



LOCAL WISDOM OF THE ARCHIPELAGO: TRANSFORMATION OF PROPHETIC VALUES IN SAPARAN TRADITION IN NGEMBAL KULON VILLAGE

Abdul Ghofur

MA Al-Yasiniyah Kudus

Email: ghofursjd98@gmail.com

Abstract

The spread of Islam in the area of Java is said to have developed rapidly, inseparable from the ingenuity of religious leaders at that time who saw it in packing their preaching. This research explores the values of Islamic teachings that are gently acculturated in the socio-cultural traditions of the community, namely the tradition of breakfasting at Mbah Poncowati's grave. Using qualitative methods and field research in nature, this study aims to identify and describe things that contain prophetic values that are instilled and transformed in the Saparan tradition by the elders of the Mbah Poncowati tomb in Ngembal Kulon Kudus Village for generations and are still approved by people in the village to this day. The results of the study show that there is a transformation of prophetic values in the form of humanization, liberation, and transcendence which can be seen in several ways, namely: a) Eating together, b) Praying together, c) Slaughtering goats, and d) Kirab gunung. From these various things, it can be concluded that there are prophetic values contained and successfully transformed in a cultural tradition in the archipelago that blends in with community customs.

Keywords: Prophetic Value, Javanese Tradition, Saparan Tradition, Archipelago Islam.

INTRODUCTION

The Javanese Islamic community recognizes many kinds of ceremonial traditions, such as the tradition of selamat ceremonies, khaul, rice harvest ceremonies, suronan ceremonies, etc. (Adibah, 2015, p. 146) Each procession in a tradition has its own meaning and values that are born from the community. Most traditions in the Javanese region were adopted by religious propagators from the habits and traditions of the old Javanese community and then filled with Islamic values as an effort to proselytize and invite Javanese people to embrace Islam. Muhaimin (2014) as cited by Zuhadi explained that the Islamic tradition in Indonesia is inseparable from the historical background of the presence of Islam in Indonesia which in its spread through da'wah and trade activities that occurred between trading ports in Indonesia and Arab, Gujarat and Persian traders. They came one by one to bring Islam in the 7th century AD until the 17th century AD so that Islam has spread and spread throughout Indonesia in a peaceful way through a touch of Indonesian local culture so that Islam can develop in almost all parts of Indonesia. (Zuhadi, 2019, p. 120)

In the archipelago, the Saparan tradition has its own historical value. In Java, for example, there is a Saparan tradition held in Warak Village, Salatiga. The Saparan tradition there began as a form of Merti Desa tradition (*meruwat desa*) which aims to keep the village prosperous and avoid disasters. Some say that Saparan is a culture that originated from the Hindu-Buddhist era, where a thousand-day ceremony was held. At that time Saparan was intended to give offerings to the ancestors, worship and ask for something to the ancestors. According to the pre-Islamic Javanese belief, the spirits of ancestors can be asked for help and blessings. (Tumimomor &

Swastikasari, 2019, p. 623) There is also a tradition carried out in the month of Safar with the main symbol "*salamun water*" as found in the village of Japan, Mejobo, Kudus. Mas'udi said that this tradition is known by the local community as the *rebo wekasan* tradition. He explained that the presence of Salvation Water, which is then known as Salamun Water, in the lives of the people of Japan Village gives its own suggestion of the essence of religion and religious behavior that develops in the midst of their lives which then raises an implication for the existence of spiritual nuances in the midst of community life. (Mas'udi, 2016, p. 29)

The information above provides information that several existing studies have not discussed and examined the Saparan tradition in Ngembal Kulon village. There are those who examine the same tradition name but different locations. On the one hand, even traditions with the same name are not necessarily the same acculturation and function in them. From here, it is necessary to explore the values of tradition in order to provide understanding to the next generation of the nation and preserve it so that it is not eroded by foreign cultural culture.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses descriptive qualitative methods and is field research. The use of these methods is to explore data, seek meaning, understanding, understanding, about a phenomenon, event, or human life by being directly and/or indirectly involved in the setting under study, contextual, and comprehensive. (Yusuf, 2014, p. 328) As for viewing data, researchers use a phenomenological approach, which views an event as a visible phenomenon. Researchers want to examine what appears (phenomenon), but by examining pure phenomena thanks to reduction (Yusuf, 2014, p. 352), then conclude it with a deductive approach which means that the researcher starts with the concept and then categorizes it into results and discussion. (Yusuf, 2014, p. 387). The data that became the source of research was taken from the results of interviews, observations and also documentation and then reduced. This research aims to describe the prophetic values in the Saparan tradition of Ngembal Kulon Kudus Village.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Saparan Tradition in Ngembal Kulon

Each region has different customs and traditions. Customs and traditions become a regional characteristic that cannot be separated from history and existing civilizations. The Saparan tradition is one of the traditions carried out in Ngembal Kulon village in Kudus district, Central Java. Almost the same as the Saparan tradition in other regions in Java, this tradition is a tradition that is carried out from generation to generation from village elders. It is said that the awalan tradition was initiated by a figure or spreader of Islam in the area. The figure is known as Poncowati or often called *Simbah Buyut Surgi Poncowati/ Mbah Poncowati*. The name Poncowati itself is still a mystery whose exact origin is unknown. In this case, there are several opinions from the local community regarding the origin of the name Poncowati. One of the village elders believes that the name Poncowati is just a nickname for a figure from the cowati area. Another opinion is that Poncowati was a descendant of a nobleman who later settled and was buried in the Ngembal Kulon area.



Saparan tradition is an annual tradition, meaning that this tradition is carried out once a year. This tradition is carried out in the month of *Sapar* (the name of the month in the Javanese calendar which is an absorption of the name of the month "Safar" in the *Hijriyah* calendar). Traditions carried out in the month of awareness are mostly related to the Rebo Wekasan Tradition. Weny and Fitria mentioned that the Rebo Wekasan tradition was originally born and developed in Central Java. This can be seen from the naming of Rebo Wekasan itself which comes from the Javanese language. In Indonesian, Rebo Wekasan means the last Wednesday of the month of Safar. The influence of Javanese in this tradition is inseparable from the fact that Banten received a lot of Islamic influence from the Demak kingdom which geographically entered into the Central Java region. (Bastaman & Fortuna, 2019, p. 39)

The thing that distinguishes it from the Saparan tradition carried out in other areas is the purpose and essence of this tradition. In other areas, there is a Saparan tradition called Rebo Wekasan which can be found in several areas in Banten, one of which is in Cikulur Village, Lebak Regency. This tradition is still routinely carried out by the village community every year. (Bastaman & Fortuna, 2019, p. 39) In the area, the rebo wekasan tradition is interpreted by the local community, among others, first, as an expression of their gratitude to the almighty for providing abundant natural resources. Secondly, it is an effort to get blessings and safety regarding the belief that 360,000 disasters and 20,000 dangers will descend every year, which descend on every last Wednesday of the month of Safar. (Bastaman & Fortuna, 2019, p. 43). There is also a tradition with the same belief that the month of Safar is the month of disaster, namely the Lawa Safar Tradition in Morella. The tradition of performing the Safar bathing ritual which is believed to be an effort or spiritual practice towards approaching oneself to Allah is also carried out by some Muslim communities in several regions in Indonesia, including Java, West Nusa Tenggara, Sulawesi, Riau Islands, Maluku, Kalimantan, and Sumatra. (Manilet & Rajab, 2021, p. 109)

The Saparan tradition in Ngembal Kulon village is indeed held in the month of Safar, but in its implementation not all days in the month of Safar can be implemented. The Saparan tradition by the local community is carried out on a certain day, namely Saturday legi or Friday legi. The selection of the day has been passed down from generation to generation and the exact reason for determining the day is unknown. One of the elders said that the determination of the day follows the ancestors of the local village and has been valid from year to year. The Saparan tradition is held if not on Saturday legi then Friday legi depending on the fall of the day and market (one of the dates in the Javanese calendar). In this case, if no Saturday with the legi market is found in the month of Sapar, the alternative is Friday with the *pasaran legi* (the term count in the java calendar).

The Saparan tradition was originally only held at the grave of the great-grandfather of Surgi Poncowati in the village. However, later by the village head it was made more festive and wider and included the community of one village with the center point at the tomb. Initially, this tradition was only followed by the local community and people who had deceased relatives buried in the tomb. This Saparan tradition is a tradition of "*kenduren*" or eating together which becomes a community gathering with processed goat meat. From generation to generation every year, the

processed meat cooked in this tradition is goat. According to one of the elders in the area, *Mbah Surgi Poncowati* used to serve goat meat dishes to the people who attended as a tribute to the audience. But as time went by, the processed goat was then sold as a replacement value for buying goats. So, the proceeds from the sale of the processed goat were made to reimburse the cost of buying the processed goat.

Transformation of prophetic values in Saparan tradition

In terms of etymology, prophetic terminology comes from the word prophet which means a person sent by God to teach people and give them messages or in other words prophets, and prophetic which means having the character of a prophet which can be interpreted as prophetic. Prophetic can be interpreted as having the nature or characteristics of a prophet. (Anisa et al., 2021, p. 95) Prophetic values are prophetic character values in the form of *sidiq*, *amanah*, *tabligh*, and *fathonah* traits that can be instilled early. Instilling these traits can make humans dignified and valuable in humanity, forming humans into good people, practicing and upholding moral values and having a high spiritual spirit. (Nurdiyanto et al., 2018, p. 549) According to Kuntowijoyo, prophetic values are grouped into three parts, namely humanization, liberation and transcendence. first, humanization or emancipation is based on the sentence *ta'muruna bi al-ma'ruf*. Humanization is interpreted by humanizing humans and the implementation of the value of *amar makruf*. Second, liberation is derived from the sentence *tanha an al-fahsha wa al-munkar*. Liberation is interpreted as liberation and is the implementation of the value of *nahi munkar*. And third, transcendence is derived from the sentence *tu'minuna bi allah*. Transcendence in this case is the implementation of the value of *tu'minuna billah*. These three prophetic values are intended as prerequisites for becoming the best people (*khayr ummah*). (Kuntowijoyo Anisa et al. 2021:95). The prophetic term was introduced by Kuntowijoyo through the concept of Prophetic Social Science. According to him, Prophetic Social Science (ISP) not only explains and transforms social phenomena but also provides guidance on where the transformation is carried out, for what and for whom. Therefore, prophetic social science is not just changing based on ethical and prophetic ideals. (Kuntowijoyo dalam Cahyono dan Iswati 2021:214)

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِنْهُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

Meaning: "You (Muslims) are the best people born for mankind (as long as) you enjoin the good, forbid the evil, and believe in Allah. Had Ahl al-Kitab believed, it would have been better for them. Some of them believed and most of them were unbelievers." (QS. Ali Imron:110)

In the interpretation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, it is explained that the verse contains an encouragement to the believers to maintain these main characteristics and to keep their spirits high. (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an (LPMQ), 2019)

The best community in the world is the one that has two characteristics: inviting goodness and preventing evil, and always believing in Allah. All these qualities were possessed by the Muslims at the time of the Prophet and had become flesh and blood in them because of which they became strong and victorious. In a short period of time they were able to make the entire land of Arabia submit and obey under the auspices



of Islam, living safely and serenely under the banner of justice, whereas they were previously a divided people always in an atmosphere of chaos and warring among themselves. This was thanks to their firm faith and adherence to the teachings of their religion, and to their steadfastness and tenacity in enforcing the good and forbidding the evil. The deep faith in their hearts always encouraged them to strive and fight to uphold truth and justice as mentioned in the word of Allah:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ
 Meaning: "Verily, the true believers are those who believe in Allah and His Messenger then they do not doubt and they strive with their wealth and souls in the cause of Allah. They are the true believers." (al-Hujurat/49: 15);

The above verse explains two conditions for becoming the best people in the world, namely first, strong faith and, second, enforcing good and preventing evil. Any Ummah that possesses these two traits is bound to be a victorious and noble Ummah and if these two things are neglected and ignored, then it cannot be regretted if the Ummah falls into the valley of destitution. (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an (LPMQ), 2019)

Based on the results of the analysis, there are at least several transformations of prophetic values in the Saparan tradition in Ngembal Kulon village as follows:

a. Eating together, kenduren.

Eating together contains humanization value. In this case, the value of humanization in joint prayer is the value of togetherness, kinship, and harmony between residents and communities who attend the event. Similar to the rebo wekasan tradition that occurs in Kudus in general, the Saparan tradition holds "selamatan". "Selamatan" is rice and side dishes that are brought to the place of worship and then distributed to the community. (Rosyid et al., 2022, p. 102) In the Saparan tradition in Ngembal Kulon, eating together is done with food that is processed there, namely processed goat meat.

b. Prayer together

Prayer together contains the value of transcendence and humanization. Prayer together is an activity by reading prayers as a request to God which is done together. Prayer together is a form of manifestation of God with His majesty by all people determined by each belief. On the hope that prayer and worship of servitude to God become a common phenomenon that will always be presented by all creatures. This will also be done by each individual who confirms his or her belief in another power outside the Adi Kodrati by performing religious rituals. (Mas'udi, 2016, p. 27) The value of transcendence in this tradition can be seen from the spiritual value of asking God. Someone who prays to his God, indirectly he recognizes that he is nobody and only a weak servant before his God. In the Qur'an it is mentioned

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ
 Meaning: "Your Lord says: "Pray to Me, and I will surely grant you (what you wish for). Verily, those who boast of not worshipping Me will enter Jahanam (Hell) in humiliation." (Gafir/40:60)

In this verse, Allah tells us that He will answer the prayers of His servants if His servants are willing to pray.

In the interpretation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an (LPMQ), 2019) It is explained that in this verse, Allah commands people to pray to Him. If they pray, He will fulfill that prayer. Ibn Abbas, adh-Dahak, and Mujahid interpreted this verse as saying, "Your Lord says, Worship Me, and I will reward you." According to them, in the Qur'an, the word supplication can also be interpreted with worship as in the words of Allah:

إِنْ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا إِنَاثًا وَإِنْ يَدْعُونَ إِلَّا شَيْطَانًا مَرِيدًا

Meaning: "That which they worship besides Allah is nothing but inatsan (idols), and they worship nothing but an impious devil. (an-Nisa'/4: 117);

Belief in magical reality will always be accompanied by the fulfillment of the value of "servitude" like human recognition of the Almighty. (Mas'udi, 2016, p. 27) In the hadith, the Prophet said:

الدَّعَاءُ هُوَ الْعِبَادَةُ. (رواه الترمذي عن النعمان بن بشير)

Meaning: "Prayer is an act of worship. (Narrated by at-Tirmidhi from an-Nu'man ibn Bashir);

Some commentators are of the opinion that prayer in this verse means "supplication"; in fact, prayer and worship are the same in terms of language. Only the former means specific while the latter means general. Prayer is one of the forms or means of worship. This is based on the hadith:

الدَّعَاءُ مَحُّ الْعِبَادَةِ. (رواه الترمذي عن أنس بن مالك)

Meaning: "Prayer is the essence of worship." (Reported by at-Tirmidhi from Anas bin Malik) ;And the Prophet's Hadith:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ سَأَلَ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: أَيُّ الْعِبَادَةِ أَفْضَلُ فَقَالَ دُعَاءُ الْمَرْءِ لِنَفْسِهِ. (رواه البخاري)

Meaning: "It was narrated from 'Aisha that she said, "The Prophet was asked, Which is the best act of worship? He replied, A man's prayer for himself." (Narrated by al-Bukhari)

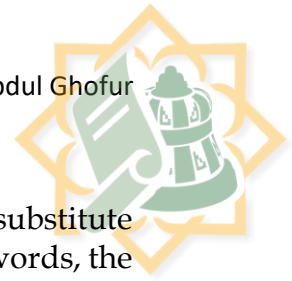
Based on the above hadith, the prayer in this verse can be interpreted as worship. This is corroborated by the continuation of the verse which means: "Indeed, those who arrogantly refrain from worshipping Me will enter a despised hell."

This verse is a strong warning and threat to those who are reluctant to worship Allah. This verse is also a statement from Allah to His believing servants so that they can attain goodness and happiness in this world and the Hereafter. It is as if Allah is saying, "O My servants, serve Me, always worship and pray to Me. I will accept your worship and prayers sincerely, grant your requests, and forgive your sins". (Gafir/40:60)(Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an (LPMQ), 2019)

The value of humanization in joint prayer is the value of togetherness, kinship, and harmony between residents and the community who attended the event.

c. Slaughtering the goat

The slaughtering of goats contains humanization value in terms of the economic ability of the lower middle class. Based on the information of one of the elders in the village, Mbah Surgi Poncowati used to hold Saparan by treating the people who came with processed goats. The current practice is that the processed



goats that are slaughtered are later bought by the people who come as a substitute for the purchase value of the goats that have been slaughtered. In other words, the village community applies the "concept of buying together to be enjoyed together". Siti Faricha Nursyifa' said that the Javanese mindset based on collaboration between taste and thought is often realized in noble traditions that are rich in philosophical values. (Nursyifa', 2021, p. 60). In Islam, goats are one of the animals that can be sacrificed. In qurbani law, goats are the smallest animal that can be sacrificed. One goat can only be used as a sacrificial animal for one person. Unlike camels, cows, or buffaloes that can be used as sacrificial animals for more than one person.

d. Kirab gunung

Kirab gunung is a symbolic form of the value of transcendence. The crops are a symbolic form of gratitude for the abundance of crops given by God. Kirab gunung has become a symbolic activity in Java. Usually, the Kirab Gunung can be found in traditional events or traditions that are public in nature. Kirab gunung can be found for example in the Garebeg Ceremony which is *one* of the traditions in the Yogyakarta Palace. The Garebeg ceremony uses Pareden (Gunungan) which shows that the Yogyakarta Palace maintains the traditions and culture of the ancestors and then the Pareden (Gunungan) is given to the community. (Kuncoroyakti dalam Hidayati et al. 2020:54). The difference is that the Garebeg kirab tradition is carried out during the celebration of Muslim holidays, namely Eid al-Fitr (Garebeg Syawal), Eid al-Adha (Garebeg Besar), Maulid Nabi (Garebeg Mulud) while the gunung kirab of the Sapanan tradition in Ngembal Kulon village is carried out in the month of Safar only. In the Sapanan tradition in Ngembal Kulon village, gunung is made from various materials such as vegetables, fruits, local traditional foods and some also use recycled materials such as plastic bottle waste. These are all shaped like a mountain which is then paraded through the village until the location of the Poncowati tomb as the final destination.

If *observed*, people on the island of Java often use gunung symbols. This can be found, for example, in the kirab gunung as well as the wayang gunung. Philosophically, the ancients made an object with its own philosophical meaning. One example is the Sundanese sawawa wayang gunung. When viewed vertically, there are 3 (three) parts of the sawawa Sundanese gunung structure, namely Palemahan, Lengkeh, and Pucuk. Palemahan is the structure of the gunung which is located at the bottom, therefore it has a transcendent meaning and can also mean a symbol of the human world. The second, Lengkeh is the structure of the gunung which is located in the middle and has a spiritual meaning. The third is Pucuk which is the structure of the gunung which is located at the top. The meaning of the topmost structure or the top has a heavenly meaning. (Nurin et al., 2019, p. 36)

CONCLUSION

The spread of Islam in Java was done in an inclusive way. Islamic Da'wah in this case did not discard local customs and traditions, but adopted and

incorporated Islamic values in them. This can be found, for example, in the Saparan tradition in Ngembal Kulon Village, Kudus Regency, Central Java. This tradition, which is known and carried out every Safar month, transforms prophetic values in the form of an annual meeting in which there are several activities that can be participated in by the general public. The transformation can be seen from the activities of eating together or kenduren, praying together, slaughtering goats, and kirab gunung. The transformation shows that the spreaders of Islam in Java could not be separated from philosophical activities. They were able to captivate the hearts of the people at that time to accept the teachings of Islam voluntarily without coercion.

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