



Digging the Traces of Islam in Baritan Tradition

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Abstract

This article aims to explore the traces of Islam in the tradition of "Baritan". The data were collected from observation, interview, documentation and literature study. The researchers here used data analysis techniques which developed by Miles & Huberman. This research was descriptive qualitative. Since religion and Islamic culture appeared in Indonesia, there was a process of Islamization of the people in Indonesia. Along with the process of Islamization, the socio-cultural changes occurred towards the formation of a new culture which was based on Islam. Some traditions that are still used by some Islamic communities such as the grave, pilgrimage, charity or traditional ceremony of Java which called as sekaten was also a proof of Islamic history in Indonesia that could not be forgotten. These traditions were born because of the influence of Islam which was acculturated with the local culture of the community at the time. One tradition that still exists today is the Baritan Tradition, which means the sea offering. This "Baritan" tradition, It was held every first suro of Javanese calendar or new year of Islam.

Keywords: Culture; Islam; Baritan tradition; Sea offering

Introduction

Indonesia is known as a pluralistic or heterogeneous nation which has a wide variety ethnic, cultural, religious, and customary traditions that are reflected in the daily life of Indonesian people, such as in traditional ceremonies, traditional houses, traditional clothes, chants/ songs and dances, musical instruments, and typical food/ local food. It is from this diversity, it became a life record, which then it turns into the cultural heritage which is now in front of us. This cultural heritage is the physicality of different traditions and spiritual achievements in the form of value in the past that are the main element as the identity of a particular group.

Koentjaraningrat (2002) explained that culture was derived from the Sanskrit language buddayah, the plural form of buddhi, which means mind or mind. Thus, the word culture can be interpreted as things relating to reason. According to him, all forms of culture that existed have universal elements, such as 1) religious system and religious ceremony, 2) system of social organization, 3) knowledge system, 4) language, 5) art, 6) living system of livelihood, 7) technological systems and equipment. Based on that, it can be concluded that human culture can only be obtained in members of the community who inheritance

through learning. Cultural system that grows and develops in society cannot be separated from the values that have been built for a long time. Various forms of cultural values are very influential in people's life.

Along with the development of the globalization era, most people do not understand what is meant in the tradition. Misunderstanding and misrepresentation of this tradition, which sometimes create an impression of taboo on people who still carry out a tradition. In fact, in a tradition it contains values that mean good for life. The term of tradition is often interpreted as a custom which is done by hereditary and is still done continuously by the community (Badudu., 1994: 1531). Man as the creator of culture puts himself in a patterned habit that continues to be a tradition.

Ismail (2012: 26) tradition is born through two ways. First, it is cultural, meaning that tradition comes from basic, it is spontaneous and unintentional. Attention, love and admiration are propagated through various ways that then affect the people, eventually these attitudes turned into behavior in the form of ceremonies, restoration of relics and reinterpretation of beliefs. Second, structural means that tradition is made up of elite power and through coercion mechanisms. Something that was initially personal was considered a choice tradition and made into a collective tradition through the path of a king's power. That is how the tradition arises, the location of the difference is that if the structural tradition is an artificial tradition which its emergence can force one who has power for his or her own interests so that the people will be his or her follower.

Pemalang Regency is an area located in Central Java, Indonesia between Tegal and Pekalongan. Pemalang area belongs to a socio-cultural area, where Pemalang inherits its ancestral culture in the form of customs and traditions that are still preserved to this day. One of them is the tradition of "Baritan" or if it is interpreted in general, it means sea offering. According to Oki (2014), the function of tradition "Baritan" is as an expression of gratitude to the God Almighty for fortune, salvation have been given. The tradition is done every new year of Islamic Hijri (Islamic calendar) or Javanese used to call it "Suronan". Suro is the name of the first month in the Java calendar, which was originally a Hindu Javanese calendar. Then, it was such thanks to the idea of Sultan Agung (104 H/ 1633), the calendar was assimilated with an Islamic calendar. The term of suro was then used to refer to the tenth day of Muharram month, supposedly related with religious myths (Agus, W. & Gunawan., 2015: 121). The religious stories surrounding the moon of Muhammad which occurred in ancient period and then became a myth that was involved in the process of spreading Islam. When they arrived in Java, the myths seemed to find a place because of the characteristic Javanese people believe in the occult and occultism.

Methodology

This research was a qualitative research. Qualitative research according to Moleong (2007: 6) is a research conducted by understanding the phenomenon of events that occurred by the subject of research such as behavior, perception, motivation, action holistically, through descriptions in the form of words and language. Qualitative research aims to obtain a complete picture of a thing, according to the view of the subject of study. Qualitative research relates to the ideas, perceptions, opinions or beliefs of the people studied and all of them cannot be measured by numbers. Further explained by Sugiyono (2013: 225) that the collection of data can be obtained from the results of observation, interviews, documentation, and data analysis. In this study, the researchers used data collection techniques through observation, documentation and literature.

Qualitative research with data analysis techniques which developed by Miles & Huberman in Sutopo (2000: 90), started by conducting in-depth interviews with key informants, ie someone who really understands and knows the situation of the object of research. After conducting the interview, the data analysis begun by making transcripts of the interview result to play back the recording of the interview, listened carefully, then wrote the words that were heard according to what had been recorded. After the

researchers wrote the results of the interview into the transcript, then the researchers must read carefully then do the data reduction. Some data obtained from the field, selected things which were important and focused on the things which important, and arranged systematically. The next stage was the presentation of data, all data which had been collected from planning, implementation of action, observation and reflection arranged in the table in order to facilitate in reading the data. The last step in the data analysis is making the conclusion, but before the conclusion was done, the first verification data was also done. After doing the verification, it can be conclusion which based on the results of research presented in the form of narration.

Results and Discussion

A. Javanese Spirituality

Since the beginning of Java life (pre-Hindu-Buddhist), Javanese society had its own spiritual attitude. According to various opinions from historians, that was the ancient period where the Javanese people embraced animist beliefs-dynamism. In ancient period, the Javanese community had a belief in the existence of a power that was invisible (supernatural), great and amazing. The Javanese people had hope for protection and to avoid being disturbed by other magical powers of evil spirits (Simuh., 1999: 101). Javanese society in everyday life is strongly influenced by beliefs, concepts of cultural values and visible norms which are arranged in their mind. This value is a tradition and action which is transmitted (speech-tinular) orally from one generation to the next generation.

After the arriving of Hindu-Buddhist to Indonesia with a new concept of belief. The kingdoms at that time gave rise to figures of kings who were believed to be gods. Then, from there, the king was regarded as a priest who served as a carrier of peace on earth, therefore the king was highly respected (Radjiman., 2000: 161). The era of Hindu-Buddhist kingdom ended, then came the belief of Hindu-Buddhist to Islam. The assumption of the king as a priest and god's gift was no longer existed because of the guardians, scholars and teachers who introduced Islam.

According to Cassirer (1994), humans never see, discover, and know the world directly except through symbols. Islam as a symbol of system, it has certain symbols to actualize the teachings of Islam. Both symbols in the form of deeds, words, things, literature, and so forth. Symbolism has been known by the Javanese culture for a long time, that is, the idea of using symbols or symbols to direct human thought toward thinking in a deeper way. Java man uses symbols as a medium of communication between human beings, so something that humans do is a symbol of the actions of the human character itself (Syukur., 2012: 198). Symbolism will not be affected by the advancement of human thinking until whenever, but human life that depends on the symbolism to follow the situation.

Man will inhabit the universe, so that man will never release symbols in his life. This is evidenced by the existence of a rite associated with some events in human life that had been believed by the Javanese. It became the basis of awareness that the Javanese society creates a view of life that respects the salvation and harmony of nature. Since nature is part of the microcosm and macrocosm, this fusion creates a balanced harmony (Magnis., 1995). Based on this situation, the Javanese had a philosophy of balance, safety and harmony between people. The Javanese were very dependent on nature that holds supernatural powers.

B. Islam and Local Tradition

Since the presence of Islam in Indonesia, some scholars had tried to adopt the local culture selectively. Appropriate social, artistic and governance systems were not altered, including many customs developed within the Islamic perspective. It allowed Indonesian culture to remain religious even though Islam had united the region religiously. Indonesian scholars had successfully integrated between Islam and Indonesianism, so that the culture that had been preserved was considered appropriate with the teachings of Islam. This is because Islam concerns values and norms, it is not tastes or ideology even a custom. Therefore, if the value of Islam is considered in accordance with local custom, it is not necessary to change. This is in accordance with the opinion of Edelbay (2012), in contemporary Kazakh countries, Islam is an important factor in shaping the identification of self and spiritual identity culture. As one form of ethnic identity, Islam participates in ethnic consolidation. Islam is the most widespread religion among the people of Kazakhstan.

Different with other religions, Islam came to Indonesia through elastic means by recognizing Islamic symbols such as structures, as well as religious rites to understand Islamic values. The Islamic preachers were more flexible and refined in spreading the religion of Islam to a society whose setting was heterogeneous cultural values. An example was walisongo, which could easily incorporate Islam into society because it was packed with a Javanese flavor culture that is integrated with Islam, so it was not absorbed as pure as Islam directly from Arabs.

Islamic tradition here means an acculturation model that was not stagnant, and continues to grow contextually (Ismail., 2012: 27). This change takes place along with the changing times that are taking place. The tradition of Islamic coastal communities in Pemalang is a local Islamic tradition that pivots on the sea as a cultural spear. The process of interaction between Islam and the local culture of this fisherman is an evident from the appearance of the prayer readings before the "Baritan" begins, an expression of gratitude to God Almighty as the ruler of the sea. The entry of Islam into the tradition of "Baritan" does not completely eliminate the traditional elements within it, Islam in Pemalang is guided by local customs and traditions.

Islam comes to Pemalang and met with the social situation of the local community which actually had a traditional value system, knowledge and belief that had been held for a long time. The process of acculturation of Islamic values into the tradition of "Baritan" of course could not be separated from the role of the scholars who came to spread Islam. The scholars needed strategic tool to translate Islam into the epistemology of traditionalist of Pemalang society. The strategic tool in question is the ability to adapt to local situations which exist in the surrounding environment.

Acculturation of Islam is a series of processes that had entered the construction of cultural values of society. The process of Islamization occurred through a very long cultural process of dialogue which then gave birth to what was called local Islam. Negotiation of Islam and local belief did not only stop on its success in transforming Islamic values with local beliefs but also succeeds in forming a new cultural space called local Islam, a space that placed the culture of Islam as an immigrant culture with the fishermen culture which exist in Pemalang as a traditional culture fill and shape each other (Ismail., 2012: 196).

The interaction between religion and culture could occur as follows: First, religion influences culture in its formation, its value is religion but its symbol is culture. Second, religion could influence the religious symbols. In this case, Indonesian culture influences Islam with pesantren and preachers from the padepokan (It is a Javanese term, meaning a complex of houses on a relatively large area provided for learning and teaching a certain knowledge and skill or Islamic teaching). Third, culture can replace the system of values and religious symbols. Both religion and culture, both provide insight and perspective in addressing life to suit the will of God and humanity (Kuntowijoyo., 2001: 196).

As in the tradition of "Baritan" in Pemalang, religion provided insight to give thanks to God for the fortune and salvation that have been given, while the culture is packed in various kinds of traditional ceremonies, providing insight and other perspective, but the same goal is the expression of gratitude to The Almighty God. Both religion and culture, both of them provide insight and perspective in addressing life to be in accordance with the will of God and humankind. According to the Journal written by Widiana (2015) the dialectic between Islam and local culture is a necessity. Islam gave color and spirit to local culture in Java, whereas the local culture gave wealth to Islam. This is what has happened in the dynamics of Islam that occurred in Indonesia, especially in Java with its traditions and cultural richness.

C. The Implementation of the "Baritan Tradition"

Based on the data from the village office of Asem Doyong village, 100% of the population is Muslim. The Islamic community in the village of Asem Doyong also has religious groups such as, gathering for Friday prayer (yasinan), prayers together to pray dead people (tahlilan) and their belief, namely Nahdatul Ulama or NU. In addition, in Asem Doyong village there is also a boarding school that has stood for a long time. People living in Asem Doyong area, they do not worry and respond to mass organizations presented in the middle of life, because people basically follow what is said by the scholars, such as scholars say A then the society or people there will do so, said one resident named Depi.

"Baritan" is a tradition where fishermen held every year, on the first of a suro or coinciding with the Islamic new year. "Baritan" means charity of the sea/ Sea offering which is as an expression of gratitude to God Almighty who has given salvation, then Asem Doyong society as a gratitude to carry out the offerings. In addition, people believe that this procession will bring in a lot of fortune, especially the fish in the sea. The tradition of "Baritan" is held in the village of Asem Doyong, Pemalang District, Indonesia every 1st Suro, or new year of Islam, exactly at 08.00 WIB. One day before the tradition of the "Baritan" tradition, there are usually entertainment events held in the evening, such as wayang kulit/ puppets, dangdutan (dangdut music) and traders performing various merchandise such as the night market to enliven the atmosphere.

The source of the cost of implementing all the events, according to the chairman of the committee "Baritan" named Muhairi, the cost borne by all members of the fishermen and also the sponsors who help the implementation of the event. Based on the interviews of fisherman figure named Mahmud, the process of implementation there is a sea offering or sea ambeng in the form of buffalo heads and local snacks placed on a small boat which left in the sea using a boat that had been decorated with flags and yellow janur banners. Prior to the marching procession, the ceremony was attended by clerics, fishermen, committees of "Baritan" and local urban village officials. After the ceremony is closed with prayers for the procession of the run smoothly, safely, not deviate from religion and in accordance with expectations, then offerings that have been decorated in small boats, paraded throughout the village before finally stop at the fish auction (TPI), accompanied by traditional gamelan/ Javanese music, marching bands as well as other arts like carnival.

After traveling around the village, finally arrived at the TPI which was greeted by several ranks of the tourism office, the cultural service, the local village ranks and not enthusiastic about the very crowded society and the police who are equally in maintaining the safety of the tradition of "Baritan". Then, some of the relevant parties gave his speech that the tradition of "Baritan" is a tradition that has existed since years ago and our task today is to maintain and preserve it, especially in the times that have been very advanced as now. Local culture needed to be explored and introduced to future generations, said representatives from the Pemalang cultural office.

Before being taken to the sea, the committee "Baritan" raffle offerings to determine the boat and helmsman who entitled to bring offerings to the sea. The trick is to take the serial number that is in a small jar and covered a paper that is given a small hole to remove the paper serial number. Much like an arisan (rotating saving). After the drawing of the helmsman and crew (ABK) required to wear shirts that have been provided by the committee. Next bring the offerings to the sea. Each ceremony or tradition held "Baritan" is always busy visited by both the village community of Asem Doyong and from outside the village. Residents who come usually given the opportunity by local fishermen to board a boat that has been decorated in such a way even visitors who come also in between the rounds using the boats (Observation results, September 21, 2017).

According to Syarifuddin (2013), in general every human expect the existence of salvation of life, it means that not only the Javanese and the Islamic religion alone, but also all humans who exist various regions according to religion and beliefs are believed. The difference is the way to realize the salvation is different, it is according to the beliefs, life experiences, facilities and infrastructure, mastery of science and technology and customs that apply. Asem Doyong Society believes that the tradition of "Baritan" is a form of gratitude for the salvation given by God Almighty. The heritage of this ancestral heritage is believed to be that the "Baritan" tradition can protect against the threats that come to the fishermen on the sea.

The tradition which held every first of Suro by society in general is as a means of reflection, introspection and closer to God Almighty. More than that, as a means of man to find identity in life, and eling lan wasapada (Javanese). Eling is a Javanese language translated into Bahasa Indonesia meaning, remember, it is meant that man is required to remain who his true self, from where man exists, how his position in the eyes of God and what his duties as human/ khalifah/ leader on earth. While vigilant, it is intended that people should remain alert and be aware of something that happened so as not to get lost into the wrong thing (Heny & Muhammad., 2012: 123).

Conclusion

The tradition of "Baritan" is a tradition of sea offerings that has been passed down through the generations of Asem Doyong community in Pemalang District, every first of suro or new year of Islam as an expression of gratitude to God Almighty for the salvation given. The tradition that is still preserved to this day shows that Asem Doyong society needs safety in sailing so that the oldest mindset that must be implemented because if they do not implement the tradition, Asem Doyong is worried that nature and can threaten their safety. It also cannot be separated from the role of scholars and local religious leaders who strongly support the implementation of tradition "Baritan", to always pray closer and thank the God Almighty with an intermediary or packed in a ceremony offering in the head buffalo, local snacks that had been decorated in small boats, then sealed into the sea. Not only from Asem Doyong community, Tourism and Culture Department of Pemalang also deeply appreciate the implementation of "Baritan" tradition, as well as people from other villages who are very enthusiastic to witness the tradition of "Baritan" because this is a tradition that must be preserved to maintain local culture of Pemalang.

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