

## Analysis of the Relationship between Religion and Culture through the “*Nyumpet*” Tradition in Jepara: Islamic Perspective and Local Wisdom

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### Abstract

The relationship between religion and culture is an interesting thing to analysis, especially in Java which has various local cultures which are famous for their Javanese. Local culture that originates from generations of ancestors still exists today. Like the *Nyumpet* tradition in Jepara which is carried out by the owner of the party before holding a celebration, whether a wedding or circumcision event. The survival of ancestral traditions to this day also involves the role of religion in them, and vice versa. Religion can enter Javanese society and also involves existing traditions. The aim of this research is to review the relationship between religion and culture through the *Nyumpet* tradition in Jepara, considering that *Nyumpet* activity is a tradition that combines the role of religion and rituals inherited from ancestors. This research is qualitative research with data collection techniques through involved observation. This means that the researcher directly witnessed and took part in the *Nyumpet* tradition, because the researcher is part of the Jepara community. The results of this research show that religion and culture have a close relationship between the two. The existence of the *Nyumpet* ritual in Jepara society aims to prevent bad things from happening at celebration events. *Nyumpet* with various Ugo Rampe combined with *Selamatan* shows that religion and culture are very strong in Jepara society and can have a psychological effect on the soul. The geographical location of Jepara district and the community's professions are also the reasons why *Nyumpet* in Jepara still exists today.

**Keyword:** *Religion, Culture, Nyumpet Tradition*

### Abstrak

Hubungan antara agama dan budaya merupakan hal yang menarik untuk dikaji, khususnya di Jawa yang memiliki berbagai budaya lokal yang terkenal dengan kejawennya. Budaya lokal yang berasal dari turun-temurun nenek moyang masih tetap eksis hingga saat ini. Seperti tradisi *Nyumpet* di Jepara yang dilakukan oleh pemilik hajatan sebelum menggelar hajatan, baik pernikahan maupun acara khitan. Bertahannya tradisi nenek moyang hingga saat ini turut melibatkan peran agama di dalamnya, begitu juga sebaliknya. Agama dapat masuk ke dalam Masyarakat Jawa juga melibatkan tradisi yang telah ada. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengkaji kembali hubungan agama dan budaya melalui tradisi *Nyumpet* di Jepara, mengingat kegiatan *Nyumpet* adalah sebuah tradisi yang memadukan antara peran agama dan ritual warisan nenek moyang. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui pengamatan terlibat. Artinya, peneliti ikut secara langsung menyaksikan dan ikut berperan dalam tradisi *Nyumpet*, karena peneliti adalah bagian dari Masyarakat Jepara. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa agama dan budaya memiliki hubungan erat di antara keduanya. Adanya ritual *nyumpet* di masyarakat Jepara bertujuan untuk mencegah keburukan yang terjadi dalam acara hajatan. *Nyumpet* dengan berbagai Ugo Rampe yang dipadukan dengan *selamatan* menunjukkan bahwa agama dan budaya begitu kuat berada di Tengah Masyarakat Jepara serta dapat menumbuhkan efek psikologis di dalam jiwa. Letak geografis kabupaten Jepara dan profesi Masyarakat turut menjadi penyebab mengapa *Nyumpet* di Jepara masih ada hingga saat ini.

**Kata kunci:** Agama, Budaya, Tradisi *Nyumpet*

## Introduction

The relationship between religion and culture is an eternal and universal phenomenon in society from both geographical and historical contexts. Rooted in human existence, religion and culture shape individual identities, beliefs, behavior and the structure of society. Studying the relationship between the two is very important for understanding human complexity and the dynamics of cultural evolution. The relationship between religion and culture in Indonesia in particular has been an interesting discussion for a long time. Various figures from Western scholars such as Clifford Geertz,<sup>1</sup> Mark R. Woodward,<sup>2</sup> Andrew Beatty,<sup>3</sup> Robert W. Hefner,<sup>4</sup> Niels Mulder,<sup>5</sup> even Indonesian scholars such as Nur Syam,<sup>6</sup> Budiwanti,<sup>7</sup> Muhaimin<sup>8</sup> and other figures studied religious and cultural phenomena in Indonesia.

People's daily religious life cannot be separated from existing culture. The implementation of rituals in Javanese society by combining religion has become clear evidence that religion cannot be separated from culture or vice versa. As has been reviewed by Geertz regarding the abangan group in Mojokuta in holding the *Selamatan* as the aim of exorcising evil spirits by presenting offerings and praying for them using the name of Allah and inviting a group of santri (modin or village religious experts) as prayer leaders.<sup>9</sup> This tradition continues to this day, in fact it is not only carried out by the abangan group, but santri and priyayi also do it.

Javanese people in the Jepara area, for example, still strongly carry out various religious traditions at celebration events. Holding parties at *walimatul ursy*, *walimatul kbitan* events and so on is a happy thing for party organizers. The reason is, they can celebrate the event attended by relatives and invited guests by bringing various '*buwuhan*'<sup>10</sup> in the form of rice, cigarettes, sugar, money, even livestock as a sign of greetings for the party organizers. The celebration party is held for two days, where the first day is called '*melek pasian*' and the second day is the peak of the celebration event.

Before the celebration begins, there is a series of 'celebrations' carried out 7 days before the party is held which is called '*melek ulem*'. The '*melek ulem*' event consists of greetings inviting relatives and closest neighbors and even sending 'blessings' to relatives, friends or distant colleagues which is called '*tonjokan*'. The *Selamatan* event during '*melek ulem*' is led by

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<sup>1</sup> Clifford Geertz, *Abangan, Santri, Priyayi dalam Masyarakat Jawa. Terj. The Religion of Java* (Jakarta: Dunia Pustaka, 1981).

<sup>2</sup> Mark R. Woodward, *Islam Jawa: Kesalehan Noematif Versus Kebatinan* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Andrew Beatty, *Varieties of Javanese Religion; An Anthropological Account* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> Robert W. Hefner, *Hindu Javanese* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

<sup>5</sup> Niels Mulder, *Agama, Hidup Sehari-hari dan Perubahan Budaya* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> Nur Syam, *Islam Pesisir* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> Erni Budiwanti, *Islam Sasak, Islam Wetu Limo Versus Islam Wetu Telu* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2000).

<sup>8</sup> Muhaimin, *Islam dalam Bingkai Budaya Lokal; Potret dari Cirebon* (Jakarta: Logos Wacana Ilmu, 2001).

<sup>9</sup> Geertz, *Abangan, Santri, Priyayi dalam Masyarakat Jawa. Terj. The Religion of Java*, 5–6.

<sup>10</sup> Buwuhan is an item brought by invited guests to a celebration event.

the village kyai and some even bring in a shaman to perform '*sumpetan*'. The '*sumpetan*' consists of market place mats, red and white porridge, *telon* flowers, *kupat lepet*, kambing charcoal, incense or incense and so on which are placed in a locked room and only the organizers of the celebration can enter it. The '*Sumpetan*' room is as if it were a sacred place that no one else is allowed to enter.<sup>11</sup>

The culture that occurs in Indonesia produces traditions that are adhered to by the community. Tradition is something that has existed since ancient times and is followed, carried out from generation to generation.<sup>12</sup> The *Nyumpet* tradition indirectly combines religion and culture in society. The implementation of *Nyumpet* is carried out by reading *tablil* readings and prayers addressed to Allah in the hope that the celebration party will run smoothly and be kept away from interference by spirits. Koentjaraningrat believes that religion cannot be separated from the culture of the people who adhere to that religion. The basic concept is that there are emotional feelings that give rise to humans to have a religious nature. Then, humans created a belief system to describe their god through various rituals. These rituals are not fixed, but change because they have different orientations. Carrying out rituals certainly requires other people to become adherents of the religion.<sup>13</sup>

Clifford Geertz understands religion as a cultural system that cannot be separated from society. Religion is not only a set of values outside of humans, but religion is also a system of knowledge and symbols that produce meaning. Geertz saw the two giving and filling each other. Religion without culture cannot be actualized, while culture without religion cannot find deep meaning. Religion is something related to reason, so the difference between humans and other creatures is that humans can create their own culture. Religion can be defined as God's rules that encourage the human soul to follow God's commands in accordance with His will to achieve a happy life in this world and the hereafter.<sup>14</sup>

Religion and culture have a very strong relationship because they both have values and symbols. Islam as a symbol system has certain symbols as the actualization of Islamic religious teachings. The movement of prostration in prayer, for example, is a symbol of the totality of human servitude and human recognition of the greatness of God. Geertz explained that religion is a system of symbols, namely everything that gives its adherents ideas. Just as culture is public, symbols in religion are also public and not purely private.<sup>15</sup> Rituals formed in the *Nyumpet* tradition are a religious symbol that enters culture. Of course, this symbol has a meaning behind it.

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<sup>11</sup> This data was obtained from a kyai who served as prayer leader at the *nyumpet* event. The writer was also involved and took part in the event, because the writer is a native Jepara resident

<sup>12</sup> Efrina Rizkya Wahono, Idris, dan Agung Wiradimadja, "Partisipasi Masyarakat dan Makna Simbolik Tradisi Nyadran di Dusun Sumanding Kabupaten Blitar," *Jurnal Sejarah, Budaya dan Pengajarannya* 16, no. 1 (2022): 119–28, <http://dx.doi.org/10.17977/um020v16i12022p119-128>.

<sup>13</sup> Koentjaraningrat, *Pengantar Ilmu Antropologi* (Jakarta: Radar Jaya Offset, 2000), 79.

<sup>14</sup> Muhammad, "Hubungan Agama dan Budaya Pada Masyarakat Gampong Kereumbok Kabupaten Pidie Provinsi Aceh," *Substantia: Jurnal-jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 22, no. 2 (2020): 85–96, <http://dx.doi.org/10.22373/substantia.v22i2.7769>.

<sup>15</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 90.

Analyzing the relationship between religion and culture through the tradition of *Nyumpet* in Jepara makes an important contribution to interdisciplinary studies such as religious anthropology, cultural history, sociology and Islamic studies. This can contribute to a deeper understanding of how religion is articulated and realized through local culture, and vice versa, how local culture can influence forms of religious expression. In addition, this research becomes very relevant in the era of modernization, where many local traditions are threatened by modern trends. Through this analysis we can see how local culture lives and is able to adapt amidst threats.

There are several studies that discuss the *Nyumpet* tradition, but so far there has been no discussion of the relationship between religion and culture in the *Nyumpet* tradition in Jepara. Imanullah Hesti Nur Alama and Abdul Ghafur researched the grounding of local culture in Jepara through *Nyumpet* with the title 'The Tradition of *Nyumpet* in Local Culture in the Sekuro Community in Jepara'. The result is that preserving a ceremony plays a role in changing society, from traditional society which is known to only lean towards previous beliefs regarding parenting patterns to modern society or a technologically savvy society which has a practical mindset. The principle of harmony in Javanese culture aims as a tool to maintain society in any circumstances.<sup>16</sup>

Fauziyah et al conducted a research on *Nyumpet* with the title *Nyumpet* Tradition in Sekuro Village, Mlonggo District, Jepara Regency, which contains an explanation of the *Nyumpet* tradition with various rituals. The *Nyumpet* tradition itself used to be a ritual that was preserved by the community in order to give protection to the spirits of their ancestors, but after the advent of Islam, the nugget tradition was Islamized so that the tradition still exists but the procession in it still has Islamized values.<sup>17</sup> Siti Ma'rifatun Ni'mah researched *Nyumpet* entitled Javanese traditional traditions of *nyumpet* in Pancur village, Mayong subdistrict, Jepara regency: Study of the Living Qur'an (QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 170). The result that in Pancur village, Mayong subdistrict, the tradition of *Nyumpet* has existed since ancient times and is a legacy from ancestors. Today's society only preserves so that these traditions do not become extinct and disappear along with current developments. The tradition of *Nyumpet* now is different from the past. In ancient times, *Nyumpet* was more about magic and nowadays it is more about religion.<sup>18</sup>

This type of research is qualitative research, namely research that intends to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by the object of research both in terms of behavior,

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<sup>16</sup> Imanullah Hesti Nur Alama dan Abdul Gafur, "Tradisi *Nyumpet* dalam Budaya Lokal pada Masyarakat Sekuro di Jepara," *Jurnal Antopologi: Isu-Isu Sosial Budaya* 22, no. 01 (2020): 81–89, <https://doi.org/10.25077/jantro.v22.n1.p81-89.2020>.

<sup>17</sup> Meyvaika Wahyuni Diah Fauziyah dkk., "Tradisi *Nyumpet* di Desa Sekuro Kecamatan Mlonggo Kabupaten Jepara," *ETNOHISTORI: Jurnal Ilmiah Kebudayaan dan Kesenjaraan* 10, no. 2 (2023): 67–72, <https://doi.org/10.33387/etnohistori.v10i2.7169>.

<sup>18</sup> Siti Ma'rifatun Ni'mah, "Tradisi adat Jawa tentang *nyumpet* di desa pancur kecamatan mayong kabupaten Jepara Studi Living Quran (QS. Al Baqarah (2): 170)" (Kudus, IAIN Kudus, 2019), <http://repository.iainkudus.ac.id/4652/>.

perception, motivation, action, and so on holistically, and by means of descriptions in the form of words and language, on a specific natural context and by utilizing various natural methods.<sup>19</sup> The data collection technique in this research is involved observation. Involved observation means that the researcher is involved in community activities in order to empathize with the research subject, thereby causing cultural blindness, that is, the cultural life being studied has become part of the researcher's life.<sup>20</sup> In this case, the author is a resident of Jepara who witnessed and was involved in the '*Nyumpet*' process. The data analysis technique referred to by Miles and Huberman includes three processes, namely data reduction, data display and data verification.<sup>21</sup> Data reduction is carried out by collecting all data and then selecting data that is appropriate to the research objectives. In the data display process, researchers organize data and relate one data to other data. Data verification is carried out by interpreting the data, so that the data that has been organized has meaning.

## Results and Discussion

### Relationship between Religion and Culture

Religion and Culture in Java are something that cannot be separated. Seeing the origins of Javanese society before the arrival of Islam embraced Hindu-Buddhist religion by believing in gods and spirits. Since the beginning, Islamization activities in Java have always faced clashes with Javanese traditions which are heavily influenced by Hinduism, so there has always been tension and long periods of dialogue. The spread of Islam in Java was adapted to local culture at that time. For example, Walisongo's work always respects the traditions and culture of the original community in spreading religion. The method used is in accordance with Islamic teachings which are tolerant of local culture.

As time progressed, Javanese people began to accept Islam, but still believed in spirits. This is realized through various ceremonies such as offerings and *Selamatan*. For example, in honoring the spirits of people who have died, Javanese people perform alms ceremonies (*selamatan*) which include: *nelung dina* (third day of death), *mitung dina* (seventh day of death), *matangpuluh* (fortieth day of death), *nyautus* (one hundredth day of death), and other ceremonies. There are also activities carried out as a manifestation of natural forces or supernatural beings, such as the *nyadran* tradition which is used as a repulsion.

Emile Durkheim, defined religion as "...an integrated system of beliefs and practices relating to sacred things, that is, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices, united in one moral community called the Church, all people who adhere to it."<sup>22</sup> Thus, for Durkheim, religion consists of three basic things: beliefs and practices, sacred things, and the

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<sup>19</sup> Lexy J Moeloeng, *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif* (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2018), 6.

<sup>20</sup> Moh Soehadha, *Metode Penelitian Sosial Kualitatif Untuk Studi Agama Edisi Revisi* (Yogyakarta: Suka Press, 2018), 105.

<sup>21</sup> Miles Matthew B. dan Huberman A. Michael, *Data Management and Analysis Methods*. In *Denzin, Norman K. and Lincoln, Yvonna S (editors). Handbook of Qualitative Research*. (California: Sage Publication Inc., 1994), 429.

<sup>22</sup> Bryan S Turner, *Runtuhnya Universalitas Sosiologi Barat, Bongkar Wacana atas: Islam vis a vis Barat, Orientalisme, Postmodernisme, dan Globalisme*, terj. Sirojuddin Arif, dkk (Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruz Media, 2008), 417.

moral community of believers. He also theorized that religion is the most basic social institution and the ancestor of most other institutions. Therefore, in Durkheim's thinking, the influence of religion on culture is very large. According to Emile Durkheim, religion is a symbolic system consisting of sacred beliefs and practices, which connect humans with what is considered transcendent or beyond the physical world. Durkheim emphasized that religion has an important role in maintaining social solidarity in society. For him, religion is not just an individual's beliefs, but a collective representation of larger social forces that regulate and shape individual behavior.

Clifford Gertz defines religion as a complex symbolic system that regulates and provides meaning for human behavior in society. Religion not only functions as a belief or ritual practice, but as a means of interpreting and understanding social, moral and cosmological realities in human life. He also emphasized that religion plays an important role in maintaining social solidarity, building collective identity, and providing moral orientation for its members. Religion is an integral part of human social and cultural life which shapes and is influenced by the dynamics of the society in which it develops.<sup>23</sup>

According to philologist, Max Muller (1823-1900), religion in English, religion, comes from the root word religio (Latin), originally meaning "fear of God or the gods, contemplating carefully about divine things, piety". Religion, according to him is "a mental faculty independent of the senses and reason, enabling man to understand the Infinite under different names and different guises."<sup>24</sup> So, the essence of religion is the awareness of the infinite. Humans have a very religious nature and their ideas about the transcendent arise from observing and contemplating objects, such as the sun, oceans, mountains, and so on. From contemplation of nature, humans gain knowledge of the Infinite. The earliest conceptions of divinity were personifications of natural phenomena that gave humans their initial intuitions about divinity and invisible realities beyond the physical world.

As for culture, Koentaraningrat defines culture as a compound development of "cultivation" which means "the power of the mind" so that it is distinguished between "culture" which means "the power of the mind" in the form of creativity, taste and intention, and "culture" which means the result from creativity, taste, and intention. In English, culture is called culture, which comes from the Latin word colere, which means processing or doing. It can also be interpreted as cultivating the land or farming, the word culture is also sometimes translated as "Kultur" in Indonesian.<sup>25</sup> According to Edward Tylor in his book *Primitive Culture*, culture refers to the qualities possessed by all people in a social group, which include knowledge, belief, art, morals, science, law, customs and other abilities, as well as habits acquired by humans. as members of society.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Geertz, *Abangan, Santri, Priyayi dalam Masyarakat Jawa*. Terj. *The Religion of Java*, 52.

<sup>24</sup> Max Müller Friedrich, *Thoughts on Life and Religion* (Germany: Norderstedt BoD – Books on Demand, 2020), 84.

<sup>25</sup> Muhaimin, *Islam dalam Bingkai Budaya Lokal; Potret dari Cirebon*, 153.

<sup>26</sup> Edward B Tylor, *Primitive Culture* (London: John Murray, 1920).

There are several ways culture can influence religion. First, culture can influence the religious beliefs held by society. Second, culture can shape the way religion is practiced. And third, culture can influence how we think and feel about religious concepts such as God, prayer, and ritual. In this way, religion and culture complement each other and provide mutual benefits.

Clifford said that the path to religion is culture, and culture in Geertz's formulation is a widely held concept that does not have many references or history and contains ambiguity. Culture shows a historically inherited pattern of meaning in which there are symbols expressed in the form of preserving and developing existing culture.<sup>27</sup> Geertz views religion as a cultural fact, not just an expression of social needs through symbols, ideas, rituals and customs. According to him, the influence of religion is present in every corner of Javanese life.<sup>28</sup> Citing Greeley's opinion in Muttaqin that religion will continue to exist if there is a cultural heritage that supports belief in these traditions. This means that religion will still exist if it continues to preserve the culture adhered to by society.<sup>29</sup> With the increasing flow of globalization, it is even possible for the emergence of secularization in the modern world, if there is an attachment between religion and culture then both will remain.

If religion is part of culture or vice versa, is it possible to separate religion and culture? Of course, religion cannot be separated from culture. Religious values to be grounded require traditions that develop in society. Religious messages through cultural products can encourage people to help each other and create prosperity in society.



Fig.1. illustration of the relationship between religion and culture

However, Matt Wagoner argues that religion has experienced a relocation. a shift has occurred where religion is no longer in consciousness but has entered culture. Wagoner's argument states that there has been a shift in religion which is no longer perceived as something that is imagined subjectively, namely placing religion in the body and brain, but religion is located in the cultural system or social system. Wagoner cites Lincoln's analysis as showing that religion is actually part of culture and not something *sui generis*. Religion

<sup>27</sup> Walter H Capps, *Religious Studies: The making of Discipline* (Minneapolis: Augsburg fortrees, 1995), 180.

<sup>28</sup> Daniel L Pals, *Seven Theories of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 243.

<sup>29</sup> Ahmad Muttaqin, "Mapping the Fate of Religions in the Late Modern Era: A Theoretical Survey," *Mukaddimah Jurnal Studi Islam* 18, no. 2 (2012): 177–205.

plays a role in participating in hegemonic struggles in culture, then religion plays a role as a marker of cultural identity.<sup>30</sup>

Religion is actually intended for humans, and the existence of religion in practice is based on human capacity so it cannot be said that humans are for religion. If religion is for humans, then in essence religion has entered the area of culture which describes the process of human thought, understanding and awareness regarding revelation, doctrine and religious teachings which are practiced in the reality of human life.

### **Geographical Location of Jepara Regency**

Jepara is a district located in Central Java. Jepara is on the north coast, with hilly areas to the east, while land areas to the north and west border the Java Sea. There are three components of Jepara's economic resources, namely marine products, agriculture and carving crafts. The majority of people living on the north coast work as fishermen. Meanwhile in the city area he worked as a wood craftsman. Therefore, Jepara is also called the city of carvings. Residents who live in areas near hills and land work as farmers. The majority of Jepara people still adhere to various traditions left by their ancestors.

The diversity of professions carried out by the Jepara community can have a big influence on local culture in Jepara. For example, people who work as fishermen often carry out various rituals combined with Islamic values, such as sea almsgiving,<sup>31</sup> the *Lomban*/Syawalan tradition.<sup>32</sup> Farmers usually carry out various traditions when harvesting their rice fields or after harvesting. For example, the *wiwit* harvest tradition.<sup>33</sup> Ancestral traditions are mostly carried out by residents with fishing and farming professions. Therefore, the Jepara people still hold strong traditions handed down by their ancestors, because they are closely related to the professions of the Jepara people.

### ***Nyumpet* Tradition in Jepara**

Traditions are habits that are passed down from generation to generation from generation to generation, including customs, belief systems, and so on. Nur Syam defines

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<sup>30</sup> Matt Wagoonier, *Culture and religion*, in P.B. Clarke (ed.), *The Oxford handbook of sociology of religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 219.

<sup>31</sup> Sea almsgiving is a tradition of salvation carried out by fishermen when they get pleasure in the form of a large catch, when fishermen want to go to sea looking for fish, when there is a new boat or ship by slaughtering a chicken, or Sea almsgiving which is done on the 17th of August by means of making safety nets and changing flags on ships and fishermen's boats. See Sofia Nurul Fitriyani, Sugiyarta Stanislaus, dan Mohammad Iqbal Maburi, "Sistem Kepercayaan (Belief) Masyarakat Pesisir Jepara pada Tradisi Sedekah Laut," *Intuisi: Jurnal Psikologi Imiah* 11, no. 3 (2019): 211–18.

<sup>32</sup> *Lomban*, which takes place every year on the 8th of Shawwal, is a parade of offerings and buffalo heads along the coast of the city of Jepara. See Muhammad Fathul Mujib, Muhammad Vicky Yakhya, dan Yusuf Falaq, "Kajian Perspektif Islam Dalam Tradisi *Lomban* di Desa Ujungbatu, Kabupaten Jepara," *Jurnal Sosial Dan Humaniora* 1, no. 1 (2023): 1–6, <https://doi.org/10.62017/arima>.

<sup>33</sup> *Wiwit* harvest is a welcome that is carried out when harvesting rice in the rice fields. Usually Jepara people make chicken *ingkung* by inviting neighbors to join in the celebration. Apart from that, *wiwit* is done by reading the *manaqib* of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jailani.

tradition as something that has been done for a long time and is part of the life of a community group.<sup>34</sup> According to Koentjaraningrat, traditions are habits shared by society which will automatically influence the actions and reactions in the daily lives of members of society. The most basic thing is that there is information passed down from generation to generation, both in writing and orally.<sup>35</sup> In other words, a tradition is something that has been done since ancient times which has been passed down from ancestors to the next generation and still exists today or may have become extinct depending on the community that adheres to it.

*Nyumpet* is one of the traditions of Jepara's ancestors which is still carried out today. 'Nyumpet' comes from Javanese which means to cover, protect and fence. *Nyumpet* is covering holes to prevent evil things from happening, whether visible or not, with the aim of providing safety to celebrations. The majority of the tradition of *Nyumpet* is carried out by the Jepara people who live on the coast and in rural areas. In celebration of weddings or circumcisions, Jepara people still believe in dino weton and the moon to carry out the celebration. There are several Hijriah months where it is forbidden to hold celebrations, such as the months of Muharram and Dzulqaidah. These two months are believed to be sacred months, in which it is not permissible to hold wedding celebrations or circumcisions. The months that are believed to be good for holding celebration parties are the months of Sha'ban, Shawwal and the month of Dzulhijjah.

The *Nyumpet* tradition is carried out 7 days before holding a celebration by inviting residents to slug and carry out the humpet ritual in a room. *Nyumpet* is done in the hope of being kept away from evil and metaphysical things such as memedi, soft, demit, stealth, pig ngepet and so on which can disrupt the continuity of the celebration. Apart from that, the aim of *Nyumpet* is to make the fruit abundant and bring in lots of guests. During a celebration, there are usually blessings as souvenirs for invited guests. The blessing in *Nyumpet* Selamat is different from the blessing of other Selamat, which generally contains rice, side dishes and wet cakes (snacks). In *Nyumpet*, the side dish is added with baby wasps which are cooked in the hope that many invited guests will come.

The Ugo Rampe<sup>36</sup> used for *Nyumpet* is as follows:

1. Rice
2. All kitchen spices used for cooking at the celebration
3. All food served at the celebration event
4. Paso kekep. Paso is an item made of clay that has a lid. Usually filled with rice. Paso kekep means earth, while rice means human nature which is always together.
5. Telon flower, which means help. With the hope that the celebration event will receive help from the Almighty.

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<sup>34</sup> Syam, *Islam Pesisir*, 16–18.

<sup>35</sup> Koentjaraningrat, *Sejarah Kebudayaan Indonesia*, (Yogyakarta: Jambatan, 2002), 103.

<sup>36</sup> Ugo Rampe can also be called an offering and is a requirement that must be fulfilled by the owner of the wish.

6. Arang-arang kambing, made from rice fried in a clay pan, then placed in brown sugar water. The goal is to 'kemrambang', that is, to believe wholeheartedly in God and avoid anxiety.
7. Market jadah, containing apem, nagasari, onde-onde, walangan, tape, tela crackers, getuk and other wet foods. Jadah Pasar shows different human traits.
8. Rujak degan has the meaning of having to make it steady for the Hyangwidi
9. Kupat lepet, is a symbol of apology. May Allah forgive the mistakes of the hajjat organizers.
10. Menyan, used as an introduction to prayer
11. Salt, the function of salt is to prevent metaphysical disturbances.
12. Dekem (*ingkung*) native chicken, taken from the words beningung and menekung which means to say a prayer.
13. Banana rojo kawesto, a symbol of greatness and good hopes
14. Red and white porridge, which is made from rice then mixed with coconut milk. To produce a red color, Javanese sugar is added. The aim is to respect human origins which come from red and white blood.

The *Nyumpet* process begins with:

1. Market jadah, free-range chicken dekm, banana rojo kawesto, red and white porridge, kupat lepet, arang-arang kambing, and degan prepared on a tray.
2. Slabar, namely announcing to the invited guests for the celebration that the celebration will be held on what day, at what time, coinciding with what weton.
3. Send nduwo (send prayers) to Rasulullah and other prophets, auliya', village leaders, and deceased heirs. The prayer leader is the village kyai.
4. After that, invite a shaman or village kyai to pray in a special room by inserting ugo rampe into it.
5. One day before the celebration, the paso is opened with the aim of opening the prayers that have been said. The hope is that many guests will come and bring lots of buwuhan.

The *Nyumpet* process carried out by the Jepara community shows that there is a strong relationship between religion and culture. The reading of tahlil at the *Selamatan* event is accompanied by the presence of a symbol in the form of Ugo Rampe at the *Nyumpet* event, indicating that religion and culture go hand in hand and are positive values in society. The purpose of people's wishes is shown with various symbols accompanied by prayers to God. From an Islamic perspective, the purpose of *Nyumpet* is to store food so that after the celebration there is leftover food that can be processed or eaten.

### **The Relationship between Religion and Culture in the *Nyumpet* Tradition in Jepara**

Religion and culture are two different things, but they are interconnected and need each other. Religion contains teachings that originate from revelations that come from God as guidance for humans to live their lives according to His will. Meanwhile, culture is the

result of human work, taste and creativity which is greatly influenced by the factors around it. Religion in essence really needs culture so it is necessary to protect both so that there is no clash between religious and cultural values. The *Nyumpet* tradition in Jepara shows the close relationship between religion and culture.

For the people of Jepara, rituals are carried out by means of *Selamatan*. *Selamatan* is an inevitability for the Jepara people and is ingrained in the flesh. The meaning of salvation is to be safe in this world and in the afterlife, as well as anticipation before bad things happen. *Selamatan* is likened to a counter in life. The Jepara people's belief in the existence of a god who protects and protects is in line with religious beliefs, where they believe that God is a holy being, sacred and above all. The beliefs of the Jepara people since ancient times show that *Selamatan* has been in contact with religion. *Selamatan* is considered important in Jepara society and is considered a syncretic ritual of Islam and Javanese Hindu and Buddhist traditions. Jepara society is always bound by traditional rituals and rituals which cannot be separated from community life. The aim of this traditional ritual is salvation or perfection of life.

Before Hinduism and Buddhism developed in Java, prehistoric people in Java adhered to animist and dynamism beliefs. Animism is a sect (doctrine) of belief that believes in the reality (existence, existence) of the soul (spirit) as an extraordinary power that resides personally in humans, animals, plants and everything that exists in this universe.<sup>37</sup> Through this belief, belief in ancestors will emerge. Dynamism is a doctrine, a belief which views that natural objects have impersonal sacred or supernatural powers, such as trees, stones, keris, statues, spears, swords or amulets.<sup>38</sup> The existence of these two beliefs encourages Javanese people to worship their ancestors by using offerings. Sajen is considered a means of seeking protection from spirits.

The *Nyumpet* tradition is carried out as a form of believing in the power of spirits that are considered holy to be able to provide salvation and avoid the wrath of these spirits. However, after the arrival of Islam in Jepara, *Nyumpet* was combined with Islamic rituals such as reading tahlil, so that Islamic values remained. In the nyummpet tradition, cultural elements can be seen from various symbols and customs carried out by the community in order to ask for safety for the implementation of the hajjat. Javanese culture, in particular, has a strong belief in the forces of nature and ancestors. They believe that in order for the wishes to run smoothly, they must be in good contact with the forces of their ancestors or supernatural beings which are presented in the form of Ugo Rampe.

Geertz in his essay entitled *Thick Description: Toward an Interpretative Theory of Culture* shows that culture has meaning or significance as does semiotics. Quoting Max Weber's opinion that humans are animals who depend on webs of meaning that they weave themselves. Geertz considered culture to be these webs. He said culture is a socially

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<sup>37</sup> Kusumohamidjojo, *Filsafat Kebudayaan: Proses Realisasi Manusia* (Yogyakarta: Jalasutra, 2010), 100.

<sup>38</sup> Ahmad Afandi, "Kepercayaan Animisme-Dinamisme Serta Adaptasi Kebudayaan Hindu-Budha dengan Kebudayaan Asli di Pulau Lombok-NTB," *HISTORIS* 1, no. 1 (2016): 1–9.

determined structure of meaning.<sup>39</sup> This tradition of *Nyumpet* is in line with Geertz's opinion, where also Ugo Rampe in this tradition has its own meaning and purpose. For example, *kupat* and *lepet* are foods made from rice (*kupat*) and sticky rice (*lepet*). The use of these two foods is a symbol of apology to the Almighty so that all mistakes are forgiven. Even though *kupat* *lepet* is food, apart from that it has its own purpose and meaning.

In every society, according to the structural-functional approach, there will always be a value system as a result of collective consciousness of all members of society. Society always has goals to be achieved, and for this reason a set of ways to achieve them has been provided.<sup>40</sup> This means that the existence of religion and rituals allows forms of social relations and social interactions to take place, so that social processes can run smoothly. The tradition of *Nyumpet* with various Ugo Rampe shows an attempt to ask the creator for help so that the celebration runs smoothly and is kept away from danger. This tradition can provide a calming effect for the organizers of the celebration, because from a psychological perspective, they have carried out the traditions of their ancestors which they believe are good traditions and accepted by God.

The *Nyumpet* tradition is an ancestral heritage that is preserved by the community to protect the spirits of their ancestors. However, after the arrival of Islam in Jepara, *Nyumpet* was combined with Islamic rituals, so that Islamic values remained. In the *Nyumpet* tradition, cultural elements can be seen from various symbols and customs carried out by the community in order to ask for safety for the implementation of the *hajat*. Javanese culture, in particular, has a strong belief in the forces of nature and ancestors. They believe that in order for the wishes to run smoothly, they must be in good contact with the forces of ancestors or supernatural beings which are presented in the form of Ugo Rampe. Geertz's perspective emphasizes that religion does not exist in a vacuum. Religious symbols and practices reflect and influence the cultural values and broader social structures in which they operate. This dynamic relationship means that as a society develops, the religious systems that are part of it also develop.

The tradition of *Nyumpet* with a combination of traditional ceremonies creates various positive effects, including community interaction that creates harmony. Apart from that, this tradition is part of helping each other in good terms because it also prays for the heirs who have died and also prays for the wishes of the organizers of the *hajat*. Through salvation it also provides a psychological function in the human soul, because it creates peace of mind. Religious rituals serve to instill certain dispositions or moods in individuals, which in turn motivate them to act in accordance with their cultural values and ethos.

Citing Wagoonier's opinion, the close relationship between religion and culture causes religion to experience relocation.<sup>41</sup> It is the process by which a religion or religious practice

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<sup>39</sup> Pals, *Seven Theories of Religion*, 240.

<sup>40</sup> Hasan Sazali, "Komunikasi Pembangunan Agama Dalam Membangun Toleransi Agama (Analisis Sistem dan Aktor)," *KHAZANAH Jurnal studi Islam dan Humaniora* 13, no. 2 (2015): 209–29.

<sup>41</sup> Wagoonier, *Culture and religion*, in P.B. Clarke (ed.), *The Oxford handbook of sociology of religion*, 21.

moves from another cultural or geographic context to a new culture. This means that when a religion changes, its practices, meaning and interpretation will also change. This is caused by religion meeting new cultures and the values of religious practices being forced to adapt to new local conditions. Wagoner notes that religious conversions often produce new interpretations that differ from the original form. For example, rituals and teachings that were originally specific to a certain cultural context will have new meanings and functions. In the *Nyumpet* tradition, the initial function was to ask for help to keep away from evil spirits, but when religion became involved in the *Nyumpet* tradition, the function shifted, namely to ask for help from the Almighty God so that it would be smooth and kept away from all bad things. The reading of *tahlil* used to only be read during dhikr, but now it is read during the celebratory event and has another function, namely as a help. The *Nyumpet* tradition illustrates how culture and religion can coexist in society. Local culture is still preserved, but it is done in a way that does not conflict with the religious values adhered to by the community.

The Jepara people in particular have an important role in preserving their ancestral culture. The arrival of Islam to Jepara does not mean that ancestral traditions will disappear, but rather that there is a close relationship between the Islamic religion and ancestral culture. Jepara's geographical location also supports the tradition of *Nyumpet* to the present. Fishermen and farmers in Jepara always adhere to *Selamatan*, because they think that professions such as fishermen and farmers are always related to God's will, therefore, *Selamatan* is a means of giving thanks, asking for help and keeping away from evil.

## Conclusion

Quoting Clifford Geertz's opinion about religion as a cultural system that cannot be separated from society. Religion contains teachings that originate from revelations that come from God as guidance for humans to live their lives according to His will. Meanwhile, culture is the result of human work, feelings and creations which are greatly influenced by the factors around them. Religion is not only a set of values outside of humans, but religion is also a system of knowledge and symbols that produce meaning. The *Nyumpet* tradition is a legacy of ancient ancestors which still exists and is still believed in by the people of Jepara. The geographical location and profession of the Jepara people are one of the big influences on why *Nyumpet* still exists today. *Nyumpet* is done in the hope of being given safety in holding the celebration. *Nyumpet* used to be a relic from ancestors whose aim was to keep away evil spirits by reciting a special spell, now *Nyumpet* is combined with *tahlil* and has a new function, namely to keep away from all evil and ask God for help so that the implementation of the celebration party can be carried out smoothly. In the *Nyumpet* tradition, it shows that religion and culture have a strong relationship, because *Nyumpet* combines *selamatan* (consist of *tahlil* reading) with *Ugo Rampe* (offerings) which are used as a symbol of supplication to the creator. Each *Ugo Rampe* has its own meaning and there must be a way to implement it. Apart from that, the holding of traditional ceremonies in the *Nyumpet* tradition has a positive

effect on the community because they can interact with each other, as a form of mutual help, as well as providing a good psychological effect for the organizers of the celebration.

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