



Book Review: Gontor's Waqf, Philosophy and Manifestation

Fathan Aulia Rahman¹

¹*Sakarya University, Turkiye*

The book *Wakaf Gontor: Philosophy and Manifestation* is a collective work by the team from the International Centre for Awqaf Studies (ICAST) of Universitas Darussalam Gontor, chaired by Syahrudin, M.Sc.Fin, with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Khoirul Umam, M.Ec. as the editor. This book comprehensively examines the role of waqf (Islamic endowment) in building and sustaining the educational system and self-sufficiency of Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor. Through historical, philosophical, and managerial approaches, the book traces the development of Gontor's waqf from the pre-waqf era to its development in the modern era. This book is quite capable of clearly describing the philosophy and manifestation of Gontor's Waqf, covering its historical development, the values that drive it, its management and operational system, and the methods for ensuring its sustainability.

OPEN ACCESS

*Correspondence:

Fathan Aulia Rahman

fathan.rahman@ogr.sakarya.edu.tr

Received: 11 October 2024

Accepted: 7 December 2024

Published: 31 December 2024

Citation:

(2024) Book Review: Gontor's

Waqf, Philosophy and

Manifestation.

The Economic Review of

Pesantren.

3.2.

Keywords: Gontor; Waqf; Sustainability

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Education is one of the main pillars of human development and the advancement of civilization. In Islam, education is not only oriented towards the transfer of knowledge, but also the formation of character and noble morals. However, the challenge of funding education is a fundamental issue in many Muslim countries. High education costs often limit access for economically disadvantaged groups.

In this context, educational waqf presents a sustainable Islamic philanthropic solution. Waqf, etymologically, comes from the word "waqafa," which means to withhold or stop. In Sharia terminology, waqf means to retain assets so that their benefits can be used for the public good without reducing their principal value. Educational waqf is a form of endowment whose proceeds or benefits are directed to support educational activities, whether through the development of infrastructure, the provision of scholarships, or the development of science. In general, educational waqf embodies the implementation of Islamic philanthropic values (*ta'awun* and *ihsan*) in the field of education. It reflects a combination of worship and long-term social development.

Educational waqf is a strategic instrument for human capital development (Rusyiana et al., 2021). It not only provides educational facilities but also serves as a source of sustainable funding for the development of science and technology. Revitalizing educational waqf in the modern era demands innovation, professionalism, and the integration of spiritual values and modern economic management. In Islamic history, waqf has had a very important role (Antonio et al., 2021).

The book *Wakaf Gontor: Philosophy and Manifestation* is a collective work by the team from the International Centre for Awqaf Studies (ICAST) of Universitas Darussalam Gontor, chaired by Syahrudin, M.Sc.Fin, with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Khoirul Umam, M.Ec. as the editor. This book comprehensively examines the role of waqf (Islamic endowment) in building and sustaining the educational system and self-sufficiency of Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor.

The discussion is divided into six chapters covering the history and phases of waqf development, the spiritual values underlying its management (such as *Panca Jiwa*, *Panca Jangka*, and *Sintesa Pondok*), the governance of the waqf administrator (*nazir*), the sources and management of waqf assets, and the development model for a productive waqf economy. The book asserts that waqf at Gontor is not merely a financial instrument, but a civilizational system that integrates education, spirituality, and the economy.

Based on field research, interviews with key figures, and a literature review, this book demonstrates that Gontor's self-sufficiency stems from a philosophy of waqf that is internalized in all aspects of the *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) life. Gontor's waqf management model—professional, transparent, and sustainability-oriented—makes it an inspiration for Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. This book makes a significant contribution to enriching the study of productive waqf and economic models based on Islamic values.

The book titled *Wakaf Gontor: Philosophy and Manifestation* was written by the team from the International Centre for Awqaf Studies (ICAST) at Universitas Darussalam Gontor, Ponorogo. The team is led by Syahrudin, M.Sc.Fin, the Director of ICAST and a lecturer at Universitas Darussalam Gontor. Syahrudin completed his undergraduate studies at Universitas Darussalam Gontor. He then pursued his master's degree at IIUM Malaysia. Currently, Syahrudin is undertaking his doctoral education at Karabuk University in Turkey. The editor of this book is Assoc. Prof. Dr. Khoirul Umam, M.Ec, an academic known for his expertise in Islamic Economics. Khoirul currently serves as the Vice-Rector III of Universitas Darussalam Gontor.

Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor is known as one of the largest Islamic boarding schools (*Pesantren*) in Indonesia with its integrated education system (Ismail, 2011). Gontor is also known for producing many alumni who have contributed significantly to Indonesia. Gontor's alumni come from various backgrounds, reinforcing Gontor's most famous motto, "Standing Above and For All Groups" (Suharto, 2016). Gontor is considered more than just an ordinary educational institution, as its management is inseparable from Waqf. Gontor can be described as a self-sufficient and sustainable model of Islamic civilization.

The culture of Waqf at Gontor is seen as having inspired many educational institutions in Indonesia in their management. Gontor itself has developed its waqf rapidly, demonstrated by the establishment of dozens of branch campuses throughout Indonesia with various assets and business entities. What Gontor has done is also emulated by various other institutions, both educational institutions founded by Gontor alumni and those that were not (Arroisi, 2020).

This is what the team of authors states motivated the writing of this book. It is hoped that this book can make an important contribution to the treasury of knowledge in the field of waqf. Additionally, the book

is expected to reflect the spirit and noble values that have long been instilled at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor.

In writing this book, the team of authors conducted direct interviews with various figures directly involved in the development of Gontor's waqf. The team also gathered various data and information from multiple sources.

The writing team divides this book into six chapters arranged with an engaging logic and system. The book begins with Chapter One, which is the introduction. This chapter contains the general history of Gontor. The authors explain quite clearly the development of Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor from before its establishment. The genealogy of the Trimurti Founders of Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor is also briefly explained. In this first chapter, the authors emphasize that Gontor's development, even from before it was founded, cannot be separated from the deeply rooted culture of waqf. This is demonstrated by the spirit of sacrifice of the Trimurti Founders in competing to endow their inherited wealth for the development of the Gontor Pesantren in its early days.

In this first chapter, the authors divide the development of waqf in Gontor into several phases that essentially run parallel to the history of Gontor itself. There are five phases mentioned by the authors: the Pre-Waqf Period (1926-1958), the Waqf Procession (1958), the Waqf Trial Period (1968-1985), and the Waqf Development Period (1985-present).

In Chapter Two, the authors continue the discussion by reviewing the "Soul of Waqf," which is the main energy in the management of Waqf at Gontor. Besides being famous for its education system, Gontor is also known for its solid and consistent values. These values are the main energy for Gontor in organizing education and teaching up to now, as it approaches its one-hundredth anniversary.

Gontor's most important values include Panca Jiwa (the Five Souls), Panca Jangka (the Five Long-Term Goals), and Sintesa Pondok (the Pesantren Synthesis). The authors underline that within all of Gontor's values, there are points that encourage self-sufficiency through waqf management. For example, in Panca Jiwa, there is the point of Self-Reliance (Berdikari). In Panca Jangka, there are points on Infrastructure (Pergedungan) and God's Treasury (Khizanatullah). In Sintesa Pondok, Gontor also takes inspiration from Al-Azhar in Egypt, which is famous for its extraordinary waqf management, enabling it to provide scholarships for prospective scholars from all over the world (Syamsuri, 2023).

In Chapter Three, the authors discuss the governance of the waqf administrator (nazir) in Gontor. In this chapter, the authors explain the definition, structure, function, and responsibilities of the Gontor waqf nazir. With such large waqf assets, Gontor is very serious in its management. Therefore, the structure and division of roles in the management of waqf at Gontor are created and implemented in as much detail as possible, from the Gontor Waqf Board as the highest institution, the Pesantren Leadership, to the Foundation for the Maintenance and Expansion of the Modern Pesantren's Waqf (YPPWPM).

The authors continue the discussion in Chapter Four by reviewing the sources of Gontor's vast waqf assets. Based on their sources, Gontor's Waqf can come from the inheritance and families of the founders, from the personal funds of the Trimurti founders of the pondok, and from the teachers. Gontor's Waqf also comes from external parties such as the general public, alumni, the government, and even parties from abroad.

In Chapter Five, the authors discuss the management and administration of Gontor's waqf assets. This chapter explains how the collection of waqf assets is managed, as well as the utilization and distribution of Gontor's waqf assets. The authors also explain the management system to ensure the sustainability of the waqf assets, which is crucial in waqf management.

The authors conclude the book in Chapter Six with a discussion related to Gontor's waqf development model, which includes the concept of Gontor's waqf development, its foundational basis, and a discussion of Gontor's protectionist economic system. Not only is its education system widely imitated, but Gontor also serves as an example in managing various business entities aimed at achieving economic independence. Gontor manages various business entities from various sectors, ranging from agriculture, plantations, trade, industry, services, health, finance, to culinary. In this chapter, the authors also discuss the strategies for Gontor's waqf development, which include the Pesantren Cooperative, CV (Commanditaire Vennootschap), and PT (Perseroan Terbatas) (Iqbal, 2016).

This book is quite capable of clearly describing the philosophy and manifestation of Gontor's Waqf, covering its historical development, the values that drive it, its management system, and the methods for ensuring its sustainability.

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BOOK INFORMATION

Book Title: *Wakaf Gontor, Philosophy and Manifestation*

Team of Authors:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Khoirul Umam, M.Ec
 Syahrudin, M.Sc. Fin.
 Dr. Mufti Afif, Lc, M.A
 Dr. Hartomi Maulana, M.Sc. Fin
 Achmad Arif, B.SH, M.A
 Alfarid Fedro, S.Ag, M.H
 Arif Dian Santoso, S.H, M.H
 Dr. Azidni Riqa, S.E.I, M.E
 Mhd. Jabal Alamsyah, Lc, M.A
 Sunan Autad Sarjana, Lc, M.H
 Andini Rachmawati, S.H.I, M.C.L
 Aqif Khilmia, S.E, M.Pd
 Atika Rukhminastiti Masrifah, M.E.Sy.
 Sheema Haseena Armina, M.SEI.
 Fadhila Tianti Mudi Awalia, S.H, M.H
 Khurun'in Zahro', SH.H, M.H
 Latiefa Rusli, S.E, M.M
 Yunita Wulandari, S.H, M.H

Publisher: UNIDA Gontor Press

Year of Publication: 2025

Number of Pages: 101 Pages

ISBN: 978-602-5620-74-4.