced fasting as a form of social protest, while Mahatma Gandhi fasted to promote unity among the religious communities in India. In ancient Javanese society, there were various fasting traditions such as *mutih*, *ngrowot*, *patigeni*, and *ngalong*. Although they come from different backgrounds, these practices show that fasting is a universal teaching preserved in Islam as a continuation of the teachings of the prophets. The act of fasting in Islam carries profound purposes, primarily to cultivate piety (*taqwa*) by encouraging believers to fulfill Allah's commands and avoid His prohibitions. Additionally, fasting instills discipline, resilience, and adaptability in facing life's challenges much like the training of a soldier. It allows Muslims to empathize with the suffering of the poor and fosters a deep spiritual connection with Allah SWT.²⁸ Thus, fasting serves as a spiritual means to strengthen the soul and enhance social awareness.

²⁶ Abu Hamid Muhammad Al-Ghazali. *The Secrets of Fasting and Zakat*, Translated, Muhammad Al-Baqir. (Bandung: Karisma, 2017), 26

²⁷ Ahmad Syarifudin, *Fasting Towards Physical and Mental Health*, (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 2021), 44.

²⁸ Susanne Haneef, *Islam and Muslims*, (Jakarta, Pustaka Firdaus, 2019), 93.

Fasting for 40 days holds a deep spiritual meaning, as it was practiced by Prophet Musa (Moses) AS before receiving the revelation from Allah SWT on Mount Thur Sinai.²⁹ In the teachings of Sufism and Islamic law (sharia), the number 40 holds its own symbolism and is often associated with the process of spiritual purification. Psychologically, research suggests that in 40 days, the human brain can form a habit through repeated actions (Duhigg, *The Power of Habit*). The number 40 is also mentioned in the Qur'an, particularly in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 51, which describes Prophet Musa's (Moses) supplication to Allah SWT for 40 nights on Mount Thur Sinai, and again in Surah Al-A'raf verse 142, which also recounts his supplication.³⁰ Allah SWT revealed the Torah to Prophet Musa (AS) over the course of 40 nights.

The number 40 holds a special meaning in the pesantren tradition and is often used in the practice of *riyadhoh* or spiritual discipline, performed by both *kyai* and *santri*. Shaykh Ahmad Mutamakhin of Kajen and Shaykh Abd al-Qadir once undertook a 40 day fast as part of their *riyadhoh*.³¹ KH. Hasyim Muzadi also encouraged a 40 day fast, both in preparation for building a pesantren and to enhance the spirituality of the *santri*. Sunan Kalijaga, one of the Wali Songo, also practiced *mutih* fasting for 40 days to reduce emotional impulses and control desires. In addition, Al-Mubarak II Islamic Boarding School in Surabaya implements a 40 day fast accompanied by *wirid* (regular recitations) and congregational prayers as an effort to shape the character of the *santri* and to prevent them from engaging in promiscuous behavior.³²

Fasting is a universal spiritual practice found across religions, with deep roots in Islam as a means to cultivate piety, discipline, and empathy. The 40 day fast holds significant symbolic and transformative value in Islamic, Sufi, and pesantren traditions. It is used as a method of spiritual purification and character building through self-restraint and devotion.

C. Metode

This is a field research using a qualitative approach, with data collection techniques including interviews, observation, and documentation. The collected data

²⁹ Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar Volume 1*, (Jakarta : Gema Insani , 2015), 340.

³⁰ Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar Volume 1*, (Jakarta : Gema Insani , 2015), 340-341.

³¹ Muhammad Sholikhin, *Unifying Oneself with the Divine*, Yogyakarta : Penerbit NARASI, 2022), 269

³² Imam Bawani, et.al., *Factory Workers' Islamic Boarding School: Empowerment of Factory Workers Based on Pesantren Education*, (Yogyakarta : PT. Lkis Printing Cemerlang, 2019), 108.

is then analyzed through four stages: data collection, data reduction, data display, and verification or conclusion. The aim is to obtain an in-depth study on developing students' mentality through the 40 day sunnah fasting at Pondok Pesantren Darul Amanah Sukorejo Kendal.

D. Results And Discussion

Education can be viewed from two perspectives: societal and individual. From the societal perspective, education functions as a means of cultural transmission to ensure the survival of the community and preserve cultural identity. From the individual perspective, education aims to develop the hidden potential within a person, like a deep ocean that holds pearls and fish waiting to be discovered.³³ For the students (santri) at Darul Amanah Islamic Boarding School in Sukorejo, Kendal, education is essential for providing recognition and a clear status, helping them avoid negative behaviors. If religious institutions can offer guidance and solutions to youth-related issues, these students will become more active and productive in religious activities.³⁴

The development of the students' (santri) personality at Darul Amanah Islamic Boarding School in Sukorejo, Kendal can be optimized through guidance from the pesantren institution, which provides Islamic educational programs to influence their mental and personal growth. The environment, as one of the main factors, plays a significant role in shaping an individual's personality.³⁵

Islamic Religious Education aims to develop students' potential to become individuals who are faithful, pious, intelligent, skilled, noble in character, and responsible. In Islam, *fitrah* refers to the innate nature of human beings that is inclined to accept religion. Islamic education does not only focus on physical and intellectual aspects but also on the integral spiritual dimension. However, the current implementation of Islamic education often neglects the spiritual aspect, leading to the emergence of a spiritually-based educational paradigm to create a morally upright generation. Spiritual education is expected to shape individuals who are balanced both physically and spiritually, in accordance with the guidance of the Qur'an and Hadith.³⁶

³³ Hasan Lagulung, *Principles of Islamic Education*, (Jakarta: Pustaka Al – Husna, 2016), 3.

³⁴ Zakiah Daradjat, *Fasting Improves Mental Health*, (Jakarta: CV. Ruhama, 2018), 105.

³⁵ Sjarkawi, *Child Personality Formation: The Moral, Intellectual, Emotional, and Social Roles as Manifestations of Integrity in Building Self Identity*, (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 2018), 19.

³⁶ Sa'id Hawwa, *Tarbiyatuna al-Ruhiyyah*, (Kairo: Maktabah al-Wahbah, 2012), 69.

Pesantren, as a religious educational institution, holds a significant responsibility in shaping the mental and spiritual development of its students. Pondok Pesantren Darul Amanah Sukorejo Kendal, through its deep spiritual approach, implements a 40 day fast based on the teachings of the *tarekat* of Gus Miek. This practice aims to strengthen the students' inner selves, develop their mental resilience, and deepen their awareness of God. From a mental health perspective, individuals with weak personalities or mental disorders often struggle to exercise self-control, both in physical and spiritual needs.³⁷ Faith that is integrated into one's personality serves as a primary tool for regulating the attitudes and behaviors of *santri*, fostering stronger mental resilience.

The 40 day fasting practice instilled in the *santri* of Pondok Pesantren Darul Amanah Sukorejo Kendal carries several important benefits in developing their mental character, including:

I. The 40 day fasting cultivates social awareness

The 40 day fasting at Pondok Pesantren Darul Amanah Sukorejo Kendal has a significant impact on the emotional intelligence of the *santri*. This fasting practice helps the *santri* face difficult conditions and cultivates patience. The experience enhances empathy toward the suffering of others, encourages social solidarity, and strengthens relationships and loyalty within the community. Ultimately, this fosters a sense of happiness and inner satisfaction in the *santri*, making them valuable members of society.

Observing the 40 day fasting at Pondok Pesantren Darul Amanah Sukorejo Kendal is part of the practice of Sufism, which teaches the attitudes of *wara'* (piety) and *zuhud* (asceticism). Sufism aims to purify the heart from reprehensible traits, with the main focus on inner cleanliness to attain the pleasure of Allah SWT. Syukur, in one of his studies, stated that Sufism is a profound spiritual training to improve the soul and draw closer to Allah, with the goal of directing the entire concentration of the *santri* solely to Him.³⁸

The attitude of *wara'* in Sufism means refraining from sinful and doubtful actions to maintain the purity of the soul, while the attitude of *zuhud* aims to shift focus from worldly matters toward the afterlife. *Zuhud* does not mean avoiding material things,

³⁷ Zakiah Daradjat, *Fasting Improves Mental Health*, (Jakarta: CV. Ruhama, 2018), 105.

³⁸ Amin Syukur, *Sufism and Social Responsibility*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2019), 19.

but rather avoiding desires that are centered on the worldly life. *Santri* who adopt the attitude of *zuhud* continue to work to meet their needs and help those in need.³⁹ This attitude encourages the use of wealth for social good, making it a social asset, and research shows that the attitude of *zuhud* can help *santri* overcome various life challenges. R. Pieris, in *Studies in The Sociology of Development*, states that in India, Sikh *santri* successfully achieved favorable economic positions due to the combination of hard work and simplicity. In Java, Geertz's research shows that the *santri* group is wealthier compared to the *abangan* group, which is caused by their simple attitude, avoidance of luxury, and hard work.⁴⁰

Syukur in his research explains that the teachings of *tasawwuf* have a social dimension, with the concepts of *futuwwa* and *itsar*. *Futuwwa* teaches the attitude of eliminating arrogance, being patient, and easing the difficulties of others, while *itsar* prioritizes others above oneself.⁴¹ Stinginess and individualism, triggered by love of wealth, can be minimized through fasting, which trains solidarity and care for others, even though the love of wealth is a human instinct.⁴²

2. The 40 day fast builds self-confidence

The 40 day fasting practiced by the *santri* at Pondok Pesantren Darul Amanah Sukorejo Kendal involves essential Islamic practices such as *wirid* (recitations), prayers, and *dhikr* (remembrance of God). Prayer, as a spiritual means, has a significant impact on spiritual well-being, providing inner peace and strengthening the fighting spirit, thereby creating a harmonious mind. Psychologically, prayer functions as a therapy that reduces fear, anxiety, and doubt, and stabilizes the soul, especially when facing emotional pressures such as stress and depression.⁴³

A harmonious mind in the life of *santri* is influenced by optimism and positive assumptions toward others. Optimism serves as a light in darkness, broadening the horizons of thought and fostering love for kindness and better social relationships. This attitude strengthens harmony, cooperation, and mutual trust among *santri*, which

³⁹ Muhammad Syakir, *Waashoyaa*, (Semarang: Toha Putra, t.th), 41.

⁴⁰ Amin Syukur, *Sufism and Social Responsibility*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2019), 44-45.

⁴¹ Amin Syukur, *Sufism and Social Responsibility*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2019), 97-99.

⁴² Ahmad Syarifudin, *Fasting Towards Physical and Mental Health*, (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 2021), 197-198.

⁴³ Ahmad Syarifudin, *Fasting Towards Physical and Mental Health*, (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 2021), 197-198.

in turn reduces suffering and increases hope. Peace in social life can only be achieved through the foundation of love and good assumptions toward others.⁴⁴

3. The 40 day fasting builds self-control

The 40 day fasting practiced by the santri of Pondok Pesantren Darul Amanah Sukorejo Kendal aims to train self-control while simultaneously strengthening faith. During the fast, the santri are trained to regulate their eating and drinking patterns and to avoid negative behaviors such as consuming forbidden goods, usury, corruption, and theft. This self-control training can be optimally achieved when the fasting reaches the level of *ihsan* and *itqon*. Therefore, fasting is not merely about abstaining from food, drink, and sexual relations, but also serves as a form of self-purification from reprehensible behaviors.⁴⁵

4. The 40 day fasting trains patience

The 40 day fasting for the students of Pondok Pesantren Darul Amanah Sukorejo Kendal serves to train patience in three aspects. First, patience in obedience, which means enduring difficulties in performing worship. Second, patience in avoiding sin, requiring restraint from bad deeds. Third, patience in facing trials and challenges, which means remaining steadfast without complaining or despairing. These three forms of patience are reflected in the practice of fasting, teaching resilience, determination, and firmness in facing life's tests.⁴⁶

5. The 40 day fasting builds honesty

The 40 day fasting for the santri of Pondok Pesantren Darul Amanah Sukorejo Kendal will have meaningful impact as an act of worship that brings behavioral change if accompanied by spiritual understanding. Without deep reflection and comprehension, fasting will only result in hunger and thirst, without producing constructive changes in daily life. Fasting is essentially not only refraining from food, drink, and biological desires, but also restraining from evil desires. This transformation

⁴⁴ Mujtaba Musawi Sayyid Lari *Eradicating the Diseases of the Heart*, Translated. M. Hashem, Youth and Moral, (Jakarta: PT. Lentera Basritama, 2018), 28-29.

⁴⁵ Ahmad Syarifudin, *Fasting Towards Physical and Mental Health*, (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 2021), 224-225

⁴⁶ Ahmad Syarifudin, *Fasting Towards Physical and Mental Health*, (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 2021), 30.

must align with broader social change, because fasting loses its meaning if it does not foster social righteousness in collective life.⁴⁷

Fasting teaches the meaning of honesty, especially in its most substantial dimension as an inner worship. Unlike other acts of worship, fasting has a thin boundary between those who are fasting and those who are not, so honesty in its practice is known only by the individual and Allah SWT. For example, actions such as rinsing the mouth and swallowing fresh water without others knowing become a test of a santri's honesty. Therefore, maintaining the spirit of honesty is very important, not only in the context of individual worship but also in social life. Developing awareness of honesty as a reflective dimension of fasting needs to be expanded to build a mosaic of honesty in society.⁴⁸

6. The 40 day fasting builds emotional stability

The 40 day fasting practiced by the santri of Pondok Pesantren Darul Amanah Sukorejo Kendal is closely related to the ability to restrain oneself (imsak), serving as a means of mental training. Fasting trains endurance in facing trials, challenges, and greater sacrifices, as well as develops discipline in self-control. An important aspect of this self-control is managing emotions, where fasting effectively trains the santri to suppress anger. Fasting santri are required to maintain their emotions and avoid losing control, because the virtue of fasting will be lost if uncivilized behavior appears.⁴⁹

According to Sigmund Freud, mental disorders arise from the accumulation of repressed desires pushed into the unconscious, which can eventually erupt in the form of disorders such as stress, anxiety, and depression. These desires are repressed because they cannot be expressed in a natural way, and continuous unconscious repression can trigger mental disorders. From an Islamic perspective, the understanding of "natural" differs from the Western concept, as Islamic norms serve as the reference for evaluating actions. The 40 day fasting practiced by the santri of Pondok Pesantren Darul Amanah Sukorejo Kendal functions to cultivate patience and control desires, which in turn can prevent mental disorders, since desires are the root

⁴⁷ Ahmad Syarifudin, *Fasting Towards Physical and Mental Health*, (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 2021), 30.

⁴⁸ Nur Ahmad dan Muhammad Ridwan, *Fasting and Honesty*, (Jakarta: Kompas, 2019), 57-59

⁴⁹ Nur Ahmad dan Muhammad Ridwan, *Fasting and Honesty*, (Jakarta: Kompas, 2019), 57-59.

of mental problems. Therefore, fasting can play an important role in maintaining the mental health of the santri.⁵⁰

Fasting must be based on sincerity in performing it. Sincerity in fasting means doing it solely for the sake of Allah SWT, without any other motives. The 40 day fasting practiced by the santri of Pondok Pesantren Darul Amanah Sukorejo Kendal is considered perfect when done with wholehearted sincerity, devotion, consistency, and by realizing the moral messages of fasting. Fasting that ignores the moral teachings of fasting has no effect other than hunger and thirst. This is because fasting is not only about abstaining from food and drink, but it must also be balanced with spiritual quality that influences one's behavior both before Allah SWT and towards others.

The 40 day fasting practiced by the santri of Pondok Pesantren Darul Amanah Sukorejo Kendal serves as an expression of emotional and spiritual intelligence. This act of worship leads to the formation of individuals who are devoted to Allah SWT and exhibit positive behaviors such as patience and empathy toward others. Through this fasting, it is expected that there will be an improvement in the mental quality of the santri, resulting in better mental health. With proper guidance in faith and piety, the santri can achieve a noble personality that supports the development of a healthy, productive, and dynamic mentality. This highlights the importance of fasting as a means to build a healthy mind.⁵¹

Fasting for 40 days at Pondok Pesantren Darul Amanah Sukorejo Kendal fosters mental and spiritual growth by cultivating social awareness, self-control, patience, honesty, and emotional stability. This practice strengthens faith, discipline, and empathy among the santri, contributing to better mental health. Grounded in sincerity and moral understanding, the fast supports the development of balanced, resilient, and productive individuals. Thus, 40 day fasting serves as a vital tool for building a healthy and dynamic mindset

E. Conclusion

The 40 day fasting practiced by the santri at Pondok Pesantren Darul Amanah Sukorejo Kendal can foster social sensitivity, increase self-confidence, strengthen self-control, and train patience and honesty. Additionally, fasting plays a role in building the

⁵⁰ Nur Ahmad dan Muhammad Ridwan, *Fasting and Honesty*, (Jakarta: Kompas, 2019), 227-228

⁵¹ Nur Ahmad dan Muhammad Ridwan, *Fasting and Honesty*, (Jakarta: Kompas, 2019), pp. 227-

emotional health of the santri, which in turn can prevent mental disorders. This is because uncontrolled desires are one of the root causes of mental problems. Therefore, the 40 day fasting is closely related to mental health, as this worship serves to normalize the mental condition of the santri and supports the development of a productive and dynamic mentality and personality.

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