

Sacred Calendar and Expression of Religion in Indonesia

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Abstract -This study elaborates the sacredness dimension and religious expression of Muslims in Indonesia in establishing sacred days. The objective of this paper is finding the ultimate values in the sacred day calendar application in Indonesia. This study applied library research approach which primarily refers to books, journals and proceedings as data resources. The research findings state some ultimate values in determining the sacred days in Indonesia: (1) religious doctrine can shape one's total belief in certain objects, (2) religious rituals can build the solidarity of religious adherents, (3) religious institution is the representation of values that binds its adherents, (4) state authority is the determinant variable for religious groups existence, (5) Need and Achievement /NaCH. The need for ritual element will always exist in both primitive and modern societies. In order to create conducive atmosphere of religious pluralism, it is imperative for the state not to prohibit religious expression from any community because it is different from social action.

Keywords: Calendar Sacredness; Religious expression; 10 Asyuro; National Santri Day

Introduction

Ritual practices such as birth, death, marriage ceremonies, and some other religious observances have been practiced by community in their culture for thousands of years. These rituals are seen to be the deepest emotions and the ultimate values that people carried out in in all conditions. Moreover, these rituals become inherent to the solidarity of social group, and even in the pillars of social constitution which lied in norms and laws (Victor Turner, 1966). In Indonesia, ritual practices have close relation to the state, in terms of calendar. The official calendar contains certain ritual times, namely Christian calendar, Hijriyah and the Javanese calendar.

B.J. Boland stated that the religious experience of Muslim people in a pluralistic Indonesia was strongly influenced by the principle of divinity "the One Almighty" in the sense of "One God". Therefore, all the state policies (MORA) do not accommodate any activities outside the religious framework other than the One God (Boland, 1982, p. 188).

The Ministry of Religious Affairs' view over "religion" is an interpretation of the first pillar of Pancasila. This is in line with Harun Nasution's statement that in Indonesian society "religion" is perceived as *ad-din* (Arabic) and *religi* (European language) which means *a* (not) and *gamma* to leave, so religion is defined as something that does not go, remains in one place and is inherited from generation to generation (Nasution, 2013, p. 1).

From previously mentioned definitions, the role of the state in this case is a night guard. Here are some studies regarding this topic: (1) The Voice of the 'Ulama': Fatwas and Religious Authority in Indonesia, Nico J.G. Kaptein revealed political authority in Indonesia. According to Kaptein, religious institutions are influenced by global politics. In Indonesia, the strength of religious organizations is dominated by Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah (Kaptein, 2004, p. 1); (2) The Principle of Relativity in the Post-Classical Theory of Law, Il'ia L. Chestnova and Ekaterina G. Samokhinab. The regulation of a state is influenced by the applicable social law so that it can be understood by the people. Thus, there was no conflict in its application (Chestnov & Samokhina, 2020, p. 47); (3) Religion and Culture: Confrontative or Compromised Relations, Roibin, this study elaborated the phenomenon of religious and cultural dialogue in society as well as described various shades of Islam in Indonesia: (1) pure Islam; (2) local Islam: Sunni, Sh'i Mu'tazili and Khawariji; (3) Sunni Islam: NU, Muhammadiyah, Islamic Union, Al-Wasliyah. Religion is commonly regarded to be a part of a cultural system (system of cognition). The result of this study said that religion becomes a source of value (value system) whose authenticity must be maintained. This means that

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religion is perceived as the result of human action which is reflected in culture and civilization. On the other hand, religion appears as a source of values that directs humans how to behave (Agama, 2004, p. 6).

In contrary to the previous studies, this paper focuses on the diverse religious expressions of Muslim people in Indonesia. However, in the public sphere there remain some problems related to the permission of ritual celebrations by certain religious communities, in particular during the 10th anniversary of Ashura organized by the Shiite community. In addition, the National Santri Day (HSN) celebrated by the Nahdlatul Ulama community did not directly get support. There were even conflicting opinions, especially when the state would validate it. This phenomenon seems interesting to study as it is well known that the sacred calendar in the implementation of rituals which are religious expressions is influenced by political power factors.

Methodology

Religious ritual cannot be separated from the sacredness of time. The dimension of time sacredness always has a social context, even the political situation becomes a determinant factor. The focus of this paper is examining the meaning of the 10th Ashura rituals by the Shiite community and National Santri Day (HSN) by NU community. Therefore, the aim of this study is revealing the meaning of ritual sacredness and its timing by each community, and the role of the state to accommodate religious activities in Indonesia.

This paper applied library research approach with the primary data centered on the literature review from books, journals and proceedings. Meanwhile, the secondary data cover encyclopedias and dictionaries. As for other supporting data, there was taken some information from cyberspace (internet) whose author was known and or credible website. The thinking framework in this paper uses Joachim Wach's religionswissenschaft perspective regarding religion which is positioned as the object of study that attempts to understand religious phenomena from various aspects such as psychology, sociology, economics, language, art and the sacredness of religion developed by Mircea Eliade (Ali, 1990). In the perspective of religious studies, religion has many dimensions that it is said to be a religion. According to L.B. Brown, religion at least has five dimensions, (1) behavior; (2) beliefs; (3) experience; (4) involvement; and (5) consequential effects (Brown, 1959, p. 10).

Result and Discussion

Concept of Place and Time Sacredness

Discussion on religious affairs is inherent to the concept of sacredness in every ritual ceremony. Robert N Bellah claimed that religion which is seen as a social evolution (organization from, social system or any form of adaptation to a complex environment) can be divided into five phases (Tipton, 2006, p. 24). First is primitive phase. Second is archaic phase. Third is historical phase. Fourth is pre modern phase. Fifth is modern phase. The five phases have their own variety of rituals and sacred values. Apart from that, Emile Durkheim stated that religion functions to be social solidarity. According to Durkheim, social solidarity is a social fact that can be used as a thing. Social solidarity is a form of social relations between individuals or groups based on moral sentiments and shared beliefs and reinforced by a sense of shared destiny (Hanneman Samuel, 2010, p. 20).

Furthermore, Catherine Bell said that ritual aspects include topics, names, symbol and myth, texts and interpretations, and the characteristics of adherents in dealing with change. In such a framework, religious rituals can be seen as social phenomena. In other words, the relationship of religion with God or something that is divine, is the object or realm of human institutions (religion) expressed and brought to life that is associated with God. According to Catherine Bell, to understand the framework it is imperative to see the variety and unique background of cultural assumptions. Likewise, the assumption internalizes and becomes a cosmology that can develop in a personal platform for his political activity (Catherine Bell, 2007, pp. 179-180).

On the other hand, Victor Turner claimed that ritual is a formal behavior aimed at an event that is not given by technological routine but by a reference to belief in being or a mystical power. Additionally, ritual is a form of structure which is defined as performance, including formal actions that tend to occur in a specific circumstance at a specific place and time or calendar (Victor Turner, 1967, p. 19).

In addition, Roy A. Rappaport said that a ritual can have a variety of repetitive behavior forms, or a variety of behavior that is determined by a specific time or location. This may happen in anywhere a specific place and includes any kind of activity (Richard Bauman, 1992, p. 249).

From a sociological perspective, Lisa Schirch revealed that ritual is communication within symbolic actions to form and change messages in unique social spaces. Symbolic actions are the actions that have primary communication through symbols, reason, and emotions rather than forming and changing words or rational thoughts:

some rituals strengthen the status quo by forming people's world views, identities, and relationships. Special space is a unique place that is set aside from the normal life that marks and helps its process (Lisa Schirch, 2005, p. 17).

To this point, ritual can be defined through symbols. In *The Forest of Symbol* book, Victor Turner revealed that symbols are divided into three categories; (1) multivocal, which states that symbol has many meanings that refer to diverse things, personal, and or phenomena. This shows how rich the meaning of the ritual symbol is; (2) polarization, which states that symbol has many meanings and there are often conflicting symbol meanings; and (3) unification, which state that symbol has separate meanings. Furthermore, it was previously mentioned that suggesting through the analysis of ritual symbols would help explain the values in society correctly.

Moreover, Victor Turner said that ritual symbol dimensions are divided into three understandings (Turner, 1967, p. 9):

1. Exegesis Dimension. What is meant is the exegetical meaningfulness of a sign through verbal explanations as a dogma, doctrine, myth based on cultural perception of normative common sense.
2. Operational dimension. This dimension emphasizes that ritual symbol not only expresses the verbal meaning, but also reveals the meaning of any expression that appears when the symbols are used in expressing joy, sadness, regret and so forth.
3. Positional dimension. This dimension asserts that a symbol is drawn from its relationship with other symbols in a totality. These symbols have many meanings (polysemy) and they are related to each other. Symbols have a positional dimension is meant that the symbols originate from their relationship with other symbols.

From the above discussion, sacredness is generally so-called a feeling of something that is difficult to describe (mysterium), feelings of fear (tremendum) and fascination (fascinans) (Thrower, 1999, p. 58). According to Rudolf Otto, the feeling of one individual or society and the feeling of another individual or society are certainly not the same. Both depend on the momentum and history behind them (Gooch, 2000, p. 111). In line with Rudolf Otto, Mircea Eliade asserted that sacredness is a manifestation of self towards a sacred reality that is different from social reality that has a system and structure. This manifestation can be described through one's own experience, hierofany (Eliade, 1956, p. 10). Remembering the experience is manifested in symbols. In this way, symbol was originally profane domains; however, symbols functionally connect the constant solidarity between humans and sacredness (Dillistone, 1986, p. 140).

As for religious experience, William James asserted that religious experience is an expression accumulation of individual or group actions that are usually seen in a ritual. In a certain ritual, religious emotions are dominating too. In this case, William James distinguishes between personal and institutional experience. If someone feels a certain condition such as loneliness or powerlessness, institutional experience places more emphasis on formal rules of worship or sacrifice practices such as religious ceremonies or organizations (James, 1902, p. 90). Apart from that, according to William James the religious experience has practical and unique consequences, such as asceticism, enthusiasm, purity and gentle attitude (James, 1902).

To sum up, here are some views of sacredness and religious expression from various perspectives, first, ritual ceremonies have an effect on individual and social power. Second, the sacredness of ritual ceremonies depends on each individual binding their group solidarity. Third, social action or reality is different from ritual.

Sacred Meaning of the 10th 'Asyura and National Santri Day in Indonesia

Calendars as a system functions to organize the chronology of time by day, week, month, and year. Calendar has a very important function for people's social life. Calendar is used to organize time in a more organized and systematic way, record historical events, determine times of worship; and is even used to make a better plan in the future time. Calendar is a system of organizing and managing the day for social, religious, commercial or administrative purposes (Nashirudin, 2013). Some terms that refers to the meaning of a calendar include (Azhari, 2006): (1) date; (2) calendar; (3) almanac; (4) dating. In Islam, the early calculation of the moon began from the appearance of crescent to its following appearance, no more than 30 days as determined by the hijrah event of Prophet Muhammad (Esposito, 300 C.E., p. 300).

Calendar Application in Indonesia's Historical Tracks

In principle, the calendar that is officially used in Indonesia is the *Masehi* calendar, the Gregorian calendar system. Before the arrival of the Dutch Colonial, most Indonesian people applied the *Hijri* calendar in their everyday activities. This includes the use of the Javanese calendar which is adopted from the Hijri calendar with modified year numbers continuing *Saka* year number. Initially, Saka or "soko" calendar was a Hinduism calendar, a calendar system based on the Sun's circumference of the Earth. The beginning of Soko year is Saturday (March 14, 78 M), which was

one year after the coronation of King Syaliwahono (Aji Soko) as king in India. That is the historical background behind Saka or Soko calendar (Khazin, 2008, p. 116).

Slamet Hambali revealed that Saka Almanac was used in Java Island until the early 17th century. The Sultanate of Demak, Banten and Mataram applied Saka almanac and Hijri almanac together. Sultan Agung (1613-1645) from Mataram abolished Saka almanac, and then created Javanese almanac that was identical to the Hijri almanac by continuing the number 1555. In consequence, 1st Muharam 1043 H is the same as 1st Muharam 1555 in Java calendar, which fell on 8 July 1633. Muharam was named the month of Sura because it covered the Ashura day of 10th Muharram. The Javanese year number is always at odds 512 from the Hijri year numbers. Sultan Agung's decision was followed by Sultan Abul-Mafakhir Mahmud Abdulkadir (596-1651) from Banten empire. As result, Saka almanac was no longer used in Java and was replaced by the Islamic Hijri almanac (Hambali, 2011, pp. 17-18).

After the independence of Indonesia, it was implicitly stated that the Hijri calendar is a National calendar as evidenced by the inclusion of Islamic holidays celebration as National Holiday, and the State ceremonies at the Islamic Holidays. However, because Muslims are the most populous citizens in Indonesia the Hijri calendar was made a part of the National calendar (Darsono, 2010, p. 89).

In principle, the two kinds of calendar are indeed different. The preparation of the National calendar is based the solar calendar system with the Gregorian calendar system. Whereas, the Hijri calendar was compiled by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia based on the calculation of *rukyyat* criteria MABIMS.

The state policy regarding the establishment of religious calendar in Indonesia refers to the definition of religious revelation. As it is known, the religion of revelation is the official religion in the world through the state constitutions. In this context, the 10th anniversary of Ashyuro in Indonesia held by the Shiite community tends not to be accommodated and often resulted in polemics. In fact, the 10th anniversary of Ashura is still seen as a social movement by some Islamic groups as it is in Iran. However, there are some views that consider the Shiite as a splinter sect that harms the Muslims' life in Indonesia. The author has some notes regarding the ban of 10th Asyuro, for example, the prohibition of the 10th anniversary of Ashyuro in At-Taqwa mosque Cirebon by a group of Islamic organizations. Another Shiite event in Semarang, Central Java was rejected for Shiite was considered to be the same as Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI), which was a banned organization in Indonesia. It is inevitable that the ideological and theological tension tarnishes the internal brotherhood of Muslims. Until today, the 10th anniversary of Asyuro is still done in a closed and exclusive place, not in the open venue.

On the contrary, Joko Widodo's policy that endorsed Presidential Decree (Keppres) No. 22 Year 2015 stipulated October 22 as National Santri Day which was seen as the struggles commemoration of santri leaders such as KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, KH. Ahmad Dahlan and many other figures. Furthermore, National Santri Day is a momentum to emulate the spirit of jihad to the Indonesian predecessors, the spirit of nationalism, the spirit of patriotism, the spirit of self-sacrifice for the nation and state. These spirits unify diversity to the unity of Indonesia. President Joko Widodo stated when establishing HSN in Istiqlal mosque (Khafifah, 2018):

"I believe in our diversities as a nation, ethnic diversity, religious diversity, and cultural diversity, there are inherent values to respect each other to maintain tolerance and strengthen mutual ties among the nation's children".

Indeed, the establishment of HSN as a state policy led to the pros and cons opinions. The pros group to HSN are those who have a traditional thought and they generally come from the traditional pesantren circles; meanwhile the counter groups are those who have modern or semi-modern thought. The former group believed that the establishment of HSN is government appreciation for santri group whose role is important in Indonesian social life, and the state appreciation for the pesantren's struggles in both in pre-independence period and in the post-independence time. On the other hand, the counter group claimed that HSN is irrelevant because Indonesia is a multicultural country that has various cultures and religions. They added that HSN was very centralistic public that might lead to the dichotomy between santri and non-santri.

The groups who support HSN include: (1) Brotherhood Institution of Islamic Organization (LPOI) which covers: NU, Indonesian Islamic Society, Islamic Union (Persis), Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyyah, Matlaul Anwar, Al-Ittihadiyah, Indonesian Chinese Islamic Association (PITI), Indonesian Da'i Association (IKADI), Azzikra, Al-Wasliyah, Indonesian Tarbiah Association (PERTI) and Islamic Community Association (PUI). On the other side, the counter group is Muhammadiyah organization. Above all, the conflicting views regarding HSN have lied to two big mass organizations, NU and Muhammadiyah.

In fact, the 10th Asyuro and HSN commemorations are religious expressions with their own sacred values. However, both events have different freedom space and meaning expressions. As previously revealed, that the ritual

expression in the 10th Asyuro and HSN commemorations is realized in a form of fear (fascum) or amazement (fascinans). This sense of fear that appears in 10th Asyuro can be interpreted as pain by people's expressing in a black shirt symbol or people's hurting themselves to get "hierofany" with Sayyidina Hasan and Husen. Whereas HSN was realized in symbols like cap and sarong as a representation of the previous warriors from Islamic preachers (kiyai), so as the today's people can their national political stance which is told in the history of struggle.

As for religious institution perspective, the religious values in the 10th Asyuro have global political emotions where Iran played a determinant role in its social setting. This context makes a lot of Islamic organizations withdraw their supports for the 10th Asyuro commemoration in Indonesia. Instead, the ceremony is done as a gratitude expression to God the Almighty where people distributed food to their relatives to show their respect to the Prophet Muhammad, not Hasan or Husein. On the other hand, HSN has regional religious emotions so that it receives special attention from the government in terms of state policy, namely Presidential Decree No. 22, 2015. In consequence, HSN gets a huge social impact especially from NU organization, as reflected in the state official and people celebration for HSN.

Regarding the variety of religious expressions in Indonesia, Fahrurrozi mentioned thirteen types: (1) actual Islam; (2) fundamentalist Islam; (3) emancipatory Islam; (4) liberal Islam; (5) cultural Islam; (6) modernist Islam; (7) pluralist Islam; (8) radical Islam; (9) rational Islam; (10) Islamic revivalism; (11) spiritualist-sufism Islam; (12) transformative Islam and (13) neo-modernism Islam. (Fahrurrozi, 2015). The author agrees with Fahrurrozi's category, Muslims in Indonesia have a lot of religious expressions. In this regard, it is hoped that the government show his tolerance to the religious expression of Muslim minorities, such as Shiite community or Ahmadiyya people. Indeed, the tolerance here has some conditions, a tolerance that does not break the rules of the state, as religious expressions are actually more universal than religious institutions. Religious expressions pass space and time boundaries. The important point is that in religious rituals there are sacred sides where they belong to individual right to reach the ultimate spirituality, and on the other side there are profane sides where a lot of social and political interests are inside it.

Conclusion

The ultimate values of the sacredness and religious expression dimensions of Indonesian Muslims within the establishment of the holy day calendar cover: first is the doctrine of religion. Religious doctrine can shape one's belief in certain objects that he totally believes. Second is ritual. Religious rituals can build solidarity among religious adherents. Third is institution. Religious institution is values representation that bind the religious adherents. Fourth is authority. State authority or religious leaders are the determinant variables for the existence of religious community. Fifth are need and achievement. The need for ritual will keep existing in both primitive and modern societies.

Finally, the author recommends that the formulation of religious definition by the state in relation to the calendar sacredness needs to consider the existence of religious communities that have their respective rituals and sacred times. Regardless of recognized (official) or non-recognized religions by the state, religious expressions must be distinguished from social action. This is seen from the religious adherent's appreciation and usefulness in the life of the nation and state.

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