

ISLAMIC AND CULTURAL ACCULTURATION AS LOCAL WISDOM IN PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT OF MERAPI MOUNTAIN AREAS

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ABSTRACT

The community around Mount Merapi with all its local wisdom believes that coexistence with Merapi requires norms and ethics. This research is a qualitative descriptive research with a literature review technique. This study aims to explore the concept of the beliefs of the Merapi people, the influence of Javanese Islam on the beliefs of the Merapi people, as well as the ethics of living the people around Merapi. Based on the results of the study, it is known that the concept of belief in the people on the slopes of Merapi is syncretism. The influence of Islamic teachings on the traditions of the Slopes of Merapi is the emergence of local people's understanding that combines Javanese traditions and Islamic teachings. In living, the Merapi community believes that with ethics in farming, raising livestock, living, and living, it can create harmony between the people on the slopes of Mount Merapi and the natural environment. The Merapi community continues to revive and preserve various traditions amid the onslaught of modernization currents, such as the *wiwitan* tradition, *dawetan sapi*, and *becekan*. This is one of the efforts to maintain a balance between humans and nature.

Keywords: Islamic and Cultural Acculturation, Local Wisdom, Protecting Environment, Merapi Mountain Areas

INTRODUCTION

Mount Merapi, which is located between the province of Central Java and the Special Region of Yogyakarta, is considered the most active and most dangerous mountain in Indonesia besides Mount Kelud in East Java and Mount Luwu on Sangir Island, North Sulawesi. Mount Merapi is included in type A based on historical data from the frequent eruptions of the mountain (Kusumadinata, 1979: 182). The eruption of Merapi was first recorded by the Dutch geological scholar, R. W. Van Bammelen, who put forward the theory of the move of the Hindu Mataram Kingdom under the rule of Wawa from Central Java to East Java due to the eruption of Merapi in 1006 which damaged the

kingdom (Kartodirdjo, 1975: 82). Since 1006 Mount Merapi has continued to experience regular eruptions with a range between once every one to seven years and until now it has been recorded to have experienced eruptions up to more than 80 times. It is on this basis that Merapi is often referred to as “the never sleeps volcano” which was one of the most active volcanoes during the holocene (Sudradjat et al, 2010: 69).

Nevertheless, the slopes of Merapi on the south side that enter the Yogyakarta area are inhabited by many people. Of course, the people on the slopes of Merapi are used to coexisting with disasters. This makes the people on the south side of the slopes of Merapi have traditional intelligence in dealing with disasters and their signs. In addition to having traditional intelligence, the people on the slopes of Mount Merapi, especially those in the south, still adhere to the *Kejawen* belief system. However, in everyday life they still carry out the teachings of the Islamic religion. As for ecological wisdom, the community around Merapi has a kind of unwritten rule that must be obeyed. Violations of all of them are believed to be able to cause havoc, not only for the offender but will be felt by all residents around Mount Merapi.

According to Sztompka (2007: 56) tradition is a hereditary policy that has a place in the consciousness, beliefs, norms, and values that we adhere to as well as in objects created in the past. Tradition provides useful fragments of historical heritage. Tradition is like a set of ideas and materials that people can use in present actions to build a future based on past experiences. Tradition provides a blueprint for action. Tradition provides them with building blocks that are already ready to shape their world. Furthermore, it is also stated that the traditions of the regions, cities, and local communities have the same role, namely binding citizens or their members in certain fields.

Local wisdom or also known as local knowledge (local knowledge, indigeneous people) according to Jeniarto (2013: 8), broadly speaking, there are two meanings of local wisdom. First, Local Wisdom is interpreted as ancestral heritage knowledge passed down through tradition. This knowledge is permanent in various eras. Second, Local Wisdom is interpreted as local knowledge which is the result of local intelligence in dealing with life problems. This knowledge is constantly changing according to the environment of the times. This knowledge is contextual within different time and space. Dekens (2007: 7) described that a local knowledge system is composed of different knowledge types, practices and beliefs, values, and worldviews. Such systems change constantly under the influence of power relations and cross-scale linkages both within and outside the community. Local wisdom is a tool of knowledge in a community, both from past generations and from their experiences related to the environment and other methods to

solve problems or difficulties faced. Local wisdom can be studied through wise words that have been studied for generations and become the guide of life. Typical words of wisdom derived from an ethnic group generally make use of one of the main linguistic tools called metaphors. Metaphors open up the possibility for any language to develop into a sophisticated one according to the needs of its ethnic group.

According to Koentjaraningrat (1974: 83), there are three kinds of cultural forms: 1) culture as a complex of ideas, ideas, values, norms, and regulations; 2) culture as a complex of human-patterned behavior activities in society; and 3) objects as human works.

The description above shows that local wisdom, tradition, and culture have a close relationship. All three contain elements of thought process (ideas) in the form of values that regulate human behavior in them for good. In this case, Value is something that society stands upholds. Setiyadi (2013: 296) reveals in relation to 'culture', local wisdom is a part of abstract culture. Local wisdom can also be a symbol. The symbols can mean "good", "positive", "not good", or "negative". In Indonesia, local wisdom must clearly have positive meaning because 'wisdom' always means 'good or positive'.

The results of the long experience of a society are proof that in the community environment (starting from even the most primitive society) there is a source of information (value) for safety for its members. From the various terms of thought and work, perhaps what has recently been discussed more is local wisdom. Wikantiyoso (2010: 20) stated that local communities generally have local knowledge and ecological wisdom in predicting and mitigating natural disasters in their area. Such local knowledge is usually obtained from rich empirical experience as a result of interacting with its ecosystem.

Related to this view, Ridwan (2007: 28) state that local wisdom is the result of a dialectic process between individuals and their environment. Local wisdom is an individual's response to his or her environmental conditions. At the individual level, local wisdom arises as a result of the cognitive work process of the individual as an attempt to establish the choice of values that are considered most appropriate for them. Local wisdom is an effort to find common value as a result of relationship patterns (settings) that have been arranged in an environment.

This paper explores Islamic acculturation and the culture that grows and develops in the scope of the merapi slope community, including the concept of beliefs embraced by the community, the influence of Javanese Islam on community beliefs, as well as the ethics of community living on the slopes of Merapi which aims to protect and preserve the environment. The majority of the people on the slopes of Merapi work as farmers, planters,

and ranchers. In carrying out this profession, the people of the slopes of Merapi believe that there are ethics and norms that must be maintained. In addition, in social living, the people of the slopes of Merapi also believe that there is an order that must be maintained, it is intended that the community can still live in harmony with merapi and all the entities in it.

METHOD

This study is a qualitative descriptive with data sources in the form of literature on local wisdom, traditions, and community perceptions regarding the concept of belief and ethics of community livelihood on the slopes of Merapi. The data collection technique in this study uses literature review techniques which are carried out systematically, factually, and accurately regarding existing facts and their relation to the ethics of living on the slopes of Merapi. The data sources used are from books and journals, historical records, and interviews.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

The Concept of Trust from the People in Merapi Mountain Areas

The people live on Merapi Mountain Areas have syncretic beliefs, or often known as syncretism (Triyoga, 1991: 10). Based on the understanding of language, syncretism is a fusion or cohesion. Meanwhile, understanding according to terms is the phenomenon of mixing the practices and beliefs of one religion with other religions so as to create new and different traditions (Pranowo, 2001: 10). The concept of syncretism is limited to the religious synthesis formed after the initial consolidation of a religion.

John L. Esposito (2001: 176) calls syncretism a deviation from the core of its parent religion or its normative ideal expression. However, adherents of this syncretic school consider that although syncretism has come out of its basic normative ideas, it still maintains the characteristics of its parent religion. This concept is closely related to the 'normative' religion and the standard of belief adhered to by its adherents when determining the do's and don'ts of the acts. In other words, religion remains a source of people's behavior. The mixture of Islamic conceptions and traditions that exist in the Slope of Merapi community, with reference to the Receptio theory, is a form of acceptance of Javanese traditions to Islamic teachings that are included in the environment of the Merapi community.

The people of Merapi are divided into several groups that are classified based on their character, social structure, and mindset towards Islam. The variety of community

groups causes each group to have a different color from each other, especially in responding to the problems surrounding syncretism. First, is that the group of students, which is divided into modernists and conservatives, has a character that is a symbol for their group. The modernist group is more focused on textual understanding based on the Qur'an and hadith. Meanwhile, conservative groups, in addition to understanding textually, also understand contextually.

An example of this is when accepting the *slametan* ritual as one of the acts of worship (Pranowo, 2009: 211). Second, is the *priyayi* group, which understands the essence of religion by its meaning of its symbols and follows certain sects (Geertz, 1976: 231). Third, is the *abangan* group, more concerned with agrarian rituals such as *slametan* circle of life (rites of passage) starting from the womb to death or *bersih desa* which is a symbol of the sturdiness of the peasant community in maintaining the relationship between the small world (*jagad cilik*) and the big world (*jagad gede*), or often known as *Manunggaling Kawula Gusti* (Geertz, 1976: 234).

The Influence of Javanese Islam on the Beliefs of the People in Merapi Mountain Areas

In general, the people of Yogyakarta refer a lot of their life problems to the admonitions given by the Palace, including the people of Merapi. The Yogyakarta Palace or formerly known as the Mataram kingdom has a special term, namely the galaktis community, which means that a country is organized as a *Mandala*. In that country there are four place guards, namely Ratu Kidul, Sunan Merapi, Sunan Lawu, and Semar. Sunan Lawu is considered the last king of Majapahit. Ratu Kidul and Sunan Merapi are ethereal spirit kings whose palaces are on the South Coast and the top of Mount Merapi, the southern and northern parts of the city. Semar is a puppet figure who is referred to as the Sultan's spiritual guide. They jointly established the boundaries of the country. The Sultan's relationship with the guards is contractual, which means that there is a process of giving each other in the form of offerings from the Sultan, which will be reciprocated with the Sultan getting supernatural powers from them (Woodward, 1999: 293).

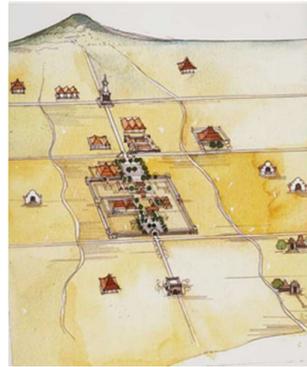


Figure 1. The imaginary axis of Yogyakarta

Source: <http://www.tribunnews.com>

Yogyakarta is not spared from the existence of an imaginary axis that stretches from the North - South direction (Mount Merapi - *Tugu Pal Putih* - Yogyakarta Palace - *Panggun Krapyak* - South Sea) which forms a linear path and connects several physical symbols that have philosophical value meanings. The philosophical concept of this city has been thought out, planned and instilled long before the formation of *Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat* by the first King of the Yogyakarta Sultanate Palace, Namely Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono I. Basically this imaginary axis has more symbolically meaning than physically. *Tugu*, Palace, and *Panggun Krapyak*, which are in a straight line, are the axis of the philosophy of Yogyakarta Palace. It is said to be a philosophical axis because the connecting lines of the Monument, Palace, and *Panggun Krapyak* are real axes in the form of roads. As for the imaginary axis, it is from Mount Merapi, Palace, and the South Sea.

Philosophically, this is divided into two aspects, namely *Jagat Alit* and *Jagat Ageng*. *Jagat Alit*, which describes the process of the beginnings of human life and life with all upright behaviors so that the nature of human life and life is understood, is described with the planology of Yogyakarta City as the King's City at that time. The city's planology extends from south to north starting from the *Panggun Krapyak*, ending at the *Tugu Pal Putih*. It emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between the Creator and man as his creation (*Sangkan Paraning Dumadi*).

In the course of his life, man is seduced by all sorts of worldly pleasures. The temptation can be in the form of women and treasures depicted in the form of beringharjo markets. The temptation of power is described by the *Kepatihan* complex, all of which are on the right side of the straight road between the palace and the White Pal Monument, as a symbol of man close to His creator (*Manunggalaing Kawula Gusti*).

Jagat Ageng, which elaborates on the life and life of the community, in which the

leader of the society whoever he is always has to make the conscience of the people his first and foremost wife in order to realize the welfare of the people is based on the constancy and belief that only one creator is all-great. *Jagat Ageng* is depicted with an imaginary line from *Parangkusumo* in the southern sea –Yogyakarta Palace – Mount Merapi. This emphasizes the relationship between humans living in a world where a human must first understand the nature of life so that he is able to achieve perfection in life (*Manunggaling Kawula Gusti*). Mount Merapi occupies an important position in Javanese mythology, believed to be the center of the kingdom of subtle creatures, as a *pangrantunan swarga*, in the plot of life's journey depicted with an imaginary axis and a spiritual line of perpetuation connecting the South Sea – *Panggung krapyak* –Yogyakarta Palace – *Tugu Pal Putih* – Mount Merapi. This symbol has a meaning about the process of human life from birth to facing the Supreme Creator..

In this case, there is an interesting phenomenon among the people of The Slope of Merapi. The phenomenon relates to a charismatic singular figure, namely *mbah* Maridjan. *Mbah* Maridjan, a courtier of the Yogyakarta Palace who has been assigned to the *ngarsa dalem* of the Sultanate of Yogyakarta Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono X as the caretaker of Mount Merapi since 1982, continued his father, *mbah* Turgo, as the representative of the palace on Mount Merapi. *Mbah* Maridjan was given the title *mas Panewu* and the title *Suraksohargo* which literally means mountaineer, who had the special task of carrying out the *labuhan* ceremony to the top of Merapi. In addition, *mbah* Maridjan as the caretaker is also in charge of performing traditional rituals and ceremonies related to Mount Merapi.



Figure 2. *Mbah Maridjan* at the *labuhan* Merapi tradition

Source: https://www.terakota.id/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/51661_620.jpg

Based on research conducted by FX Rudi Gunawan (2006: 38) it is explained that *Mbah* Maridjan is a loyal and responsible caretaker. His closeness to Merapi has opened the eyes of his heart and gave his own money. Merapi is considered a living being that must be understood and treated like any other living being. However, because Merapi's age is very old and far from our age, it is appropriate for humans to have the highest respect for Merapi as a living being. Such trusts in fact form their own beliefs among the people of Merapi. It can also be said that they believe in the great mystical power and

value found in Mount Merapi. It is also a reflection of the syncretic values that most merapi people have.

Mbah Maridjan is a Merapi caretaker who has been loyal for 30 years as the caretaker of Merapi. After *Mbah* Maridjan died in the 2010 Merapi eruption, the consecration activities were continued by the successor caretaker, *Mbah* Asih, who is also the son of *Mbah* Maridjan. *Mbah* Asih was crowned by Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono X in 2011. The task of the caretaker is as a leader or leader in the rituals surrounding Mount Merapi, the ritual is aimed at making a balance between the Yogyakarta palace and the great power of the *ghaib* kingdom on Mount Merapi. In addition, the caretaker gives a very important meaning to the climbers of Mount Merapi. The caretaker usually notifies what are the taboos when climbing, hiking trails, and rescue routes and informs the surrounding residents if there are activities of Mount Merapi that are considered dangerous. The existence of the caretaker of Mount Merapi is very important because the Yogyakarta palace was built on two astrals, namely Mount Merapi and the South Sea Coast.

The thick traditions and customs that exist are shown by the implementation of these various rituals is a strong Javanese cultural influence and attached to the life of the people of Merapi. Javanese people, in particular, the people of Merapi adhere to the principle of the Javanese philosophy of life, which is an attitude of life that aims to seek the perfection of life through *pangawikan (ngelmu) sangkan paraning dumadi* and *manunggaling kawula Gusti*. In this case, Pakubowono V, gives a mystical message in Centini Fiber V: 279 whose contents are: *aywa lunga yen tan wruha, ingkang pinaranan ing purug, lawan sira aywa nadhah, yen tan wruha rasanipun, ywa nganggo-anggo siraku, yen tan wruh ranning busana, weruha atakon tuhu, bisane tetiron nyata*. This quote gives a message to mystics to live the essence of life with caution (Endraswara, 2004: 34).

Ethics of Living the People in Merapi Mountain Areas

For the people of the Southern Slopes of Merapi, on Mount Merapi there is a supernatural power that can affect social life. Mount Merapi has a legend or myth as the Palace of Ethereal Creatures which is communicated for generations by the surrounding community. One of the figures known and loved by the residents is *Nyai Gadung Melati* who acts as the leader of the ethereal creature Merapi and protector of the environment in his area.

Legends or myths about the existence of volcanoes are not only found in Yogyakarta, but also found in many developed countries. As an illustration, some of the

legends of the mountain include: (1) Mount Fujiyama in Japan with Princess Kaguya which in Japanese means daughter who glows sparkly. (2) Mount Vesuvius in the Campagna area near the Gulf of Naples which means "Son of Ves/Zeus" or also known as Hercules, St. Helens known as the Bridge of the Gods, (4) Mahameru which is considered the abode of the gods and as a means of connecting between the earth (man) and *Kahyangan*.

The mountain is considered the pinnacle of spiritual attainment of humanity. The mountain is the abode of spirits and the center of supernatural power. The mountain is the gate of the sky, the highest place of man as a tangible figure, because above it man becomes a spirit. This is shown in the form of pyramids in Egypt, Mount Mahameru in India, to Mount Fujiyama in Japan. In Javanese culture, the representation of value is manifested in the form of tumpeng, a serving of rice and produce formed pursuing, symbolizing horizontal unity (man and nature) and vertical (man and his creator). This description suggests that mythical figures in this community story are seen as sacred and can be used as a model that provides meaning and value for the behavior of mythical owners in achieving living in harmony with nature and the environment.

This manifestation of the close relationship between the community and Merapi can be observed from the personification of Mount Merapi such as Merapi the Supreme Master, *Eyang Merapi*, or other terms related to nature such as *Bopo Angkoso Ibu Bumi*. This personification can be interpreted as a form of belief that man and nature are a complete part. The harmony of nature and man in everyday life seems like in a big family. The term Merapi the Supreme Master has also been used as the title of a film presented to visitors at the Merapi Museum in Yogyakarta.

Various perceptions, views and attitudes of the people around Mount Merapi regarding Mount Merapi, are inseparable from myths that are believed for generations. For the surrounding community, they firmly believe that Merapi is not a threat to their lives. This closeness of society to nature is also reflected in the ethics of society during interaction with nature. The ethical patterns of the surrounding community towards Mount Merapi are divided into several ethical patterns of the community in maintaining the balance of the cosmos, such as:

Ethics in Farming

Before the people on the slopes of Merapi planted the fields, together they held a *selamatan* to ask the god of food named *Mbok Sri (Dewi Sri)*, as well as when the harvest was finished, this community also held a *wiwit* tradition as an expression of gratitude to *Mbok Sri* and *sang Smara bumi*. Usually they also visit ancestral tombs for successful

harvest (Triyoga, 1991: 72). *Wiwitan* is one of the traditions carried out by the farming community. *Wiwitan* in Indonesian means to start, first (Purwadi, 2012: 367). In general, *wiwitan* is one of the *slametan* rites in Java which was originally used for offerings to *Dewi Sri* as a form of community gratitude for the harvest that has been given (Endraswara, 2012: 100). *Wiwitan* is a manifestation of gratitude from farmers towards God for being given a bountiful harvest, while also begging for safety and safety from danger.

In the implementation of the *wiwitan* tradition, it begins with preparations, but before making various preparations, first determine the day for the process of implementing the *wiwitan* tradition. After determining the day, the next stage before the peak of the *wiwitan* tradition is usually the community do the *mojoki* tradition (putting *janur* and *dadap* leaves spare) in the four corners of the rice field. On the peak day of the implementation of the *wiwitan* tradition, the community is busy preparing *ubo rampe* and other equipment for the process of implementing the *wiwitan* tradition. After that the food is taken to the rice field. Arriving at the rice field, the owner of the rice field made a place of offerings. After the offering place is finished, then the *ubo rampe* is placed and a prayer reading is carried out. When finished, the food was distributed to the participants of the ceremony. After that, do the pennant and finally the cutting of rice.



Figure 3. *Wiwitan* Tradition Procession

Source: <http://www.budayajawa.id>

In an effort to find good agricultural land and free from evil, people will usually ask for the help of a shaman or powerful person. After bringing the means from shamans or powerful people, the landowner then burned the machete stalks to burnt, hollowed out the stalks of hoes, and roasted the corn kernels until they were black scorched. After that the relief machete was used to cut down wooden trees or bamboo groves, and to weed the grass and thickets that grew on prospective farms. Then, the soil, which has been freed from the unwanted plant, is fattened with a hoe that has been leached or hollowed out by the stalk. Finally, the loose soil was cut off by black scorched corn kernels, the seeds were then taken back and eaten by the landowner. The spreading of corn kernels and their

feeding should be repeated up to three times, only then the soil can be cultivated.

When Merapi's ash rain falls, which means that many plants die, but this community is still grateful to *Eyang* Merapi for the sprinkling of Merapi ash which can increase the fertility of their soil. According to the experience and beliefs of the people of Merapi, the plant scorched by Merapi ash, this was borrowed by *Eyang* Merapi for festive purposes at the Merapi palace, and will soon be returned excessively in the next harvest harvest (Triyoga, 1991: 73). The purpose of this series of actions is to repel the evil gentlemen who inhabit the would-be farmland. After leaving and looking for a new place to live, the land was cultivated into moor. The planting technique used is intercropping, which is planting the main crop of corn, interspersed with distilling plants in the form of tubers, vegetables, and grains.

Ethics in Raising Livestock

The inauguration of protected forests has resulted in changes in maintenance techniques, from grazing techniques to maintenance techniques in cages, with the risk of livestock owners having to graze every day. On weekdays grazing activities are carried out every morning and evening in the yard as well as in the moor and in the protected forest bordering the village. In the dry season, grazing activities are only carried out in the morning because it is difficult to get green grass. To meet the needs of livestock in that season, during the day the community looks for young grass found in the yard and moor. In that season, they were forced to graze on the upper slopes for about a three to four-hour round trip.

Grazing activities are carried out in places that are considered unwalked. However, grazing activities are carried out in groups, for fear of grazing alone in the forest on the famous upper slopes. According to them, the forest of grazing activities in the dry season is inhabited by many annoying softs, in the forest there are often voices of people singing Javanese songs, the sound of people shouting for someone's name, and a scary voice. While in the forest they graze close to each other, taking care of each other to avoid softening distractions. They never complained, profanity, shrieked, and imitated the voices heard in the place and inwardly excused themselves to the inhabitants of the forest. Lawn seekers are also often encouraged to find themselves by often seeing thickets of grass between sand and rock. This is a mere illusion that if violated by trying to take the grass, it is believed that unwanted things can happen. Lawn seekers must be firm and steady and equipped with strong intentions.

As for the occurrence of a lava disaster that burns grasslands and reeds, it has its

own meaning for them and is considered a gift of *Eyang Merapi*. After the grassland is burned by lava, the ash will become natural fertilizer. The meadow will re-green on its own and be as fertile as possible, because the roots do not burn. Even sometimes, if the lava does not burn the pastures, they secretly burn the old pastures. This burning is carried out at the end of the dry season in the hope that the fire will not spread to burn unwanted plants. In addition, it is mainly to fertilize pastures and accelerate the growth of young grass when the rainy season arrives.



Figure 4. Procession of *Dawetan Sapi* Traditions

Source: <http://www.budayajawa.id>

In addition to grazing activities, there is also a tradition that has developed in the slopes of Merapi related to treating the rich king or the livestock. People think that owning a cow is one of the measures of luxury, side by side with other four-legged livestock such as horses, buffaloes, and goats. People consider the rich king to be like a mistress, at any time squeezed by the economic situation they can sell it. Therefore farm animals are very privileged in their existence.

The community has an ancestral heritage tradition in the form of the *Dawetan Sapi* tradition, a tradition of expressing gratitude for the birth of a calf or usually called *pedhet* on the fifth day. This tradition is carried out in the field where people flock to sit on mats in front of which they are served *tumpeng* containing corn rice, side dishes, and *jadah*. In addition, *dawet* drinks are also served. As soon as local community leaders finished chanting prayers full of hope, the traditional food was then eaten together aka *kembul bujono*. Beside that, a dozen *pedhet* were specially given a *dawet* banquet which was accommodated by a bucket. However, nowadays the implementation of the *Dawetan Sapi* tradition is quite carried out by the owner of the *pedhet* who makes the *dawet* then distributes the *dawet* to neighbors around the house. With the implementation of this *Dawetan Sapi* tradition, the community hopes that the growth of *pedhet* can be healthy and strong and female *pedhet* can become a fertile brood.

Ethics in Settling

For the villagers on the slopes of Mount Merapi, the land where they live is closely related to the owner and his family. Ugly and sinister land affects the state of health, economy, social relations of the people who occupy it; for example, often sickly, quarrelsome, failed harvests, and difficulty finding a mate. On the contrary, good soil, will be freed from the dwelling, bringing good influence to the owner, as always getting good luck, well-being and safety.

To find out the good and bad of a piece of land that will be used as a place to live, the surrounding community will dig the soil in the middle of the plot as deep as an arm. The excavation of the soil is then re-covered with the original soil. If when stockpiling, closing the excavated hole, the soil is not in condition then the plot of land that is considered good and free from softening. The land is considered to bring good fortune and safety to the owner and his family. On the other hand, if in re-closing the excavated hole the land is in a state of trouble, it is a sign that the landowner must look for a new piece of land that is free from softening.

To find good land, the surrounding community usually asks for the help of a duktm either from within the village or from outside the village. After mutually agreed, on a predetermined day in accordance with the Javanese calendar, the shaman came to the plot of land that a person submitted for his residential building. At exactly 12:00 noon, the shaman sat cross-legged facing west in the middle of the plot of land as his mouth read a spell he only knew by himself. After that, he digs up the ground about half a meter deep. The excavated soil was then smelled to find out the smell; if it smells of fragrance, it is a sign that the land is good for the dwelling, but if it smells fishy, he will encourage the owner to look for a new piece of land because the plot of land is not good, because it is inhabited by a detrimental soft. If there is no new plot of land, the shaman is forced to make peace or expel the softener by providing offerings in the form of frankincense, flowers, chickens, and so on depending on the request of the softener, and reading the incantation.

The surrounding community in Mount Merapi has a belief that the direction of a residential building has an influence on the safety and welfare of its owner and his family. On the southern slopes of Merapi, residential houses are mostly erected facing south or towards the village road, avoiding the direction of Mount Merapi and Merbabu. The avoidance of the direction of the mountains was intended to obtain safety and well-being for the owner and his family. The residential house facing Mount Merapi is a "*sangar house*" because the owner is considered disrespectful, challenging and provides his house as a residence for ethereal creatures who inhabit the Merapi Palace, as well as

houses facing the Merbabu direction.

Actually, when viewed from a scientific point of view, the prohibition of building a residential house facing the direction of Mount Merapi or preferably facing south or the direction of the shoulder of the road is to facilitate the evacuation process and exchange information about mountain activities at the time of an eruption. This fact is supported by the opinion of Tyas (2021: 76) that the people on the slopes of Merapi are quite traumatized by the eruption of Mount Merapi in 2010 ago, this causes excessive fear, however, the positive side is that residents become obedient to government regulations and instructions if there are signs of evacuating immediately.

Ethics in Living

Residents who live on the banks of the rivers that flow on Mount Merapi sometimes hear strange sounds at night, such as the clattering of the sound of a passing dating train. It is said that it is a sign that the Merapi Palace is sending a group in order to celebrate to marry a relative with one of the residents of the South Sea Palace. It was interpreted as a mystical sign that soon there would be a lava flood that would pass through the river. Therefore, the local community still always carries out some traditional ceremonies, such as mountain almsgiving, livestock congratulations, friday *kliwon*, and and so on. The purpose of organizing the various rescue processions is to pray for salvation and abundance of fortune to God and give alms to the ethereal creatures of the merapi inhabitants so as not to disturb the residents, peaceful, and free from danger so as to create a harmony between humans and the natural environment. Society believes that if human behavior is negative, then nature will also be negative, because whatever is planted is what will be reaped.



Figure 5. Procession of *Becekan* Tradition
Source: Personal Documentation



Figure 6. Procession of *Becekan* Tradition
Source: Personal Documentation



Figure 7. *Becekan* Tradition in the *Gendhol* River
Source: Personal Documentation



Figure 8. *Becekan* Tradition Carried Out by Male
Source: Personal Documentation

The *Becekan* ceremony, also called *Dandan Kali* or *Memetri Kali* which means to maintain or improve the river environment, is in the form of a ceremony asking for rain during the dry season which takes place in Kepuharjo Village, Cangkringan District, Sleman Regency. River water is of great importance for the local population for agricultural purposes. It is said that after the ceremony, it usually rains immediately so that the ground becomes muddy, then it is called splatter. Muddy is also defined as an offering of mutton that is cooked with gulai. Hamlets that carry out this ceremony include Pagerjurang Hamlet, Kepuh Hamlet, and Manggong Hamlet.

The implementation is divided into several stages, namely symmetrizing wells in Kepuh Hamlet, because in this area only this hamlet has wells and then the *Becekan* Ceremony is carried out in the middle of the *Gendhol* River. This is because, in the *Gendhol* River area there are many springs, but due to the eruption of Merapi in 2010, many springs in the *Gendhol* River have been lost. This ceremony is intended to pray for rain to God, in addition to begging for the land to be fertile, so that the citizens become healthy, safe, safe, and prosperous.

The timing of this traditional ceremony uses *pranotomongso*, namely on *mongso kapat* and the day is *Kliwon* Friday, if there is no *Kliwon* Friday on *mongso kapat*, it will be postponed on *mongso kalimo*, because that day is considered sacred. The ceremony was presided over by a *modin* and was attended by residents from three hamlets. This whole series of events must be carried out and followed by men, offerings are absolutely not allowed to be touched by women, and goats for offerings must be three male goats, one for each hamlet. The procession of slaughtering and processing goats must also be carried out by the men.

Goats are used as the main ingredient because the beginning of this tradition coincided with the Eid al-Adha, so that over time this tradition was continued by the

community and continued to use goats as a staple even though it did not coincide with the Eid al-Adha holiday. After the procession of processing the offerings is completed, the goats that have been cooked with gulai are placed in a container, namely *takir*, a base commonly used for food made from leaves then the procession is continued with slack. *Ubo rampe* prepared in addition to processed goats is *tumpeng* rice with chili and market snacks in the form of *jadah*, bananas, *jenang*, and small foods.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, there are several points that can be taken, including, first, the concept of trust in the people of Merapi is syncretism. The construction of Islamic teachings in Java shows the phenomenon of mixing the practices of several religions and beliefs such as Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, thus creating a new tradition, namely Javanese Islam (*Kejawen* Islam). The emergence of Javanese Islam was motivated by the development of Islamic teachings to Java, and made the palace the basis for the spread of religion and cultural changes. From it it can be understood that the concept of syncretism is limited to the religious synthesis formed after the initial consolidation of a religion. Adherents of syncretic traditions consider that they still maintain the characteristics of their parent religion, although there are some teachings that differ from the pure teachings of Islam.

Second, the influence of Islamic teachings on the traditions of Merapi is the emergence of local community understanding that combines Javanese traditions and Islamic teachings, or what is known as Javanese Islam. Then they developed sufism that formed the core of state cults and the theory of *kerajawian* which had similarities with the kingdoms in Bali which were indoctrinated from religions in South Asia as a religious model of their own. These doctrines are reinforced by the pattern of relations formed between religious texts, folk religions, social organizations, social discourses, and religions. Normative piety was highlighted by javanese society at that time by connecting rituals and shari'ah (Islamic law) and forms of behavior as a set of transcendent behaviors.

Third, in living the people of Merapi still believe in the existence of supernatural powers that are considered higher, so that various ceremonies carried out by the community, are actually a form of their efforts to maintain harmony between the residents, Mount Merapi, and surrounding nature. The people of Merapi also still believe that whoever violates the laws of nature, will get punishment from the community or from the higher cosmos who come from the nature. It is with this belief that the harmony between the people of Mount Merapi and the natural environment can run with full balance.

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