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THE THEOLOGICAL MEANING OF THE *PUNGGAHAN* AND *PINTAN* TRADITIONS IN WELCOMING RAMADHAN IN THE JAVANESE ETHNIC GROUP OF DUSUN XI PAYA LOMBANG TEBING TINGGI



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Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas makna teologis dari tradisi *punggahan* dan *pintan* dalam menyambut bulan Ramadhan pada masyarakat Jawa di Dusun XI Paya Lombang, Tebing Tinggi. Tradisi ini tidak hanya merupakan warisan budaya, tetapi juga menjadi sarana komunikasi spiritual antara manusia dan Tuhan, serta memperkuat nilai-nilai sosial keagamaan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode fenomenologi. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara dan dokumentasi. Tradisi *punggahan* meliputi ziarah kubur, mandi bunga, doa bersama, dan makan keluarga, sementara *pintan* berfokus pada doa dan penghormatan anak kepada orang tua yang telah wafat. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kedua tradisi tersebut memiliki makna teologis yang kuat, mencerminkan hubungan vertikal dengan Allah (hablumminallah) dan hubungan horizontal dengan sesama (hablumminannas). Nilai-nilai seperti rasa syukur, penyucian diri, ukhuwah Islamiyah, ketakwaan, dan pelestarian budaya Jawa yang Islami muncul dalam praktik ini. Tradisi ini tidak hanya memperkuat solidaritas sosial, tetapi juga menunjukkan relevansi budaya lokal dalam membentuk praktik keagamaan yang kontekstual dan bermakna dalam masyarakat modern

Keyword: *Punggahan*, *Pintan*, Bulan Ramadhan

Abstract

This study discusses the theological meaning of the *punggahan* and *pintan* traditions in welcoming the month of Ramadan in the Javanese community in Dusun XI Paya Lombang, Tebing Tinggi. This tradition is not only a cultural heritage, but also a means of spiritual communication between humans and God, as well as strengthening socio-religious values. This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological method. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The tradition of *punggahan* includes grave pilgrimage, flower bathing, joint prayer, and family meal, while *pintan* focuses on prayer and children's respect for their deceased parents. The results of the study show that both traditions have strong theological meanings, reflecting a vertical relationship with Allah (hablumminallah) and a horizontal relationship with others (hablumminannas). Values such as gratitude, self-purification, Islamic brotherhood, piety, and the preservation of Islamic Javanese culture emerge in these practices. This tradition not only strengthens social solidarity, but also demonstrates the relevance of local culture in shaping contextual and meaningful religious practices in modern society.

Keyword: *Punggahan*, *Pintan*, Bulan Ramadhan

INTRODUCTION

In the 19th century, Dutch plantation companies in North Sumatra, especially in the Deli region, began to grow rapidly. They needed a lot of workers to manage tobacco, rubber, and palm oil plantations. To meet the need for workers, the Dutch brought in contract workers from Java through a system called contract coolies. The arrival of these workers from Java was regulated by an institution called Vrij Emigratie Deli Avros or VEDA.¹ Some of these contract workers were initially employed for a limited period of

¹ Usman Pelly, *Sejarah Sosial Daerah Sumatera Utara Kotamadya Medan* (1984).



time, but many of them eventually chose to settle permanently in North Sumatra after the contract period ended.

After Indonesia's independence, the Indonesian government, especially during the reign of President Soeharto, continued the transmigration program. Soeharto considered that the limited agricultural land due to population density in Java could be overcome by utilizing land outside Java as a guarantee of survival.² During this period, North Sumatra became one of the main destinations for the transmigration program. Thousands of families from Java were moved to North Sumatra to open new agricultural land, increase regional productivity, and reduce density on Java Island. This transmigration program lasted until the late 1980s.

In the end, the Javanese ethnic community has spread to several areas of North Sumatra and settled as native Sumatran residents. Although as immigrants, the Javanese ethnic group has become one of the largest ethnic groups in Sumatra. This transmigration is not an obstacle for the Javanese ethnic group, they quickly adapt to the surrounding environment. The migration of the Javanese ethnic group to the island of Sumatra did not cause the loss of customs, traditions, culture and habits inherited from their ancestors. The rituals and traditions that have been taught will continue to be carried out and preserved until now.

One of the varieties of Javanese culture that is still developing is the tradition of welcoming the month of Ramadan among the Javanese ethnic group, precisely in the Tebing Tinggi area, in the village of Paya Lombang. As a country with the largest Muslim majority population in the world, Indonesia shows that religious values in welcoming the month of Ramadan are often practiced through local traditions and cultures that are deeply rooted in society. The month of Ramadan is a sacred momentum that encourages Muslims to increase the intensity of worship and good deeds in order to achieve divine grace and forgiveness. In addition to being a means to get closer to Allah, Ramadan also functions as a form of learning about how individuals should behave and interact in the context of social life in society.³ This tradition not only reflects local wisdom, but also shows the complex interaction between religion and culture.

The *Punggahan* Tradition is a tradition carried out by the Javanese people in welcoming the holy month of Ramadan, where people make spiritual and physical preparations as a form of self-purification. *Punggahan* has a meaning as a process of self-reflection on mistakes that have been made, as well as a tradition to welcome Ramadan.⁴ In practice, the *Punggahan* tradition involves the installation of *pintan*, which is a symbol of welcoming and hoping for blessings during the fasting month. *Pintan* is another term for offerings or offerings. The installation of *pintan* in welcoming Ramadan is usually carried out as a form of respect for the ancestral spirits.

This tradition reflects the local wisdom of the Javanese ethnic group in maintaining harmonious relationships with God, humans and nature.⁵ The *Punggahan* tradition and the installation of *pintan* can be seen as a form of actualization of Islamic teachings that emphasize the importance of self-purification before carrying out fasting. Islam is able

² Yulia Rahma Fitriana, *Transformasi Kebijakan Agria Dan Transmigrasi Di Indonesia*, ed. by Pustaka Ilmu Group Yogyakarta, Pustaka Il (2019).

³ Devi S. Yuliyani, 'Mengenal Tradisi Menyambut Bulan Ramadhan (Studi Tentang Tradisi Punggahan Dan Pudunan)', *Sosial Budaya*, 19.1 (2022), pp. 39 – 47.

⁴ Salmaa Al Zahra Ramadhani and Nor Mohammad Abdoeh, 'Tradisi Punggahan Menjelang Ramadhan', *Al-Mada: Jurnal Agama, Sosial, Dan Budaya*, 3.1 (2020), pp. 51 – 65, doi:10.31538/almada.v3i1.495.

⁵ Amsal Bakhtiar, *Fisafat Agama Wisata Pemikiran Dan Kepercayaan Manusia*, ed. by Rajagrafindo Persada, Yogyakarta (2007).

to integrate with the local culture that existed before its arrival, showing a productive acculturation process between the values of Islamic teachings and cultural practices that have developed in society.⁶ This tradition shows how religion can dialogue with local culture to create harmony that enriches religious life.

The tradition of *Punggahan* and *pintan* reflects how the Javanese people integrate Islamic religious teachings into their cultural life. This reflection is in line with the concept of muhasabah or self-introspection. *Punggahan*, with its symbolic elements, becomes a space for people to reflect on their life journey, ask for forgiveness for their sins, and improve relationships with God and fellow humans.

This tradition shows how local culture can be a bridge to understand and appreciate religious values, thus creating a beautiful harmony between faith and culture. Based on the description above, the researcher tries to review the tradition with the title "The Theological Meaning of Tradition and the Installation of *Pintan* in Welcoming Ramadan in the Javanese Ethnic Group, Dusun XI Paya Lombang, Tebing Tinggi".

The type of research used is a qualitative research type using a phenomenological approach, primary data through observation, interviews, and documentation. To obtain secondary data, data can be obtained from books, journals, and theses related to the Punggahan tradition during Ramadan. The data can help researchers in conducting research clearly and in depth. The first step in the data analysis process is to examine all data, both from interviews and observations that have been written in field notes, which are then interpreted in the form of data while still going through the phenomenological reduction steps as much as possible. This analysis, if related to the research studied by the author, aims to find out how the theological value of the Punggahan tradition of installing *pintan* in welcoming Ramadan is in the Javanese ethnic group in Dusun XI, Paya Lombang, Tebing Tinggi District, Serdang Bedagai Regency.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Tradition of *Punggahan* and *Pintan* in the Javanese Ethnic Group

Definition *Punggahan*

Punggahan is a tradition carried out by the Muslim community as a form of welcoming the month of Ramadan. The word "punggahan" comes from the Javanese word "menaikan" or "mengangkat" which means increasing spiritual readiness before entering the month of Ramadan. Punggahan is a tradition that contains religious and cultural values, which is specifically carried out by the Muslim community, especially in several areas in North Sumatra and Java, as a form of welcoming the arrival of the holy month of Ramadan. This tradition illustrates the hope that every human being can experience improvement, namely improving the quality of worship, spirituality and social relations in welcoming this blessed month.

Punggahan is not just a cultural heritage tradition that continues to be preserved but also has a deep philosophical value, namely preparing oneself physically and mentally to enter a month full of blessings. Punggahan is a symbol of an effort to combine religious rites with socio-cultural dynamics, and a symbol that the meaning of religion must be connected to everyday social issues.⁷ The ancestors have built a self-concept and a

⁶ Muhammad Taufik, 'Harmoni Islam Dan Budaya Lokal', *Ilmu Ushuluddin*, 12.2 (2013), pp. 255 – 71.

⁷ Asep Salahudin, *Sufisme Sunda: Hubungan Islam Dan Budaya Dalam Masyarakat Sunda*, ed. by Nuasa (2017).

building of religious interpretation that is truly rooted in the collective memory of society. According to Mr. Untung's statement about punggahan as follows:

*"Punggahan is a form of gratitude for still being given the opportunity to meet the month of Ramadan. Usually, we will gather with family, pray together, and make a pilgrimage to the graves of our ancestors. The goal is to have a clean heart, be able to fast solemnly, and receive blessings from Allah."*⁸

According to Indonesian society, punggahan is one part of the tradition. According to knowledgeable people, punggahan is a series of events to increase faith in preparation for entering the month of Ramadan. For the general public, pung – gahan is eating, having fun and celebrating happiness.

In general, punggahan can be interpreted as a process of preparation for Ramadan, which is usually filled with various religious and social activities such as praying together, eating together with family, visiting graves to ancestral graves, to asking for forgiveness and strengthening ties of friendship. This activity aims to be a means of purifying oneself from various sins that have been committed, so that when entering the month of Ramadan, a person is in a state of heart and mind that is clean and worthy of carrying out worship solemnly. Thus, everyone can carry out worship with full readiness and solemnity with the provisions that have been prepared in punggahan.

Definition Pintan

One of the Indonesian cultures in the spiritual aspect adopted by the Javanese people is offerings or sajen.⁹ Pintan is a Javanese culture that refers to offerings or sajen given to ancestors as a form of respect. The term sesaji comes from the word saji, which means to serve or serve, namely providing food as a form of respect and expression of belief in the spirits of ancestors.¹⁰ Offerings are usually placed in places that are considered sacred or holy. Thus, the essence of the offerings is believed to be conveyed to the spirits of the ancestors, who according to community beliefs, are only present to feel the aroma of the essence of the offerings, while the rest of the offerings will be left to rot and then thrown away.¹¹ This ritual aims to show respect, maintain good relations with ancestors, and ask for protection and blessings for the surviving family.

The pintan tradition is rooted in the animism and dynamism belief system adopted by Javanese society in the pre – religious era, namely before the entry and development of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. In carrying out the pintan ritual, the community believes that ancestral spirits have a role in everyday life, so that respect for them is considered important in order to obtain blessings and avoid unwanted things.

The pintan tradition is part of the cultural heritage of the Javanese people that has been passed down from generation to generation and continues to be maintained and preserved as part of the cultural identity that continues to be practiced in society and culture to this day. In the past, parents often performed the pintan installation ritual every time they had an important occasion and a big day as a form of asking for blessings from the ancestral spirits. They performed the pintan installation ritual on large trees, mountains, forests, or places that were considered sacred. After Islam came, the

⁸ Untung, (Tokoh Agama), Paya Lombang Dusun XI Kecamatan Tebing Tinggi Kabupaten Serdang Bedagai, Jum'at, 14 Februari 2025

⁹ Mudji Sutrisno, *Meniti Jejak-Jejak: Estetika Nusantara*, ed. by Kanisius, Uji Prasty (2022).9

¹⁰ Ayatullah Humaeni, *Sesajen: Menelusuri Makna Dan Akar Tradisi Sesajen Masyarakat Muslim Banten Dan Masyarakat Hindu Bali*, 2021.31 – 33

¹¹ Humaeni.

community still carried out some of the customs they had done before. This practice was initially carried out as part of a ritual of respect for the spirits of ancestors, especially during important moments such as religious holidays.

With the entry of Islam into the archipelago, several elements of this tradition underwent changes and adaptations. Islam does not reject the existence of local traditions as long as they do not conflict with the principles of monotheism and the provisions of Islamic law. As a religion of *rahmatan lil'alamin*, Islam respects the diversity of traditions that develop in society. Therefore, the *pintan* tradition remains, but has been reinterpreted in the context of Islamic teachings.

Along with the acculturation of culture and the development of Islamic teachings to Java, the practice of *pintan* has undergone a transformation. If at first the offerings were placed as a form of respect for the spirits, now it is more associated with joint prayers and alms as a form of respect in accordance with Islamic teachings. Thus, this tradition has survived but has undergone reinterpretation in accordance with the Islamic values adopted by the community. The *pintan* tradition in the Javanese ethnic group has experienced cultural and religious syncretism, where Islamic values are integrated into ancestral practices that have been going on for a long time.

Procedures for Implementing the *Punggahan* and *Pintan* Traditions

Before-*Punggahan*

Before *Punggahan* is a series of preparations carried out by Javanese people before carrying out the *Punggahan* tradition, namely a ritual to welcome the holy month of Ramadan.

Grave pilgrimage

The term pilgrimage comes from Arabic, *ziyarah* which means to visit, visit or come to a place.¹² Pilgrimage to the grave is an activity with the aim of praying for the spirits of the deceased and to take wisdom from the condition.¹³ This tradition functions as a means to remember death and pray for ancestors who have died. The community believes that by making a pilgrimage they can strengthen their spiritual relationship with their ancestors and ask for forgiveness for those who have died. The essence of a pilgrimage is to reflect on death and remember the afterlife as part of spiritual reflection as an effort to strengthen awareness of the afterlife. This reminds us that this world is mortal and realizes that living creatures will also die.

Flower Bath

Flower bathing is a tradition that has been carried out from generation to generation every year as an expression of people's gratitude in welcoming the month of Ramadan. This tradition reflects a ritual procession carried out to purify oneself and prepare oneself spiritually before entering a month full of blessings. Flower bathing is not only considered a form of expression of gratitude, but is also seen as a symbol of the process of self-purification which is carried out as a spiritual preparation for the arrival of the month of Ramadan. This tradition states that a person must cleanse themselves, both physically and mentally before fasting.¹⁴

¹² Jamaluddin, 'Tradisi Ziarah Kubur Dalam Masyarakat Melayu Kuantan', *Sosial Budaya: Media Komunikasi Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial Dan Budaya*, 11.2 (2014), pp. 251 – 69.

¹³ Jamaluddin.

¹⁴ Sri Mawarti, 'Tradisi Mandi Limau Menengok Kembali Nilai Pendidikan Agama Islam Pada Tradisi Di Riau', *Nusantara; Journal for Southeast Asian Islamic Studies*, 17.1 (2021), p. 1, doi:10.24014/nusantara.v17i1.13805.

Flower baths are usually done by wetting the entire body using water that has been mixed with various types of fragrant flowers, such as jasmine, roses, cananga, kaffir lime and various other flowers. This flower bath is believed to symbolize purity and coolness of the soul. Although the practice of flower bathing is more cultural than Islamic teachings, some people still maintain this tradition as a form of ancestral heritage that is considered to have meaning in preparing to welcome Ramadan.

Implementation of the *punggahan*

Time of Execution of *Punggahan* and *Pintan*

The tradition of punggahan and pintan in Dusun XI Paya Lombang, Tebing Tinggi District is part of a religious ritual carried out by the Javanese ethnic community in order to welcome the holy month of Ramadan. The implementation of this tradition has a special time that has been mutually agreed upon by the local community.

This year, the punggahan and pintan traditions fall on February 26 2025, which is the time chosen based on cultural and religious considerations. Meanwhile, the installation of the pintan actually has varying times, this is up to the person who wants to carry out this tradition, there is no specific time determined by the people of Dusun XI. It's just that there are some people who carry it out on the day when the punggahan is held, with the aim and intention that the cooking is done at the same time as the punggahan.

Place of Implementation of *Punggahan* and *Pintan*

The implementation of the punggahan is carried out at the mosque of Dusun XI Paya Lombang. Punggahan in the mosque generally involves various religious activities, such as reading prayers together to pray for the family and ancestors who have died. The activity of installing pintan is carried out individually in each house. This tradition is optional, meaning that it is only carried out by individuals or beliefs to carry it out. This ritual was carried out by the old people in the past, and now there are still people who carry it out so that it does not become extinct. Not all people participate in this tradition, because the practice of installing pintan depends on the preferences and cultural values adhered to by each family.

Implementation Stage of *Pintan* Installation

The installation of pintan is more commonly carried out by parents or elderly people who still maintain deep cultural and spiritual principles.¹⁵ This tradition has systematic implementation stages, starting from the process of cooking or preparing food and drinks to be served. After the preparation is complete, the pemasuhan procession is carried out, which is a ritual that aims to invite the spirits of the ancestors to enjoy the dishes that have been provided.¹⁶ Furthermore, there is the morotin stage, which is the process of taking the pintan at a certain time according to the provisions believed in the tradition.

As part of a tradition that continues to be maintained and passed down from generation to generation, the installation of pintan has a deep meaning in the lives of the people who still practice it. In addition to being a form of respect for ancestors, this tradition also represents spiritual and cultural values that are still maintained by some people to this day.

¹⁵ Bella Pertiwi and Ilham Mirzaya Putra, 'Fenomena Sosial Keagamaan (Memasang Pintan Pada Tradisi Jawa) Dalam Menyambut Dan Mengakhiri Bulan Ramadhan', *Masyarakat Madani*, 7.2 (2022), pp. 65–76.

¹⁶ Nurjannah and Siti Haziza, 'Makna Pemasangan Pintan (Sajen) Dalam Menyambut Dan Mengakhiri Bulan Ramadhan Pada Etnis Jawa Di Dusun VII Desa Laut Dendang', *Jurnal Antropologi Sumatera*, 20.1 (2023), p. 16, doi:10.24114/jas.v20i1.43921.

The pintan installation process has similarities with the practice of providing food and drinks consumed by ancestors during their lifetime. The types of food that must be provided in this ritual include rice and side dishes, chicken, meat, tempeh, eggs, soybeans, noodles, sticky rice, apem, bananas, and drinks such as tea, black coffee, and water. In addition, several cigarettes and matches are also included in the offering procession. The presentation of pintan is basically like the food that will be eaten by the homeowner or the person who will install the pintan. The addition of types of food is the decision of the homeowner who will hold the pintan installation ceremony.

Before the Maghrib prayer, the food that will be used in the Pintan ritual must be prepared separately from daily consumption and placed in a special container. The Pintan is arranged systematically on a table in a certain room, such as a bedroom. The food that has been prepared is not allowed to be consumed before the prayer procession is carried out and before the series of Pung – Gahan events are completed. In the afternoon before Maghrib, the food that has been prepared will be offered to the spirits of the ancestors as a form of respect. The ritual ceremony is carried out by the head of the family or a son who is in a holy condition.

In the pintan installation stage, the individual in charge will sit in a prepared room and surround the food that is being offered. The host invites the ancestors to enjoy the food that has been provided. After the pintan installation process and the reading of prayers for the ancestral spirits are complete, the head of the family will continue the activity by attending the pung – gahan event at the mosque, which is a communal meal activity that is part of the tradition of welcoming the holy month of Ramadan. The pintan installation tradition reflects the values of respect for ancestors and is part of spiritual preparation in entering the holy month of Ramadan.

Implementation Stage punggahan

First, before the punggahan is carried out, there are various traditional rituals carried out by the Javanese ethnic community in Paya Lombang, such as the grave pilgrimage which aims to pray for the souls of those who have passed away and as a reminder of the nature of death.

Second, Bathing flowers is also a series of processes before the punggahan tradition is carried out. Although optional, this flower bath has the meaning of purifying oneself to be clean. Third, a series of events before the implementation of the punggahan is the installation of pintan which aims to honor and pray for the deceased.

Punggahan is a series of rituals involving giving alms and thanksgiving celebrations carried out by the community in preparation for welcoming the month of Ramadan.¹⁷ Punggahan is a tradition carried out to welcome the month of Ramadan, with the aim of asking for safety and blessings in fasting for the whole month.

Fourth, after the pintan installation ceremony is finished in the afternoon, all men will perform the Maghrib prayer together at the mosque. The implementation of the punggahan itself will be carried out in the mosque hall, after the Isha prayer is finished. This tradition is carried out in the form of a kenduri event or meeting held to pray and share food together with the dishes that have been prepared. On the night of the punggahan, men have a role in bringing dishes that have been prepared in their respective homes to then be brought to the mosque. The food brought is generally very diverse, ranging from rice and side dishes to various cakes which are also commonly called jajan pasar.

¹⁷ Yuliyani.

After arriving at the mosque, all the congregation will gather to pray together. The implementation of the punggahan was led by religious leaders and closed with prayer. Prayers offered as a form of request to Allah SWT to provide protection, health and smoothness in carrying out fasting and various practices during the month of Ramadan.

After the joint prayer procession is complete, the community will continue the activity with the tradition of exchanging food between congregations. This tradition reflects the values of togetherness and social solidarity within the community. After the food is exchanged, all participants of the event will eat together at the mosque as a symbol of togetherness and gratitude. In addition, the food that has been exchanged in this kenduri event is not only consumed on site, but also taken home as provisions for the family at home. This tradition strengthens social relations between residents and is a real manifestation of the values of mutual cooperation and togetherness in community life. Thus, the punggahan event not only plays a role as a religious activity, but also as a forum to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood and preserve traditions that have existed since ancient times.

Theological Meaning of the Punggahan and Pintan Traditions

Gratitude

In human life, gratitude is not only an expression of gratitude to God, but also a form of awareness that every blessing received is a gift that should be appreciated. Gratitude is the main attitude that every Muslim must have as a form of recognition of the blessings given by Allah. Gratitude is a form of recognition of all the blessings given by Allah, both health, age, sustenance, and the opportunity to meet the month of Ramadan. The blessings given by Allah to His people should be something to be grateful for, not just a verbal expression, but must be realized in real actions.

For Muslims, the month of Ramadan is a highly anticipated moment because it has great virtues, including forgiveness of sins, increased piety, and the opportunity to increase worship and good deeds. Therefore, in the tradition of punggahan and pintan, people express their gratitude for the gift of Allah who still brings them together with the month of Ramadan.

In Islam, gratitude is not just saying "Al – hamdulillah", but is also manifested in real actions. In the punggahan ritual, people express their gratitude through praying together, eating together, and sharing with others. They believe that the more they share and the more sincere they are in praying, the greater the blessings they will receive. In addition, by visiting graves, they are also grateful for the life that is still given, while remembering that every human being will eventually return to the Creator. Allah emphasizes that Allah will increase blessings for those who are grateful. Thus, the tradition of punggahan and pintan is not just a cultural heritage before Ramadan, but also a form of implementing Islamic teachings in appreciating every blessing that has been given.

Self Purification

Purification in Islamic teachings is part of a spiritual process that aims to cleanse the heart, mind, and actions from all forms of sin and mistakes. Tazkiyatun nafs is an Arabic term composed of two words, namely tazkiyah and an – nafs.¹⁸ Tazkiyah means purification, cleansing or purifying while nafs means soul, self and also ego. Tazkiyah an – Nafs refers to the process of purifying the soul, restoring the soul to its natural state, and healing efforts for souls that have experienced deviations so that they return to a

¹⁸ Lita Fauzi Hanafani and Radea Yuli A. Hambali, 'Hakikat Penyucian Jiwa (Takiyat An – Nafs) Dalam Perspektif Al – Ghazali', *Gunung Djati Conference Series*, 19 (2013), p. 533.

spiritually healthy state, with the main goal of getting closer to Allah as much as possible through the spiritual¹⁹ stages that must be passed. Islam teaches that a Muslim must always try to maintain physical and spiritual purity in order to gain Allah's pleasure. With the existence of the punggahan, society is more fundamental to the importance of purifying the heart and improving themselves before entering the month of Ramadan.

Self-purification includes not only the vertical dimension of the relationship between humans and God, but also the horizontal dimension involving harmonious interaction with fellow humans. Self-purification is not only about the heart and mind, but also includes changing behavior for the better. In the tradition of punggahan, people are invited to get used to sharing and caring for others, for example by giving alms or giving food to neighbors and the poor. This is a form of self-purification from stinginess and egoism, as well as training social sensitivity before undergoing Ramadan which is full of worship and good deeds. Mr. Untung's explanation:

"Traditions such as pilgrimages or grave pilgrimages actually have the meaning of self-purification, namely remembering death and improving relationships with God and fellow human beings and will be further perfected in this tradition, namely by bathing in flowers as a symbol of cleansing oneself both physically and spiritually."²⁰

Punggahan and pintan are not just traditions without meaning, but are also symbols of how culture and religious teachings can go hand in hand in shaping the character of society. Self-purification taught in Islam is internalized into local culture, so that people can live it in the form of traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation. By maintaining this tradition, they not only cleanse themselves spiritually, but also preserve local wisdom which teaches Islamic values in a deeper way.

Strengthen Ukhawah Islamiyah

Ukhawah Islamiyah is a term derived from Arabic, namely from the word aha – ya'hu which means brotherhood or brotherhood, while Islamiyah refers to things related to Islam.²¹ Thus, ukhuwah Islamiyah can be interpreted as a bond of brotherhood that is established among fellow Muslims. Brotherhood that applies between fellow Muslims or brotherhood that is established by faith and belief without distinguishing between groups.²²

One of the main goals of community life is to strengthen ukhuwah Islamiyah or brotherhood among Muslims. The tradition of punggahan and pintan is a means for society to strengthen social relations, considering that in this activity members of the entire family, neighbors and community gather in one moment of togetherness. The social interaction that occurs in this tradition reflects the values taught by the Prophet Muhammad emphasizing that the perfection of a person's faith is achieved when he is able to love his fellow humans as much as he loves himself.

¹⁹ Siti Mutholingah, 'Metode Penyucian Jiwa (Tazkiyah Al – Nafs) Dan Implikasinya Bagi Pendidikan Agama Islam', *Journal TA'LIMUNA*, 10.1 (2021), pp. 69 – 83, doi:10.32478/talimuna.v10i1.662.

²⁰ Untung, (Tokoh Agama), Paya Lombang Dusun XI, Kecamatan Tebing Tinggi Kabupaten Serdang Bedagai, Wawancara, Jum'at, 14 Februari 2025

²¹ Herwani, 'Ukhawah Islamiyah Dalam Pandangan Al – Qur'an', *Cross-Border*, 3.2 (2020), pp. 294 – 301.

²² Eva Iryani and Friscilla Wulan Tersta, 'Ukhawah Islamiyah Dan Peranan Masyarakat Islam Dalam Mewujudkan Perdamaian: Studi Literatur', *Jurnal Ilmiah Universitas Batanghari Jambi*, 19.2 (2019), p. 401, doi:10.33087/juibj.v19i2.688.

The silaturahmi established in punggan and pintan not only provides positive social impacts, but also strengthens brotherhood within the framework of Islamic values. This was also clarified by Mr. Sukono:

"With joint activities such as eating together, praying together, asking for forgiveness, visiting graves, the community can feel togetherness that strengthens social and religious ties in everyday life."²³

The tradition of punggahan and pintan is not only a culture, but also has a deep meaning in strengthening Islamic brotherhood. Through activities of praying together, eating together, forgiving each other, and sharing with others, the community increasingly strengthens their social relationships within the framework of Islamic values. This tradition teaches that approaching Ramadan, a Muslim does not only need to prepare themselves individually. In addition, it is also important to establish good interactions with others as an effort to support the creation of blessings in carrying out worship. By continuing to preserve punggahan and pintan, the community not only maintains the culture of their ancestors, but is also required to actualize the values of Islamic teachings concretely in everyday life.

Increasing Piety

Piety in Islam is interpreted as an effort to carry out all of Allah's commands and avoid His prohibitions based on awareness and sincerity in every action. In welcoming the holy month of Ramadan, the Javanese ethnic community in Dusun XI Paya Lombang believes that punggahan and pintan are also part of spiritual preparation so that they can carry out the fasting worship better and closer to Allah.

The tradition of punggahan and pintan carried out by the community serves as a form of self-preparation to enter Ramadan, which is seen as a time full of blessings and divine forgiveness. Preparation before Ramadan is highly recommended with the aim that Muslims are able to carry out the fasting worship optimally and improve the quality of their piety. Piety is seen as the highest degree in Islamic spirituality, because in essence piety is reflected through obedience to Allah's commands and avoidance of His prohibitions, which are based on the strength of faith and deep inner awareness. Piety is the main goal of fasting worship, because Islam teaches humans to fast so that humans are pious. Therefore, this tradition is relevant to the preparation of Muslims in improving the quality of their faith and piety ahead of Ramadan.

This tradition is an important momentum for people to reflect on their life journey, improve themselves, and increase their worship.²⁴ This tradition teaches that before entering the holy month, a person must first cleanse their heart and intentions, and strengthen their relationship with Allah SWT. So, actually this tradition has a good

²³ Sukono, (Masyarakat Dusun XI) Paya Lombang Kecamatan Tebing Tinggi Kabupaten Serdang Bedagai, Wawancara, Kamis, 13 Februari 2025

²⁴ Mucholit Vatku Rohman, Andri Nirwana AN, and Yeti Dahliana, 'Konsep Meningkatkan Taqwa Dalam Implementasi Kehidupan Perpektif Hamka Dalam Tafsir Al-Azhar', *Tafaqquh: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kajian Keislaman*, 12.1 (2014), pp. 1 – 14
<http://scioteca.caf.com/bitstream/handle/123456789/1091/RED2017-Eng-8ene.pdf?sequence=12&isAllowed=y%0Ahttp://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.regsciurbeco.2008.06.005%0Ahttps://www.researchgate.net/publication/305320484_SISTEM PEMBETUNGAN_TERPUSAT_STRATEGI_MELESTARI>.

purpose and meaning for our society, it's just that it has begun to erode and be marginalized where it is carried out only as a tradition inherited from ancestors.²⁵

Almsgiving

In Islam, charity is not only about giving wealth or food to others, but also a form of social concern that can purify one's wealth, heart, and soul. The Javanese ethnic community in Dusun XI Paya Lombang understands that welcoming Ramadan is not only about preparing oneself spiritually, but also sharing happiness with others, especially those in need. Almsgiving is not limited to giving wealth to those in need but also includes various forms of kindness, such as sharing food, giving help, and even smiling at others. Since ancient times, the ancestors of the Javanese ethnic group have taught that gratitude to Allah must be followed by real actions, such as giving alms to fellow living beings.²⁶

The teachings of our ancestors are still preserved and applied today. One of the real implementations of gratitude and appreciation is by collecting prayers to God Almighty and the spirits of our ancestors, and accompanied by a safety ceremony and presentation of offerings. The tradition of punggahan carried out by the people of Dusun XI Paya Lombang is one real form of implementation of the teachings of alms, which is manifested in the activity of eating together and sharing sustenance before Ramadan.

Through this activity, people not only express their gratitude to Allah, but also strengthen social relationships and increase their concern for others. By sharing their fortune, they believe that the blessings of life will increase, both for the sake of life in the world and for happiness in the afterlife. Therefore, this tradition is not only a cultural ritual but also functions as a means of worship that strengthens Islamic values in community life.

Pray for each other

One important aspect of the punggahan tradition is the collective prayer carried out by the community. The tradition of punggahan and pintan is also a reminder to repent and ask Allah for forgiveness. People believe that the month of Ramadhan is a time full of blessings and forgiveness from Allah, so they want to enter this month with a heart that is clean from sin. Through joint prayer, they ask for forgiveness for all the mistakes they have committed. In this activity, they pray for each other's goodness and pray for their families and ancestors who have passed away. Islam strongly encourages its followers to always pray for those who have passed away, as stated in the hadith that a person's good deeds will stop after his death, except for three things, continuous charity, beneficial knowledge, and prayers offered by pious children. Praying for ancestors in punggahan and pintan is proof that this tradition not only serves to strengthen relationships between living individuals, but also to maintain spiritual ties with those who have passed away.

Praying for each other is a form of caring. In addition to praying for fellow individuals, we are also taught to pray for the departed. Because only prayer will save them from the torment of the grave. This shows that Islam not only teaches good relationships with fellow individuals but also emphasizes the value of respect and appreciation for the services of deceased ancestors through prayer and grave pilgrimage.

Remembering Death

One form of respect for ancestors, the tradition of pintan and grave pilgrimage also has a deep theological meaning, namely a reminder of the transience of life. Awareness of death is one of the means of reflection that encourages individuals to improve

²⁵ Untung, (Tokoh Agama), Paya Lombang Dusun XI Kecamatan Tebing Tinggi, Kabupaten Serdang Bedagai, Wawancara, Jum'at, 14 Februari 2025

²⁶ Wahyana Giri, *Sajen Dan Ritual Orang Jawa*, ed. by Narasi (2010).

themselves and reminds awareness of the importance of worship. Through grave pilgrimages, humans will be reminded of the awareness of death so that this moment becomes a reflection for society to better prepare their acts of worship as provisions in the afterlife. Remembering death in the tradition before punggahan can provide awareness that life in the world is temporary and every human being will return to Allah. Therefore, this tradition has an important role in shaping the spiritual awareness of society to be more focused on carrying out worship and improving the quality of religious life not only in the holy month of Ramadan but can also be applied in everyday life.

CONCLUSION

The tradition of punggahan and pintan is part of the ritual that is still preserved by the Javanese ethnic group as a form of spiritual preparation in welcoming the holy month of Ramadan. Punggahan is done by visiting graves, bathing in flowers, installing pintan and praying together. Pintan itself focuses more on the activities of respect and emphasizes the importance of the prayers of pious children as a form of loyalty and respect for parents who have passed away realized through acts of worship, such as prayer and alms. This ritual shows that society does not only prepare itself physically, but also spiritually and socially in welcoming the holy month.

Theological meaning, the tradition of punggahan and pintan not only functions as a cultural ritual, but also has a deep religious meaning. This tradition illustrates the balance between theocentrism and anthropocentrism, where diversity is not only oriented towards God (transcendental), but also has a positive impact on social life. Punggahan and pintan contain the meaning of gratitude, self-purification, strengthening Islamic brotherhood, increasing piety, charity, praying for each other, and remembering death. This tradition is a real manifestation of Hablumminallah (relationship with Allah) and Hablum-minannas (relationship with fellow human beings), which reflects how Islamic teachings can be applied in local culture without leaving its spiritual values.

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