



## STUDY ON THE PESANTREN EDUCATION IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF KIAI SAHAL MAHFUDH AND ITS RELEVANCE WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTEMPORARY PESANTREN

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### ABSTRACT

Pesantren, Islamic boarding school, as Islamic educational institutions by setting the main objectives of Islamic education is simply to generate the Santri (students) to explore religious knowledge (*tafaqquh fid-din*). However, since the 1970s Pesantren began to open up indicating that Islamic boarding schools with their dynamics required recognition by the community about their existence. Kiai Sahal Mahfudh, a Pesantren intellectual figure with a traditional background helped encourage the Pesantren to be able to respond to modernization and the demands of society in the right way. Kiai Sahal Mahfudh presents himself as a figure with transformative, innovative and visionary vision in transforming Pesantren education. He argued that Pesantren education cannot be separated from its two potentials: religiosity and social potential. This study aimed to determine the perspective of Pesantren education based on the perspective of Kiai Sahal Mahfudh and its relevance to the development of contemporary Pesantren. This study is a library research using the primary data in the form of *Nuansa Fiqh Sosial*, papers, or any works of Kiai Sahal Mahfudh. Meanwhile, the secondary data were in the form of books related to the Pesantren or

the thoughts of Kiai Sahal Mahfudh. The analysis technique used *content analysis* in which the phases of analysis started by determining the problems, formulating the frame of thoughts and preparing the methodology devices, data analysis and data interpretation. The results of this research showed that the teaching of the kitab kuning needs the ability to understand contextually for solving contemporary social problems. The formulation of the objectives of *pesantren* education in preparing righteous and akram people in line with the functions of humans personally as khalifah of Allah who also carry out social functions to prosper and manage the earth. The da'wah islamiyyah or propagative potential in *pesantren* is not only articulated in word but also in deeds or *da'wah bil hal*. For Kiai Sahal Mahfudh, da'wah can also be in the form of community empowerment. Both have the same end goals. These are relevant and in accordance with the direction of development of contemporary *pesantren* which wants *pesantren* to no longer only carry out their traditional functions as religious educational institutions, but also as social community institutions.

**Keywords:** *Pesantren* Education; Kiai Sahal Mahfudh; *Pesantren* development .

## INTRODUCTION

In the early days of its establishment, *pesantren* as Islamic educational institutions or Islamic boarding school implemented a very simple learning system by setting the main goal of Islamic education only to prepare students for deepening religious knowledge (*tafaqquh fid-din*). *Pesantren* in its development expanded its focus of study to no longer just religion, slowly it also helped establish madrasa, as a result of being dissatisfied with the *pesantren* system, which at that time was considered too narrow because it only focused on religious studies. Slowly but surely the *pesantren* are starting to clean up and innovate. Nowadays *pesantren* has new trends with the emergence of modern *pesantren*. Some technological skills have been introduced in *pesantren* (Mas'ud, 2019). *Pesantren* are no longer merely educational institutions that teach, develop and disseminate Islamic religious knowledge, but also social institutions that have their own institutions that function as charities and become a community reference along

with the relationship between values and community culture, especially those in the community around the *pesantren*.

Although so far *pesantren* are more closely labeled as traditional Islamic educational and religious institutions, *pesantren* are also required to be sensitive and responsive to the times with all their problems. Islamic caregivers/advisor (highest position of Islamic teacher in *pesantren*) or commonly known as *kiai* in this case occupy the main figure in formulating the education system in the *pesantren*. Whether or not a *pesantren* is dynamic in responding to the progress of the times or it is even more comfortable to dwell on traditionality as an identity without looking at all as an option.

One of the intellectual figures who was born from the “womb” of traditional *pesantren*, *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh (1999) chose to uphold the principles as he conveyed:

In all its movements, the *pesantren* holds a principle of "*al-muhafadzah 'ala al-qadim al-shalih wa al-akhsu bi al-jadid al-ashlah*" maintains in a broad sense and is active towards things that have existed for a long time and are still being viewed good, proper and appropriate and take and use something new which is considered better (*mashlahah*). (p. 63)

It is interesting to see the progress of *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh, who instead welcomes the *pesantren* to be able and ready to respond to the needs of the people who have been paying attention to *pesantren* as a source of reference and are considered role models as well as figures of trust for the community. Through his various policies both during his tenure as *mudir* (director) at Mathali'ul Falah Islamic School (PIM) and as a caregiver/advisor/owner at *Pesantren* Maslakul Huda (PMH), *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh presented himself as a *kiai* with transformative and innovative vision in transforming educational patterns of *Pesantren* including their breakthroughs in actively participating in empowering communities in the surrounding community based on *pesantren*, both in the economic, education, health and social fields. *Kiai* Sahal Mahfudh always emphasizes that *pesantren* education cannot

be separated from its two potentials, which is religious potential as well as social potential (Aziz, 2012).

That is, what is meant by *pesantren*, not only in the form of physical means, what is meant by *pesantren*, is not only a physical place to study religion with dormitories, classical Islamic books, *santri* and *kiai*, but also includes the surrounding community who builds a cultural, social life. and religions whose patterns are more or less the same as those developed by the *pesantren*. It is indisputable that the culture of the community around the *pesantren* is derived from and influenced by the *pesantren*, especially the role of a *kiai* as the main figure of the *pesantren*'s actions.

In connection with this framework of thinking, the development of contemporary *pesantren* education in the future is expected to no longer just play its traditional function as a central institution for the transmission and transfer of Islamic knowledge, maintenance of Islamic tradition and reproduction of *ulama*, but also to become a center for health education, a center for developing appropriate technology for rural communities, center for efforts to save and conserve the environment; and more importantly to be the center of economic empowerment for the community.

Based on the background of the problem above, it can be concluded that the research questions are as follows: What is the perspective of *Kiai Sahal Mahfudh's pesantren* education? Then, what is the relevance of *Kiai Sahal Mahfudh's perspective pesantren* education with the development of contemporary *pesantren*?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The first research is an article written by M. Sofyan An-Nasr with the title "*Pendidikan Keluarga dalam pemikiran Sahal Mahfudh* (Family Education in Sahal Mahfudh's thought)". This paper aims to reveal Sahal Mahfudh's thoughts on family education. To uncover *Kiai Sahal*'s thoughts, an interpretive method is used, which is a method that uses the character's work and then delves into it to capture the meaning of the nuances intended by the character specifically. According to *Kiai Sahal*, the dream of realizing the benefit of the people can be achieved through the benefit of the smallest unit of society, which is the family. *Maslahah* (good) family is a family in

which every member of the family is able to understand the rights and obligations equal to their understanding of the rights and obligations of others. A *maslahah* family education has great potential to produce a quality generation that can have a positive impact on society. Family education which was initiated by *Kiai* Sahal is aimed at giving goodness to the general public. One of the outputs of family education is children with noble character and behavior, righteous and akram people, and productive humans (An-Nasr, 2106).

The next research is Heri Setyawan's thesis with the title "*Aplikasi Gagasan Fiqh*(Islamic Technical Law) *Sosial KH Sahal Mahfudh dalam Dunia Pendidikan* (Application of Social *Fiqh* Ideas of KH Sahal Mahfudh in the World of Education)". This study discusses KH Sahal Mahfudh's social *fiqh* education. His study was motivated by the demands of *fiqh* science to be able to adapt to the prevailing modern life. This study shows that: (1) The idea of social *fiqh* education is an educational idea initiated by *Kiai* Sahal to guide students to gain a qualified understanding in the field of *fiqh* as well as to understand society's problems. (2) Social *Fiqh* education is applied to the islamic boarding school education system which includes both material and application. The learning activities conducted at *Pesantren* Maslakul Huda include learning the classical system and at the same time applying this learning to the daily life that the students do at the Islamic boarding school. The nature of social *fiqh* which covers all aspects of human life makes the application of the idea of social *fiqh* education divided into several domains that are interrelated with one another. These findings provide a reference for the teaching system regarding contemporary *fiqh* science which is expected to be able to provide a wiser understanding in understanding Islamic law (Setyawan, 2012).

The next research is Arief Aulia Rachman's thesis with the title "*Metodologi Fikih Sosial MA Sahal Mahfudh* (Social Jurisprudence Methodology of MA Sahal Mahfudh)." The problem that inspires this research is the anxiety of Islamic legal experts and the public regarding the existence of *fiqh* which has been adhered to by Muslims because it appears that there is a stubbornness in understanding and applying *fiqh*. This anxiety has become a separate motivation for jurisprudents to find alternative *fiqh* that is more flexible and

contextual. In its development, there has not been a methodology that comprehends sharia completely and accurately, to overcome all social problems that are constantly evolving and changing. Therefore, *Kiai Sahal* with his social *fiqh* conception tries to change the *fiqh* paradigm, from textual to contextual, even though it raises various discourses, especially issues of epistemology, methodology, and their implementation in society. Based on the research methods and theoretical framework above, the compilers made several conclusions, which is: first, the formulation of concepts in Sahal Mahfudh's thinking regarding social *fiqh* was influenced by his intellectual journey during his time at the *pesantren* and his concern for the poor economic conditions of the Kajen community, limited employment opportunities, uncontrolled population, unclean environment due to disposal of factory waste, lack of bureaucratic access to local government. The formulation of the concepts and thoughts shows the application of the adaptability theory of Islamic law and Shahrur's theory to the social reality of the Kajen, Pati and surrounding communities through processes and in *fiqh*, which leads to the achievement of the general benefit of the surrounding community and has a second dimension, the method of applying Sahal Mahfudh's social jurisprudence in the reality of Indonesian society which is plurat, that is the process of extracting laws on contemporary societal problems using methods and thoughts that refer to thoughts or scholars in the Shafi'i school of thought (priority scale), and focus on achieving the general benefit. *Kiai Sahal* emphasized understanding from textual to methodological schools, which is by revitalizing contemporary *ijithad* in *pesantren*, transforming social *fiqh* through participatory *da'wah*, optimizing the role of *pesantren* as centers of education and socio-religious activities. This method is useful for addressing issues such as the relationship between religion and the state, the ecological crisis, prostitution and the sex industry, contextual education, and the socialist economy. Third, the relevance between Sahal Mahfudh social jurisprudence and Islamic family law in Indonesia are: a) the study of *fiqh* and social reality is strongly influenced by the desire of the community to apply Islamic law that is contextual and flexible with its socio-cultural conditions; b) the substance of the conceptual framework of the ideal

family in Islam requires a combination of Islamic and social values in the family, which is manifested in the form of attitudes, behavior, words, deeds and thoughts; c) with regard to the reinterpretation of the Counter Legal Draft of Islamic Law Compilation (CLD KHI) and its correlation with Social Jurisprudence, there are two conclusions, which are: CLD KHI seeks to re-actualize *fiqh* in an Indonesian context, and the meeting between CLD KHI and social jurisprudence is on legal relativism and contextuality of Islamic law (Rachman, 2010).

The last research is an article entitled “*Landasan Puritanisme Sosial Agama Pesantren: Pemikiran Kiai Sahal Mahfudz*” (The Foundation of Islamic Social Puritanism of Religion: The Thought of *Kiai Sahal Mahfudz*)” by Ahmad Ali Riyadi. Revitalization means renewal of religious understanding which is considered as part of a social change movement based on religious values. In line with Max Weber's interaction theory, he explains in his work *The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism*. The three main themes are the interaction of religious thought in economic activity, the interaction between social stratification and religious thought, and the differentiation of Western and Eastern cultural characteristics. The ultimate goal is to discover the reasons Western and Eastern cultures have developed following different paths (Riyadi, 2016).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This type of research is library research which is collecting data or scientific papers by conducting scientific studies of books, literature, notes related to the object of study. This research used descriptive qualitative approach. This research is based on primary data, which is the book *Nuansa Fiqh Sosial* (Social Fiqh Nuance) by *Kiai Sahal Mahfudh* which is considered to be able to describe *Kiai Sahal Mahfudh's* thoughts on *pesantren* education, as well as various writings of *Kiai Sahal Mahfudh* but not or not yet published in the form of papers, articles that are widely published in mass media and in accordance with the theme raised. Meanwhile, secondary data in this study are books containing the educational thoughts of *Kiai Sahal Mahfudh* related to *pesantren* and his other thoughts, books about *Pesantren*, Islamic education books, journals, magazines and other

publications. The data analysis technique used in this research is the content analysis method; to make replicable and valid inferences of the data by considering the context, as well as systematically and objectively identifying specific characteristics in a text (Krippendorff, 1991).

### SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF KIAI SAHAL MAHFUDH

*Kiai* Sahal's full name is Muhammad Ahmad Sahal bin Mahfudh bin Abdus Salam al-Hajini. Born in Kajen Village, Margoyoso sub-district, Pati district, on February 16, 1933. His father was named KH. Mahfudh Salam (d. 1944) and his mother named Mrs. Hj. Badriyah (d. 1945). *Kiai* Sahal Mahfudh's father, KH. Mahfudh Salam is the brother of *misan* (younger cousin) of KH. Bisri Sansuri who is one of the founders of *jam'iyah* NU who is very respected (w. 25 April 1981). He is the third of six children, which is M. Hasyim, Hj. Muzayyanah (wife of KH. Mansur, advisor of PP/Islamic Boarding School An-Nur Lasem and grandson of KH. Abdussalam Kajen), Salamah (wife of KH. Mawardi, advisor of PP Bugel-Jepara, brother of wife of KH. Abdullah Salam), Hj. Fadhilah (wife of KH. Rodhi Sholeh Jakarta, representative of Rois' aam PBNU since 1984), Hj. Khodijah (wife of KH. Maddah, advisor of PP Assuniyah-Jember as well as grandson of KH. Nawawi, younger brother of KH. Abdussalam, grandfather of *Kiai* Sahal). Meanwhile, *Kiai* Sahal Mahfudh's wife, Hj. Dra. Nafisah is the grandson of KH. Bisri Sansuri. That way, *Kiai* Sahal has a strong lineage because both father, mother and wife are all descendants of well-known *kiai* (Al-Qurthuby, 1999; Asmani, 2017).

Apart from being active as a advisor of *Pesantren* Maslakul Huda and as the Director of *Pesantren* Mathali'ul Falah, *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh also holds a strategic position which he has held since his 30s. His organizational career began at Nahdatul Ulama until near the end of his life *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh once held the position of Rais Aam at the PBNU. Besides at NU, *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh has also had an organizational career at MUI. The following is the career path of the *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh organization at MUI:

1. In the 1980s, he became chairman of MUI Pati.

2. In 1990, he became chairman of the MUI Level I Central Java. *Kiai* Sahal Mahfudh served as chairman of the MUI Level I Central Java for two periods until 2000.
3. In 2000, he was entrusted with serving as Chairman of the Central MUI, returning to office in 2005 and 2010 (Asmani, 2017).

*Kiai* Sahal was also the leader of *Pesantren* Maslakul Huda, Pati. He held leadership at *Pesantren* Maslakul Huda since 1963 at the age of 26, as well as being the director of the Mathali'ul Falah Islamic College. He was also the Chancellor of the Nahdlatul Ulama Islamic Institute in Jepara in 1989 and founded the Mathali'ul Falah Islamic College (STAIMAFA) in Pati which has now developed into the Mathali'ul Falah Islamic Boarding School (IPMAFA). He managed to record several personal awards, World Peace Leader (1984), Manggala Kencana Class I (1985-1986), Bintang Mahaputra Utama (2000) and Nation Unity Figure (2002). Meanwhile, BPPM-PMH also received the Damandiri Award in the category of Best Micro Business Development (2006) eliminating 36 finalists. Strong and consistent in developing the concept and implementation of social *fiqh*, both in the fields of education, health, economics, and the environment, so that the *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh was awarded the honorary title of Doctor Honoris Causa in the field of *fiqh* science and development of Islamic boarding school education by UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta in 2003 (Rahman, 2012).

After a long struggle in the field of knowledge, giving dedication to the community, and having been involved in the world of organization from bottom to top, *Kiai* Sahal passed away on Friday, January 24, 2014 at 01.00 in the morning at his residence in the Maslakul Huda Kajen Islamic Boarding School complex. Margoyoso, Pati, Central Java, because of disease complications (Asmani, 2017).

## **FORMULATION OF *PESANTREN*, PERSPECTIVE OF *KIAI* SAHAL MAHFUDH**

### ***The Pesantren Education Epistemology of Kiai Sahal Mahfudh***

As a multidisciplinary *kiai*, *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh relies on authoritative sources of Islam (al-Qur'an and Hadith) as a reference. In addition,

he based his thoughts a lot on the products of contemporary social sciences, especially those related to the public benefit (*mashlahah al'ammah*) (Shidiq, 2017). At least, there are two factors that influence the thinking of *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh, which is: first, internal factors and external factors.

This internal factor consists of the social background of *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh in terms of the place where he was born, the values he learned from his closest people, the depth of thinking, while this external factor can come from social interactions with many figures, the community while he is active in the organization at the regional to national level, as well as the academic world, as well as his intellectual networks that have formed thinking patterns and have colored his line of thought, including when he formulated the concept of social *fiqh* (Asmani, 2007).

### **Social *Fiqh* Paradigm of *Kiai* Sahal Mahfudh**

*Pesantren* society, wherever, was originally a *fiqh* society. *Fiqh* which is a practical derivation from the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, as a normative basis for behavior, both individuals and society. In this connection, we find *fiqh* as the most practical guide for life in Islam, discussing four main aspects of human life. The birth of social *fiqh*, *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh cannot be separated from the conditions of poverty and social underdevelopment in Kajen where he lived. *Kiai* Sahal Mahfudh is called to help solve this problem with his wealth of knowledge, which is social *fiqh*. The mindset of *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh is based on a paradigm, that *fiqh* must be read in the context of solving and fulfilling three types of human needs, which is *dlaruriyah* needs (primary), *hajiyah* needs (secondary) and *takmiliyah* needs (supplementary) (Mahfudh, 2007).

The social *fiqh* of *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh has five main characteristics that stand out, which is: contextual interpretation of *fiqh* texts, changes in the textual *madzhab* (school) pattern (*qauli*) to madzhab methodologically (*manhaji*), basic verification of which is the main teaching (*ushul*) and which teachings which is a branch (*furu'*). *Fiqh* is presented as social ethics instead of positive state law and the introduction of a methodology of philosophical thought, especially in cultural and social issues (Mahfudh, 2003).

The involvement of *fiqh* with the real problems encountered by the *ummah* (people) has made *fiqh* the main framework for the transformation of education and society. The social *fiqh* of *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh covers and covers various problems of life, not only covering the problems of religious practice, but also various problems and problems of life, including discourse and problems of Islamic education, especially problems surrounding the world of *pesantren*.

### Islamic Education in *Pesantren*

*Pesantren* education is always identified with religious education or Islamic education. *Kiai* Sahal Mahfudh further defines ideal Islamic education, citing Mustafa Ghulayaini as "*garsul al-akhlaq al-karimah al-fadhilah fi nufusi an-nasyiin batta tusybih al-malakah*" that is planting noble character in developing souls until ingrained and aging into character (Mahfudh, 2005). Islam as a guide, education needs to rely on the concept of religion itself.

*Kiai* Sahal Mahfudh also quoted Ibn Katsir as interpreting religion as "*wadl'un ilahiyyun saiqu li zawni al-uquli as-salimati ila ma huwa labum fi dunyahum wa Akbiratihim*" which means divine provisions that encourage anyone with a sound mind to a better direction for the life of this world and the hereafter. If then, education is based on '*ad-din*' (religion), there will be an understanding that whatever is done and learned by humans in an educational process with a target towards a better life, automatically, this process is an integral part of religious education or more generally is the practice of religious teachings itself (Aziz, 2012).

Meanwhile, *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh (1998) defines *pesantren* as *tafaqquh fi ad-din* institutions by positioning itself as an educational institution to carry out its main function in producing *salih* and *akram* of *santri* (*pesantren*'s students). The fundamental difference between *pesantren* and other educational institutions is that apart from a distinctive system, the educational process in *pesantren* is not sufficient only with the transfer of knowledge process, but in *pesantren*, there is a process of transfer of value which is ultimately embedded and reflected in behavior as a character (p.23).

## Functions and Roles of *Pesantren*

*Pesantren* at the time of its appearance was part of cultural action and social transformation. Initially, *pesantren* had played a role as resistance to colonialism as well as Islamic *da'wah* (Islamic message speech) institutions. Responding to the emergence of globalization in various fields that leaves a lot of anxiety and problems, it has also made *pesantren* add their function as stabilizers of new values and cultures, and even do not hesitate to position themselves as conflict managers.

The function and position of the *pesantren* will be closely related to the existence of Islam as a central value and way of life which serves as a guide as well as a reference for the steps of its people. According to *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh (2007), *pesantren* has a function not only as a *da'wah* institution, an educational institution based on *tafaqquh fî ad-dîn*, as well as a social institution (p. 305).

## Role of the *Kiai*

The meaning of *kiai* in the Javanese tradition has a very broad meaning. The word can mean matter or things as well as humans which are measured by their special characteristics and therefore highly respected. *Kiai* Sahal Mahfudh himself provides criteria as characterized by Imam Ghazali that a *kiai* is "*faqîh fî mashâlih al-khalq fî ad-dunyâ*" which means someone who really understands and is sensitive to the benefits of creatures in the world (Mahfudh, 2007). The distinguishing point from the meaning of the *kiai* figure mentioned by *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh is the addition of the word 'sensitive', it is not only necessary to have a *kiai* figure who understands the affairs of the people but is not moved to participate in finding solutions to problems faced by the people. Because for the *kiai* community, it is not only the leader of *pesantren* but also the leader of an Islamic community who is believed to have enormous and charismatic authority.

*Kiai* Sahal Mahfudh puts the figure of a *kiai* as a personification of Islamic teachings. As the heir to the prophets, the *kiai* have a role that cannot be underestimated. The role of the *kiai* is always encountered with a measure of the benefit of the *ummah*, because that is why efforts to develop Islamic religious and social insights are urgent. The *kiai*'s understanding of *maqāshid asy-syari'ah* which

consists of *kulliyat al-kebomsab* (Mahfudh, 2007) is as important as understanding the conceptions of *al-ma'ruf* and *dirāsāt al-islāmiyyah al-ijtimā'iyah*. A *kiai* who is able to understand the potential, the role that also has sharp social sensitivity will be the guide for the transformation of the social order.

In the context of development, the *kiai* positively and significantly contributes as a social preparation, on a small scale to the education of their students at the *pesantren*, the *kiai* acts as a character builder, responsible for shaping the personality of the students. *Kiai* Sahal Mahfudh (2007) argues that at least the *kiai* helped shape a Muslim personality who is tough and responsive to all forms of change, has a strong but flexible mental attitude, does not close his eyes to plural realities, but at the same time does not dazzle with various innovations and modernities that are increasingly sophisticated and spectacular. " (p. 169)

### ***Kitab Kuning of Pesantren***

One of the elements or components that cannot be separated from *pesantren* is the teaching of classical books or better known as *kitab kuning* (the yellow book). They are called yellow books because they are printed on yellow paper, although some are printed using plain white paper. *Kitab kuning* is part of the curriculum that can only be found in the teaching tradition in *pesantren*.

The yellow book is very interesting, not only because it is yellow in color, but for the *pesantren* tradition, *kitab kuning* is a unique teaching material with inherent characteristics (Mahfudh, 2007). For *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh (2007), there are four criteria or characteristics that the yellow book has for the *pesantren* tradition, which are:

- a. The yellow book contains multidisciplinary science.
  - b. Typical arrangement systematics.
  - c. Has no vowels.
  - d. Special idioms are often used.
  - e. *Sanadmuttashil*, from the teacher to *muallif Kitab* (the author).
- (p.262)

In the *pesantren* tradition, *kitab kuning* is taught in two stages. First, by using the "*utawi iki iku*" method using the letter formula "*mim and kha*" and so on, its function is to describe the position of

the *tarkib* from the point of view of the *nahwu* and *shorof* (Arabic grammar) rules. Second, the stage contains an explanation and commentary from the contents of the content textually-literally (*letterlijk*) as well as up to the insights contained in it (*mafshûmât*).

Kiai Sahal Mahfudh (2007) explicitly states that the yellow book education is not something that must be abandoned, but it requires the ability to understand contextually as well as open oneself to various dimensions of knowledge (both exact and social) beyond what is considered religious science. The integration of *kitab kuning* with various references from other sciences, if done seriously and appropriately, will in fact produce scientific synergies that will be useful for solving contemporary social problems, but also do not come out of the roots of past Islamic traditions (p. 141).

In line with the opinion of *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh, Nurcholish Madjid (2004) said that the resilience of a thought is very much determined by *ashlahab* (originality) and *mu'asharah* (up to date, according to the times), which means thinking that is continuous with the past and is able to understand the most recent era complete with all the complexity of the problem (p.ix-x).

### ***Salih and Akrom as the Purpose of Pesantren Education***

Institutionally and management, which is typical for *pesantren*, it does design a curriculum that is in accordance with its educational basis. Especially in formulating educational goals which characteristics must reflect the identity of the *pesantren* itself. According to *kiai* Sahal, the basic objective of *pesantren* education is to prepare students to become *salih* and *akram* human beings. *Kiai* Sahal Mahfudh (2007) defines the objectives of *pesantren* education as follows:

The purpose of education in *pesantren* is basically to prepare students to become human beings who are *akram* and *salih* in a broad sense. *Akrom* in the sense that he is more devout in carrying out worship in a wide manner where worship is the first human function as the caliph of Allah. Meanwhile, the meaning of "*sholih/salih*" is that which is able to inherit (regulate, manage and develop) this earth, the ability which is the manifestation of the second human function, which is "*imāratul' ardh*" (p. 273).

The conception of *shālih* and *akram* as conceptualized by *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh is an affirmation and synergy between worldly and *ukhrawi* (hereafter) life; between tradition and modernity. Thus, it can be said that the approach used by *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh in formulating the objectives of this *pesantren* education is holistic, not partial nor dichotomous. He did this so that the *pesantren* has relevance in all aspects of life.

### ***Da'wah* and Community Empowerment in *Pesantren***

*Da'wah* according to language can be defined as "inviting or calling". According to *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh referring to the definition of *da'wah* given by Sheikh Ali Mahfudh in his book *Hidayah al-Mursyidin*, which is Encouraging (motivating) to do good, following (Allah's) instructions, telling people to do good, prohibiting doing ugliness, to be happy in the world and the hereafter (Mahfudh, 1986).

The manifestation of *da'wah* according to *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh (2007) is not just an increase in religious understanding in behavior and outlook on life, but towards a broader goal. Especially in the midst of changing times that are increasingly dynamic, *da'wah* must be positioned as a means of proving the dimensions of *rahmatan lil ālāmīn* (useful for all livings) that Islam has so that it can touch the realities of people's lives. (p. 110)

For *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh, preaching can also be in the form of community empowerment. Both have the same end goal. *Da'wah* can encourage people to achieve physical and mental well-being, as well as provide the means and mechanisms. Meanwhile, community development is the process of interacting a series of activities or businesses that lead to an increase in people's lives and standards in a better direction. Efforts to improve the quality of life and the mentality of the people clearly implement what are known as *da'wah* activities.

It must be admitted that *pesantren* in every activity is always overshadowed by the social tasks of society that have not been touched much. The history of the establishment of the *pesantren* may be very simple, but it is not as simple as the initial process of its birth, the *pesantren* in its development has approximately four *mas'uliyah* (responsibilities), which are *mas'uliyah ad-diniyah* (religious

responsibility) implemented in preaching activities to the community, *mas'uliyah ats-tsaqafiyah* (educational capability) which focuses more on improving the quality of education of the people, *mas'uliyah al-amaliyah* (practice capability) which emphasizes the realization of sharia (Islamic law) in the Muslim person, and *mas'uliyah al-qudwah* (moral capability) which directs people to decorate themselves with good morals (Asmani, 2007).

### **The Relevance of *Kiai Sahal Mahfudh Pesantren* Education with the Development of Contemporary *Pesantren***

The discourse on the development of *pesantren* initially emerged due to the influence of modernization in various aspects of life which gradually influenced the *pesantren*. The traditionality of *pesantren* has begun to be questioned for its relevance to the needs of the times, some want the *pesantren* to stick to the traditions and noble values that exist in the *pesantren*, others refuse to remain silent in responding to changes.

The keyword that is often used by *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh to explain the strategy in navigating the socio-cultural modernization process is canalization. Canalization can briefly be interpreted as being involved but not being swept away, for instance a *pesantren* is involved in community development activities, but does not lose its identity as a *pesantren* that already has a major role (Zubaedi, 2007).

*Kiai* Sahal Mahfudh also does not deny that maintaining the *pesantren* tradition by blocking outside influences or forces is very difficult, not to say it is impossible. The life journey of a *pesantren* should not and should not be done in an exclusive way. On the other hand, *pesantren* actually have the power to mobilize and direct existing influences towards the goals they want. Therefore, what is done is to break the flow of influences that enter the 'channels' and then flow them in the direction they want (Mahfudh, 2007).

Some of the thoughts above need to be elaborated on their relevance to the development of *pesantren*. The relevance that is meant is to find a relationship between *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh *Pesantren* and the development of the *pesantren*. So far, the community views and positions the *pesantren* as the center of *tafaqquh fi ad-din* with an inherent traditional role. However, many circles, especially those

from internal *pesantren*, think that they should respond positively to changes by taking part selectively so that the noble values and identity that exist in the *pesantren* can be maintained. In detail, the following will be discussed:

### **Reformulation of *Pesantren* Education Goals**

The purpose of *pesantren* education is like a guide that will guide the direction in which *pesantren* remains relevant and strengthen its social roots in society. It is something that must really be considered. Perhaps, according to *kyai* Sahal Mahfudh, the proposed formulation of *pesantren* education objectives could be considered relevant to represent the emergence of a new role carried out by *pesantren*. It is no longer limited to playing the role of transmitting religious knowledge, reproducing *ulama'* (Islamic teachers or authorities) and maintaining tradition, but now many *pesantren* have emerged which also include social roles as part of *pesantren*. *Pesantren* education aims to prepare students to become *salih* and *akram* human beings.

The goal of the *pesantren* as formulated by *kyai* Sahal Mahfudh is to answer questions and fill in the empty spaces in the modernity side that are often sought after in *pesantren*. Furthermore, the location of its relevance is on the holistic side of the formulation of the educational goals of the *kyai* Sahal Mahfudh *Pesantren* which views the santri as an individual as well as part of society. At the same time expanding the scope of *pesantren* education goals towards empowerment in the economic, social as well as cultural fields which ultimately encourages social improvement in society.

### ***Pesantren* institutional reform**

It is impossible, an education system can run continuously and sustainably without going through a process of change and development. Every education system that has been in effect in an educational institution will run and develop in accordance with the conditions and factors that surround it. If a careful analysis is conducted regarding the relevance of the concept of *kyai* Sahal Mahfudh *Pesantren* to institutional development in the *pesantren*, of course it will be found even though explicitly in the education curriculum of *kyai* Sahal Mahfudh *pesantren*, it has been modified and

adjusted according to research and the level of community needs. According to *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh, both *pesantren* and *madrasah* (Islamic schools) curricula have provided a portion for skill activities even though they are part of extracurricular activities (Asmani, 2012).

The organizational structure developed in the management of *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh *Pesantren* no longer places the *kiai* in a centralistic position, neither the decisions and policies of the *pesantren* are solely in the hands of the *kiai*, even though they remain under their supervision. In the concept of science and its development in *pesantren* by *kiai* Sahal Mahfudh we will find a *pesantren* with open arms ready to accept and develop knowledge into institutions.

The only thing that has not been changed is the principle of education which is still based on *tafaqquh fi ad-din* so that apart from material on life skills, material on religious knowledge still dominates. M. Imam Aziz called it a combination of modern and traditional learning methodologies. As an independent boarding school that survives self-financing and self-supporting while maintaining the noble values of its identity.

### **Renewal of *pesantren* functions**

As an organizational community, *pesantren* should not remain silent about the problems of their followers. Whatever it is, *pesantren* must establish themselves as institutions that are open to cultural issues, including social, economic, and cultural issues. In this aspect, *pesantren* must appear as agents of social change that are active-progressive in carrying out their role as social institutions. *Kiai* Sahal Mahfudh calls it one of the two potentials of *pesantren*, which is as a potential for religious education and social potential (Asmani, 2007; Mahfudh, 2007).

The functionalization that is not only carried out by the *pesantren* with its role, but also has an impact on shifting the role of the *kiai*. *Kiai* for *pesantren* who play a role as a social institution are required to be more sensitive and responsive in responding to changing conditions in society. At the same time, *kiai* are required to be wise in utilizing their intellectual side and their closeness to the community to pioneer social change (Achidsti, 2017).

To portray the relevance of *kyai* Sahal Mahfudh's idea, which states the role of *pesantren* as a social and practical institution with the concept of developing *pesantren*, it is certainly not an exaggeration to look at the success of a *kyai* Sahal Mahfudh as a central figure in the process of dynamism and renewal taking place at *Pesantren* Maslakul Huda Kajen in developing society. In addition, developments within the *pesantren* are also directed towards the refunctionalization of *pesantren* as an important center for the development of society as a whole. *Pesantren* is expected to be an alternative development that is centered on the community itself (people-centered development) and at the same time the development of value-oriented development (value-oriented development). Based on this idea, it is hoped that *pesantren* will no longer only hold traditional functions, but become centers of community development (Asmani, 2007; Zubaedi, 2017).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that:

1. In *pesantren* education's tradition, the teaching of the kitab kuning needs the ability to understand contextually as well as open to another dimensions of knowledge for solving contemporary social problems.
2. The formulation of the objectives of *pesantren* education in preparing righteous and akram people in line with the functions of humans personally as khalifah of Allah who also carry out social functions to prosper and manage the earth.
3. The da'wah islamiyyah or propagative potential in *pesantren* formulated in the word "*amr ma'ruf wa nahyu an al-munkar*" is not only articulated in word but also in deeds or *da'wah bil hal*. For *kyai* Sahal Mahfudh, da'wah can also in the form of community empowerment. Both have the same end goals.

These are important points of *pesantren* education for *kyai* Sahal Mahfudh which is relevant and in accordance with the direction of development of contemporary *pesantren* which wants *pesantren* to no longer only carry out their traditional functions as religious educational institutions, but also as social community institutions.

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