

Ziarah Kubur Activity Phenomenon on the Last Days of Sha'ban Month in Jakarta

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Abstract— This article discusses the phenomenon of the tendency among Muslims to carry out the activity of *ziarah kubur* (visit to the grave) in Jakarta on the last days of Sha'ban month, the 8th month in the Hijri calendar. The purpose of this research is to know the factors that motivate them in implementing that activity. To achieve this goal, the authors use qualitative research methods with the approach of religious science in Islam and sociology. This approach is used because the things that are read in *ziarah kubur* are related to elements from Islam religion and that activity is carried out by *peziarah* (grave visitor) who have social relations with the deceased while he was still alive. From that research, obtained results that indicate the existence of increasing of *ziarah kubur* activity on the last days of Sha'ban month at cemeteries in Jakarta. The moments leading up to Ramadan holy month (the month after Sha'ban) is a powerful phenomenon in motivating them to carry out *ziarah kubur* activity. The time approaching the coming of Ramadan month is considered as an interesting time to carry out *ziarah kubur*. As a conclusion, *ziarah kubur* activity among Muslim in Jakarta on the last days of the Sha'ban month which approaching the coming of Ramadan month has shown a phenomenon of increasing when compared to that activity in other days. Its impact is the existence of great attention from *peziarah* to use the last days of Sha'ban month to carry out the *ziarah kubur* activity.

Keyword---*ziarah kubur, Sha'ban, Ramadan, Jakarta*

I. INTRODUCTION

Ziarah Kubur is an activity to visit the graves of the deceased. In this place, *peziarah* reads the verses of the Qur'an, *tahlil, tahmid, tasbih, istighfar, shalawat*, and others, then ends with a prayer for the deceased. This reading can be done by a person himself or by being guided by a guide who has expertise in guiding *ziarah kubur* reading. *Peziarah* can be individuals or groups. *Ziarah kubur* activities can be done at any time, but in the last days of the month Sya'ban it experienced an increase in activity among some Muslims in Jakarta [1].

Jakarta is a big city that is the capital of Indonesia. The population of this city is heterogeneous which consists of various ethnicities. The majority of the population are Muslims.

Some of the Muslim population of Jakarta have a activity of *ziarah kubur* in the last days of the month of Sha'ban in various burial places in that city, such as cemeteries in Tanah Kusir, Karet Bivak, Jeruk Purut, Menteng Pulo, and others [2].

There are several articles that contained information about the *ziarah kubur*. However the thomb and the burial location discussed in this article is different from those articles. There is an article that contains information about the activity of *ziarah kubur* by visiting ancient tombs in Jakarta [3, p. 369--387]. While some other articles chose graves of *wali* (holy man) or graves outside Jakarta as a place for research of articles on the activity of *ziarah kubur*, such as the *ziarah kubur* activity in Gresik and others [4, p. 247--261], [5, p. 149-164], [6, p. 335-353]. Thus, there are differences between this article and articles written by other authors. The difference includes two things: the location of the graveyard which is used as a place of research and the tombs visited by *peziarah*. Another article examines the graves of certain people (holy people) who are visited, while this article discusses the graves of ordinary people who are used as a place for visit by their relatives.

II. METHOD

This research uses the method of religious research and sociology. *Ziarah kubur* is an activity which is related to religious rituals. This can be seen from the existence of reading in Islam read at the tomb. That reading are some verses of the Al-Qur'an, *tasbih, tahlil, tahmid*, and others. Therefore, in this research, it is necessary to use methods of religious research.

On the other hand, this activity is something that is commonly practiced by some Muslims in Jakarta. They have social relations with family members, including with family members who have died by visiting their burial sites, both at public or family cemeteries. Therefore, sociological research method is also needed in the writing of this article. The study of social relations between family members has relation with sociology because the relationship between people in group life is a field of study of the sociology [7, p. 17]. In this case, the appropriate branch of sociology to be used as a research method is the sociology of religion which studies the

relationships between individuals in society groups in religious activities [8, p. 8], [9].

If linked to the means used in the study, there are two types of research methods used. The first method is library research, and the second method is field research. By using library research, the author uses the information contained in various books, articles, and other reference sources. Another method that is also used in this study, is the field research method by observing several cemeteries in Jakarta that are usually visited by *peziarah* in the last days of Sya'ban, the days leading up to the month of Ramadan. Some of the cemeteries in Jakarta that have been observed for writing this article are public cemeteries in Tanah Kusir, Karet Bivak, Jeruk Purut, Menteng Pulo, and others. Some of these cemeteries are places that are visited by many *peziarah*.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A few days at the end of the month of Sya'ban, the 8th month in the Hijri calendar, in various public and family cemeteries in Jakarta, there is a phenomenon that the number of *peziarah* increases significantly compared to the other days in the previous month. Although the *ziarah kubur* activity can be carried out any time without any attachment to a certain time, those days are different moments from other days because the time coincides with the approaching of the holy month of Ramadan. This phenomenon is seen in public cemeteries in Tanah Kusir, Karet Bivak, Jeruk Purut, Menteng Pulo, and others [10] - [13]. Besides being able to be seen in public cemeteries, this phenomenon is also seen in several family-specific cemeteries.

In visiting the cemetery, many *peziarah* carry fragrant flowers. Usually that flowers are purchased from traders not far from the cemetery. They sow the flowers above the tomb so that the burial place is fragrant and well- preserved as a symbol of the *peziarah* attention to the deceased. Some of the *peziarah* called the activity of visiting the tomb in the last days of the Sya'ban month before Ramadan with the term *nyekar* [14].

At the burial place, the *peziarah* recites the Sura al- Fâtiḥah, the Sura Yâsin and *tasbih, tahmid, tahlil*, and closes with a prayer, hoping that the reward is conveyed to the soul of the deceased visited. Usually these readings are read by the *peziarah* himself or the *peziarah* uses the services of others to read them in exchange for money voluntarily without certain tariffs [15].

Ziarah kubur is an activity that has relation with the teachings in Islam. In Islam, based on a Hadith narrated by Imam Ahmad and Imam Muslim, there is a recommendation to Muslims to carry out the *ziarah kubur* activity so that they can remember the coming of death and the life in the hereafter [16, p. 477]. By remembering the coming of death and life in the hereafter, they are expected to be able to increase their faith and taqwa to Allah SWT. In addition, they are also expected to be able to improve good deeds. Thus, *ziarah kubur* is not only beneficial for the deceased visited, but also for *peziarah*.

On the other hand, for people who do *ziarah* to the tomb of their parents, *ziarah kubur* can be interpreted as an attempt to do good to their parents. At the tomb of the parents, they prayed that his parents would get forgiveness for all their sins from Allah SWT, obtain His mercy and compassion, and obtain the best place in heaven [17, p. 347]. Attention of children to their deceased parents by praying for them to get the best things in the afterlife is part of the signs of children's piety. In Islamic teachings, the attitude of pious children who always pray for their parents to get good in the afterlife is a pious deed whose reward can be accepted by their deceased parents [16, p. 479].

In *ziarah kubur* activities, praying for the deceased to get good in the hereafter can not only be done by children to their parents, but can also be done by others, including by people who do not have kinship. The benefits of prayer in *ziarah kubur* activities carried out by anyone, including those who do not have a kinship with a deceased person, can be felt by the people who were buried in the visited place. [16, p. 479].

As mentioned above, there is a phenomenon of increasing *ziarah kubur* activities in various cemeteries in Jakarta on the last days of the month of Sya'ban before Ramadan. From this phenomenon, it is seen that the last days of the Sya'ban month before the month of Ramadan is a chosen time that attracts some Muslims in Jakarta to carry out *ziarah kubur* activities. The month of Sha'ban has a very strategic position because its position is before Ramadan. To be able to reach Ramadhan, Muslims must go through the month of Sha'ban. Because of that, there is a prayer as taught by Rasulullah which its contents are among others to get blessings in the month of Sha'ban and the opportunity to reach the month of Ramadan [18, p. 37--38].

Ramadan is a holy month for Muslims. Towards this arrival, they generally make preparations by carrying out various good activities. Among other things, *ziarah kubur* is an activity which its benefits are expected to be felt by the deceased [16, p. 479]. Therefore, the last days of the month of Sya'ban and before the coming of Ramadan, the *ziarah kubur* activities increase in various cemeteries in Jakarta. In the *ziarah kubur* activity, they also clean the tombs visited and sow flowers. Thus, during the holy month of Ramadan, the tombs looked clean.

The month of Sha'ban is a month which its position is flanked by the month of Rajab and Ramadan. In Islam, the month of Rajab is a month that has privileges and glory as part of *Asyhur al-Hurum* (Dzul Qa'dah, Dhul Hijjah, Muharram, and Rajab) [19, p. 309]. Based on a Hadith of Rasulullah, the month of Rajab is the month of Allah, the month of Sha'ban is the month of Rasulullah, while the month of Ramadan is the month of the followers of Rasulullah [18, p. 44]. Thus, it appears that the month of Sha'ban is flanked by a month that has privileges and glory, so that Muslims are expected to still have great attention to the month of Sha'ban by carrying out various good activities [19, p. 309].

Besides being able to be analyzed from religious aspects, the phenomenon of the increasing *ziarah kubur* activities can also be analyzed from sociological aspects. There are several sociological aspects that can be researched from the

phenomenon of the increasing activity of *peziarah* in the last days of the month of Sha'ban. Among these several aspects, there are aspects of efforts to remember the deceased relative. Pilgrims have had a relationship in group life, whether in family or friendship, with the deceased when still alive. There are *peziarah* efforts to remember the social relations that have been done by people who have died.

The opportunity to carry out *ziarah kubur* with family members can be used as a momentum to build awareness in family social relationships. Harmony of social relationships among family members can be achieved if there is attention among them. The last days of the month of Sya'ban are used as the right time for them to build concern for deceased family members in the form of *ziarah kubur* activities.

The month after Sha'ban is Ramadan. In this month, sociologically, attention to good charity activities in inter-individuals social relations in empirical phenomena in Jakarta seems to increase. The atmosphere of welcoming the improvement of good deeds in the month of Ramadan can be felt in the last days of the month of Sya'ban, so that the activity of the *ziarah kubur* as a social-religious activity increases in the last days of the month of Sha'ban along with the activities to welcome the holy month Ramadan. Thus, their attention to social-religious activities in the month of Ramadan does not forget their attention in carrying out social-religious activities in the month of Sha'ban. [19, p. 309].

The increasing activity of the *ziarah kubur* on the last days of the month Sya'ban has a sociological impact in the economic field. This impact is seen in the increase of various flowers sale around the cemetery in Jakarta. This flower is a complement to the activities of the *ziarah kubur* usually carried by *peziarah* [20]. The flower is spread on the thombs, thus creating a fragrant aroma. Therefore, in the last days of the month Sya'ban many people who sell flowers around the tomb obtain more incomes compared to other days. [21]. The increasing activity of the *ziarah kubur* on the last days of the month Sya'ban also causes an increase in the incomes of other traders. In addition to many flower traders, there were also many food and beverage traders at the cemetery in Jakarta on the last days of the Sya'ban month before Ramadan [22]. The increasing number of people carry out *ziarah kubur* is an opportunity for traders to earn more income.

Another sociological impact in the economic field is the large number of people offering *tahlil* reading services and prayers at the cemeteries visited by *peziarah*. The increasing number of people who conduct *ziarah kubur* at the cemetery is used as an opportunity for them to offer these services. From this service offering, they get the reward from *peziarah* voluntarily [15]. The opportunity to offer *tahlil* reading services and prayers at cemeteries in Jakarta is also used by people from outside Jakarta to get income [15], [23].

IV. CONCLUSION

The discussion of this article can be concluded that in various cemeteries in Jakarta there is an increasing phenomenon of *ziarah kubur* activities in the last days of the

month of Sha'ban before Ramadan. This phenomenon is seen in cemeteries in Karet Bivak, Tanah Kusir, Jeruk Purut, Menteng Pulo, and others [10] - [13]. The increase in *ziarah kubur* activities on those days is related to religious and social elements. The relation with religious elements is that *ziarah kubur* is a recommended activity in Islam to pray for those the deceased in order to get the best things in the hereafter, in addition the *peziarah* can also remember the death and the afterlife [16, p. 477]. The relation with the social element is that the *ziarah kubur* on the last days of the month Sya'ban can be used as an effort to remember members of relatives who have died, build social care in family social relationships, and do efforts not to forget the month of Sha'ban to carry out social-religious activities in the days of preparing to welcome Ramadan [19, p. 309].

The increasing activities of the *ziarah kubur* in the last days of the month Sya'ban has a sociological impact on the economic aspect, that many flowers, food, and beverage traders appear around the cemetery in Jakarta [13], [22]. Other sociological impacts in the economic field can be seen in the number of people who offer services of reading *tahlil* and prayers at various cemeteries in Jakarta [15].

The phenomenon of increasing *ziarah kubur* activities in the last days of the Sya'ban month before Ramadan can show the value of piety among the *peziarah*. The value of piety can be seen from various things. One of them is the attitude of caring for people who have died by performing a *ziarah* to the tomb of the person to read *tahlil* and prayer.

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