

# The Meaning of Mauludan Tradition in Local Javanese Islamic Rituals: Between Teachings and Customs

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## Abstract

Islam and tradition are two different substances, but in their manifestations can influence each other, complement each other, and color each other's behavior. The purpose of this study is to explain the meaning of mauludan tradition in local kejawen rituals in Islam and tradition. The research method used with a literature study approach through literature sources from various literature sources about the Mauludan tradition in Islam and Javanese tradition. Then analyzed and presented the results of the data findings objectively. The results showed that the Mawlid tradition is a commemoration of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad SAW which is held every 12 Rabiul Awal. In welcoming the birth month of the Prophet, Muslims often hold various celebrations that have been passed down to form a tradition. As in Indonesia, many events are held to welcome the month of Mawlid. There are several mauludan traditions in Javanese Islamic rituals, including: Barik'an tradition, meron tradition, grebeg maulud tradition, weh-wehan tradition, ampyang maulid tradition, and sekaten tradition. The meanings or values contained in the mauludan tradition are: spiritual values, moral values, social values, and unity values.

**Keywords:** Tradition, Islam, Mauludan

## Introduction

Indonesia is a country that is very rich in treasures in culture and tradition. Tradition in Latin *traditio*, which means passed on or custom, in the simplest sense is something that has been done for a long time and is part of the life of a community (Ratih 2019). Traditions born from humans are customs, that is, customs that emphasize supernatural properties that include cultural values, norms, laws, and rules. Traditions that exist in one group (society) are the result of generations from ancestors or ancestors. Traditions in an area usually exist since ancient times that have a history and are used as something that cannot be left behind in people's lives. Because people believe in the values that exist in these traditions for life, so they must be carried out according to a predetermined time (Fadillah dan Nurcholis 2022, 202).

The traditions that exist in Indonesia are very diverse, not only providing color in the state arena, but also having an influence in the beliefs and religious practices of the community. In this case, religion and culture can no longer be said which is more dominant, culture as a religious product or religion as a cultural product. Even between the two there will be a tug-of-war between religious interests and traditional interests (Roibin 2013, 35). Islam, as a religion of the majority of people in Indonesia, and has a close relationship with the traditions in the archipelago (Simanjuntak 2016).

Islam has universal and absolute values throughout the ages, but nevertheless Islam as a dogma is not rigid in the face of the times and their changes. Islam always presents itself in a flexible form, when facing the societies it encounters with a variety of cultures, customs or traditions.

Such is the case with Islam that developed in Javanese society which is very thick with its traditions and culture. Javanese traditions and culture still dominate national traditions and culture in Indonesia. Javanese names are also very familiar to the ears of the Indonesian people, as well as Javanese jargon or terms. This proves that Javanese traditions and culture are enough to give color in various problems of the nation and state in Indonesia.

Islamic traditions appear usually as a form of commemoration of holidays which are then continuously implemented. This tradition is used as a momentum to gather and strengthen the relationship between Muslims and is still thick today. One of the Islamic traditions in Indonesia that exists in each region with different forms of commemoration and is still carried out today is the celebration of the Mawlid of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The tradition of the Prophet's mawlid is a celebration carried out in commemoration of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad as a form of manifestation and love of the people for the Prophet. This tradition is widely practiced by Muslims in various parts of the world including in Indonesia.

In Indonesia itself the tradition of mawlid is celebrated in many different ways according to the traditions of each community, this is where there is then a struggle between religion and tradition which for some Muslims the celebration of the Prophet's birthday is considered heresy and excessive so that it actually causes a mixture of shirk elements prohibited by religion. Based on this, the author wants to study the meaning of the Mauludan tradition in local Islamic rituals between teachings and customs.

## **Method**

Analysis of the method in this journal uses library research using a philosophical approach (examining the meaning of the Mauludan tradition in local Islamic rituals between teachings and customs) (Imam Gunawan 2014). The data collection technique used in the article is a documentation technique, namely collecting data material in the form of sources of books in the library, articles related to writings related to research, and collected and taken and digested and associated with the object of study (Joko Subagyo 1991, 109). Data analysis is carried out by examining various literature from documentation data against various data from research results related to the object of article research. The first stage is carried out by analyzing and identifying what kind of problem is studied. The second stage examines as sources and documentation that need to find solutions to the problem. The third stage is to draw conclusions (Endang Widi Winarni 2018).

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Concept of Tradition**

The term tradition in the anthropological dictionary means the same as customs, namely religious customs from the life of a native population regarding cultural values, norms, laws, and rules that are interrelated then become a system or regulation that is stable and includes all conceptions of cultural systems from a to regulate social action. Epistemologically, tradition comes from Latin (tradition) which means customs similar to that of culture or customs (Alaluddin 2007, 107).

According to Bastomi, tradition is the spirit of a culture and culture, the existence of this tradition this cultural system will become stronger. If traditions are destroyed, it is certain that the culture of a nation will be lost as well. As for Soerjono Soekanto, he believed that tradition is a

form of activity carried out by a group of people or society continuously (lasting). Furthermore, in the opinion of Harapandi Dahri, tradition is something that becomes a habit and is carried out continuously or continuously by using various kinds of rules, norms, rules and symbols that still apply to society (Rofiq 2019, 97-98.).

From several opinions and also understandings of tradition above, the author concludes that tradition is something that has been passed down by predecessors or ancestors for generations in the form of symbols, principles, materials, objects and policies. However, traditions that have been inherited can also change or survive as long as the traditions are still appropriate and also relevant to situations, conditions and along with changing times.

Tradition is part of the cultural system of society. Tradition is a tangible cultural heritage from ancestors, which has lived hundreds of years and is still followed by those born after ancestors and until now. The tradition was passed down by ancestors to follow because it was considered to provide a kind of life guide for those who were still alive. Traditions are judged favorably by those who have them, even considered unchangeable or abandoned by them (Simanjuntak 2016, 145).

Islam and tradition are two different substances, but in their manifestations can influence each other, complement each other, and color each other's behavior. Islam is a normative ideal, while tradition is the product of human cultivation. Traditions can come from ancestors, local customs or the result of their own thoughts. Islam speaks of ideal teachings, whereas tradition is the reality of human life and its environment.

### **Various Traditions**

At first, Islam in Java can be said to be a syncretic face of Islam, or in softer language, it can be said that Islam in Java is not Sharia Islam, but mystical Islam, Sufism and accommodating local wisdom, because it is accommodating with customs that are not found in the Qur'an and Sunnah, so we know the term *bid'ah* in Islam. Some things that constitute the accommodation of Islam with Java are various kinds of rituals in ceremonies, *mantenan* ceremonies, *tingkeban*, *mitoni* and the like including earth cleansing ceremonies, all parts of the traditions found in Java are from Hinduism and Buddhism before the existence of Islam, but still carried out by Javanese people until now, including Muslims (Weldan dan Huda 2004, 29).

Because Islamic traditions in Java are diverse, Islamic formations are also diverse in shaping society. Kuntowijoyo, a Muslim historian who has an interest in Islamic culture in Java, often mentions that in Java it is a marriage of many traditions, so that in Java this generation of Muslims was born who are very religious (Qodir 2011, 156).

Religious tradition is a frame of reference for norms in people's lives and behavior. And religious tradition as the primary institution of culture is indeed difficult to change, because its existence is supported by the awareness that the institution concerns the honor, self-esteem and identity of the supporting community (Alaluddin 2007, 102).

Indonesian society is a pluralistic society, one of the consequences of this plurality is that there are various religious rituals carried out and preserved by each of its supporters. These religious rituals have forms or ways of preserving and purposes that vary from one community group to another. Local religions or primitive religions have different teachings, that is, they are not practiced in written form but in oral form, as manifested in traditions or ceremonies. The religious ritual system usually takes place repeatedly either every day, every season, or sometimes. Religious rituals that occur in the community include:

#### **1. Suronan**

The suronan tradition or better known as the one suro ritual is a tradition that is more influenced by Buddhist holidays than Islamic holidays. This tradition is widely celebrated by

people who are anti-Islam. The growth of several vibrant anti-Islamic sects since the wartime and the emergence of religious teachers who saw the need to return to the original Javanese custom, namely through slametan satu sura.

## 2. Saparan

Saparan, better known as rebo wekasan, is a religious ritual performed on the last Wednesday of the sapar month (the second month according to the Javanese calendar) or şaffar (the second month of the Hijri departure). Rebo wekasan can be defined as a form of expression that describes an important position on the last Wednesday of the month, especially at the end of the month şaffar, to then perform various rituals such as prayer, dhikr, making wafak for salvation, and so on, in order to avoid various disasters that will come down on the last Wednesday of the month şaffar.

## 3. Muludan

Twelve mulud is the day on which Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was born and died. This selamatan is called muludan, because it is the name of the bula, mulud is also taken from the Arabic term maulud which means birth. This muludan usually carries out reading activities berzanji or žiba' whose contents are none other than the biography and life history of the Prophet SAW and some are supplemented by various religious activities, such as displaying hadrah art or announcing the results of various competitions, while the peak is mauizahşasanah from muballigh.

## 4. Rejeban

This ritual is a celebration of Isra' mi'raj Prophet Muhammad SAW, which is the journey of the Prophet facing God in one night. This warning is not much different from muludan. Muslims view the event of Isra' mi'raj as one of the important events, because it was at that time that he received the command to pray five times a day and a night.

## 5. Ruwahan

Ruwahan is taken from kataruwah which is the name of the month of the Javanese calendar, which comes from the word arwah that is, the soul of a deceased person. Ruwahan is also said to be the beginning of fasting called megengan. This religious ritual is held by those whose parents are at least deceased (Huda 2016, 16–17).

### **Mauludan Tradition Form in Local Islamic Rituals Kejawen**

Mawlid tradition is a commemoration of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad SAW which is held every 12 Rabiul Awal. In welcoming the birth month of the Prophet, Muslims often hold various celebrations that have been passed down to form a tradition. As in Indonesia, many events are held to welcome this Mawlid month. Some say the commemoration of the Prophet's Mawlid in Indonesia was first brought by Wali Songo in 1404 AD (Kholid 2016). Basically, most of the traditions of welcoming and celebrating the Prophet's Mawlid in various regions in Indonesia have the same goal. Namely as a sign of gratitude for the birth of the Prophet SAW, strengthening brotherhood among Muslims, as well as raising the culture of each region, especially for the Javanese people.

For Javanese, life is full of ceremonial rituals, both ceremonial ceremonies related to the circle of human life from its existence in the mother's stomach until the time of death, or also ceremonies related to daily life activities. These ceremonies were originally performed in order to counteract the adverse influence of unwanted supernatural powers that would be harmful to human survival. Of course, with the ceremony, the hope of the perpetrators of the ceremony is that life is always safe. One of the ceremonies carried out by the Kejawen community is the tradition of the mauludan ceremony.

In the month of Mawlid a Mauludan or Udukan ceremony is held, which is held to mark the birth of the Prophet Muhammad. This ceremony is a communal ceremony and most of the villagers follow it. In the past this ceremony was held at the village chief's house and is now diverted in the langgar or mosque. The ceremony is presided over by a Kiai or religious figure (Muhaimin 2002, 178-179).

Some of the mauludan traditions in Kejawen Islamic rituals are as follows:

#### 1. Barik'an Tradition

The Barik'an tradition is a loose event that still exists and is sustainable in Pati Regency. Kenduri itself is a community culture by bringing rice and side dishes into a container brought from home. Then in a mosque or mushala, prayers will be offered by a Kiyai or Ustadz. Only after the prayer, followed by exchanging the food brought and eaten together. In each region called this way of sagging different. But the purpose of the slack on the anniversary of the Prophet's Mawlid remains the same. Even from this tradition, harmony and friendship between Muslims are increasingly well established.

#### 2. Meron Tradition

Tradisi meron yang diselenggarakan di Desa Prawoto, Kecamatan Sukolilo, Kabupaten Pati merupakan acara tahunan yang diselenggarakan oleh pemerintah Kabupaten Pati dalam memperingati Maulid Nabi SAW. Biasanya proses tradisi ini berlangsung hanya setengah hari saja. Pagelaran tradisi meron ini kerap berlangsung meriah, sebab berbagai rangkaian acara disiapkan oleh pihak penyelenggara. Salah satunya yaitu arak-arakan berbentuk gunungan nasi tumpeng dengan tambahan hasil bumi seperti kacang, terong, buah-buahan, padi, cabai dan hasil bumi lainnya. Selain itu, ada juga pawai bersama dengan mengenakan pakaian khas daerah oleh anak-anak, pakaian keraton yang dikenakan remaja putri, dan pakaian petani yang digunakan oleh remaja putra. Selain dilakukan untuk memperingati Maulid Nabi SAW, tradisi ini dilakukan sebagai wujud rasa syukur kepada Tuhan Yang Maha Esa atas segala karunia dan hasil pertanian yang melimpah selama setahun ini.

#### 3. Mawlid Nabi ritual in Pakem village

In Pakem Pati Village, there is a special ritual on the commemoration of the birth month of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Various activities were arranged by the organizers, one of which was starting from the dukuh kelilih by carrying spears, kris, and ancaks. After the procession is over, continued with prayers in front of the Baitul Muttaqin prayer room, mauidhoh hasanah, mahalul qiyam, prayer, ancak grab, singing march yalal wathon, march banser, and singing the Indonesian national anthem. Not much different from other traditions, in Pakem village this actually makes the celebration of the Prophet a symbol of tolerance. Because in its celebration, in Pakem village not only Muslims celebrate but also non-Muslims.

#### 4. Grebeg Maulud at Kraton Yogyakarta

This Grebeg Maulud tradition is a series of ceremonies to commemorate the birth of the Prophet SAW held at Kraton Yogyakarta. History records, Grebeg Maulud was once held during the leadership of Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono I with the aim of spreading Islam. This tradition that has been carried out for generations has been used as a cultural tourism destination that is much awaited by local and foreign tourists.

Another purpose of the Grebeg celebration is as a thanksgiving for the prosperity given to the community. This is symbolized by presenting mountains in pairs. This mountain is composed of produce assembled on a mountain-shaped skeleton and then carried around. Usually, people will fight over the contents of the mountain because it is believed to contain

blessings. The Grebeg Maulud tradition will be continued with the sounding of two gamelan devices belonging to the Palace for 7 days. The culminating event was the reading of the Minutes of Mawlid of the Prophet Muhammad SAW by the Pengulu Keraton.

#### 5. Weh-Wehan Tradition

The Weh-Wehan tradition is one of the hereditary traditions carried out by the people of Kendal regency when commemorating the Birthday of the Prophet SAW. This tradition still exists today, even the community has high enthusiasm. Usually before Mawlid, the community will be busy with preparing food such as sticky rice abang ijo, serabi, klepon, snacks, to drinks which will later be given to the community for free.

#### 6. Ampyang Maulid Tradition

The Weh-Wehan tradition is one of the hereditary traditions carried out by the people of Kendal regency when commemorating the Birthday of the Prophet SAW. This tradition still exists today, even the community has enthusiasm. The Ampyang Maulid tradition is one of the traditions of celebrating the Birthday of the Prophet SAW. carried out by the people of Loram Kulon and Loram Wetan villages, Jati District, Kudus Regency, Central Java. This tradition functions as a medium for self-introspection of the community in living daily life, then behaving in a way that reflects the characteristics of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Usually this tradition is carried out with a procession of palanquins containing ampyang wrapped rice. Inside it contains rice, complete with crackers and vegetables wrapped in teak leaves. In addition to rice, there are also fruits and vegetables assembled like mountains as high as 1.5 meters. After the order in the mountains was completed, then the ampyang kirab was then paraded in a tradition called kirab and prayed by Islamic leaders and elders in Loram Kulon. After that, ampyang was distributed to residents.

#### 7. Sekaten Tradition

Sekaten is a tradition of gamelan musical expression. This tradition first happened on the island of Java. This, as a means of spreading Islam carried out by Sunan Bonang. In the past, every time Sunan Bonang played gamelan, it was always interspersed with songs containing Islamic teachings. Each song change in the Gamelan punch is interspersed with protesters being asked to recite the shahadatain, which in the end this tradition is called 'sekatenan'. The purpose of sekaten is shahadatain (reading two sentences of shamat). Sekaten is also a requirement for political and cultural nuances in the late 20th to early 21st centuries.

Sekaten is also played to coincide with Grebek Maulud. The culminating event in the Sekaten tradition is the release of a pair of mountains from the Grand Mosque after being prayed for by the royal cleric. Many people thought that whoever got little or too much food from the Mountains would have a blessing in his life. A few days before the opening of the sekaten, a folk feast was held. Sekaten is a ceremony to commemorate the Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad conducted by the Palace family in Yogyakarta. In addition, maulud sekaten is held in the Great Month (dzulhijjah). During this celebration, two mountains are paraded from the palace to the Great Mosque Square in Yogyakarta (Ismail Yahya, dkk 2009, 44).

### Meaning or Value in the Mauludan Tradition

There are four values and meanings in this celebration of the Prophet's Mawlid, including:

1. First, spiritual value. Every Muslim will be able to grow and increase love for him through mawlid. The outpouring of joy over the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is a reflection of our love and respect for him as a bringer of mercy for all nature as

surah Yunus; 58. Because this exemplary figure was sent to bring mercy to all nature (surah al-Anbiya'; 107).

2. Second, moral values can be learned by listening to praiseworthy morals and noble morals in the exemplary story of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Practicing praiseworthy qualities derived from the Prophet Muhammad SAW is one of the goals of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. In commemoration of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, we can also get advice and direction from scholars so that we are always in religious guidance and guidance.
3. Third, social value. Glorify and give food feasts to guests, especially from the poor who attend the mawlid assembly as a form of gratitude to the Supreme Creator. It is highly recommended by religion, as it has high social value. In addition, the event can be used as a place to give alms among others by donating some of the property independently to be served in the mawlid event which will ultimately be enjoyed by everyone.
4. Fourth, the value of unity. By gathering together in order to mawlid and pray and dhikr. This can indirectly foster a high sense of social solidarity so that it can strengthen and strengthen ukhuwah both Islamiyah, Basyariyah and Wathoniyah.

The commemoration of the Prophet's Mawlid with various versions is practiced festively in various regions with various motivations, including expressing joy over the birth of the Prophet SAW, expressing love for the Prophet SAW, expressing gratitude, increasing faith and Islam, means of da'wah, means of sadaqah, dhikr, inner contemplation, preserving Islamic teachings, inspiration for life, and various other motivations.

## Conclusion

Tradition is something that becomes a habit and is carried out continuously by using various kinds of rules, norms, rules and symbols that still apply to society. Islam and tradition are two different substances, but in their manifestations can influence each other, complement each other, and color each other's behavior. Mawlid tradition is a commemoration of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad SAW which is held every 12 Rabiul Awal. In welcoming the birth month of the Prophet, Muslims often hold various celebrations that have been passed down to form a tradition. As in Indonesia, many events are held to welcome the month of Mawlid. There are several mauludan traditions in Javanese Islamic rituals, including: Barik'an tradition, meron tradition, grebeg maulud tradition, weh-wehan tradition, ampyang maulid tradition, and sekaten tradition. The meanings or values contained in the mauludan tradition are: spiritual values, moral values, social values, and unity values.

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