Amulet Development: *Wifiq* "*Darkah Ya Ahlal Medina*" from Magical Content to Visual Performance

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Abstract. Some Indonesian people still believe that the amulet is a media that can protect them from evil. There are several types of amulets, one of them is *wifiq*. Which is the amulet in form of written and in Javanese it can be known as *Rajah*. *Wifiqs* is still used by *santris* as the way to seek refuge from their God. One of the *wifiqs* that they are widely used is *wifiq* "*darkah ya ahlal medina*". However, at this time there is a change in the function of *wifiq*. Which used to be very sacred but now *wifiq* can turn into something that is no longer sacred (profane). The phenomenon of the change in this function causes the tranformation of *wifiq* towards commodification. This study uses qualitative descriptive method and supported by Emile Durkheim's theory of functionalism. This transformation caused by the changes of the magical thinking in Javanese. The results of this study will open people's minds of the magical object can change into an object that has a consumptive function.

Keywords: *amulet, wifiq, commodification, magical thinking*

1. INTRODUCTION

An amulet is an object that is believed to have magical content and can bring sanctuary from evil or danger[1]. These objects can be found in various cultures: e.g. pharaoh sticks in Egyptian culture and swastikas in Indian culture[2]. All objects can principally be made as amulets, such as gemstones, coins, animal parts, plant parts and writing[3].

In Indonesia, the most used amulet until now is the kris[4]. Kris is a type of amulet in the form of object. Other than in the form of objects there are other types of amulets which the magical part is in the writing. This type of amulet is known as *rajah*. *Rajah* is a symbol or written that contains a mantra or prayer [5]. *Rajah* can be written directly on the wearer's skin as found in the Dayak tribe tattoo culture in Borneo[6]or written on paper as found in many Javanese cultures[7].

Javanese culture has 2 types of *rajah*[2]. The first is the *kalacakra rajah*, and the second is *wifiq*. The kalacakra *rajah* is found mostly in artifacts inherited from Hindu kingdoms in Java and used ancient Javanese writing[4]. Whereas, *wifiq* is often found in artifacts inherited from the Islamic kingdom on Java and used Arabic writing[8].

Wifiq is a writing that is arranged systematically as a means of communicating with the God or God's energy[5]. It is expected that through this sacred writing one can obtain certain salvation[9].

Wifiq is widely used by *santris*. Even during the Indonesian war of independence, *wifiq* was highly relied to fight the invaders. It was made evident from *wifiq* artifacts during that time[10]. The use of *wifiq* is intended to make them immune to weapons of the enemies. The *wifiq* is from verses of the Qur'an , prayers and so on written on a piece paper or clothe and used during the battle[10]. It was believed by the *santris* as a means to seek refuge to God.

Currently, according to Himawan, the amulet / *wifiq* is still widely used, this was stated in his book which examined the level of magical thinking of various ethnic groups in Jakarta in 2011 and 2014[11]. One of the *wifiq*s that are still widely used by *santri*s is the *darkah ya ahlal medina*. This *wifiq* is popular among them due to its being of general purpose and is considered not a violation to Islamic religious norms[8]. Like on Nanang Qosim research who discussed about lingual element in *wifiq*. The concept is similar to putting the writing of *basmalah* on the start page of a book to get blessings[5]. Which it mentioned on M Abdullah research who juxtaposed *wifiq* with *wirid* and *hizib*[12].

Considering this phenomenon, it is considered imperative to conduct a scientific study to reveal the causes of *wifiq* transforming being sacred objects to the form of visual performance and the reason it is no longer considered to have a magical function.

2. METHOD

This study conducted through qualitative method with descriptive analytic exposure to generate an overview and analysis of the phenomenon. This study uses a phenomenological approach to investigate the transformation of *wifiq* from sacred objects to profane. Phenomenology research involves awareness of human experience. The main concept in sacred phenomenology to profane is meaning[13]. Meaning is an important content that ariss from the experience of human consciousness. To identify the inherent quality of awareness experience that carried out in dept and thoroughness. This method is supported by using Emile Durkheim's functionalism theory. In order to answer the above questions, researchers conducted a literature review related to the development of magical point of views that developed into profane in the modern era today.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

3.1 What *Wifiq Darkah Ya Ahlal Medina* Is

Based on the results of the interview with the maker of *wifiq darkah ahlal medina* (subsequently: *wifiq*-DYAM), namely Habib Abu Bakar Al Haddad from Malang, East Java. The idea of making this *wifiq* originated from the story of the writer of *simtud dhurar sholawat* namely Habib Ali Al Habsyi who often received shipments of goods from abroad, and the shipment did not arrive at him. He then made a letter symbol *kha '* (in Arabic) above 1030 (in Arabic) and in the middle there is a 110 Arabic number as seen in **Figure 1**. The symbol is then written onto the objects to be sent abroad. From the story of what was done by Habib Ali, Habib Abu Bakar was inspired to make it into a form of *wifiq*-DYAM as we know it.

Fig. 1. an example of a figure from DYAM *wifiq*. Personal documentation source.

The meaning of this *wifiq* is that number 110 is the number of letters *hijaiyah* [14]which arranges the word " Ali ". This number also symbolizes the clan of this *wifiq* maker, see **Table 1**. The number 1030 is a count of the sentence of *Amanatullah wa rosuluh wal Abdullah alhaddad* where this count is a suggestion from several *ulama '* from the city of Tarim, Yemen, see **Table 1**. The sentence "*Yaa Fattaah*" and the phrase "*Yaa Rozzaaq*" are the daily wirid of this *wifiq* maker, see **Table 1**. The letter kha' is a symbol of the clan Al Haddad, see **Table 1**. **The** combination of letters kha' and the number 110 add up to 1980, see **Table 1**.

Table 1. The meaning of *wifiq*-DYAM

Symbols	Meaning
Number 110	The number of values of the letters *hijaiyah* who composes the word " Ali "
	Symbolizes the clan of *wifiq* makers
Number 1030	Number of words in the sentence *amanatullah wa rosuluh wal Abdullah alhaddad*
Yaa Fattaah	daily wirid from *wifiq* makers
Yaa Rozzaaq	daily wirid from *wifiq* makers
Kha'	Al-Haddad clan
Kha'+ 110	Year 1980

The magical function of this *wifiq* is to expect that the items sent through other people arrive safely at their destination. At present, *Wifiq*-DYAM has spread and is used in almost all Muslim regions of the world. This is due to the fact that according to some religious scholars, this *wifiq* has a general nature because it writes *darkah ya ahlal medina, ya tarim wa ahlaha.* The meaning of the sentence is "give help to the people of the city of Medina (Muhammad) and the people of the city of Tarim (guardians, scholars and pious people)" as a way to hope for safety from God through these people.

3.2 An Analysis of the Transformation of *Wifiq Darkah Ya Ahlal Medina*

According to functional theory, society is a social stem consisting of parts or elements that are interrelated and mutually integrated in balance. Changes that occur in a section will bring changes to the other changes[14]. If it is associated with the phenomenon that occurs in *wifiq*-DYAM, there is a change in magical thinking patterns in Javanese society today. In the past Javanese people tended to be superstitious. There have been many Javanese folktales related to magic. *Wayang*, kris, traditional dances, most are regarded to have magical properties. This

study aims to investigate the transforming phenomenon of the magical thinking of Javanese people.

Magical thinking is considered as a specific form of irrational thinking[15]. Irrational thinking is a form of thought that is contrary to logic and does not involve the use of reason[16]. Belief in magical things arises when the boundary between magic and logic becomes biased[16]. There have been many magical thoughts that are not considered as truth. Regardless, in society there are still several groups or individuals who still use magical thinking[15].

The same is the way of thinking taught in a religion. Trusting one's own religion can be categorized as a result of magical thinking[15]. Religion is a way of life for humans and created by God[17]. Things like blessing, the existence of heaven and hell, angels and jinn can be seen as truth by religious people because they use irrational thought (i.e. magical thinking)[18].

Magical thinking is also a cultural result and is passed from generation to generation[15]. It is in harmony with what happened to *wifiq*. The existence of *wifiq* in Java is influenced by *santri* culture. *Kiai*, as a teacher of the *santri*s, teaches knowledge about *wifiq* and this has been taking places from ancient times.

Research on the level of magical thinking in Java was carried out by Himawan. This study was conducted in Jakarta in 2011[15] and in 2014[15]. The results of the study were that there was an important relationship between the level of education, age, ethnicity of the individual, and economic status with the level of one's magical thinking[11][15]. Then according to Himawan's research results, most of the *wifiq* users in the community are also determined by these factors.

Referring to Functional theory, changes in the mindset of this magical thinking will trigger other events. *Wifiq* which was originally a sacred object, then due to changes in the magical mindset, there was a change the function of the *wifiq*. The magical mindset in *wifiq* is in terms of sacredness. Something sacred is something that is protected and isolated by prohibitions (taboo), whereas something of a profane nature is something in which the prohibitions are applied and must be kept spaced out from things that are considered sacred[19].

The definition of the sacred as something forbidden and apart does not necessarily qualify that the sacred is identical to that which is holy, because in any profane things are sacred and bad, but not going to turn it into holy. On the contrary, in the sacred matter there can also be evil and good at once, but it will not turn out to be profane[20]. From this concept, then once again the writer alluded that the main concentration of magical thinking lies in the sacred and *wifiq* is intended as a sacred thing[21].

The sacredness of *wifiq* finally vanished because of some perspectives that *wifiq* has a magical element and pattern that is wicked and should be opposed and even eliminated; therefore making *wifiq* a profane object.

Initially before someone writes *wifiq*, it is usually preceded by ablution, reading prayer or even fasting first and so forth [22]. Now this *wifiq* is produced without going through these processes. Therefore *wifiq* is no longer used as an initial function, namely as a means to request protection from God, but for the purpose of maintaining the symbol as limited as visual performance.

3.3 *Wifiq*-Dyam as a Visual Performance Commodification

Globally, the development of *wifiq* at the moment is degrading due to people opposing the magical concepts within. However, others regard its visual performance as appealing and

conveying Islamic values. These people attempted to make *wifiq* a piece of art by using its visual performance.

From the explanation above, shows that there is commodification that realizes value through transformation "usability value" to "exchange rates". Therefore, commodification has carried out religious syncretism with a global society that is more synonymous with aesthetics and worth selling. While commodification relates to how the process of transformation of goods and services along with their value becomes a commodity that has an exchange rate in the market. This is in accordance with vincent mosco's commocification theory[13] which states the commodification of content is the process of changing messages from a collection of information int a system of meaning in the form of marketable products.

Technological advances also have an impact on the development of *wifiq*. Now *wifiq darkah ahlal medina* is developed by utilizing mass printing technology such as printers and cutting stickers. Visual performance found in *wifiq* is also used in the direction of commodification, such as watches, key chains, rings and clothing, for example see **Figure 2**.

Fig. 2. Examples of figures from the *wifiq darkah ahlal medina* which is experiencing commodification. Personal documentation source.

4. CONCLUSIONS

As a type of amulet, *wifiq darkah ahlal medina* is still on use by *santri*s. *Wifiq darkah ya ahlal medina* no longer sacred and develops into some profane things. There are many factors that influence it, such as educational level, age, ethnicity, and economic status. Those factors would greatly affect a person's level of magical thinking. Also, people's mindset about sacred objects being evil thus should be eliminated is in accordance the Emile Durkheim functionalism theory. As a result, *wifiq* is currently mass produced by certain community because it aims to maintain the symbol that implies an Islamic element using printer technology and cutting stickers for easy distribution. *Wifiq darkah ahlal medina* also experienced commodification and made as a form of visual performance of human accessories such as watches, necklaces, hats, caps, t-shirts etc.

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