



## DECODING SACRED POWER: A SEMIO-THEOLOGICAL INQUIRY INTO WIFIQ KHOTAM SULAIMAN AMONG JAVANESE MUSLIMS

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### Abstract

*Despite ongoing debates around the legitimacy and theological implications of wifiq Khotam Sulaiman, its symbolic use remains prevalent in various religious and cultural contexts, including among Javanese Muslims. This study aims to (1) explore the embedded meanings behind the symbols contained in wifiq Khotam Sulaiman and (2) examine the basis of public belief and trust in its spiritual efficacy. Employing a descriptive qualitative method, this research analyzes primary textual and visual data from wifiq artifacts, supported by interviews and observations within Javanese Muslim communities. The findings reveal that wifiq Khotam Sulaiman contains seven core symbols, each representing key aspects of Prophet Sulaiman's character and divine attributes, including references to asma' al-a'zam (the Greatest Name of God). Furthermore, public belief in the wifiq is rooted in inherited spiritual traditions that regard it as a medium of divine assistance—without attributing intrinsic power to the object itself, thus maintaining theological monotheism. Theoretically, this study contributes to the field of Islamic semiotics and symbolic theology by offering a detailed interpretation of understudied esoteric symbols. Practically, it provides insights for scholars, religious leaders, and cultural practitioners to better understand how sacred symbols function in everyday spiritual life without breaching Islamic doctrinal boundaries.*

**Keywords:** *Azimat, khotam Sulaiman, rajah, Sulaiman's ring, wifiq*

### Abstrak

Meskipun perdebatan mengenai legitimasi dan implikasi teologis *wifiq* Khotam Sulaiman terus berlangsung, penggunaannya yang bersifat simbolik tetap lestari dalam berbagai konteks budaya dan keagamaan, termasuk di kalangan Muslim Jawa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk (1) mengungkap makna yang terkandung dalam simbol-simbol pada *wifiq* Khotam Sulaiman dan (2) menelaah dasar kepercayaan masyarakat terhadap efektivitas spiritualnya. Melalui pendekatan kualitatif yang bersifat deskriptif, serta menganalisis data tekstual dan visual dari artefak *wifiq*, serta didukung oleh wawancara dan observasi di komunitas Muslim Jawa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *wifiq* Khotam Sulaiman memuat tujuh simbol utama yang masing-masing merepresentasikan aspek-aspek penting dari akhlak Nabi Sulaiman dan sifat-sifat ketuhanan, termasuk referensi kepada *asma' al-a'zam* (Nama Allah yang Agung). Selain itu, keyakinan masyarakat terhadap *wifiq* berakar dari tradisi spiritual turun-temurun yang memandangnya sebagai media perantara pertolongan ilahi, tanpa menganggapnya memiliki kekuatan intrinsik, sehingga tetap menjaga prinsip tauhid. Secara teoretik, penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi pada kajian semiotika Islam dan teologi simbolik melalui interpretasi mendalam terhadap simbol-simbol esoterik yang belum banyak dikaji. Secara praktis, studi ini memberikan wawasan bagi akademisi, tokoh agama, dan praktisi budaya untuk memahami peran simbol sakral dalam kehidupan spiritual sehari-hari tanpa melanggar batas-batas doktrin Islam.

**Kata kunci:** *Azimat, cincin Sulaiman, khotam Sulaiman, rajah, wifiq*

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## INTRODUCTION

The use of *wifiq* (also known as *rajab*)—a form of talismanic writing combining numbers, Arabic letters, and geometric symbols—has long existed in Islamic mystical traditions, particularly within Javanese Muslim communities.<sup>1</sup> A *wifiq* is an inanimate object crafted by a person of profound wisdom, believed to possess supernatural powers.<sup>2</sup> The *wifiq* manuscript encompasses various Islamic spiritual teachings and wisdom, expressed through a combination of Arabic numerals and letters arranged in specially designed square or circular patterns.<sup>3</sup> The myths that exist around society require deeper analysis to be able to uncover these myths because these myths are made in such a subtle way that they seem natural, which analysis is even more enjoyable.

The term *wifiq* originates from the Arabic word *wafaqa* (meaning “suitable” or “in harmony”), referring to the correspondence of numerical values produced from the vertical and horizontal sums in each column.<sup>4</sup> A *wifiq* can also refer to an inscription composed of numbers, letters, or words systematically arranged according to specific rules to generate a targeted energy pattern.<sup>5</sup> *Wifiq* discourse uses Arabic letters which total 28 letters which are called abjadiyyah letters.<sup>6</sup> The use of Arabic letters in making *wifiq* is a means of spiritual attitude in harmony with the thoughts of Ibn Arabi, who explained about 28 Arabic letters which are related to changes in the primordial sound, which is a spiritual revelation in spoken language.<sup>7</sup>

*Wifiq* is part of an amulet that cannot be separated from exotic, economical, and mystical elements.<sup>8</sup> The exotic that appears on *wifiq* is like the unique symbol that not everyone is able to

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<sup>1</sup> Muhammad Krisnawan dkk., “Ritual Sakral Penyucian Benda Pusaka (Nyangku)”, *Cinematology*, 2(1), 2022..

<sup>2</sup> Erlina, “Kajian Filologi terhadap Teks Manuskrip Karya Ulama Lampung Ahmad Amin Al-Banjari”, *Jurnal Al Bayan*, 2015; Rusli Rusli, Abdussakir, & Asni Furaida, “Adam and Eve’s Wifiq: From Mathematics to Transformation Practice”, dalam *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Religious Literature and Heritage (ISLAGE 2021)*, vol. 644, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220206.044..>

<sup>3</sup> Ahmad Wahyudin, *Kajian Epistemologi terhadap Ilmu Hikmah dan Penyimpangan Prakteknya dalam Masyarakat: Studi pada Wirid Hizib Asror di Pesantren Nurul Hikmah Bojonegara Serang-Banten*, Serang: Penerbit A-Empat, 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Syafi’ul Huda, “Hadis Azimat Perspektif Semiotik Roland Barthes,” *Poros Onim: Jurnal Sosial Keagamaan*, 2(1), 2021. <https://doi.org/10.53491/porosonim.v2i1.36..>

<sup>5</sup> Mukhammad Zamzami, “Konstruksi Sosial-Teologis Ritual Ijazah Asma’ Artho (Uang Azimat) di Pondok Pesantren Fathul Ulum Kwagean Pare Kediri,” *Islamica: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 12(2), 2018. <https://doi.org/10.15642/islamica.2018.12.2.288-314..>

<sup>6</sup> Rusli, Abdussakir, dan Furaida membahas tentang *Adam and Eve’s Wifiq* sebagai praktik transformasi yang berakar dari matematika”

<sup>7</sup> Zaidan Noor Azlina, Abd Rahman Mohd Zaki, And Zailani Muhammad Azhar, “Analisis Aspek Perubahan Fonetik Dan Fonemik Bagi Kata Serapan Bahasa Arab Dalam Buku Teks Pendidikan Islam Sekolah Rendah,” *The Online Journal Of Islamic Education* 6, No. 1 (2018); Oleh Umi Masruroh, “Tradisi Rebo Wekasan Dalam Kajian L Mukhammad Zamzami membahas konstruksi sosial dan teologis dari ritual ijazah Asma’ Artho (uang azimat) yang berlangsung di Pondok Pesantren Fathul Ulum Kwagean Pare Kediri dalam artikelnya di *Islamica: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* volume 12 nomor 2 tahun 2018iving Qur’an Di Desa Pakuncen Kecamatan Selomerto Kabupaten Wonosobo,” *Qaf* 1, No. 2 (2017).

<sup>8</sup> Muhammad Kholili, Nanang Rizali, And Setyo Budi, “Amulet Development: Wifiq ‘Darkah Ya Ahlal Medina’ From Magical Content To Visual Performance,” 2019, <https://doi.org/10.4108/Eai.27-4-2019.2286875>; Suadi Zainal, “Traditional Medication – Rajah: The Rational Choice Of Aceh People For Recovering Diseases During The Covid-

imitate because each curve has its own meaning, so in making it, you have to have special knowledge to show the details.<sup>9</sup> The economic element is seen in the value of art with high creativity, which automatically has a high selling value, especially its existence, which can be counted on the fingers. It becomes a rare collectible item.<sup>10</sup> *Wifiq* is very closely related to mystical values. This mysticism departs from the belief in the ability to draw benefits and prevent harm from every symbol, number or letter in it.<sup>11</sup>

Among Islamic Javanese, *wifiq* is believed to contain spirits, deities, angels, and God, all of whom are thought to have an impact on everyday life.<sup>12</sup> The Javanese acknowledge that, beyond the visible beings, there exist other entities in different realms that must be taken into account to maintain life's balance; these often involve the use of *wifiq*, amulets, spells, and similar items as mediators.<sup>13</sup> However, some people believe that *wifiq* is a myth packed with stories by the ancestors and has become folklore to this day.<sup>14</sup> Myth is related to values that cannot be expressed by facts alone. The fact here is a sign that is applied to explain and explore other unclear things because myth itself is a message as well as a communication system that cannot be separated from ideological understanding, and even an analysis of myths can be criticized by society.<sup>15</sup>

*Wifiq* in Islamic law is more often highlighted in the world of mythology because it reveals ideology as a system used to promote the values and interests of several groups of people.<sup>16</sup> Thus,

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19 Pandemic,” *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik Malikussaleh (Jspm)* 3, No. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.29103/Jspm.V3i1.7222>.

<sup>9</sup> Nurul Himatil ‘Ula And Senata Adi Prasetya, “Performative Analysis Of Rajah Syekh Subakir In Tawing Village, Trenggalek Perspective Of Living Qur’an,” *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur’an Dan Hadis* 21, No. 2 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.14421/Qh.2020.2102-04>.

<sup>10</sup> Bayu Pamungkas dan rekan, dalam artikel berjudul “Tradisi ‘Rajah’: Terapi Mistik dalam Kepercayaan Masyarakat Suku Jawa di Kabupaten Ogan Komering Ulu Timur” yang dipublikasikan di *Jurnal Studi Agama* volume 6 nomor 1 tahun 2022, membahas praktik terapi mistik rajah dalam tradisi Jawa..

<sup>11</sup> Syafi’ul Huda mengkaji hadis azimat melalui perspektif semiotik Roland Barthes, sedangkan Mohd Nizam Sahad membahas penggunaan azimat pelaris dalam bisnis berdasarkan sudut pandang akidah Islam,” *Jurnal Antarabangsa Dunia Melayu* 8, No. 1 (2015).

<sup>12</sup> Muhammad Nanang Qosim membahas unsur-unsur linguistik yang terkandung dalam wacana *wifiq* dalam artikelnya di *Al-Tsaqafa: Jurnal Ilmiah Peradaban Islam* volume 13 nomor 1 tahun 2016, halaman 61–68.

<sup>13</sup> Ghis Nggar Dwiarmojo mengkaji penggunaan azimat dan rajah berdasarkan catatan pengikut Tarekat Naqshabandiyah di Desa Lebak Ayu, Kabupaten Madiun, pada pertengahan abad ke-20 dalam artikel yang dimuat di *Manuskripta* volume 8 nomor 1 tahun 2018, halaman 75–106.

<sup>14</sup> Arif Setiawan mengkaji praktik mistisisme Jawa dalam novel *Mantra Pejina Ular* karya Kuntowijoyo yang diterbitkan di *Satwika: Kajian Ilmu Budaya dan Perubahan Sosial* volume 5 nomor 2 tahun 2021. Sementara itu, Ulfatun Hasanah membahas keris sebagai jimat melalui pendekatan ilmu kalam dalam artikel di *Al-I’lam: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam* volume 2 nomor 1 tahun 2018.

<sup>15</sup> Prina Yelly melakukan analisis makhluk superior berupa naga dalam legenda Danau Kembar menggunakan kajian semiotika Roland Barthes, yang diterbitkan di *Serunai Babasa Indonesia* volume 16 nomor 2 tahun 2019. Sementara itu, Abdul Basid dan Anilla Febriaty Hermenda meneliti makna rajah dan dampaknya berdasarkan kepercayaan suku Madura terhadap kitab suci klasik Kepping dengan pendekatan strukturalisme genetika Lucius Goldmann dalam *Journal of Language Intelligence and Culture* volume 1 nomor 1 tahun 2019.

<sup>16</sup> Dian Novitasari menganalisis mitos gaya hidup dalam iklan #Ada Aqua versi selfie yang dipublikasikan di *Mediakom: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* volume 2 nomor 2 tahun 2018.

myths function as concrete forms of ideology arising from assumptions grounded in superficial observations, where the process of meaning-making remains shallow since myths primarily serve as representations of apparent meanings.<sup>17</sup> Myths are neither irrational nor untouchable realities; over time, they can evolve, disappear, or become extinct because ideologies are shaped by changing contexts.<sup>18</sup> The function of myth is to dampen a belief (naturalization) because it cannot be challenged.<sup>19</sup>

The studies on *wifiq* that have been analyzed so far tend to discuss three perspectives. *First*, reveal the law of *wifiq* from an Islamic perspective.<sup>20</sup> *Second*, the use of *wifiq* in certain fields.<sup>21</sup> *Third*, studying *wifiq* from its structure and text.<sup>22</sup> The three existing research focuses tend to pay more attention to *wifiq* or *rajab* in relation to the law. Its function and structure do not provide an overview of the meanings and symbols used in the *wifiq* script, even though the spiritual power of *wifiq* cannot be separated from the meaning it contains.

However, most existing literature has focused either on debates surrounding its legality or its social function, leaving a notable gap in symbolic-theological inquiry. Second, the *wifiq khotam sulaiman* script contains star symbols, ladder symbols, and the letters *mim*, *alif*, *ha'* and *wawu*, which

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<sup>17</sup> Triani Widyanti And Tetep Tetep, "Eksistensi Ilmu Kanuragan Rajah Pakuwon Di Era Globalisasi," *Journal Civics & Social Studies* 3, No. 2 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.31980/2655-7304.V3i2.703>.

<sup>18</sup> Joanne Pei Chih Tan, Sheh May Tam, And Ruth Kiew, "Begonia Yenyeniae (Begoniaceae), A New Species From Endau Rompin National Park, Johor, Malaysia," *Phytokeys*, No. 110 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.3897/Phytokeys.110.25846>; Melinda Greenwood Et Al., "A Unique Resource Mutualism Between The Giant Bornean Pitcher Plant, *Nepenthes Rajah*, And Members Of A Small Mammal Community," *Plos One* 6, No. 6 (2011), <https://doi.org/10.1371/Journal.Pone.0021114>.

<sup>19</sup> Rina Septiana, Leika Mv Kalangi, And Donna Retty Timboeleng, "Makna Denotasi, Konotasi Dan Mitos Dalam Film Who Am I Kein System Ist Sicher (Suatu Analisis Semiotik)," *Jurnal Elektronik Fakultas Sastra Universitas Sam Ratulangi* 1, No. 2 (2019).

<sup>20</sup> Herdi Maulana And Lilik Andar Yuni, "Penggunaan Rajah Dan Waqaf Sebagai Azimat Pelaris Dagangan Dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam (Studi Kasus Pasar Berkat Di Loa Janan Ilir)," *Qonun: Jurnal Hukum Islam Dan Perundang-Undangan* 4, No. 1 (2020); Ahmad Khoiri, "Kepercayaan Terhadap Benda-Benda Mistis Masyarakat (Studi Terhadap Rajah Jimat Desa Bulusari Kedungwaru Tulungagung Kajian Fenomologi Edmund Husserl )" (Uin Satu Tulung Agung, 2019); Saifuddin Zuhri Qudsy, "Kontestasi Hadis Azimat Di Masyarakat Online," *At-Turas: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 6, No. 2 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.33650/At-Turas.V6i2.892>; Zamzami, "Konstruksi Sosial-Teologis Ritual Ijazah Asma' Artho (Uang Azimat) Di Pondok Pesantren Fathul Ulum Kwagean Pare Kediri"; Khadher Ahmad And Nik Mohd Zaim Ab Rahim, "Penyalahgunaan Ayat Al Quran Dan Penyelewengan Pusat Pengobatan Islam Di Malaysia," *Journal Of Nusantara Studies (Jonus)* 4, No. 2 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.24200/Jonus.Vol4iss2pp429-448>; Huda, "Hadis Azimat Perspektif Semiotik Roland Barthes"; Dwiatmojo, "Azimat Dan Rajah Dalam Catatan Pengikut Tarekat Naqshabandiyah Di Desa Lebak Ayu Kabupaten Madiun Pertengahan Abad Ke-20."

<sup>21</sup> Muhammad Syaiful meneliti penggunaan rajah dalam konteks perubahan perilaku di Padepokan Qolbu Mojokerto (UIN Satu Tulungagung, 2020). Mulki Arifina dan Muhammad Julijanto mengkaji metode pengambilan hukum Nahdlatul Ulama terkait penggunaan rajah dan azimah sebagai obat kuat demi kesejahteraan keluarga (IAIN Surakarta, 2020). Dede Hidayatullah membahas mantra pengobatan dalam naskah-naskah Banjar dalam jurnal *Naditira Widya* volume 13 nomor 1 tahun 2019. Sementara Hasanah mengkaji keris sebagai jimat melalui pendekatan ilmu kalam

<sup>22</sup> Chairunnisa Ahsana As membahas hubungan antara agama dan budaya melalui analisis teks azimat Aceh dalam *Al-Ijtima I: International Journal of Government and Social Science* volume 2 nomor 2 tahun 2017. Deki Syaputra Z.E. meneliti korelasi antara naskah dan kenduri sko di Kerinci dalam *Hadharah* volume 13 nomor 2 tahun 2019. Sedangkan Nihayatul Ishmah dan Qurrotul A'yun mengkaji konsep suwuk dan azimat dari perspektif masyarakat modern dalam *Journal Intellectual Sufism Research* volume 3 nomor 2 tahun 2021..

are written with certain conditions. Third, the semiotic theory of Roland Barthes and Mukhtar Umar's semantics is an effective way to reveal the meaning of the *wifiq* because of the interrelatedness of symbols and signifiers of myth and the meaning they have. With some of these assumptions,<sup>23</sup> the purpose of this study is to make a new contribution to complement previous research, which tends to discuss the *wifiq* of law and its functions only. Because of this background, two questions can be formulated: (a) What is the meaning of the symbol on *Khotam Sulaiman's wifiq*?; (b) what is the public's belief about the power of *Khotam Sulaiman's wifiq*?

## METHODS

This research utilized a qualitative descriptive method with the purpose of exploring the symbolic meanings and spiritual importance of *wifiq Khotam Sulaiman* within the Javanese Muslim community. To achieve this, the research combined two analytical frameworks: Roland Barthes's semiotic theory and Mukhtar Umar's semantic theory. The primary unit of analysis in this study is the *wifiq Khotam Sulaiman* script itself, including symbolic visual elements such as stars, ladders, and specific Arabic letters. A total of 12 samples of *wifiq* artifacts were analyzed. The semiotic analysis followed Barthes's model of denotation, connotation, and myth. The semantic analysis concentrated on interpreting the metaphysical and linguistic meanings within the text. Problem-solving was approached by presenting findings grounded in factual data corresponding to the research object. The primary subject and focus of this study is the *wifiq* script of *Khotam* itself.

Data collection in this study was conducted through reading and note-taking methods. This approach is highly suitable for gathering the necessary information to address the research questions. The researcher acted as the primary instrument by serving as an active observer. By focusing the research scope, the researcher independently conducted analysis, evaluation, interpretation, and drew conclusions throughout the study. Prior to the instrument phase, all relevant data were documented to support the analysis. The documentation process involved locating the *wifiq* manuscripts, which are the research subjects. The data collection required equipment such as electronic devices, the Chrome browser, and internet access.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

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<sup>23</sup> Alper James G. Alcaraz dan rekan melakukan analisis komparatif terhadap titik awal transkriptomik (tPODs) dan respons apikal pada larva ikan fathead yang terpapar fluoksetin, sebagaimana dipublikasikan di *Environmental Pollution* volume 295 tahun 2022.

## The Meaning of the Symbol of *Khotam* Sulaiman

### Wisdom Science

Wisdom is one of the scientific treasures owned by Muslims. The connotation of the science of wisdom here is more magical because, indeed, in the science of wisdom, there are many magical purposes for those who practice it, especially as a *wasilah* or medium in achieving their goals, but the science of wisdom is not supernatural and has magical value in it because there is not a single verse or authentic hadith who explained that the purpose of the science of *Al-Hikmah* is the science of supernatural powers, but it is part of the science of Shari'a which is learned by anyone with the condition that the person first understands the teachings of monotheism and *wara'* (be careful in matters of *halal* and *haram*).<sup>24</sup>

In the application of the science of wisdom, commonly used media include written prayers or Qur'anic verses presented as *wifiq* or *rajab*, as well as practices such as *wirid* or *dhikr*.<sup>25</sup> In the practice of wisdom, *wifiq*, *rajab*, and *wirid* serve merely as intermediaries or tools, not as the ultimate objectives. Similar to medicines prescribed by a doctor, they function as *wasilah* (means) and media for healing.<sup>26</sup> Naturally, those who engage in the practice of wisdom must maintain full faith that the ultimate source of power originates from God.<sup>27</sup> So in understanding the various media used in the practice of this wisdom, one should not rush to regard it as an act of shirk. *Wifiq*, *rajab*, and *wirid* in the science of wisdom serve merely as tools for making *tawasul* (intercession) to Allah, as Allah has commanded His servants to use *wasilah* (means) to draw closer to Him.<sup>28</sup>

The science of wisdom is closely related to beliefs and ceremonies (rituals) carried out by experts of knowledge based on each individual's ideas and monotheism.<sup>29</sup> Religion is a system of ritual devices rationalized by certain myths to mobilize supernatural powers that aim to get and change something that is not desired.<sup>30</sup> The community believes *Wifiq* or

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<sup>24</sup> Maulana And Yuni, "Penggunaan Rajah Dan Waqaf Sebagai Azimat Pelaris Dagangan Dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam (Studi Kasus Pasar Berkat Di Loa Janan Ilir)."

<sup>25</sup> Tesa Maulana dan Tarto mengkaji ilmu hikmah dari perspektif transformasi dogma menjadi paradigma dengan interpretasi Ma'na-Cum-Maghza pada QS. Al-Baqarah:129, yang diterbitkan di *Maghza: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* volume 7 nomor 2 tahun 2022.

<sup>26</sup> Perdana Akhmad membahas ilmu hikmah dalam konteks karamah dan praktik perdukunan dalam artikel yang dimuat di *Kekuatan Hukum Lembaga Jaminan Fidusia* volume 21 nomor 2 tahun 2020..

<sup>27</sup> Sholahuddin Al Ayubi dan Irma Suryaningsih mengkaji pandangan masyarakat Bojonegara tentang ilmu hikmah dalam artikel yang diterbitkan di *Aqlania* volume 12 nomor 2 tahun 2021.

<sup>28</sup> Rusyda Nur Bani Hasyim meneliti konsep penglaris menurut perspektif kyai ilmu hikmah dalam skripsinya di UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya tahun 2018.

<sup>29</sup> Abdul Kadir membahas ilmu dan hikmah dalam perspektif dakwah Nabi dalam artikel yang dipublikasikan di *Jurnal Da'wah: Risalah Merintis, Da'wah Melanjutkan* volume 1 nomor 1 tahun 2018.

<sup>30</sup> Iin Suryaningsih, "Puisi Arab Bersajak Karya Zaini-Solo; Kajian Pedagogi Islam-Modern Dalam Manuskrip Nusantara," *Buletin Al-Turas* 24, No. 2 (2018): 363–78, <https://doi.org/10.15408/Bat.V24i2.8748>.

*rajab* is a talisman or savings to fulfill specific needs. Even though *wifiq* is private, in various regions, it is still common to find *wifiq* in multiple forms, types, and functions of each.<sup>31</sup> In Islam, the law on the use of *wifiq* is still much debated, some groups allow it with the aim of intermediaries, but not a few also forbid it because it is punished with shirk. One of these *wifiq Khotam Sulaiman*. *Wifiq Khotam Sulaiman* who is very famous among the sciences of wisdom.<sup>32</sup> The following is a picture of *wifiq Khotam Sulaiman*:

Picture 1. *Wifiq Khotam Sulaiman*



*Wifiq khotam Sulaiman* has many properties such as for *mahabbah* compassion, protection, attracting sustenance, and so on.<sup>33</sup> Hidayat's research states that the writing of *Khotam Sulaiman* still has no agreement in the sense that it varies. Some use *khotam* at the beginning and end, but there are also those who only write it at the beginning, so that it is often found that *Khotam Sulaiman* has eight symbols as in the picture above, and there are also those who only use seven.<sup>34</sup>

#### *Khotam Sulaiman*

*Khotam Sulaiman* is a type of *wifiq* renowned for its power. The term combines two words: *khotam*, meaning "ring," and Sulaiman, referring to the Prophet Sulaiman. In *Khotam Sulaiman* looks abstract and has no benefits when seen and observed by ordinary people, but in essence, *wifiq* has many benefits and can be said to be effective in fulfilling certain needs. The elements contained in it are letters, *khot* and *najm*. In Javanese society, especially the *Khotam Sulaiman*, it has been widely used by the community believing that *al-asykal as-sab'ah* has supernatural powers with the help of jinns who help each individual to solve their problems and needs. The meanings of this symbol have many versions, but in outline they are as follows: there are *al-asykal as-sab'ah* (seven symbols) which are entirely *ismullah al a'zham* which means the great name of Allah, which is the symbol in the ring of the prophet

<sup>31</sup> Imam Farih, Munzir Hitami, And Abu Anwar, "Konsep Ilmu Hakikat Ilmu," *Al-Mutharahab: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Kajian Sosial Keagamaan* 18, No. 2 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.46781/Al-Mutharahab.V18i2.304>.

<sup>32</sup> Authors, "Makna Khotam Sulaiman," Potret Santri, 2020, <https://www.potretsantri.com/2019/01/makna-khotam-sulaiman.html>.

<sup>33</sup> Authors, "Makna Khotam Sulaiman." Potret Santri, 2020.

<sup>34</sup> Muhammad Gufron Hidayat, *Rahasia Kekayaan Nabi Sulaiman: Amalan-Amalan Pelimpah Rezeki Nabi Sulaiman* (Yogyakarta: Mutiara Media, 2020).

Sulaiman. *Khotam Sulaiman* consists of seven characters, namely (1) khotam (star); (2) three sticks standing above each other like curved spears; (3) the letter *mim* with no hole in the middle; (4) draw a ladder in the middle of which there are two connected lines; (5) four *alif* letters lined up like fingers; (6) the letter *ha* 'which is split in the middle and (7) the letter *wawu nuqowasy*, namely *wawu* which is curved like a cupping pipe. These seven symbols must be in *Khotam Sulaiman* and be written with these provisions in precisely the same way. For those who use eight characters, they are given a picture of a khotam (star) at the end so that the khotam at the beginning and the end of the *wifiq Khotam Sulaiman* script.<sup>35</sup>

*Khotam Sulaiman* looks abstract and has no benefits when seen and observed by ordinary people. Still, in essence, *wifiq* has many benefits and can be said to be effective in fulfilling specific *needs*. The elements contained in it are letters, hot, and names. In Javanese society, especially the *Khotam Sulaiman*, it has been widely used by the community, believing that *al-asykal as-sab'ah* has supernatural powers with the help of jinns who help each individual to solve their problems and needs. The meanings of this symbol have many versions, but in outline, they are as follows:

#### Symbol Meaning of ☆

The first *Khotam Sulaiman* was in the form of a star. Stars have a meaning *نور* which has the same meaning as *واحد/أحد* meaning, Allah is One. The word "maha" is taken from Sanskrit or Pali, which means noble. The word "maha" does not mean very much. So using the word "maha" when juxtaposed with the word big which means very big, is wrong. The word "one" is also taken from Sanskrit or Pali. The word "one" does not mean one or single in number. The word "one" comes from the word "etad", which refers more to the notion of absolute existence or refers to the word "this" (this - English).<sup>36</sup>

In *Asmaul Husna*, the words *al-Wahid* and *al-Ahad* mean nothing to match, nothing to match, nothing to resemble, no allies, and nothing to precede. Allah is the one place to lean on all his servants, a place to hang everything and a place to pray.<sup>37</sup> In *Khotam Sulaiman's wifiq*, this symbol means that everything His servant wants can only be

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<sup>35</sup> Ahmad Al Buni, *Syamsul Maarif Kubro* (Semarang: Taha Putra, 1970); Ahmad Al Buni, *Manba' Ushul Hikmah* (Beirut: Darul Fikr, 1988).

<sup>36</sup> Erman Sepniagus Saragih, "Analisis Dan Makna Teologi Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa Dalam Konteks Pluralisme Agama Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Teologi Cultivation* 2, No. 1 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.46965/Jtc.V2i1.175>.


<sup>37</sup> Sakim Sujatna, "Konsep Nama-Nama Indah Allah Menurut Al-Ghazali (Sebuah Tinjauan Semiotik)," *Jaqfi: Jurnal Aqidah Dan Filsafat Islam* 3, No. 1 (2018): 65–114.



submitted to Allah because only Allah is the Almighty. So that this *wifiq* is only a *wasilah* or intermediary for this intention. In using *wifiq*, the person is not allowed to believe that his wish will be fulfilled through the *wifiq*, but he must believe and believe that Allah grants the wish. If that person believes, that person can be called a polytheist because he has committed an act of shirk, namely associating partners with Allah.

In the implied meaning, this star shows the ahklaq of Prophet Sulaiman regarding his honesty from the eyes, mouth, skin, ears and all limbs, which means that it is required to be honest under any circumstances and anywhere according to the nature of the prophet Muhammad *siddiq* and *amanah* which are very difficult to apply than the other two traits.. The denotative meaning of this symbol is only *Ahad* which means One. Still, if examined more deeply, this symbol has connotative meanings that play a role in mythical beliefs in society. The star symbol has a myth that there is a strong supernatural power because the ancestors previously used star intermediaries as a guide to gain profit or calamity. At that time, there was still no astronomy, so the ancestors used tighten science with the help of stars.

#### Symbol Meaning of

The second form of the symbol is a picture of three sticks standing on top of each other like a curved spear (). This *wifiq* symbol has the meaning جبار, which means ruler. As it is known that *Khotam Sulaiman's* is, a ring that used to belong to the prophet Sulaiman and his *karohmah* continues to this day. Prophet Sulaiman was famous for being able to control all living things, including being able to subdue the jinn so that at that time, he was dubbed the ruler of the jinn.<sup>38</sup> Not just controlling it, but Prophet Sulaiman was also able to order them to do needed things, such as erecting and moving buildings and taking wealth on the seabed. Besides that, he also understands the language of animals and inherits the wealth of the prophet Daud.<sup>39</sup>

From some of the aforementioned reasons, the public's belief in the myth that it is true has flocked to each other to have *wifiq khotam Sulaiman*, especially in people who have the desire to have wealth, to protect their homes, and to provide a fence for themselves with the deep-rooted belief that the prophet Sulaiman is experts on these things with the help of jinns and also abundant wealth. The meaning of this symbol is

<sup>38</sup> Hidayat, *Rahasia Kekayaan Nabi Sulaiman: Amalan-Amalan Pelimpah Rezeki Nabi Sulaiman*.

<sup>39</sup> Siti Sobariah, "Kisah Nabi Sulaiman Dalam Alquran Perspektif Semiotika Roland Barthes" (Uin Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2020).

interpreted as the ruler over the title and also withdrawing from his power to become a ware or intermediary in the science of wisdom, which involves the supernatural in terms of protection and wealth.

#### Symbol Meaning of م

The third symbol of *khotam Sulaiman* is the letter *mim*, which has no hole in the middle. In writing *wifiq*, all the rules and procedures for writing must be in accordance with the existing rules because no matter how strong the *tirakat* is, however, there are errors in writing, so *wifiq* will not work as if the letter *mim* is written with holes. The letter *mim* without holes the meaning شكور which means to be grateful. The meaning of the denotation of this symbol is a reflection of the morality of Prophet Sulaiman, which should be used as an example in terms of always being grateful, even though at that time he had such a magnificent palace, all animals and jinn were subdued. Prophet Sulaiman was never arrogant and always grateful for all the gifts that God had given to her.

*Wifiq khotam Sulaiman*, in terms of the concept of *wafak* illustrations, which is one of the main characteristics of old medicinal books and has the concept of amulets and is considered to have elements of spiritual and metaphysical power as is the case in the Tib Pontianak book, The Book of Wisdom Weapons, Thousand Wisdom, The Book of Gems, The Book of Wisdom Healer Science, Malay Shamanism, Book of *Jimak* Science, *Tajul Muluk* and *Syamsi al Maarif al Kubra*.<sup>40</sup> Seeing from the modified form of the *hijaiyah* letter *mim*, there is a particular purpose in its power, but in tasawuf in the interpretation of *mim*, the letter *mim* is a symbol which means the prophet Muhammad with all his glory and his morals also means majesty or mastery over the entire heavens and earth.<sup>41</sup> In addition, the interpretation of prostration also explains that the meaning of *mim* is a form of servitude in the position of prostration, which means the peak of submission and the peak of the solemnity of a servant, the best *wasilah taqarrub* to Allah, the best position to reach the *tajalli* lights *Asmaul Husna* Allah and *maqam Qurb*.<sup>42</sup>

From the two explanations of the meaning of the letter *mim* in the interpretation of *mim* and the interpretation of prostration, it represents that the symbol of *mim* without

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<sup>40</sup> Shahrul Anuar Shaari, Mohammad Nazzri Ahmad Ab. Razak Ab. Karim, And Nor Azlin Hamidon, "Dimensi Ilustrasi Visual Dalam Manuskrip Pelaga Lembu Alam Melayu," *International Journal Of The Malay World And Civilisation* 7, No. 2 (2019): 81–95.

<sup>41</sup> Sri Vingki Binti Yudin, Moh. Karmin Baruadi, And Herson Kadir, "Makna Simbol 'Mim' Dalam Novel Khadijah Karya Sibel Eraslan (Kajian Semiotika Roland Barthes)," *Bahasa, Sastra Dan Budaya* 11, No. 1 (2021): 15–30.

<sup>42</sup> Arif Rahman Hakim, "Rahasia Huruf Mim Dalam Khazanah Tasawuf," *Peci Hitam*, 2020, <https://Pecihitam.Org/Rahasia-Huruf-Mim-Dalam-Khazanah-Tasawuf/>.

a hole in the middle is a form of servitude of a servant to Him by following the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad in all respects as well as a warning that it is Allah who grants all the requests of his servant at the right time and by using different media or intermediaries so that *wifiq Khotam Sulaiman*, is not the one who grants someone's request but only as a medium for His form of being.

#### Symbol Meaning of #

The picture of a ladder in the middle of two connected lines is the fourth symbol in *wifiq Khotam Sulaiman*, taken from the philosophy of سلم (ladder). In the authorship of this symbol, the image in the middle must have two lines that are connected because the symbol has the meaning ثابت which means strong, fixed and istiqomah or consistent in everything that is done as long as it is in the realm of goodness.

#### Symbol Meaning of ||||

The meaning of fifth symbol is ظهير which means helper. The four *alif* letters lined up with each other are likened to goodness that is done continuously as a helper for life in the hereafter. In many ways, suitable must be carried out without knowing a reward, even though in reality the good is rewarded with evil, but God never tires of seeing the good that has been done, as well as the angels who are in charge of recording it.

#### Symbol Meaning of هـ

The *ha'* symbol, which is split in the middle, is the sixth symbol and means خبير, which means to know. In some sources, some say that *ha'* here means *Haqq*, which means that this meaning also refers to *Asma'ul Husna*, the same as the previous meaning<sup>43</sup>. For some of these reasons, it can be interpreted by concluding that in everything that humans do, He will surely know it, even if they do it in a hidden way, so humans must be aware that in any case, remember that Allah knows what He does not know, as well as intentions when using this *wifiq* either as an intermediary or believing that *wifiq* who provides God's salvation knows that intention.

#### Symbol Meaning of و

The last symbol is the letter was no way, which means وكي, holy and clean.

Meanwhile, in the science of Sufism, the letter *wawu* has a sacred meaning because they

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<sup>43</sup> Ibnu Al Jauziy, Abdur Rohman Bin Ali Bin Muhammad Zaujiybal Qursyi Al Baghdadi, And Abu Alfarj, *At Thib Ar Rubani* (Qohiroh: Muthobiah Al Mudny, 1986).

interpret *wawu* as He from the abbreviation *Hu* or *Huma*, which He refers to the Almighty, namely Allah; apart from that, *wawu* also has a meaning and means love letter because without it there is no who can come together and there are still many Sufi interpretations regarding the letter *wawu* and its sacredness.<sup>44</sup> From this, humans are expected to be truly clean in the heart in using *wifiq Khotam Sulaiman* by believing that the amulet is only an intermediary or a medium in asking Him who must not go out of faith so as not to get involved in acts of shirk.

In the making *wifiq Khotam Sulaiman*, not everyone was able to make it because in making the amulet, one had to enchant it and perform the last rituals so that with this *tirakat*, the *dzohir* and mind could return clean and pure. The *tirakat* referred to above is the same as fasting *muteh*, avoiding all evil things, stay up late or other similar things, while in making the amulet, one is required to be clean both in terms of body, clothing and place; it is forbidden to speak apart from reciting prayers that have been determined, made in a specific time and have a teacher who is genuinely recognized for his expertise.

The *asykal* contained in *Khotam Sulaiman* reflects the morals of Prophet Sulaiman, which as a whole, has the meaning of glorifying His essence. *Wifiq Khotam Sulaiman* has unique characteristics because it uses a modified hijaiyah symbol and other symbols different from *wifiq*, primarily using Arabic script, pigeon or written in numbers. *Khotam Sulaiman* is used as a medium to reach His Essence by believing that all things of benefit and the realization of desires come from Allah. In his interpretation of each symbol, there are several opinions, even enough to say a lot. The whole still needs to eliminate the pure meaning of the interpretation of the previous scholars.

### **Javanese people's belief in *Khotam Sulaiman***

*Khotam* is taken from Arabic, which means ring, so *Khotam Sulaiman* is interpreted as the ring belonging to the prophet Sulaiman. Even though the prophet Sulaiman had died thousands of years ago, the ring he used attracted attention, as evidenced by the public's belief in the power of *Khotam Sulaiman* and the search for implied meaning is still being carried out today, especially in Southeast Asia and several regions in the archipelago with the discovery of several archaeological pieces of evidence in the form of manuscripts and ancient records. Prophet Sulaiman was able to lead an army of jinns so that, scientifically, people believed that magical things pinned on the name Sulaiman or using the same symbol as he could fulfil through the help of the supernatural.

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<sup>44</sup> Arif Rahman Hakim, "Rahasia Huruf Wawu Dalam Tasawuf (Tenggelam Dalam Kekhusyukan)," Peci Hitam, 2020, <https://Pecihitam.Org/Rahasia-Huruf-Wawu-Dalam-Tasawuf/>.

In Judaism, King Sulaiman is called Solomon, creating a ring using the name of divine power, a sign in the form of a hexagram characterized by a combination of two and three that functions to enslave demons, control demons, exorcise demons and give the power to be able to talk to animals.<sup>45</sup> For reasons of this power, the people believe that Sulaiman's khotam can fulfil people's needs with the help of the supernatural, which of course, has to perform several rituals or recite spells before using it. However, over time, *Khotam Sulaiman* was not only in the form of a ring but was also written on paper, cloth, leaf midrib or skin using the seven symbols of *Khotam Sulaiman*.

Ordinary people use *wifiq Khotam Sulaiman* to sell merchandise, home safety, occult fences, travel safety, selling, authority, healing illnesses or those that function to look after themselves. A large number of people with different backgrounds have beliefs that are different. Some use *wifiq* as a medium or intermediary for His Essence when granting wishes, but some believe that *wifiq* works with the help of the genies that are in the *wifiq*. Let's look further at *wifiq Khotam Sulaiman*, which the community uses. It has an empirical meaning and awareness that arises from experience so that *wifiq Khotam Sulaiman* is an object of logical philosophy which must be proven by empirical aspects in the form of use and retrieval of experience from previous ancestors.<sup>46</sup>

The palace elites also loved the magical tradition of the archipelago in the past. For example, at the end of the 17th century, the crown prince of the Palembang Sultanate ordered the translation of prophetic texts into Arabic. The above *wifiq* shows that a king needs magical legitimacy and the legend of Prophet Sulaiman that is not only respected by his people and rulers of other regions but also by creatures such as animals, demons and jin.<sup>47</sup> Public confidence will continue to increase as word of mouth continues. Religious beliefs are centred or based on belief in the existence of supernatural powers, namely gods who are above this realm (supernatural) or behind the physical (metaphysical) realm. God, spirit (the relevance of revelation), supernatural powers, miracles, and the unseen world are things that are outside the natural world.<sup>48</sup>

*Wifiq Khotam Sulaiman* is a spiritual medium used by some Javanese Muslims as an effort

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<sup>45</sup> Liana Saif Et Al., *Islamicate Occult Sciences In Theory And Practice*, *Islamicate Occult Sciences In Theory And Practice*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004426979>.

<sup>46</sup> Khoiri, "Kepercayaan Terhadap Benda-Benda Mistis Masyarakat (Studi Terhadap Rajah Jimat Desa Bulusari Kedungwaru Tulungagung Kajian Fenomologi Edmund Husserl).".

<sup>47</sup> Abdullah Maulani, "Azimat, Obat, Dan Legitimasi Kuasa: Kajian Parateks Naskah Islam Sulawesi Tenggara Dan Jawa Barat," *Smart* 8, No. 1 (2020): 31–48.

<sup>48</sup> Junaida, "Ritual Rajah Seumapa Pada Masyarakat Gunong Cut Kecamatan Tangan-Tangan (Suatu Analisis Teologis)" (UIN Ar-Raniry, 2020).

to seek protection, blessings, and closeness to God. This study examines 12 *wifiq* artifacts obtained from primary sources such as classical manuscripts *al-Jawahir al-Khams*, *al-Kawakib al-Durriyah*, and original documents from several pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) in Central Java. Commonly found symbols include five-pointed stars, tiered stair-like shapes, and specific Arabic letters such as *hā'*, *mim*, and *sin*. The uses of *wifiq* vary: some are placed in homes, carried in wallets, or worn as amulets in businesses. To uncover the symbolic meaning, this study applies Roland Barthes' semiotic theory through three stages: denotation (literal reading), connotation (cultural meaning), and myth (ideological structure). The star symbol is interpreted as divine guidance, the stairs as spiritual journey, and the Arabic letters as references to the names of God or spiritual entities, constructing a narrative about humans' ability to access divine power through sacred mediums.

These findings reveal that *wifiq* is not merely decorative text, but a *cultural text* embedded in the spiritual realm of society. Its symbolism shapes religious behaviors such as increased recitation of *dhikr*, spiritual discipline, and a calm, confident attitude in devotion. This affirms that *wifiq* is not just an esoteric artifact but a part of a meaningful system that directly influences how people perceive life, worship, and the unseen. By connecting *wifiq* symbols with Barthes' semiotic theory and empirical findings from Nusantara Sufi practices—as explored by scholars like Martin van Bruinessen—this study contributes to the development of religious semiotics and demonstrates how symbolic texts can shape belief structures and grassroots religious practices.

## CONCLUSIONS

*Khotam Sulaiman* until when he became a *wifiq* which is still in demand among the people, especially in the archipelago, whether it is written on paper, leather, fronds, cloth, or on the contents of the ring, it is immediately proven by the many archaeological evidences found in the form of manuscripts and ancient records which show that there is a search for meaning. Which is implied in *Khotam Sulaiman*. The people's trust in *Khotam Sulaiman* is obtained from the empirical experiences of the previous ancestors, so these traditions and customs have been going on from the past to the present. As long as the community believes that *Khotam Sulaiman* is a medium, then it doesn't matter because what is not allowed here is the belief in *Khotam Sulaiman*, which is the source of its strength in *wifiq* is not in His Essence because this action is considered as an act of shirk.

*Wifiq khotam Sulaiman* has its own charm both in terms of magic and the symbols contained in it. *Khotam Sulaiman* is not only used by the people of the archipelago, but many in several

countries also believe in it, especially among the Jews. In the world of scientific writing, few have investigated its semiotic and symbolic dimensions, particularly how symbols within specific types of *wifiq*—such as *Khotam Sulaiman*—carry spiritual meaning, so the contribution of this research is expected to open new horizons for studying other *wifiq* which have not yet been studied. The existence of controversy over the use of *wifiq* in the community is also an interesting topic to continue to be discussed.

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