



## The Concept of *Ndalem* as Manifestation of Sufistic Values and Practice of *Kiai Kampung* in Madura

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### Abstract:

This study explores *ndalem*, the residence of *kiai kampung* (village kiai) in Madura, as an embodiment of Sufistic values and practices. Using a descriptive qualitative approach through historical analysis, ethnography, and interviews, this research examines the historical roots of Sufism in Madura, the role of *kiai* in Sufi practices, as well as the architectural and symbolic elements of *ndalem* as a spiritual and cultural space. The findings indicate that the *ndalem* serves as both a residence for the *kiai* and a place where social and religious activities of the *kiai*, *santri*, and the religious community take place. The history and background of Sufism in Madura point to the character of *kiai kampung* as religious leaders in rural areas who play crucial roles in spreading and revitalizing Sufi teachings among society. The structure of *ndalem*, as a place of *kiai* to dwell, reflects Sufistic values, particularly those that embody deep spirituality. One of the essential aspects is the preservation of *dikr* (remembrance of God) and *wirid* (spiritual recitations). *Kiai kampung* also plays a key role in maintaining these traditions among the Madurese community.

**Contribution:** This study contributes to capturing the Sufistic expression in spatial space, besides social and ritual practices, as part of Living Sufism.

**Keywords:** *Ndalem*, Sufism, *Kiai Kampung*, Madura,

## Introduction

In the development of the era of globalization and digitalization that touches all aspects of humanity without exception, moral crises and spiritual crises have become problems of society in general and Muslims in particular.<sup>1</sup> Madura is known as an area rich in religious traditions and values. The term Madurese Islam is Islam based on local wisdom, which merges the culture and religion in Madura. The Madura region is no exception; modernization affects each individual's personality. So, it is necessary to strengthen the soul and engage in activities that include worship to revive peace. One of them is reviving the role of the village kiai (Islamic leader), which is also called Sufism. The village kiai plays a central role in maintaining and spreading Islamic teachings. As written by Aswab Mahasin, the village kiai is a cultural preacher. Aswab also quoted the opinion of Kiai Aqil Siradj, who stated that the village Kiai is a fortress of the family to strengthen and maintain peace and harmony in the nation and religion, which always teaches patience, gratitude, and sincerity.<sup>2</sup> The daily life of the village kiai is inseparable from simple preaching by showing good morals to the community. This is contained in the theological and Sufi teachings applied in the life of the village kiai.

A critical aspect of Kiai's life is *Ndalem*, which functions as a physical residence and a spiritual and social centre. *Ndalem* is a gathering place for people to study Sufi teachings applied in everyday life, known as Living Sufism.<sup>3</sup> This concept teaches simplicity, wisdom, and closeness to God, which is taught and exemplified by the village kiai. Several studies that examine the concept of *ndalem* were found, including first, Abdurrahman Wahid's (Gus Dur) work entitled "Pesantren and Wayang."<sup>4</sup> In this study, Gus Dur reviewed several parts of the concept and meaning of the kiai's *ndalem*. Gus Dur's general view is that the kiai's *ndalem* is often considered the centre of social and

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<sup>1</sup> These developments brought a new paradigm, outlook on life, and societal behaviors that led to individualism and hedonism. This means that society today does not have self-stamina and soul because modernity has surrounded society to stay away from divine values related to worship and soul values related to the heart. This phenomenon is the opposite of what should happen. Humans must live in peace and togetherness so that the theological and Sufi aspects of each human being can function properly.

<sup>2</sup> Dakwah Kultural and Kiai Kampung, "Oleh Aswab Mahasin, " 2017 <https://www.nu.or.id/opini/dakwah-kultural-kiai-kampung-0pZvh>.

<sup>3</sup> Saifuddin Zuhri, *Guruku Orang-Orang Pesantren*, (Yogyakarta : Lkis, 2001), 4.

<sup>4</sup> Abdurrahman Wahid, *Pesantren Dan Wayang* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1993), 11.

religious life in the pesantren community, a place where interactions between kiai and santri take place, as well as a place for the spread of moral, cultural, and ethical values of exemplary behaviour in everyday life, such as simplicity, wisdom, and wisdom exemplified by the kiai. In this book, Gus Dur provides an essential point that pesantren, including *ndalem* or the residential environment of the kiai, have a crucial role in preserving local Islamic traditions. Gus Dur views that the *ndalem* of the kiai, with all the values and traditions contained therein, supports the concept of Islam that is friendly to local culture, which is shown, for example, through the wayang art that lives and develops in the pesantren environment.

Second, Saifuddin Zuhri's work entitled "Guruku, orang-orang dari pesantren"<sup>5</sup> contains Gus Dur's view of the *ndalem* as more than just a place to live. It is a space that reflects the noble values passed down by the kiai to the students and the surrounding community. Through interactions in the *ndalem*, the students feel an atmosphere full of tradition, where the advice and guidance of the kiai are conveyed not only through formal teaching but also in daily conversations and behaviour. Thus, the *ndalem* becomes integral to the holistic and contextual pesantren education system, covering various aspects of religious, cultural, and social life.

Third, a study conducted by M. Muchlis Sholichin, entitled Typology of Kiai Madura (A Study of the Lineage and Religious Behavior of Kiai-Kiai in Pamekasan).<sup>6</sup> The results of this study state that the village Kiai can be seen from their behaviour and religiosity. There are several types of kiai, ranging from lineage kiai and non-lineage kiai, pesantren kiai and non-pesantren kiai, political kiai, and tariqa kiai. People with this predicate (tariqa kiai) get a special position in society, especially in the Pamekasan Madura society. From these results, as far as the authors are concerned, the research topic on the *ndalem* of village kiai as a manifestation of Sufitic values and practices is still limited.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the meaning of *ndalem* as an icon of local wisdom of Madurese society in the context of the Sufi life of the village kiai in Madura and how *ndalem* contributes to strengthening the spirituality and

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<sup>5</sup> Zuhri, *Guruku Orang-Orang Pesantren*.

<sup>6</sup> M. Muchlis Solichin, "TIPOLOGI KIAI MADURA (Telaah Terhadap Silsilah Dan Keberagamaan Prilaku Kiai-Kiai Di Pamekasan)," *KARSA* XI, no. 1 (2007): 42, <https://doi.org/10.19105/karsa.v1i1.147>.

character of the local community. This study also integrates each element's meaning and position of *ndalem* into Sufi values. The village kiai, as the holder of a central position in every social order, represents Sufism and spiritual values so that inner peace is created in the kiai environment in particular (*ndalem*) and the local environment in general. This study is essential to understanding the relevance of this tradition in a modern context and its role in enriching Islamic culture in Indonesia. The living tradition of Sufism in Madura, primarily through the role of the village kiai, is an essential part of Islam's cultural heritage and spirituality in Indonesia. In the era of globalization, many local values are threatened by cultural homogenization. This study plays a vital role in strengthening the local religious and cultural identity in Madura by highlighting how the values of Sufism are practised and maintained in the local community.

## Literature Review

### Ndalem Kiai

In the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), *ndalem/dalem*, derived from Javanese, is defined as a house or palace. The term *ndalem* is specifically used for certain figures, such as a call for a nobleman and a Kiai in a Pesantren. *Ndalem* kiai means the term and respect for the residence or house of the kiai and the place where social and religious activities occur. Several studies define *ndalem* as an integral part of the pesantren environment that represents the religious authority of the Kiai.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, from the Islamic cultural perspective, *ndalem* is also associated with the concept of *baraka*, namely blessings that flow from the kiai to the students and the surrounding community.<sup>8</sup>

The presence of *ndalem* in the pesantren domain has existed since the archipelago's development of traditional Islamic educational institutions. In Madura, for example, the *ndalem* is not only a place for the kiai to live but also a centre for studying *kitab kuning* (classical textbook), student deliberations, and even a place where the community meets the kiai in various religious and

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<sup>7</sup> Atik Dewi Siti Jenar, "Peran Kiyai Terhadap Kesejahteraan Santri Ndalem Pondok Pesantren Al Munawwir Komplek Q Krapyak, Yogyakarta" (UIN Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, 2017), 15..

<sup>8</sup> Muyammanah, "Ngalap Berkah: Pemaknaan Santriwati Ndalem Di Pondok Pesantren Al-Amien Kota Kediri Perspektif Pergeseran Paradigma Thomas Samuel Khun" (IAIN Kediri, 2023), 6.

social matters. Unlike ordinary houses that only function as a place to live, *ndalem* has a strong social and spiritual dimension. There are religious activities such as limited religious studies, scientific discussions, and meetings of guests from various levels of society in the *ndalem*. This function makes it a space for interaction between the private and public realms, unique to the Nusantara Islamic tradition.

Thus, *ndalem* is not only a symbol of the leadership of the *kiai* in the *pesantren* but also reflects the Sufi values inherent in the religious life of the Madurese community. Referring to Pierre Bourdieu's theory of Habitus, Capital, and the social realm,<sup>9</sup> *ndalem* can create a valuable habit by forming a good lifestyle pattern in accordance with the rules in *ndalem*. The interaction pattern and relations between the *kiai*, students, and the surrounding community will create a habit or habitus. *Ndalem* also forms symbolic and spiritual capital. Symbolic capital refers to the meaning that will be given by society to something that is considered to have privilege or social legitimacy. Spiritual symbolic capital means that *ndalem* has values and meanings that are socially recognized because they are related to religious aspects, holiness, and spirituality. In the social realm, *ndalem* becomes a social space that can form a religious and cultural hierarchy consisting of *kiai*, students, and the community.

The general structure of a *ndalem* includes a courtyard, a mosque or prayer room in front, a guest reception room, a screen or partition connecting the guest reception and the main room of the *kiai*, a guest room, a guest bathroom, a *kiai*'s bathroom, and a kitchen. Each structure has a meaning and significance that refers to the semiotic theory of Charles Peirce and Roland Barthes. Analyzing symbols and meanings in the architecture and spatial layout of the *ndalem*.<sup>10</sup> This means that the *ndalem* is not only understood as a physical residence but also as a symbolic space that represents the values of Sufism, blessings, and the authority of the *kiai*.

### **Sufistic Values**

Sufism refers to the teachings and spiritual practices in Islam that emphasize the search for understanding and direct experience of God and

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<sup>9</sup> Mangihut Siregar, "Teori 'Gado-Gado' Pierre-Felix Bourdieu," *Jurnal Studi Kultural* 1, no. 2 (2023): 79–82.

<sup>10</sup> Halina Sendera Mohd. Yakin and Andreas Totu, "The Semiotic Perspectives of Peirce and Saussure: A Brief Comparative Study," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 155 (November 2014): 4–8, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.10.247>.

absolute reality.<sup>11</sup> Sufi refers to the person first receiving the title "al-Sufi" named Abu Hasyim Al-Kufi. He was a Sufi, meaning someone heading towards spirituality in Islam by purifying himself or what is called *tazkiyat al-nafs*, which aims to get closer to Allah SWT. Sufism is a model of preaching that can make *mad'u* (the invited servant) have noble qualities, not just conditions, but more on friendly affection or aspects of consciousness.<sup>12</sup> From the definition above, it can be explained that Sufism is a self-cleansing process to get closer to Allah SWT. In this process, some stages bring the one closer to God. Each stage has a meaning that must be absorbed and applied slowly. This is not easy for humans with fluctuating faith, but there is a special feeling in getting closer to Allah SWT.

Sufi values refer to the combination of two concepts, namely values and Sufism. In an academic context, values refer to beliefs that guide a person's way of life, personally and socially, compared to others. According to the theory put forward by Sidi Gazalba, the value refers to a substance that has an abstract nature and cannot be felt by the senses.<sup>13</sup> Values do not depend on the categorization of right or wrong but rather regardless of whether something is desired or not. In other words, value is something that has meaning but cannot be observed through the five senses. It also does not always have to be in accordance with the truth but in accordance with the expectations that have been expressed.<sup>14</sup> Sufism is a scientific term that explains how important it is for someone to cleanse their heart and soul because the heart occupies a fundamental position in the spiritual journey. The two main aspects that become the values of Sufism are *maqāmāt* and *aḥwāl*.

The term *maqām*, like *aḥwāl*, has varying interpretations among Sufis. However, they generally agree that *maqām* refers to a person's spiritual position before Allah SWT, which is achieved through perseverance in worship, struggle against lust, and spiritual exercises. According to Sufi figures and scholars, the

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<sup>11</sup> Achmad Junaedi Sitika et al., "Kedudukan Akhlak Dan Tasawuf Dalam Islam Serta Hubungan Keduanya," *ANSIRU PAI: Pengembangan Profesi Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam* 8, no. 2 (2024): 116–24, <https://doi.org/10.30821/ansiru.v8i2.14262>.

<sup>12</sup> Syamsul Bakri and M Agus Wahyudi, "Kontribusi Tasawuf Dalam Menghadapi Pandemi Covid-19," *Spiritual Healing: Jurnal Tasawuf* 1, no. 2 (2021): 59–66, <https://doi.org/10.19109/sh.v1i2.7899>.

<sup>13</sup> Chabib Thoha, *Kapita Selekta Pendidikan* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1996), 60.

<sup>14</sup> Hauzal Fithri, "Nilai-Nilai Sufistik Dalam Serat Jati Karya Raden Ngabehi Ranggawarsita Analisis Serat Jati Dalam Pandangan Ilmu Tasawuf" (Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo Semarang, 2022), 14.

levels of maqamat vary in order and content. Therefore, maqamat is relative because it depends on the experiences of each Sufi. The division of maqamat according to *Abu Naṣr Al-Sarrāj Al-Ṭūsī* in his book *al-Luma' fī al-Taṣawwuf*, the levels of maqamat consist of 7 places: repentance, *wara'*, *zuhd*, *faqr*, *ṣabr*, *tawakkal*, *riḍā*. Although different from the division of the Sufi figures above, the goal of the direction of maqamat remains the same, namely, *ma'rifatullāh*.<sup>15</sup> *Maqāmāt* is always preceded by repentance because it is the first stage for a seeker to empty himself of negative and despicable things. The seeker repents of his sins first. This is included in the *takhallī* phase.<sup>16</sup>

As for *aḥwāl*, it is a condition that surrounds the heart, which has been created (as a prerogative) of Allah in the human heart, without the Sufi asking or being able to reject the condition when it comes and keep it when it goes.<sup>17</sup> There are many terms related to the definition of ahwal, in various references of the Sufis, one of which is the view, according to Al-Thusi, that *aḥwāl* is a condition of the heart that always remembers Allah SWT. It is not achieved from the *mujāhada* or the previously mentioned process. Ahwal is like a feeling that he will always be watched by Allah SWT, close to Allah SWT, and have feelings of love, calm, longing, and others.

These *maqāmāt* and *aḥwāl* are part of the practice of Sufism or *sulūk*. Maqamat are stations that must be passed by salik (spiritual travelers). In contrast, actual spiritual states are experienced during a journey with a temporary nature, while maqamat have an absolute or permanent nature. Sufi values are valuable and useful and used as guidelines by humans to carry out daily life through good behavior according to religious teachings to obtain true and perfect happiness and get closer to the creator, and not act as slaves to worldly affairs alone.

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<sup>15</sup> Jamaludin and Solihah Sari Rahayu, "Maqamat Dan Ahwal Dalam Pandangan Abu Nashr Al-Thusi Al-Sarrāj Dalam Kitab Al-Luma'," *Marifat* 1, no. 1 (2022): 19–38, <https://jurnal.iailm.ac.id/index.php/marifat/article/view/484>.

<sup>16</sup> Ali Ridho, "Konsep Taubat Menurut Imam Al-Ghazali Dalam Kitab Minhajul 'Abidin," *Aqidah-Ta: Jurnal Ilmu Aqidah* 5, no. 1 (2019): 23–48, <https://doi.org/10.24252/aqidahta.v5i1.7513>.

<sup>17</sup> Oo Hanapiah and Wawan, "Filosofi Maqamat Dan Ahwal Dalam Ajaran Tasawuf," *Marifat* 1, no. 1 (2022): 39–52, <https://jurnal.iailm.ac.id/index.php/marifat/article/view/485>.

## Kiai in Madura

In Madura, initially, the *kiai* emerged as the central religious leader and the people's leader. A Madurese proverb, "bhuppa-bhabhu-ghuru-rato" (parents, teachers - kiai, formal leaders - state), suggests a continuous search for leaders. This is manifested in the reciprocal relationship between the people and influential leaders who have succeeded in maintaining their independence from the state. The *kiai* has been seen as the people's leader in almost all aspects of Madurese society. In today's Madurese society, a religious leader means kiai. However, the meaning of kiai in Madurese traditions is not static. Initially, kiai was a term for people with special characteristics, both positive and negative. Thus, a criminal or even a Chinese Muslim trader could be called a *kiai* if they showed special characteristics, such as martial arts or trading activities, compared to ordinary people. Kiai is also one of the titles of the Madurese nobility.<sup>18</sup>

Karel Steanbrink defines kiai as an Islamic religious teacher who leads one of the *pesantren* in a certain area and a complete and free scope, not dependent on anyone.<sup>19</sup> There are several kinds of kiai in Madura. Kiai *pesantren* are generally regarded as the highest in rank. There are also kiai *tariqa* who usually lead *pesantren* but are more recognized as *tariqa* teachers. The next category is kiai *dukun* or shaman. The last and the lowest in the hierarchy of kiai in Madura are kiai *langgar*, who run a *langgar* (small mosque) in villages.<sup>20</sup>

Then, from the perspective of the descendant, kiai can be distinguished as kiai *nasab* (a descent of Kiai) and kiai *non-nasab* (not a descent of Kiai). Second, regarding their activeness in the *ṭarīqa* organization, kiai are grouped as kiai *tariqa* and kiai non-*tariqa*. In the view of the local community, Kiai *Tarīqa* is also called *Kiai Baṭin*, who is known as someone with high spiritual abilities and is considered someone who has the grace of Allah. Meanwhile, Kiai non-*Tarīqa* are also called *Kiai Zāhir*, namely Kiai, who have high Islamic

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<sup>18</sup> Zainalfattah, *Sedjarah Tjaranya Pemerintahan Di Dacrah-Dacrah Di Kepulauan Madura Dengan Hubungannya* (Pamekasan: The Paragon Press, 1951), 68–69..

<sup>19</sup> Moh. Samsul Bahri, "Framing Interpersonal Kyai Dalam Peningkatan Reputasi Pondok Pesantren Nurul Qadim," *Aafiyah: Jurnal Multidisiplin Ilmu* 1, no. 02 (December 26, 2023): 112–27, <https://doi.org/10.70610/ja.v1i02.174>.

<sup>20</sup> Yanwar Pribadi, "Kiai in Madura," *American Journal of Islam and Society* 29, no. 3 (June 1, 2012): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.35632/ajis.v29i3.316>.



religious knowledge, which is marked by their ability to read and understand classical Islamic books, often called kitab kuning.<sup>21</sup>

Kiai is considered a traditionalist who does not conform to neomodernist ideas and Puritan conceptions of Islam. Clifford Geertz, an anthropologist researching Java during the Old Order, underestimated the kiai and their role, especially in mediating local culture and modernity.<sup>22</sup> In the religious sphere of contemporary Madurese society, to be recognized in a religious environment, the common pattern is that a kiai must fulfill three important requirements. He must be a member of the *kiai* family, lead a pesantren, and be a member of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). If he does not fulfill one of the three requirements, he cannot be considered a kiai in the vast network of kiai in Madura.

The high status of the kiai is also enjoyed by their families. In general, kiai in Pamekasan are kiai Nasab, meaning they have a lineage of kiai. According to the Book of Silsilah Kiai-Kiai Madura, printed by Pondok Pesantren Sumber Anyar Pamekasan, the kiai in Pamekasan generally claim to be descendants of Sunan Ampel through his daughter, who was married to Sunan Kalijaga (see the genealogy of Kiai in Pamekasan).<sup>23</sup>

Kiai Pesantren is the kiai who founded and is the caretaker of the pesantren, who has full authority in leading and managing the pesantren. Kiai, who care for the pesantren, generally views the pesantren as a small kingdom where the kiai is the absolute source of power and authority in the pesantren environment. No one can refuse the decision of the kiai in a pesantren. On the other hand, students believe that the kiai they follow is someone who has full confidence in himself (self-confidence), both in matters of Islamic religion and in the field of power and management of the pesantren.<sup>24</sup>

Kiai, who are not caretakers of pesantren, are active in teaching Islamic knowledge at Islamic educational institutions such as *langgar*, mosques, and madrasahs. Usually, the scope of their leadership and influence is at the village

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<sup>21</sup> Imam Suprayogo, *Reformalisasi Visi Pendidikan Islam* (Malang: STAIN Press, 1999), 23.

<sup>22</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Javanese Kyahi, The Changing Role of Culture Broaker Comparative Studies and History, 1959 – 1960* (USA: The Hague, 1960).

<sup>23</sup> Mohammad Kosim, *Sejarah Perumbuhan Dan Perkembangan Pondok Pesantren Di Kabupaten Pamekasan* (Pamekasan: Proyek Peningkatan Perguruan Tinggi Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri Pamekasan, 2001), 15. 5

<sup>24</sup> Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyai* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1980), 23..

level or the highest level in the village. Mansurnoor describes them hierarchically as 1) *Kiai langgar*, namely Kiai who establish, lead worship, and teach in *langgar rajah*. *Langgar rajah* is the centre of religious worship activities at the village level (RT/RW). Several terms are attached to this type of kiai, such as *Kiai Langgar*, *Mak Kiai*, and *Kiai Ajih*. While Langgar Rajah is a place of worship and for children's religious studies, it is owned by several groups of residents with their own *tanèyan lanjông* (a model of Madurese houses). 2) The imam of the Mosque, namely the leader of Islam at the village mosque level, is the centre of religious activities and Islamic education in the village, which is hierarchically higher than the *kiai langgar*.

Kiai tariqa are kiai who bind themselves to a certain tariqa organization. Historically, three *ṭarīqas* are widespread in Madura: the Qadiriyyah wa Naqsyabandiyah *Ṭarīqā*, the Naqsyabandiyah *Ṭarīqā*, and the Tijaniyyah *Ṭarīqā*. The most recent one, the Tijaniyyah *Ṭarīqā*, has gained many followers in Madura. At the same time, the Qadiriyyah wa Naqsyabandiyah and the Naqsyabandiyah *Ṭarīqā* competed fiercely to win the loyalty of the Madurese earlier.<sup>25</sup>

## Method

This study is qualitative research with a descriptive approach. Qualitative studies are conducted in-depth on a research object that is being studied. In his book, Mustika Zed states that literature study is an approach that is interpreted as a series of activities related to collecting library data and processing research materials. In field research, the library approach is intended as an initial step to prepare a research framework to obtain and deepen theoretical studies.<sup>26</sup>

Creswell defines a descriptive approach as describing an object or phenomenon being studied.<sup>27</sup> The data sources used are human and non-human data. The primary human data source as the primary data source is conducting structured interviews, observations, and documentation of several village kiai and documenting *ndalem* that fall into the criteria of traditional *ndalem* (as stated in the article) in Madura, especially in the city of Pamekasan. In contrast, the non-human data sources used are books, articles, and news pages related to

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<sup>25</sup> M. Muchlis Solichin, "TIPOLOGI KIAI MADURA (Telaah Terhadap Silsilah Dan Keberagamaan Prilaku Kiai-Kiai Di Pamekasan)."

<sup>26</sup> Mestika Zed, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan*, 5th ed. (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2018), 1.

<sup>27</sup> Jozef Raco, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (Jakarta: Grasindo, 2010), 16.

the concept of *ndalem* and the role of village kiai in enlivening Sufi living with documentation techniques. The data analysis used in this study is content analysis with diligent observation and sufficient references.

## Results and Discussion

### Historical Background of Sufism in Madura

Sufism is an important aspect of Islam that emphasizes a spiritual and inner approach to getting closer to God.<sup>28</sup> Azyumardi Azra said that the Sufism network indirectly influenced the development of Islam itself.<sup>29</sup> Studies by other figures, such as Karel A. Steenbrink, John A.H., Sumanto al-Qurtuby, and Martin Van Bruinessen, also believe that the first preachers and missionaries to come to the archipelago were Sufis or *tariqa* teachers. In Madura, Sufism has strong roots in the religious and cultural practices of the community. The history of the entry of Sufism in Madura is closely related to the process of Islamization in the archipelago, which began in the 13th century.<sup>30</sup> Nusantara scholars who had kinship and intellectual networks with the Wali Songo further developed Islamic preaching with a Sufi character through direct practice (*da'wa bi al-hāḥ*), trade, marriage, and culture supported morally and spiritually by the Wali Songo.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> The term Sufism can be traced to the term Tasawwuf. The term Tasawwuf is basically a concept of teachings or doctrines about the purification of the soul towards God. This concept then moved towards Sufism as an actualization of the praxis of Tasawwuf. The term Tasawuf appeared in the middle of the third century Hijri which was introduced by Abū Hashīm al-Kūfī (d. 250 AH) by putting the word al-Shūfī after his name. Among these indicators are many religious worship and rituals such as sunnah fasting, sunnah prayers, dhikr, and various other worships. In this regard, Ibn Sīnā implicitly interprets Sufism as the behavior of a person who is zuhd and a worshipper. See more in Sokhi Huda's research, "Karakter Historis Sufisme: Masa Klasik, Modern, Kontemporer.," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam* 7, no. 1 (2017): 65. <https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2017.7.1.64-95>

<sup>29</sup> Azyumardi Azra, *Tasawuf Dan Tarekat: Studi Tentang Tarekat Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Prenada Media, 2013), 45.

<sup>30</sup> The entry of Islam into Nusantara cannot be separated from the "mega project" of Islamization of Nusantara, which took place massively by preachers known in Java as Wali Songo. Islamization took place through a network of transportation that continued reciprocally from generation to generation, from century to century, from the 7th century AD to the 15th century AD, between Nusantara and the Middle East, as the center of Islam.

<sup>31</sup> Zainol Hasan, "Kiai Abdul Wahid Khudzaifah Dan Upaya Melek Literasi Tasawuf Di Madura," Media NU Pamekasan, n.d.

From the series of Walisongo students considered famous Sufis and architects or pioneers of the birth of pesantren in Madura, is Kiai Kholil Bangkalan. He is considered to have an extraordinary depth of religious knowledge, so many students want to learn from him. He is a charismatic figure who succeeded in teaching Nusantara scholars who later established other pesantren. He also participated in building a scientific base founded on Ahlussunah wa al-Jamā'ah. The existence of Sufism in Madura is supported by local figures known as Kiai Kampung. In many studies that have been carried out, it can be understood that kiai kampung are religious leaders in rural areas who play an important role in spreading and reviving the teachings of Sufism among the community. In a study conducted by Ahmad Gelora Mahardika, it was stated that kiai kampung are included in the elite who have the power to influence society from various sectors of life.<sup>32</sup> The level of public trust in the figure of the kiai is very high, so this can be measured by the number of village people in Madura who go to the kiai to expect blessings and good habits to be imitated.<sup>33</sup> KH. Ali Hasan Mahfudz said: "Sufism in Madura can be said to exist simply, either in the form of dhikr Allah or at a gathering, because Sufism is about being too close to Allah SWT".<sup>34</sup>

In the early days, Sufism developed in Madura through simple teachings to form good personalities and morals. This approach aligns with the character of the Madurese people, who are thick with spiritual values and respect religious leaders or kiai as respected figures. In addition, Sufism in Madura is understood textually and through direct practice, such as dhikr, wirid, religious forums (*pengajian*), and certain practices led by the kiai. The influence of Sufism is so deep that it gave birth to the tradition of the village kiai, who not only teaches religion but also becomes a guide in the spiritual and social aspects of the community. Muhammad Basyrul Muvid stated that *dhikr*, *wirid*, and *pengajian* become educational media to instill spiritual, moral, and social values in a post-modern society, so that *dhikr* as a form of Sufism activity approaching

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<sup>32</sup> Ahmad Gelora Mahardika, "Politik Kiai Kampung: Fungsi Dan Peran Kiai Kampung Dalam Konsistensi Pemilu Di Kota Kediri Jawa Timur" (Universitas Gajah Mada, Yogyakarta, 2009), 5.

<sup>33</sup> Totok Agus Suryanto, Ruslan Ruslan, and Abd. Muiz, "Profil Sosial Kiai Kampung: Dari Guru Ngaji Hingga Penjaga Tradisi," *Hudan Lin Naas: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora* 4, no. 2 (December 31, 2024): 269, <https://doi.org/10.28944/hudanlinnaas.v4i2.1472>.

<sup>34</sup> A direct interview with KH. Ali Hasan Mahfudz in Prekbun Village, Pademawu District, Pamekasan Regency on August 8, 2024, at 13.00 WIB.

oneself to Allah SWT can provide beautiful, harmonious values between the spiritual and *mu'āmalah* (social life) aspects.<sup>35</sup>

Madurese Sufism emphasises Sufi teachings that are practical and easy to apply in everyday life, such as the concept of simplicity, obedience, and total devotion to God. This aligns with the teachings of the *tariqa*, especially the Qadiriyyah wa Naqsyabandiyah, which are popular among the Madurese community. The *tariqa* offers a more structured approach to Sufism, including in-depth *dhikr* and *wirid*, as well as direct guidance from the *kiai* as a spiritual teacher. The spread of the *tariqa* was carried out by the *kiai*, who were considered central figures in society. The emergence of this *tariqa* was popularised famously in Madura by Syaikhona Khalil Bangkalan, with the main teaching of the Qadiriyyah wa Naqsyabandiyah *tariqa* being the perfection of *suluk*, the manners of the students, *dhikr*, and *muraqaba*.<sup>36</sup>

Among the components of the *kiai*'s life are the implementation of religious traditions and worship; several of them exist. There is a *langgar* or mosque as a place of spiritual worship, which is a medium for implementing the *ṭarīqa*. There is also a *kiai*'s *ndalem*, which is a medium for the occurrence of Sufism or the implementation of the science of the soul. *Ndalem*, or the *kiai*'s residence, is a place to live, a symbol of spiritual strength, and a centre for religious activities. *Ndalem*, as a centre for studying Sufism and other religious activities, adds depth to the role of the *kiai* in Madurese society. The teachings and values of Sufism taught in the *ndalem* reflect the strength of architecture and symbolism that form the cultural identity of the Madurese people.

Overall, the historical background of Sufism in Madura is not only related to religious aspects but also reflects a cultural identity influenced by the *kiai* and *ndalem* as a means of spreading Sufism values. Studying Sufism in Madura provides in-depth insight into how Sufism values can develop in a society with unique characteristics. It shows how Sufism has become an integral part of the daily lives of the Madurese people.

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<sup>35</sup> Muhamad Basyrul Muvid, "Aktualisasi Zikir Tasawuf Sebagai Metode Pendidikan Spiritual, Moral Dan Sosial Bagi Masyarakat Postmodern," *Refleksi* 22, no. 2 (October 28, 2023): 303–22, <https://doi.org/10.15408/ref.v22i2.31155>.

<sup>36</sup> Alzani Zulmi M, "Tarekat Qodariyyah Wa Naqsabandiyah Syaikhona Muhammad Kholil Bangkalan Tahun 1834-1925," *Avatara: Jurnal Pendidikan Sejarah* 1, no. 2 (2013): 89–99.

## The Role of Kiai Kampung in Sufism Transmission

In Madura, the village kiai is vital in spreading the teachings of Sufism and spiritual values among the community. The existence of Kiai is not only a religious figure but also a respected leader and a place to consult for various life problems, both spiritual, social, and personal. According to Karel A. Stenbrink, there are no special requirements to become a kiai. Still, traditional communities usually use knowledge, piety, descent, and the number of students as criteria for giving the individual the title of kiai.<sup>37</sup>

As observed by researchers related to the role of kiai kampung in Madura with a focus on the city of Pamekasan, data with the following descriptions and classifications have been produced. First, *Kiai Kampung* is the community's spiritual teacher or spiritual guide. In the tradition of Sufism, the *murshid* (spiritual teacher) has a central role in guiding students (*sālik*) to achieve closeness to Allah through various practices, such as *dhikr*, *wirid*, and special worship that leads to the purification of the soul. In theory, Mahfred states that kiai are non-formal leaders and spiritual leaders whose positions are close to the lower classes of society. Charismatic and spiritually based leadership will increasingly be the focus of public admiration for the kiai, so goodness increases because they imitate religious figures.<sup>38</sup> In Madura, village kiai who are considered to have deep knowledge and spiritual experience will be appointed as *murshid* for existing *ṭarīqa*, such as the Qadiriyyah and Naqsyabandiyah *Ṭarīqa*. With this role, the village kiai is an intermediary connecting students with deeper Sufism teachings.

Second, the village kiai teaches and spreads the values of Sufism in everyday life. Village Kiai teaches Sufism with a simple and practical approach, in accordance with the character of the Madurese people, who value simplicity and closeness in religion. In everyday teaching, values such as sincerity, patience, obedience, and gratitude are emphasised so that people can apply the values of Sufism in everyday life. In his book, Hamka discusses the concept of Sufism and the modern era, namely the concept of moral Sufism or Sufism that leads to the characteristics of simplicity.<sup>39</sup> By living simply, one will get a sense

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<sup>37</sup> Karel A. Stenbrink, *Pesantren Madrasah Sekolah; Pendidikan Islam Dalam Kurun Modern* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1975), 109..

<sup>38</sup> Muhammad Ibnu Malik, "Peran Kiai Sebagai Tokoh Sentral Dalam Masyarakat Desa Tien Kejajar Wonosobo," *QuranicEdu: Journal of Islamic Education* 2, no. 2 (2023): 211–25, <https://doi.org/10.37252/quranicedu.v2i2.355>.

<sup>39</sup> Hamka, *Tasawuf Modern* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1998), 13.

of devotion in worship and closeness to Allah SWT, and social relations will become harmonious. The concept of simplicity and sincerity is carried out through religious lectures by kiai, religious studies, and routine religious activities such as *yasinan* (reading QS. Yāsīn tradition), *tahlilan* (reading tahlil tradition), and the Friday night religious studies held in mosques or prayer rooms.<sup>40</sup>

Third, the village kiai uses local symbols and Traditions. The village of Kiai in Madura also uniquely integrates Sufism teachings with local traditions and symbols. They use an approach known and close to the local culture, such as through the tradition of *selamatan* or *slametan*, which is a form of gratitude to Allah while strengthening relations between residents. In this event, the village kiai often gives advice and addresses that contain Sufism values so that these values become part of the community's culture without feeling too formal or heavy. Syafiqurrahman and Mohammad Hosnan stated that the kiai uses local symbols and traditions, and the kiai is positioned as the leader in implementing traditional activities that usually occur in the community.<sup>41</sup> With their knowledge and dignity, the community will obey and follow the habits and practices that have been taught. This means that the tradition that has been running with the concept and teachings of Sufism becomes stronger through the support of the implementation of the village kiai.

Fourth, the role of the *ndalem* is to be a centre for education and spirituality. In Madura, the *ndalem* or the residence of the kiai, not only functions as a place to live but also as a centre for spiritual and religious activities. In a study conducted by Nurul Qomariyah et al., the *ndalem* of the village kiai became a place for Muslim women to study kitab kuning.<sup>42</sup> *Ndalem* became a centre of education where students, congregations, and the general public came to seek spiritual guidance from the village kiai. In the studies held in *ndalem*, the values of Sufism are taught directly and practically, such as in teaching manners, social ethics, and purification of the heart. With the

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<sup>40</sup> Eko Nani Fitriyono et al., *Mengimplementasikan Ajaran Tasawuf Dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam* (Indramayu: Adab, 2022), 65.

<sup>41</sup> Syafiqurrahman Syafiqurrahman and Mohammad Hosnan, "Kepemimpinan Kiai," *Tafhim Al-'Ilmi* 10, no. 2 (May 1, 2019): 17–41, <https://doi.org/10.37459/tafhim.v10i2.3422>.

<sup>42</sup> Nurul Qomariyah Nurul Qomariyah, "Pengaruh Kajian Kitab Kuning Terhadap Ketaatan Beribadah Ibu Muslimat Di Desa Prekbun Kecamatan Pademawu Kabupaten Pamekasan," *Rabbani: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 3, no. 2 (October 1, 2022): 222–37, <https://doi.org/10.19105/rjpai.v3i2.6429>.

existence of *ndalem* as a centre for spiritual education, the transmission of Sufism values can take place more effectively and deeply.

Fifth, maintaining the Tradition of *dhikr* and *wirid*. The village kiai also plays a key role in maintaining the tradition of *dhikr* and *wirid* among the Madurese community. Through structured religious activities, village kiai invites the community to do *dhikr* and *wirid* together, especially after congregational prayers, to get closer to Allah and strengthen the community's spirituality. This tradition not only strengthens the spiritual dimension of the community but also instills discipline in the practice of Sufism in everyday life. Alan Alfarisi stated that, related to the kiai as the strengthener of the tradition of *dhikr* and *wirid* for the community, they are always ordered to repent and feel the need for Allah.<sup>43</sup> By feeling the need for Allah SWT, the community is taught to always consult with Allah through prayer or *munajat*. By maintaining a connection through *dhikr* and prayer or *munajat*, the community that practices it will create a connection and be connected to Allah. This connection with Allah will improve the community's behaviour.

### **Ndalem: Architecture, Symbolism and Sufistic Meaning.**

Ndalem, which literally means "home" in Javanese and Madura, is the residence of a kiai, a religious leader who plays a significant role in society's social and spiritual life. In Madura, the *ndalem* functions as a private residence, a centre for religious activities and education, and a gathering place for people to learn or consult about various life problems.<sup>44</sup> Architecture and symbolism contained in the *ndalem* have a deep meaning and reflect the values of Sufism taught by the kiai to the congregation and the wider community.

Along with the times, the form and architecture of *ndalem* transformed into a more modern form, which can be categorized as semi-modern. So, in this case, the authors took samples of the research object of *ndalem* in Toket, Proppo District, Pamekasan Regency. Through observation techniques, interviews, and documentation, researchers categorize architecture and symbols of *ndalem* and their relation to spiritual values and community traditions based on the results of interviews as follows:

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<sup>43</sup> M. Alan Alfarisi, "Dzikir Dan Wirid Di Pesantren Darur Rahman Kiemas Sendangagung," *Jurnal Ilmiah Spiritualis: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam Dan Tasawuf* 9, no. 1 (March 31, 2023): 23–41, <https://doi.org/10.53429/spiritualis.v9i1.520>.

<sup>44</sup> Wahid, *Pesantren Dan Wayang*, 15.



"The *ndalem* structure consists of a front yard with many plants. The model is more open, with no fence limiting the *ndalem* kiai; there is a *langgar* (prayer room), a place for community gathering or receiving guests, a private room of kiai for performing *riyadlah*, a bathroom, and a kitchen. There is also a *hijab* or barrier as a cover for the personal activities of the kiai to prevent others (not *maḥram*) from seeing him directly. The structure of the *ndalem* room from the courtyard to the kiai kitchen will be loaded with dhikr activities, prayers, and other kinds of worship. Activities that bring closeness to Allah SWT are Sufism activities that Sufis usually do to present a gentle soul. *Ndalem* Kiai is open to the community regardless of their social strata.<sup>45</sup>



*Figure 1. Front view with a courtyard<sup>46</sup>*

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<sup>45</sup> Interview with Kiai Abdul Wahed Asmari in Toket village, Proppo district, Pamekasan Regency on September 19, 2024, at 15.00 WIB.

<sup>46</sup> This photo was taken directly by the researcher at the residence of Kiai Abdul Wahed Asmari in Toket Village, Proppo District, Pamekasan Regency, on September 19, 2024, at 13.40 WIB.



Figure 2. The interior as seen from the side with the structure of the door, window, and simplicity of the interior<sup>47</sup>.

### Basic Philosophy of *Ndalem* Architecture

The architecture of the *ndalem* in Madura is designed with a basic philosophy rooted in the concepts of simplicity, purity, and closeness to God, as opposed to the philosophy and characteristics of buildings in Madura. The shape and arrangement of the rooms in a *ndalem* are often simple and not excessive, reflecting the teachings of Sufism that emphasize a non-materialistic life and a focus on spiritual goals.<sup>48</sup>

The foundation of literature about *ndalem* in Javanese theory related to palaces and museums has different meanings and definitions. The concept adopted is the definition of *ndalem* as a private form in the sense of certain activities that lead to good values.<sup>49</sup> The concept of *ndalem* in the realm of kiai

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<sup>47</sup> This photo was taken directly by the researcher at the residence of Kiai Abdul Wahed Asmari in Toket village, Proppo District, Pamekasan Regency on September 19, 2024 at 13.42 WIB

<sup>48</sup> The essence of the interview and observation with Kiai Abdul Wahed Asmari in Toket village, Proppo district, Pamekasan Regency on September 19, 2024, at 15.00 WIB.

<sup>49</sup> Based on the structure of Javanese architecture, the building will be divided into two parts. Namely, the inner part is private, and the outer part is public and more open. In addition, the spatial layout of the building seems to be harmonious and logical, a combination of religious dimensions with realistic and technical views, as well as spiritual and material aspects (Mangunwijaya, 1988). See more on the research of Yuliana Hastin Asyrofiyah and Mohammad Pranoto Soedjarwo, "Bangunan Tradisional Jawa Yang Dipengaruhi Arsitektur Eropa (Studi Kasus: Museum Ndalem

kampung contains the value of simplicity, which teaches that a simple life is a form of submission to Allah and avoiding arrogance or Riya. In addition, *the ndalem*, as the house of a kiai, is designed to meet the community's needs, with an open space that allows many people to gather for religious recitation or study. This principle of openness indicates the inclusive nature of the Islamic teachings taught by the kiai, where people, regardless of social status, can come for spiritual guidance.

This simplicity is a tangible manifestation of the value of Sufism, which teaches *tawadhu'* or humility.<sup>50</sup> Kiai, who lives in the *ndalem*, emphasizes the simplicity of life as a form of devotion to Allah and the avoidance of *riya'* or showing off. This modest home reminds people of the importance of humility and a focus on spiritual values rather than worldly luxuries. The simple forms in the design of the *ndalem* also reflect the attachment of the kiai and the community to the teachings that advocate avoiding arrogance and trying to live modestly. This simplicity is not only in architecture, but also in the interior decoration and furniture used, which are usually minimalist and have a clear use value.

### **The Main Room as a Center of Spirituality**

The main room in *the ndalem*, which is often used for recitation and dhikr assemblies, has a symbolic meaning as the center of spirituality in the house. These rooms are usually decorated with simplicity, yet provide a calm and solemn atmosphere, reflecting a place of contemplation and self-introspection. This concept in Sufism is referred to as *tazkiyat al-nafs*. Namely, purifying the heart and soul by prioritizing spiritual values, including *dhikr* and *wirid* to Allah. M. Abdul Qadir Abu Faris, in his book, states that *tazkiyat al-nafs* is a mental therapy for clean and holy morality.<sup>51</sup>

This main room is the place where the kiai teaches Sufism and moral values to the community. In Madura, people often see this main room as a

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Wuryaningratan),” *Widyastana* 3, no. 2 (August 1, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.33005/widyastana.v3i2.95>.

<sup>50</sup> Tasawwuf as a type of mysticism, in English is called Sufism, and the word Tasawwuf began to be discussed as one of the terms around the second century Hijri, which was associated with a type of coarse clothing called shuff or coarse wool. This type of cloth is very popular with Sufis, so it becomes a symbol of simplicity. See more in the book Zulkifli and Jamaluddin, *Akhlaq Tasawuf Jalan Lurus Mensucikan Diri* (Riau: Kalimedia, 2018), 78.

<sup>51</sup> M. Abdul Qosic Abu Faris, *Menyucikan Jiwa* (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 2005), 2.

sacred area where profound religious knowledge is given. People who come to the *ndalem* will feel closer to the kiai and connect spiritually, because this room is a place for transmitting knowledge and spirituality. The use of this room as a place of *dhikr* and the study of Sufism also indicates the importance of having a clean heart and being free from worldly distractions when getting closer to Allah SWT.

### **Door and Window Architecture: A Symbol of Spiritual Openness**

The doors and windows on the *ndalem* are often designed to be large and open, which symbolizes the openness of the heart and mind to religious teachings. The wide-open door not only functions physically to accommodate the large number of pilgrims who come, but also has a symbolic meaning, namely openness to all knowledge and advice from the kiai. In some *ndalems*, the main door is usually decorated with calligraphy or Islamic ornaments containing spiritual meanings, such as Qur'an verses or Sufism symbols. This decoration emphasizes that whoever enters the *ndalem* must purify their intention and mind to receive the knowledge taught by the kiai.

*Ndalem* often has a large open space, both in the form of a front room, a central room, or a courtyard that the public can access. These open spaces reflect the values of sincerity and openness, two main principles in the teachings of Sufism.<sup>52</sup> In the concept of Sufism, openness to society and sincerity in sharing knowledge are very important because Sufism teaches sharing kindness and knowledge without strings attached. The open space in *this ndalem* makes it easier for people to come and gather without feeling isolated or limited. This is in line with the role of the kiai as spiritual guides and teachers for all circles. This open design is also a sign that the teachings conveyed in the *ndalem* can be accessed by anyone, regardless of social status, as a form of love for the people.

### **Ndalem Courtyard as a Symbol of Unity with Nature**

The courtyard before or around the *ndalem* is often neatly designed and equipped with refreshing plants or trees. This courtyard symbolises the unity of humans with nature and is a reminder of submission to Allah as the creator of nature. On the other hand, the large courtyard also accommodates the congregation, which attends big events such as *haul* (an annual

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<sup>52</sup> Nur Yasin and Sutiah Sutiah, "Penerapan Nilai-Nilai Tasawuf Dalam Pembinaan Akhlak Santri Pada Pondok Pesantren Miftahul Huda Gading Malang," *Al-Musannif* 2, no. 1 (June 1, 2020): 49–68, <https://doi.org/10.56324/al-musannif.v2i1.37>.

commemoration) or grand *pengajian* (public religious teaching). For the Madurese people, this courtyard is the initial place of interaction before entering the *ndalem*. The courtyard is often used for event preparation or a place for ablution before entering the main room as a symbol of self-purification. In Sufism teachings, this courtyard can be likened to transitioning from material worldly life to a more spiritual inner life of *ndalem*.

The courtyard or open area around the *ndalem* is often decorated with simple plants or trees, reflecting ecological awareness and a harmonious relationship with nature. In Sufism teachings, nature is seen as God's creation that needs to be appreciated and maintained.<sup>53</sup> The trees in the *ndalem* courtyard provide physical coolness and remind us that humans must live in balance with nature as part of their spiritual responsibility. The *ndalem* yard is also a place of social interaction for those who come. Many religious activities, such as *selametan* (seeking salvation prayer), *pengajian*, or community meetings, are held in the *ndalem* yard. This shows that the yard has a dual function: as a means of community socialisation and a symbol of respect for nature as God's creation.

## Conclusion

The concept of *ndalem* as a manifestation of Sufism values and practices among village kiai in Madura represents a deeply embedded cultural and spiritual institution. Ndalem is not just a physical dwelling; it reflects a sacred space where Sufism principles such as humility, simplicity, and sincerity are upheld and lived by the kiai. Through *ndalem*, Sufism values are expressed daily, making it a sacred place that serves as a centre for community learning and religious guidance. Village kiai play an essential role as guardians of this tradition, preserving Sufism teachings and practices in accordance with local Madurese culture. The architectural and symbolic elements of *ndalem* reflect the spiritual depth and moral clarity of Sufism, reinforcing the role of the kiai as a mediator of divine wisdom and a guide for the community. This study concludes that *ndalem* is a unique manifestation of local Sufism, aligning spiritual heritage with the socio-cultural structure of Madura, thereby

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<sup>53</sup> Asep Muhyiddin, "Dakwah Lingkungan Perspektif Al-Qur'an," *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 4, no. 15 (2010), <https://doi.org/10.15575/idajhs.v5i15.423>.

strengthening the spiritual foundation of the community through a living heritage guarded by the village kiai.

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Both authors review the article, provide analysis, formulate the methodology, and write the initial drafts, as well as edit and curate the data.

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