

Dimensions of Spiritual Education in The Tradition of Grave Pilgrimage in Javanese Muslim Society

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ABSTRACT: *This study aims to identify and analyze the dimensions of spiritual education in the tradition of grave pilgrimage among the Javanese Muslim community. The approach employed in this study is a systematic literature review, which enables the researcher to compile findings comprehensively based on published scholarly sources. Data were collected from a range of academic literature, including journal articles, scholarly books, and relevant documents discussing aspects of spirituality, Javanese culture, and Islamic education. The analysis was conducted using a descriptive-qualitative method, emphasizing the interpretation of concepts and spiritual educational values embedded in the practice of grave visitation. The findings of this study indicate that the tradition of grave pilgrimage contains important spiritual educational elements for the formation of religious consciousness, the appreciation of life values, and emotional closeness to ancestors. Findings from the perspective of Javanese Muslim pilgrims indicate that grave pilgrimage is viewed as a form of worship, seeking blessings, and religious tourism. This practice also has implications for the development of religious and cultural identity. It can be used as an educational experience that combines spiritual, artistic, and educational elements in Islamic education. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the values and practices contained in the tradition of grave pilgrimage, as well as its relevance in the context of spiritual-based education and the development of religious and cultural identity in Java.*

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis dimensi pendidikan spiritual dalam tradisi ziarah kubur pada masyarakat Muslim Jawa. Pendekatan yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah tinjauan literatur sistematis (*systematic literature review*), yang memungkinkan peneliti menyusun temuan secara komprehensif berdasarkan sumber-sumber ilmiah yang telah dipublikasikan. Data dikumpulkan dari berbagai literatur akademik, seperti artikel jurnal, buku ilmiah, dan dokumen relevan yang membahas aspek spiritualitas, budaya Jawa, dan pendidikan Islam. Analisis dilakukan secara deskriptif-kualitatif, dengan menitikberatkan pada interpretasi konsep dan nilai-nilai pendidikan spiritual yang termuat dalam praktik ziarah kubur. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa tradisi ziarah

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kubur mengandung unsur pendidikan spiritual yang penting bagi pembentukan kesadaran religius, penghayatan nilai-nilai kehidupan, serta kedekatan emosional dengan leluhur. Temuan dari perspektif peziarah Muslim Jawa menunjukkan bahwa ziarah kubur dipandang sebagai bentuk ibadah, mencari berkah, dan wisata religi. Praktik ini juga memiliki implikasi dalam pengembangan identitas agama dan budaya, dan dapat digunakan sebagai pengalaman pendidikan yang menggabungkan unsur spiritual, budaya, dan pendidikan dalam pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini berkontribusi memberikan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang nilai-nilai dan praktik yang terkandung dalam tradisi ziarah kubur, serta relevansinya dalam konteks pendidikan berbasis spiritual dan pengembangan identitas agama dan budaya di Jawa.

Keywords: *Grave Pilgrimage, Spiritual Education, Muslim Society, Javanese Society.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The tradition of visiting graves is a practice in society that has had a profound spiritual dimension throughout human history. Grave visiting has also been part of the discourse in Islamic studies during the 19th and 20th centuries. Even figures such as Ibn Taymiyah, Ibn Abd al-Wahab, Rashid Rida, and Sayyid Qutb debated this tradition. Although a number of modern Islamic figures continue to criticize the practice of grave pilgrimage and consider it an act of polytheism and *bid'ah* (religious innovation), the practice of grave pilgrimage continues to be carried out in various Muslim countries (Harahap et al., 2024; Kamarudin & Mokodenseho, 2022).

The phenomenon of pilgrimage indeed has multiple dimensions. Grave pilgrimage is closely related to the diverse interpretations of its practitioners. Pilgrimage can signify acts of piety and affirmation of religious identity and often also carries economic motives (Adinugraha & Shulthoni, 2024; Marbun, 2019; Uyuni et al., 2024).

In the Indonesian context, grave pilgrimage is also influenced by several factors. The *first* is the influence of local beliefs. When Islam arrived in Java in the 13th century, elements of local beliefs still influenced Javanese culture (Mansyur, 2019; Tjahjono, 2018). *Second*, the tombs of the Saints. Java has a number of tombs of saints, or holy people in Islam, who are revered and used as pilgrimage destinations. The *Wali Songo* are the most popular (Dakhliya, 2007; Garadian, 2016). *Third*, Death and Funeral Traditions. The funeral process in Java often involves various rituals and ceremonies that influence how grave pilgrimages are conducted. *Fourth*, Artistic and Cultural Heritage. Grave pilgrimages are usually accompanied by traditional Javanese art and music, creating an aesthetically rich experience. Historically, the spread of Islam has always occurred through interaction with other cultures.

Meanwhile, the tradition of visiting graves among Javanese Muslims is a social and religious practice with a strong spiritual dimension. In the study of religious anthropology, visiting graves is not only seen as a practice of paying respect to ancestors or religious figures who have passed away but also as a means of getting closer to Allah and strengthening the spiritual awareness of the pilgrims. This pilgrimage practice

includes various rituals, ranging from reciting prayers and *tahlilan* to conveying personal or group wishes. In this context, grave pilgrimage has not only cultural significance but also deep theological meaning (Mujib, 2016).

The tradition of pilgrimage to the tombs of saints in Java is always a synthesis of religious and cultural contexts in a diverse panorama, which simultaneously culminates in something global and universal, namely the meaning of saints (*wali*) and their biographical traces that become holy places. This condition is then correlated with all the relations between the saints as divine figures and the places around them that become holy relics, namely mosques, wells, and tombs (Petrova, 2024).

Previous studies on the tradition of grave pilgrimage have emphasized the historical, normative, and socio-cultural aspects of pilgrimage practices, particularly within the context of Javanese Muslim society. For example, Henri Chambert Loir's research outlines the tradition of pilgrimage globally across the Islamic world. The regions studied include the Middle East, Egypt, Sudan, the Maghreb region, West Africa, East Africa, Iran, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, Turkey, Central Asia, the Balkan region, and Indonesia. Each area is discussed in two articles accompanied by maps and illustrations (Chambert-loir, 2010).

Irfannuddin & Darmawan (2021) discuss grave visiting from the perspective of hadith. The study explores the laws of grave visiting based on the hadith of the Prophet, the views of scholars on the laws of grave visiting, and the procedures and ethics involved in the process of grave visiting. The study concludes that the diversity of understanding among Muslims regarding the legal status of grave visiting can be addressed through the refinement of Islamic law; however, this approach is more flexible when considered from a cultural perspective.

Furthermore, Arjana (2017) in his study mentions that the tradition of visiting graves by Muslims is not limited to the holy cities of Mecca and Karbala, but also includes various sacred sites around the world. The journey is undertaken to visit the graves of important figures in history and religion, the graves of holy people, and natural sites such as mountain peaks and springs. Arjana further presents a rigorous theoretical discussion on pilgrimage, ritual practices, and the nature of sacred spaces in Islam, both historically and contemporarily. According to him, pilgrimage has brought Muslim travellers across sectarian boundaries, incorporated non-Muslim rituals, and involved multiple communities, languages, and traditions. Arjana even borrows the concept of "substitute hajj" from German Orientalist Annemarie Schimmel to argue that pilgrimage is not a sectarian practice and does not contradict the hajj.

Furthermore, studies are focusing on the mystical or esoteric aspects of grave pilgrimage. In this context, grave pilgrimage is viewed as a practice that provides space for interaction with the supernatural or metaphysical dimensions. The community perceives the graves of certain figures as centres of spiritual power and utilizes the opportunity of pilgrimage to seek blessings, spiritual strength, or assistance in daily life. However, although these studies have revealed the mystical meanings of grave pilgrimage, discussions on how this practice contributes to shaping and developing the spirituality of individuals or communities have not been widely explored in academic literature (Habib et al., 2024; Hidayat et al., 2022).

Thus, it can be understood that grave visiting is a spiritual practice that encompasses various values, including faith, devotion to parents, asceticism, and social values (Umami, 2024; Zulfa et al., 2023). Initially prohibited by the Prophet Muhammad, it

was later permitted to strengthen faith and remember death. Even grave visiting is not limited to Muslims; some Christians also practice this tradition (Harmakaputra, 2015). In Palembang, the annual "*ziarah kubra*" event attracts thousands of male participants from various regions, strengthening religious solidarity and potentially boosting the local economy through tourism.

Other studies also highlight that pilgrimages to the graves of prominent figures, such as Syeh Mutamakin in Kajen, have economic impacts, fostering local trade and preserving Islamic educational institutions like *pesantren* (Lahmi et al., 2025; Romdhoni, 2015). At the tomb of Sunan Kalijaga in Kadilangu, pilgrims are motivated by various factors, including religious devotion, spiritual tourism, seeking blessings, intercession in prayer, protection from misfortune, spiritual practices, and socializing (Mujib, 2016; Saefullah & Cahyadi, 2023). These practices reflect the complex interaction between spiritual, educational, and socio-economic factors in Javanese Muslim society.

Overall, from various studies, grave pilgrimage has several purposes, namely seeking blessings, honouring the deceased, strengthening religious identity, and fostering community bonds. Grave pilgrimage also offers opportunities for spiritual growth, encouraging participants to deepen their faith and prepare for the afterlife (Stoddard & Morinis, 1997).

As a distinguishing feature and new perspective, this study focuses on how the practice of grave visiting in the context of Javanese Muslim society serves as a means of spiritual education. Based on the researcher's identification, the dimension of spiritual education in the tradition of grave visiting and its role in the lives of Javanese Muslims has not been widely discussed in academic studies. Through the process of reflection on death, life, and the relationship with Allah that is built during the pilgrimage, this practice becomes an effective medium for instilling deep religious and moral values in Muslim individuals.

This study attempts to integrate spiritual education theory into the analysis of grave pilgrimage practices. In this context, pilgrimage is viewed as a learning process that involves not only cognitive aspects but also affective and psychomotor aspects. In practice, grave pilgrimage not only encourages individuals to interact directly with God through prayer but also teaches them to appreciate the meaning of life, the transience of the world, and the importance of preparing for the afterlife.

II. METHOD

This study is a literature review that focuses on theoretical and conceptual studies of the dimensions of spiritual education in the tradition of grave pilgrimage among the Javanese Muslim community (Moleong, 2018). A literature review was used to collect and analyze information from various relevant literature, such as books, journals, articles, and other written sources that discuss spirituality, education, and the culture of grave pilgrimage in Java. The research uses a qualitative approach that aims to understand and explore the deeper meanings of various concepts, theories, and perspectives in the relevant literature (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). This approach allows researchers to interpret spiritual concepts and educational values that emerge in the context of culture and the tradition of grave pilgrimage in greater depth. The primary sources in this study are literature containing the main theories and concepts related to spiritual education, grave pilgrimage practices in Islam, and the spiritual culture of

Javanese society. Secondary sources include previous research findings, reports, or other reference materials that support a contextual understanding of the phenomenon of grave pilgrimage and spiritual education. Data collection was conducted through document study or literature documentation. This stage involved searching for, selecting, and collecting relevant literature to support the research focus. The researcher's documents were chosen from various academic sources such as libraries, online journal databases, and religious and cultural texts containing information related to the value of spiritual education in grave pilgrimage. Qualitative data analysis techniques were based on the stages proposed by Huberman and Saldana, namely, Data Condensation, where researchers select, simplify, and group relevant data from various literature, focusing only on information that supports the spiritual dimension in education within the tradition of grave pilgrimage. Data Display, where the selected data is presented in the form of tables, graphs, or narratives to clarify the relationships between concepts and main themes. Conclusion Drawing/Verification: The researcher concludes the presented data and re-verifies the literature to ensure the consistency and validity of the information obtained (Miles et al., 2014).

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Grave Pilgrimage in Muslim Society

The term “*ziarah*” comes from the Arabic word “*ziyârah*,” which means “to visit.” In English, it is known as “pilgrim,” which comes from the Latin term “*peregrinus*” (per = through, ager = field, land, etc.). Pilgrimage is synonymous with visiting holy places (<https://www-merriam--webster-com>, 2025). In Islamic tradition, pilgrimage is not limited to visiting graves. Pilgrimage can be performed by visiting living people or visiting “*athar*,” which are historical sites associated with specific events experienced by the Prophets (Arjana, 2017; Thimm, 2023).

In the Islamic context, the practice of pilgrimage involves visiting the graves of the Prophet Muhammad, his family, companions, saints, spiritual guides, community leaders (*amîr al-mu'minîn*), founders of religious schools, as well as other prominent figures and spreaders of Islam. This tradition of pilgrimage is widespread in almost all Muslim-majority countries (Hadi et al., 2024; Wani, 2018). For example, in Iraq, the tomb of Sheikh 'Abd al-Qâdir al-Jîlânî in Baghdad is visited by many pilgrims every day. Similarly, the tomb of Imam al-Syâfi'î in Egypt is also a popular pilgrimage destination.

Grave visiting in Islam also has a religious dimension, as it involves remembering the deceased and praying for them. The tradition of visiting the graves of holy figures has long been known in Java (Sulestri et al., 2024). However, the development of grave visiting practices in Java is a blend of Islamic values and local culture. This has created diversity in grave visiting practices, including food offerings, dances, and traditional music. The graves of saints in Java serve as centres for Islamic education and gathering places for Muslims. This reinforces the tradition of grave visiting as a form of veneration and remembrance of religious figures (Bellous, 2021; Masduki, 2015).

This pattern of relationship is very strong because they believe that local wisdom is built without coercion from above but rather through a natural relationship that flows from below. This situation is also considered a common interest in creating a shared identity

and social symbols. This includes its relationship with Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, and other important Islamic holidays (Faidah, 2021).

The practice of grave pilgrimage in Java reflects the complexity of the relationship between Islam, tradition, and local beliefs. Grave visiting is also an expression of strong cultural identity and religiosity in Javanese society. For Javanese people, grave visiting is more than just a religious ritual; it is a way to honour ancestors, remember the deceased, and live according to the values passed down by previous generations. Clifford Geertz, in his work "The Religion of Java," identifies the religious practices of Javanese society, including non-Islamic traditional elements (Geertz, 1976, 2013). Geertz further highlights the interaction between religious and cultural aspects in Javanese society. This assimilation process has resulted in a social structure known as the *santri*, *priyayi*, and *abangan* groups in Javanese Islamic society (Laksana et al., 2023).

Geertz further sees the pilgrimage tradition as a symbolic system that gives meaning to human actions. Every element in this ritual, such as prayers, recitations, or flowers placed on the grave, has a symbolic meaning that reinforces spiritual and religious values. Flowers, for example, are symbols of beauty and respect, representing purity and love for the deceased. The prayers and recitations contain symbols of hope, where families and communities hope that the deceased will find the best place in God's presence (Malighetti, 2020).

In this context, grave pilgrimage became a cultural medium used to bridge the understanding of Islam with the local culture that was already familiar with ancestor worship. Pilgrimage, which was originally understood in the animistic-dynamic tradition as a form of spirit worship, was Islamized into a form of respect for pious people and a means of prayer, not worship. This reflects a historical reflection on the strategy of da'wah: Islam embraces, rather than rejects, local culture as long as it does not contradict the doctrine of tawhid.

The tradition of pilgrimage also reflects spiritual continuity between the past and the present. Javanese Muslims do not sever ties with their predecessors; rather, they use graves as a contemplative space to learn from the lives of their ancestors, especially religious figures such as *kyai*, *wali*, and *ulama*. This tradition has become a practice for reflecting on the spiritual history of families or communities, where each visit to a grave is an attempt to "dialogue" with history and the legacy of values left behind. This has become a form of spiritual history education, where people learn that their existence today is shaped by the deeds and prayers of those who have passed away (Jamhari, 2014; Tisdell, 2020).

From a reflective historical perspective, pilgrimage also serves as a guardian of collective memory. This practice allows people to remember religious figures, saints, and scholars not only as historical figures but as part of the narrative of the community's spiritual identity. For example, the pilgrimage to the tomb of Sunan Kalijaga is not merely a ritual but a reinforcement of the values of tolerance, simplicity, and a cultural approach to preaching (Mustagfiroh & Mustaqim, 2016). Thus, grave pilgrimage becomes a tool for binding the religious-historical identity of the Javanese Muslim community. The following is a conceptualization of pilgrimage in Javanese Muslim society:

Table 1. Conceptualization of pilgrimage in Javanese Muslim society

Component	Conceptualization
Spiritual concept	· Religious awareness · Appreciation of life values · Closeness to ancestors
Basic concept	· Worship · Seeking blessings · Religious tourism
Educational concept	· Islamic values education media · Contextual spiritual experiences
Identity concept	· Strengthening religious identity · Preservation of Javanese culture
Trasformative concept	· Integration of spiritual, cultural, and educational elements · Local-based educational model

Based on the table above, it can be emphasized that visiting graves is not merely about remembering the past but also serves as a space for inner dialogue between humans and their mortality. Visiting graves opens a space for contemplating death, the transience of the world, and the importance of righteous deeds, values that remain unchanged across generations. This ultimately leads to the actualization of the prophetic spirit: it calls humanity to return to its natural state, revive prophetic values, and reflect on the end of life as an inevitable part of one's personal history.

Visiting Graves from an Islamic Educational Perspective

From an Islamic educational perspective, grave visiting is not merely a visit to a grave but also has profound educational values that can shape personality, strengthen faith, and instil spiritual and social awareness in the lives of Muslims. This activity serves as a practical and contextual educational medium, as it teaches Muslims about the values of life, death, the afterlife, and relationships with fellow human beings (Jakandar et al., 2025).

Furthermore, grave pilgrimage can also be explored in various meanings and important educational values, namely: *First*, *taqarrub ilallah* (approaching Allah). *Taqarrub ilallah* literally means “drawing closer to Allah.” In the context of Islamic spirituality, *taqarrub* is not only a physical or formal approach but more of a heartfelt, spiritual, and charitable approach to achieve spiritual closeness to God.

Visiting graves can be a way to draw closer to Allah. By visiting graves and praying for the deceased, Muslims affirm their obedience to Allah and remind themselves of the afterlife. Visiting graves reminds Muslims of the temporary nature of worldly life and the inevitability of death. It helps individuals understand their vulnerability as creatures of Allah and prepare themselves for life after death (Stoddard & Morinis, 1997; Thimm, 2023).

In the context of grave pilgrimage, *taqarrub ilallah* does not mean seeking intermediaries from people who have died in a state of shirk, but rather using the moment of pilgrimage as a means of contemplation and inner approach to Allah. The pilgrimage becomes a spiritual activity that reminds pilgrims of the end of life, the importance of righteous deeds, and absolute dependence on Allah.

In the context of Javanese Muslim spirituality, pilgrimage is not only understood as a ritual but as part of a deep inner ritual. Values such as: *Tawadhu'* (humility), *Tawakkal* (surrender), gratitude and patience, love and hope for Allah. All of these emerge naturally in the process of pilgrimage, making it part of the *suluk* (spiritual journey) towards closeness to the Divine (Nasir, 2019; Rofiqoh et al., 2021).

Second, tadabbur (meditation). *Tadabbur* comes from the word *dabbara*, which means to think deeply, reflect, or trace something to its consequences. In the context of visiting graves, *tadabbur* involves reflection on life, death, and the greatness of God. This means that visiting graves strengthens the understanding of the transience and brevity of worldly life. This encourages Muslims to reflect on the purpose of life, preparation for the afterlife, and the journey of the human soul after death (Aziz, 2018; Jamhari, 2014).

Tadabbur is also a spiritual exercise to think deeply about the signs (wali of Allah), both explicit (*Qur'aniyah*) and implicit (*kauniyah*) — including death, life, and the universe. It is a form of meditation in Islam, but not in the sense of emptying the mind as in Eastern traditions, but rather filling the heart and mind with divine meaning and spiritual values.

In Javanese Muslim society, pilgrimage is carried out with a solemn and symbolic approach: reciting *tahlil*, scattering flowers, sitting quietly near the grave, or talking silently with the deceased. All of these contain elements of *tadabbur* because there is a slow and calm spiritual rhythm, which facilitates inner meditation, there is a symbolic and emotional presence that touches the heart, and there is a historical and spiritual awareness of heritage and role models (Masduki, 2018; Tisdell, 2020).

Through grave visits, one can explore the wisdom behind all of God's creations. Psychologically, grave visits also have the potential to strengthen and deepen one's faith. Through this experience, visitors can feel closer to nature and more aware of the blessings of God's creations (Choiron, 2017). This means that *tadabbur* becomes a powerful pedagogical tool because it touches the affective realm, not just the cognitive. It is a form of education that is not taught through lectures but is born from deep spiritual experience.

Third, Tazkiyat al-Nafs (Purification of the Soul). *Tazkiyat al-nafs* means purification of the soul or cleansing of the heart from all despicable traits (*madzmūmah*) and replacing them with praiseworthy traits (*mahmūdah*). *Tazkiyat al-nafs* is a process of internal transformation in which a person strives to improve their intentions, subdue their desires, and draw closer to Allah through good deeds, remembrance, and deep contemplation. It is the core of spiritual education in Islam. Visiting graves can also be a moment of introspection for Muslims. Through this experience, they are reminded of the importance of self-improvement, increasing good deeds, and strengthening their relationship with God and fellow human beings.

Tazkiyat al-nafs through pilgrimage is not taught in the form of theory or long lectures but through direct experience, symbols, and habit, such as: Sweeping graves or scattering flowers are symbolic forms of purification, reading *tahlil* together fosters

togetherness in prayer and servitude, and sitting in silence near the grave is a spiritual exercise to silence the whispers of desire.

Pilgrims who are serious about undergoing the process of *tazkiyat al-nafs* through pilgrimage will obtain spiritual fruits, including: 1) *Qalbun salīm* (pure heart) — as the main provision for the afterlife, 2) Controlled desires — no longer controlled by lust and anger, 3) Gentle and ethical social relationships — because a pure soul radiates in behavior.

Fourth, Silaturahmi (Family Relations). *Silaturahmi* comes from the Arabic words *ṣilah* (relationship) and *rahīm* (relatives/womb/love). In a broad sense, *silaturahmi* means establishing and maintaining good relationships, especially among family members and fellow Muslims. Visiting graves is an opportunity to strengthen family ties. Muslims are invited to maintain relationships with their deceased family members by praying for them and taking care of their graves. This enhances the sense of brotherhood and togetherness among Muslims (Geertz, 2013; Nasir, 2019).

Visiting graves as an activity that encompasses the dimension of *silaturahmi* (maintaining family ties) carries a number of important spiritual educational values: 1) Gratitude and awareness of family history. Children learn to recognize their family roots, appreciate the struggles of their ancestors, and learn lessons from the past. 2) Togetherness in sadness and prayer. Pilgrimage unites family emotions in a touching and spiritual atmosphere, which deepens empathy and affection. 3) Strengthening Islamic morals and ethics. During pilgrimage, children are taught how to behave politely, recite prayers, maintain the cleanliness of graves, and respect their parents—both living and deceased. 4) Fostering social piety. Pilgrimage often serves as a bridge to reconnect broken relationships between family members, thereby becoming a means of reconciliation and strengthening *ukhuwah* (brotherhood).

This means that in Javanese Muslim society, pilgrimage is not merely a ritual but also part of the cultural and spiritual identity of the family. By taking children to the graves of their ancestors, parents not only introduce them to history but also transmit moral and Islamic values from one generation to the next. This is a form of informal family-based spiritual education that is deeply rooted, emotionally and affectively charged, and shapes social and transcendental awareness.

Fifth, Tawassul (intermediary). *Tawassul* comes from the Arabic root word *و-س-ل* (*w-s-l*) which means to approach or to connect. In terms of terminology, *tawassul* is an effort to get closer to Allah Swt through intermediaries whom He has approved, whether in the form of righteous deeds, prayers from righteous people, or mentioning the names of servants who are close to Allah (Abu-Rabi', 2008).

In the context of *ziarah kubur*, *tawassul* is a profound and meaningful spiritual practice. When Muslims visit the graves of saints, scholars, parents, or pious people, they often offer prayers to Allah by mentioning the name of the person being visited as a *wasilah* (intermediary). This practice is common in traditional Muslim communities such as in Java (Umami, 2024).

Thus, the meaning of *tawassul* in the context of pilgrimage becomes a medium for recognizing the closeness of pious people to Allah, asking for blessings in life and for our prayers to be accepted through their glory, and fostering enthusiasm to emulate their deeds and morals (Bloechl & Brouillette, 2022; Wani, 2018).

This means that the main function of *tawassul* in pilgrimage is to become a bridge to true closeness with Allah (*taqarrub ilallah*). This spiritual process teaches that humans need sacred and appropriate means to get closer, need respect and follow in the footsteps of those who are pleasing to Allah, and are encouraged to purify their intentions and increase their good deeds. Thus, it can be understood that *tawassul* is not only a means of prayer but also a gateway for souls that are growing spiritually so that they may come closer to their Lord through the path of love, exemplary behaviour, and respect.

This also confirms that visiting graves is a tradition rich in meaning in Islam, both as a means of remembering death and as a way to strengthen faith and piety. This tradition has various educational dimensions that make it an important means of shaping the personality, morals, and social relationships of Muslims. Through reflection, contemplation, and respect for ancestors, individuals can develop a deeper spiritual awareness and strengthen their connection with God. Spiritual education within the tradition of visiting graves encourages individuals to reflect on life and death, enhance the value of community, and appreciate symbols and rituals that carry spiritual meaning.

The Transformation of Grave Visitation as a Means of Spiritual Education

Grave visitation is one of the religious practices that has been deeply rooted in human civilization and Muslim traditions, including in regions such as Java. This practice not only carries the meaning of respect for ancestors and righteous people but also holds great potential as a means of spiritual education. The transformation of grave visiting as a means of spiritual education refers to a shift in the orientation, meaning, and practice of grave visiting from a mere social-religious tradition to an effective medium for shaping religious awareness, fostering spiritual education, deepening spiritual values, and strengthening human relationships with God and with one another.

Some transformative aspects of grave visiting are manifested in several moments, namely:

1. Means of Raising Awareness about Death

Visiting graves educates Muslims about the concept of temporary life and inevitable death, which is an important part of the Islamic faith. This awareness is not merely a form of spiritual reflection but also a foundation for a person to live a more responsible life (Bashir et al., 2020).

Through grave visits, Muslims are reminded that wealth, position, and worldly things will have no meaning after death. This psychologically educates a person not to get caught up in greed and excessive pride. Thus, grave visits serve as a reminder and training to control oneself and live a balanced life, in accordance with Islamic teachings.

Grave visiting has a very important function in Javanese Muslim tradition, especially as a medium of education to increase awareness about death (*zikrul maut*). This practice teaches that death is a certainty and an inseparable part of the cycle of life. Through grave visiting, people are invited to reflect on the essence of life, improve themselves, and prepare provisions for the afterlife.

In the tradition of visiting graves, Javanese Muslims are taught to view death not as the end but as a gateway to eternal life. By visiting graves, one is reminded of the transience of the world and that everything one possesses, whether wealth, position, or status, will ultimately be meaningless upon death. This reflection guides people to live more wisely, do more good deeds, and increase their devotion to Allah Swt.

The tradition of visiting graves also contains strong spiritual and educational elements. During the visit, people recite prayers, *tahlil*, and verses from the Qur'an to pray for the souls of the deceased. This activity is not only an expression of love for ancestors but also a means to strengthen spiritual connections with God. The prayers recited serve as a reminder that death is a transition to eternal life, and every human being is accountable for their deeds in this world (Ulfah et al., 2021).

Islamic education highly values the process of introspection, and visiting graves is one of the moments to reflect on past actions and determine future steps. Thus, visiting graves plays a role in forming deep self-awareness and encouraging every Muslim always to improve themselves, which is in line with the goal of Islamic education, which is to form pious individuals.

2. Means of Moral and Social Ethics Education

Grave visits also contain important moral values in Islamic education, particularly in respecting parents, ancestors, and fellow Muslims. These values are crucial in shaping one's character to become a person of noble character and compassion towards others.

In this tradition, grave visits are often conducted collectively, whether by families, neighbours, or communities. This practice teaches the values of cooperation, togetherness, and mutual support among community members. Cleaning graves, praying, and sharing stories about ancestors not only strengthens family ties but also creates a strong sense of solidarity and social awareness in the community. This is in line with the social values in Javanese culture that emphasize the importance of harmony, tolerance, and cooperation among individuals (Chair et al., 2019).

Grave visits also teach the importance of self-reflection and social awareness. During a visit, individuals are encouraged to reflect on the meaning of life and death, as well as their role in society. This enables individuals to improve their moral character, such as patience, humility, and mutual respect. Thus, grave visits serve as a reminder of the importance of good moral character, both towards family, neighbours and the wider community.

In Islam, showing devotion to one's parents is a duty that is highly prioritized, even after they have passed away. Visiting graves is a way to show dedication to parents and ancestors who have passed away. By visiting their graves, a Muslim shows respect and love for those who have contributed to their life.

For children and teenagers, visiting graves can be a very effective educational tool in instilling the value of *birrul walidain* (filial piety). This value teaches children always to respect and pray for their parents, both while they are alive and after they have passed away. From an Islamic educational perspective, devotion to parents is one of the core principles that must be instilled from an early age (Fasyiransyah et al., 2025; Fauzi, 2025).

Empathy also grows through this tradition, where every Muslim is taught to pray for the deceased and show respect to them. This teaches Muslims to care for one another, appreciate the contributions of those who have passed away, and maintain harmonious relationships with their extended family. Thus, visiting graves contains social educational values that strengthen social bonds and empathy.

3. Means of Learning about Faith and Piety

In Islamic education, strengthening faith and piety is the main goal. Grave visits play an important role as a means of strengthening faith, especially in maintaining the belief in life after death and God's decree for every human being (Pradita et al., 2020).

Grave visits have a very significant role in the spiritual education of the Javanese Muslim community, especially in terms of strengthening faith and piety. This tradition is not merely a ritual to pray for the deceased but also a means of self-reflection on life, death, and the relationship between humans and God. Through grave visiting, Javanese Muslims are taught to strengthen their spiritual foundation through awareness of the transience of the world and the importance of good deeds as provisions for the afterlife.

Philosophically, visiting graves teaches people to increase their faith (Faidah, 2021). Visiting graves also serves as a medium for building togetherness in society. In many cases, families or communities visit graves together, which strengthens the values of Islamic brotherhood. This teaches solidarity, mutual prayer, and sharing in times of difficulty, as well as maintaining relationships between citizens within the framework of faith and piety.

By seeing the condition of the graves firsthand, a person is reminded that human life is entirely in the hands of Allah. This teaches Muslims always to be *tawakkal* or surrender to Allah, in living their lives. Visiting graves makes a person realize that humans do not have complete control over life and death, which teaches *tawakkal* and deep faith in the destiny that Allah has determined.

Visiting graves serves as a concrete reminder of the existence of the afterlife, which educates Muslims to always live in accordance with the rules of Islamic law. This reminder encourages a person to be more diligent in worship, such as prayer, zakat, and almsgiving, as well as to increase good deeds. Islamic education emphasizes the importance of piety, which includes obedience in carrying out Allah's commands and avoiding His prohibitions.

Awareness of the afterlife teaches that life should be filled with righteous deeds as preparation for life after death. Visiting graves provides a moment of introspection that encourages individuals to draw closer to Allah, increase their piety, and consistently maintain their worship and moral conduct. Thus, visiting graves plays a crucial role in fostering piety and shaping the character of a good Muslim.

4. Means of Intergenerational Value Sustainability

Grave pilgrimage also has an intergenerational educational dimension. This activity is not only carried out by individuals but often involves extended families, where Islamic values are transmitted from older to younger generations. In Islamic education, the role of the family is very important in character-building and instilling Islamic values.

When children and teenagers are encouraged to participate in grave visits, they can directly observe how older generations show respect to their parents or ancestors. They learn about the importance of this tradition and gain an understanding that honouring deceased family members is part of Islamic teachings. This process provides a strong example for children about the importance of moral values, ethics, and family relationships.

The younger generation is an important target in the continuity of the grave pilgrimage tradition. In Javanese Muslim communities, children and teenagers are often involved

in this activity, either as listeners in recitations held at the grave or as active participants in cleaning the grave or participating in prayer processions. Through this participation, the younger generation is taught to respect their ancestors, understand the importance of prayer for the deceased, and absorb the spiritual values embedded in this tradition. Thus, grave visiting serves as a medium for passing on spiritual values to the next generation, ensuring that this religious practice remains alive amidst the dynamics of the times (Yusuf, 2020; Zakiyya, 2024).

Grave visiting, in the context of Javanese Muslim society, is not merely a ritual but an education in spiritual continuity that bridges past, present, and future generations. This tradition ensures that values of faith, respect for ancestors, and awareness of the afterlife are passed down, making them an integral part of the spiritual identity of Javanese Muslim society.

Philosophically, grave visits teach the younger generation about the importance of death as an inseparable part of life and part of Allah Swt destiny. This teaches them to always remember death as a form of awareness of the afterlife, which must be prepared for from an early age by doing good deeds, praying, and worshipping. The tradition of visiting graves provides an opportunity for parents to convey religious messages to their children, teaching them to respect their parents and ancestors, as well as the importance of praying for the deceased, which is also part of ongoing charitable deeds (Hong, 2024; Mahzumi & Fuad, 2019).

Grave visiting has a profound meaning that goes beyond simply paying respects to the deceased. It also serves as an important educational tool in passing down Islamic values from one generation to the next within the Javanese Muslim community. This tradition acts as a medium for spiritual and moral learning, connecting older generations with younger ones and teaching them about the meaning of life, death, and the duty to worship Allah SWT. By involving the younger generation, grave visiting helps instil a deeper religious awareness and introduces them to values aligned with Islamic teachings.

Additionally, grave visits teach Islamic social values such as solidarity, respect for elders, and social responsibility. During these visits, Javanese Muslims typically involve all family members or even the entire community, strengthening a sense of unity and cooperation. These values are directly taught through daily practices, enabling the younger generation to develop solidarity and concern for others.

By preserving this tradition, the younger generation is guided to understand the roots of Islamic culture, appreciate their ancestors, and maintain practices that support their faith. This tradition teaches them that Islam is a sustainable religion.

Based on the above discussion, the following are the transformations of the grave visiting tradition as a form of spiritual education:

Table 2. Transformation of the tradition of grave pilgrimage as a form of spiritual education

Aspect	Meaning of Pilgrimage	Educational Value	Transformation of Values
Raising awareness	Media for self-introspection and awareness of death (<i>dzikrul maut</i>)	Awareness of the afterlife, purification of the soul (<i>tazkiyat al-nafs</i>), drawing	Forming a humble and religious character

		closer to Allah (<i>taqarrub</i>)	
Social Sensitivity	Moments of family and community togetherness (<i>nyekar, haul</i>)	Social gatherings, social empathy, cooperation	Fostering solidarity, tolerance, and love for family
Enhancing Faith	A place for reflection, contemplation, and emulating righteous people	Exemplary behaviour, contemplation, meaning of life	Sharpening spiritual awareness, interpreting messages from tradition and spiritual history
Spiritual Sustainability	The legacy of values passed down from ancestors across generations	Non-formal values education, internalization of spirituality	Fostering sustainable piety across generations and rooted in

Based on the table above, it can be understood that the tradition of visiting graves in Javanese Muslim society is not only a religious practice but also a medium of spiritual education that shapes religious, moral, and social awareness. Through the integration of Islamic teachings and local culture, this tradition instils important values such as self-reflection, respect for ancestors, social solidarity, and understanding of the afterlife. In this way, grave visiting becomes an effective means of transmitting spiritual and cultural values to future generations.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion in the previous subchapter, it can be concluded that the tradition of visiting graves in Javanese Muslim society contains rich and diverse spiritual educational dimensions, which are not only related to ritual aspects but also build character and religious values. Through the practice of visiting graves, Muslims are encouraged to reflect on life and death and understand the importance of their relationship with Allah and fellow human beings. The awareness of death gained from grave pilgrimage teaches people to appreciate the time they have, improve themselves, and increase their acts of worship. On the other hand, grave pilgrimage also serves as a means of instilling moral values, such as respect for parents and ancestors. Javanese Muslims believe that by praying for the deceased, they can continue to remember and appreciate the contributions made by those individuals. This demonstrates that grave visiting is not merely a spiritual activity but also an important moral education in daily life. Furthermore, grave visits encourage individuals to strengthen social bonds and solidarity among family members and the community. In this context, grave visits become a medium for passing on religious traditions and values to the younger generation, enabling them to understand and appreciate the meaning of life and death from an Islamic perspective.

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