

# Mindfulness in Relation to the Meaning of Life of *Jemparingan* (Mataraman traditional Archery) in the Perspective of Kawruh Jiwa Ki Ageng Suryomentaram

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## ABSTRACT

This study is about *jemparingan*. *Jemparingan* or Mataraman style traditional archery is one of traditional activities, centered in Keraton Kesultanan (Yogyakarta Royal Palace) and Pakualaman, Indonesia. The aim of this research was to discuss the perspective of Kawruh Jiwa Ki Ageng Suryomentaram (KAS) on 'mindfulness as the synergy between the philosophy of *jemparingan* and how the players of *jemparingan* valuing their life through the philosophy'. Kawruh Jiwa of KAS is closely related to Javanese traditional values. It is emphasizes on understanding important things that often determines people's ability to know and recognize their self/soul. Therefore Kawruh Jiwa was chosen to be the perspective of analysing mindfulness of *Jemparingan* players. This study used qualitative pheno-ethnography based on two reasons. First, the phenomenological approach as a method of research focuses on the processes and interactive events through the individual experience. Second, ethnography approach as the extensive study towards natural behaviour in specific culture or certain social group enable this study to analyse individual experience in order to reveal the behaviour pattern. Two main participants involved in this research are *jemparingan* players and located in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Data collection was done through observation and interviews. The results found that the philosophy of *jemparingan* has value that can be used by *jemparingan* players to give the meaning of their life. Unfortunately, not all of *jemparingan* players are aware about the philosophy of *jemparingan*. If the players aware about the philosophy, they will be able to find the meaning of life. Eventually, there are two choices for *jemparingan* players. They use mindfulness to do *jemparingan* or through *jemparingan* they found mindfulness.

**Keywords:** mindfulness, meaning of life, *Jemparingan*, Kawruh Jiwa Ki Ageng Suryomentaram

## INTRODUCTION

This research aims to discuss the perspective of Kawruh Jiwa by Ki Ageng Suryomentaram (KAS) towards the role of mindfulness as the synergy between the philosophy of *jemparingan* and the meaning of life of *jemparingan* players. Mindfulness is the ability of individuals to pay attention and be aware of the present time without being reactive to the situation. On the other hand, *jemparingan* cannot be separated from the word "*manah*" (shoot), which in Javanese means "heart" or "*roso*" (inner-self) that were in fact almost identical to "mind". It means, *jemparingan* requires mindfulness as the part of its activity. Kawruh Jiwa of KAS is used as the basis for this study because the thought is closely related to the traditional life of Yogyakarta people (Rusdy, 2014). In addition, the thought itself also teach how to achieve mindfulness without meditation

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through the self-consciousness. The similarity between Kawruh Jiwa of KAS and *jemparingan* is found in the process of self-consciousness. If self-consciousness in Kawruh Jiwa of KAS was found through the meaning of life, then *jemparingan* offers self-consciousness by its activities and understanding its philosophy.

## JEMPARINGAN

*Jemparingan* or Mataraman style traditional archery is one of traditional activities, centered in Keraton Kesultanan (Yogyakarta Royal Palace) as well as Pakualaman, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. *Jemparingan* itself cannot be separated with words “*manah*” (shoot). *Manah* in Javanese means heart or inner-self, that in fact almost identical to “mind”. Inner-self in Javanese can be interpreted as self-identity as well as intuition in the way to reveal the spiritual truth.



**Figure 1.** Original style of *Jemparingan* Mataraman (left); modification style of *Jemparingan* Mataraman (right) (Personal documentation)

Beyond all of its activities and equipment, *jemparingan* has its philosophy. It manifests on various symbol of tradition. Symbol in *jemparingan* become social object that being used by its player to build communication with their self and others. Like the other symbol, symbol in *jemparingan* also the result of an agreement. These symbols are the part of the action that has symbolic qualities. Symbol of *jemparingan* can be seen in the procedures and equipment that being used. *Jemparingan* use the bow and arrow that made from wood and bamboo. The manufacturing process of bow and arrow is still manual. Each tool was made customize with its own characteristic. It teaches *jemparingan* players to always *titen* (aware) to the tools that being used. Every *jemparingan* players should aware to the characteristic of its bow and arrow and treat it according to its characteristic (Interview with Sukro, 2014).

The way to shoot is also different from other archery. *Jemparingan* is performed by *bersila*. *Bersila* aims to keep the players relax and keep the peace of mind. Maintaining the rhythm in *jemparingan* teach them to always calm to solve the problems in life. *Bersila* is not only about peace of mind. Moreover, it is about *manunggaling kawulo Gusti*, focusing your mind towards God, the Almighty. As mentioned by Mulyono (1979), it is similar with the purpose of Javanese people, the unity between our self with God or “*Jumbuhing Kaula Gusti*”. *Jemparingan* players wear traditional Java clothes called *surjan*. It is originated from word “*siro*” and “*jan*” which means light or enlightenment. The target is also different from other archery. It is not face target but white pendant made from straw wrapped by white fabric.

Each traditional equipment as well as every movement and process of *jemparingan* is a symbol that has a specific philosophy that should be internalized by *jemparingan* players. *Pamenthanging gendhewa wujudake pamenthanging cipta*. It means the range of bow is the manifestation of a masterpiece from the heart. It describes sincerity from both physically and spiritually. Moreover, in *jemparingan*, it is prohibited to release the bow without arrow. Releasing the bow without arrow is like come to God with empty heart and mind and leads to the bad things. *Jemparingan* equipment made by natural materials such as bamboo, woods, and goose feater by some reason. It is because human and nature have a strong relation. If *jemparingan* players realize every symbol in *jemparingan*, it will help them to valuing their life.

## KAWRUH JIWA BY KI AGENG SURYOMENTARAM

Basically, the meaning of life cannot be separated from the purpose of life. The purpose of life will lead people to understanding their life (the will to meaning). According to Frankl in Bastaman (2007), if someone successfully finds the meaning of life, it will lead them to the happiness. Their life will be more valuable and meaningful and lead to happiness. Apart from western theory, there is also theory about human life originated from Java such as Ki Ageng Suryomentaram (KAS). He is famously known by his thought, Kawruh Jiwa. Kawruh Jiwa of KAS is not religion, nor believes. It is not about the lesson about good or bad, not about prohibition nor ruling people's life. It emphasizes on understanding important things that often determines people's ability to know and recognize their self/soul. For example: *karep* (willingness/desire), thought, *kramadangsa*, happiness and difficulties, as well as painfulness.

In Kawruh Jiwa, there is no obligation to do or not to do (Atmosoetidjo, 2003). Kawruh Jiwa of KAS helps Javanese people to be happy in any circumstances. This is the aim of Kawruh Jiwa that based on sense of life, started from inner-self and consciousness. The foundation of Kawruh Jiwa is various feelings inside everyone. The similarity between Kawruh Jiwa by Kas and *jemparingan* is self-consciousness that lead to mindfulness.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research using mindfulness based on Kawruh Jiwa Ki Ageng Suryomentaram in order to examine the meaning of life of *jemparingan* players. Mindfulness is English translation of *pali* and *sati*. *Pali* is Buddhist psychology about 2500 years ago (mindfulness is the main thought of this tradition). *Sati* means consciousness, awareness and admonishment. In psychotherapy literature and Buddhist followers, the definition of mindfulness is often equated with awareness, present experience, and acceptance (Germer, 2005). Kawruh Jiwa itself originated from Javanese, '*ka*' and '*weruh*' means knowing. *Jiwa* means soul. So, Kawruh Jiwa is the knowledge about soul. Soul is the part of human that unseen but you can feel it, for example: painful, happiness, etc. Meanwhile body is physical part of human. Soul is recognized through feelings. Therefore, soul is related to the feelings, and kawruh jiwa is the knowledge about feelings (Suryomentaram, 2003).

Kawruh Jiwa emphasizes on the importance of various things that can affect human to understanding their soul. For example, desire, thought, *kramadangsa*, painful and happiness. In kawruh jiwa, there is no such thing to do or not to do (Atmosoetidjo, 2003). According to KAS, there is one element that should be exists, that is consciousness. It is important to understanding the knowledge about our-self or *pengawikan pribadi* (self-awareness) through self-introspection. *Pengawikan pribadi* cannot be taught from other people. *Pengawikan pribadi* conceptually is started from now, here, and in current condition (*saiki, kene, ngene*). It is not about yesterday or tomorrow. It is about present time. Learning about *pengawikan pribadi* started from now, here, through examining our self, our desire, our action, our mind, our feeling. We try to identify the meaning of our desire, action, thinking and feeling (Suryomentaram, 2003).

Modern society exercises their consciousness to feel their self through meditation. Meditation has physical benefit such as relaxation that affects metabolism and hormone to reduce pain and creating relaxed body condition. According to Davis (2003), meditation can be used for self-regulation, relaxation, control the pain, self-exploration, as well as self-therapy. Traditionally, it can also be used to achieve self-transcendence (Davis, 2003). Prof. Koentjoro on introduction of book titled "*Psikologi Raos*" mentioned that KAS is existential psychology teacher who teaches mindfulness without meditation. Mindfulness teaches us to manage our stress and achieve happiness. According to KAS mindfulness can be achieved without meditation but through inner-self and self-consciousness (Sugiarto, 2015). Therefore, this research will use inner-self and self-consciousness to identify the meaning of life of *jemparingan* players.

Self-consciousness by KAS has existential characteristic. It has a purpose to raise awareness about selfhood. By recognizing our selfishness, hopefully we could be liberated from our ego, to release *kromodongso* with various self-character into transcendental self without any character attached to be human with self-consciousness (Boneff, 1993). Self-consciousness is highly related with knowing and recognizing our self. It is very difficult because not so many people interested to knowing their self. People only consider about other people and unable to raise their self-consciousness. It is easier to feel about other people than our self. For example, if we meet someone, than we can feel something about that person. Feeling something is actually our own self in reacted to others. It is more difficult to recognize our feeling about our mind/idea. What we are thinking are invisible by our eyes and our senses. What we think about our feeling is actually an idea about what we think we feel (Suryomentaram, 2002).

Self-consciousness will be used to identify the meaning of life of *jemparingan* player. The meaning of life is the experience acquired by responding to the environment, find and run the task in unique life, and let our self to experience it (Bastaman, 2007). In the perspective of Frankl, the meaning of life is condition that indicating how far someone's experience and how the person valuing their existence in this world according to their own perspective (Bastaman, 2007). According to Frank (1984, cited from Thomas & Cohen, no year) meaning of life is a needed, human characteristic, and the center of motivation. The meaning of life is important because according to Nietzsche (in Frankl, 2003), whoever has reason or "why" in their life will be able to overcome every obstacle in life through "how". It is important to be consistent with life principal, life framework, and value of life.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research was using qualitative approach in order to gain deep understanding, comprehensive, and holistic about the topic of research. Creswell (1998) mentioned that qualitative method is generally can be used to examining community life, history, behavior, functionalization of organizations, social activity, etc. Furthermore, Creswell also mentioned that qualitative research providing comprehensive and complex picture through words, reporting detailed description that obtained from informant/participant, and held through natural setting. The main characteristic that needs to be concerned in qualitative research is awareness about "meaning". Based on this main characteristic, qualitative approach will be able to facilitating the aim of this research to understanding mindfulness of *jemparingan* players based on Kawruh Jiwa Ki Ageng Suryomentaram through feno-ethnografic. This research was using phenomenology as a perspective to understanding individual life or experience through their perspective. In order to understanding the world that undertaken by individuals, it is prominent to recognizing their perception about something (Creswell, 1998).

According to Giorgi and Giorgi (2003), phenomenological psychology aims to provide accurate description about human life experience because this study emphasize on first-hand-experience. Phenomenology was used because of the relevance phenomenon with the meaning of the subject as well as describing how the meaning is subjectively formed. The main point about phenomenology is human as its subject and awareness. The design of this research also supporting researcher to build direct personal relation with the research subject. Therefore, researcher will be able to build close relation with the subject and situation in order to gain clear understanding about reality and daily activities of the subject.

Ethnography originated from word ethno (nation) and graphy (description). Ethnography can be described as description and interpretation about pattern, behavior and life philosophy that can be observed from certain systems or social group as well as culture (Creswell, 1998). Ethnography is description about culture in order to understanding the philosophy of life from cultural players perspective (Neuman, 2006). According to Spradley (2007), the definition of ethnography is a work to describe culture. Emerson (in Neuman, 2006) describing ethnography as a study about community behaviour on their daily life with natural background. Even-though the meaning of culture is wide, but ethnography usually centered on activities that rely on behavior, language that can be identified through rules, rituals, norms, and interaction with other people or other believe/value. The main characteristic of this research is holistik-integratif and qualitative analysis (Spradley, 2007).

The implementation of qualitative pheno-ethnography on this research is based on several reasons. First, phenomenology as a research method focuses on the process and interactive process through individual experience. It helped researcher to reveal the meaning, uniqueness and the essence of experience or event that experienced by *jemparingan* players in order to give the meaning of their life through *jemparingan*. Life experience of each participant is phenomenon to give value/meaning about the complexity because the focus of this research is about the meaning of life.

Second, ethnography as a depth study about natural behavior in certain culture or social group was held by analyse every aspect and individuals experience to identify the behavior pattern. Natural behavior of *jemparingan* players on their daily life in Yogyakarta as a cultural city will be seen clearly. The process of giving the meaning of life through *jemparingan* will be an interconnected culture based on assumption that *jemparingan* players give the meaning of their life through *jemparingan* activities. It can only be understood by knowing and understanding the real and natural situation of *jemparingan* community.

## RESULTS

This research were produce themes that obtained through examining the meaning of life of *jemparingan* players, called IN and AR. The result has shown that the internal aspect such as self-maintaining by *jemparingan* players determined their *jemparingan* performance.

### Participant IN

IN needs high concentration in order to maintain her-self during *jemparingan*. The level of concentration is even higher in every aspect such as mind, physic, and feeling. It requires high level concentration physically and spiritually. For IN, it is important to release her mind and heart from negativity while practicing *jemparingan*. IN always try to focus on present time, current situation and raise her consciousness. It will help her to focus, started from the beginning till the end of the process to release the arrow. IN always focus on doing her best to finishing the challenge in front of her. She needs relaxation to perform *jemparingan* well. In order to obtain relaxation, she needs to feel comfort. Comfort in here means all aspect such as mind, heart and environment are in places where *jemparingan* is being held. It is important to synchronizing heart and mind to achieve positive vibe in order to create calmness and comfortable feeling in every process.

For IN, *jemparingan* activities is highly related with maintaining her body and energy. She mentioned about the ultimate role of breathing. Maintaining her breath is prominent to perform *jemparingan* well. IN stated that *jemparingan* requires consciousness. It needs self-consciousness and high concentration in every step of *jemparingan*. If there is a part where she lost her concentration, she needs to start from the beginning. IN also mentioned that it needs concentration, focus, relax and put our energy and synchronize it with consciousness. Therefore, for IN *jemparingan* need comprehensive focus and consciousness.

### Participant AR

Similar with IN, AR are interpretating *jemparingan* through examining and identifying his internal self when practice *jemparingan*. AR stated that while doing *jemparingan*, he uses his mind to do *jemparingan* technically. He uses his mind to find calmness and feel the right time to release the arrows. AR mentioned that *jemparingan* needs energy in order to pull the bow. It needs precise energy to pull the bow properly, not to weak but not too strong. For AR, *jemparingan* requires balancing that obtained from sitting position, crossing the leg, supporting the body to be relax and maintaining his mind and feeling to achieve serenity.

AR mentioned that relaxing his body is important to enjoy every process, to manage his mind and feelings in order to gaining concentration to achieve expected target. AR also mentioned that breathing is a prominent aspect in *jemparingan*. According to AR, if we fail to create calmness, it will affect our breath that will determine our *jemparingan* performance. AR believed that breathing is the key. If we fail to manage our breath then we will fail to do *jemparingan* properly.

## DISCUSSION

According to experience of IN and AR related to *jemparingan* activities, it can be concluded that interpretation of each individu is similar even-though they described it with different words. Based on KAS, every human being needs to learn from their own life experiences to be able to differentiate happiness and painful to make them recognize their inner-self. Javanese culture are recognizing *cipta* (creation), *roso* (feeling) and *karso* (desire). *Cipto* is ability to do or think about something. *Roso* is ability to feel about something. *Roso* is pragmatic measurement of every mystical effort of Javanese people. The purpose of *cipta*, *roso* and *karso* is to bring satisfaction, calmness, serenity (*tentrem ing manah*), relaxation and deep appreciation about what is called *Eudamonia* (Greece) or happiness. That kind of circumstances will only be achieved if experience of inner-self reach the point of calmness, the end point is self-centered (Handayani & Novianto, 2004). *Cipto*, *roso* and *karso* are also aspects on *jemparingan*. *Jemparingan* contains various aspects such as *cipta* (creation), *roso* (feelings) and *karso* (desire). Both participant interpretate *jemparingan* by explaining what they thinking and feeling according to their experience. The aspect of *cipta*, *roso* and *karso* was explained by them with their mind, concentration, focus, feelings, calmness, energy and the centralization of power.

In Kawruh Jiwa by KAS, there is a way to solve the problem or *ngudari reribet* through *kondhotakon*. *Kondhotakon* can be done through responding our own mind/idea by *nyawang karep* (discussion with our self) or discuss with others through perception in responding our own feelings towards other feelings in our self. *Kondhotakon* with their own self is done through self-intropection or self-reflection; while *kondhotakon*

through others can be done by discussion with other people. It is basically done through sharing about our mind and our feeling with other people. The object of *kondhotakon* basically is to realize our body/physical (*rasa ning raga*), realizing our mind (*rasa ning pikir*), our desire (*rasa ning karep*), and our feeling (*rasa ning rasa*). The same thing happened with *jemparingan* players. If the *jemparingan* players feel stuck to find the solution of their *jemparingan* problems, they usually will ask to the other *jemparingan* players about what they are feeling. The other *jemparingan* players will be very happy to give any advice to solve the problems. Kawruh Jiwa with its consciousness cannot be separated from mindfulness. The method of self-consciousness that been done through *kondhotakon* is an effective way how people reflect their self through discussion with their own self or with others.

In *jemparingan*, self-management is highly visible and can be seen from the shoot to the target. The result is not always right on the target but the consistency and stability. If it is missed, then it is not too far from the target. These results were obtained from the control and management of thoughts, feelings, and execution of arrows. The tools and equipment as well as the comfortable feelings in order to respond the situation is also important to be consider. Self-control is needed through regular evaluation. It is mandatory to evaluate every arrow that has been released. The results can be analysed and helps *jemparingan* players to avoid the same mistake. Similar with Kawruh Jiwa, self-consciousness is using to *ngudari reribet* that also requires some exercise and practicing continuously. Kawruh Jiwa "*raos salebeting raos*" cannot be identified as a metaphysical technique skill equal to behavioristic skinner (Jatman, 2011). Self-maintaining in *jemparingan* requires the players to always raise their consciousness and aware about their action because the feelings in *jemparingan* is always different every time.

Lesson learned from both subject is how they give the meaning for their life. IN interpret her life as a flow, by consciously undergo her choice, life with the purpose in order to act with clarity, so accustomed to controlling emotions, while minimizing the things that trigger discomfort, adjusting self-capability to be able to avoid blaming other people for own failure. AR interpret his life by preparation, to prepare everything properly in order to achieve his goal, getting used to keep the distance from busy life in order to reflect and expand the perspective from the goal that already been set. Lesson learned from *jemparingan* is how to achieve balance on his life. Both subject mentioned about the important of breathing in determine the successful of *jemparingan*. By realizing their breath, they will be able to focus on present time, current condition and action that will be done based on their mind, feeling and desire. However, researcher finds that only some players realize the philosophy of *jemparingan* both senior players as well as the beginners. Understanding about philosophy of *jemparingan* can be seen from their purpose in doing *jemparingan* and their perspective towards certain meanings.

## CONCLUSION

From this research, it can be concluded that it is easier for *jemparingan* players to give the meaning for their life through understanding philosophy in every process of *jemparingan*. *Jemparingan* is used as a tool to teach the players to always raise their self-consciousness when practicing *jemparingan*. However, not all of *jemparingan* players understand the philosophy of *jemparingan*. Many of them do not apply *jemparingan* philosophy. In fact some of them actually have opposite attitude towards *jemparingan* philosophy. Habit that constructed in *jemparingan* activities can be implemented in daily life in order to implement Kawruh Jiwa by KAS. By then, *jemparingan* players will be able to realizing mindfulness, raise consciousness everywhere, every time, in every condition. *Jemparingan* can be done by everyone, men and women in every age, various background, beyond religion and believe. The most important thing value of *jemparingan* is how to be always *eling* or being mindful in every condition. Similar with *jemparingan*, the main value of Kawruh Jiwa is how to live life with awareness and mindfulness. *Jemparingan* and Kawruh Jiwa by KAS have the same core which is mindfulness through self-consciousness.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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