

Religio-magicism of Sasak: the Qur'anic Mantras in the Healing Rituals of Lombok Community

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Abstract--- *This paper aimed to examine the Qur'anic values living and thriving in the magic tradition of Sasak Lombok (the indigenous ethnic of Lombok). The analysis was done ethnographically using anthropological approach. Drawing on the cultural analysis, it was to interpret either independent and related phenomena or those constituting other phenomena in the realm of Sasak culture, Lombok. The findings unveiled that the Qur'anic mantras and the cultural values of magicism for Sasak community were the representation of Karamah (miracles bestowed upon Auliya) and Mu'jizat (miracles adhered to prophets) to gain some benefits, such as medical treatment, salvation, wealth, mate, political position, and even environmental conservation. For Sasak people, the Qur'anic mantras were unique elements of religion and culture adhered not to customary leaders or traditional healers, yet to spiritual experts deemed as religious consultants and medical experts, who were able to compose herbal medicines, and whose ability was inherited directly through the line of descent. The culture of Sasak viewed Qur'anic mantras as central characters in representing the religiosity and spirituality of the Sasak community; hence, the practice of the Qur'anic mantras in the healing rituals of Sasaknese has unique and sacred position.*

Keywords--- *Religio-magism, Qur'anic Mantras, Healing Rituals, Sasak.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The existence and relation of the spiritualism, tradition, and myth are prevalent in the practices of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago as in Islam Sasak in Lombok, Islam Tolotang in Sulawesi, Islam Kejawan or Islam among the Javanese, and other parts of the state(1). These local Islam in the concept of Robert N. Bellah is known as civil religions or *little tradition*(2). Such religious practices are often associated to Islamic tradition or local Islam. These practices of Islam Nusantara (literally means archipelagic Islam) are a mixture of various teachings of dietary accommodatively and synchronically modified, which tend to be to more flexible in compromise(3). In comparison to the Sulawesi, the Javanese and the sasaknese are more complex in terms of religious spectrum. The later embody animism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islamism in their culture. Islam in Java and Lombok is more open and tolerant towards cultural difference, while Islam in Sulawesi tends to be legalistic. Nonetheless, religiosity should not be static, linear, completed and done(4).

Having been a crossroad for the international merchants and outsiders from numerous regions since the thirteenth century as Palembang, Makasar, Banjar and Jawa, Lombok dynamically pervades a multitude of cultural and religious elements brought by the traders and visitors. The island remained the center of translation for Kawi and Jawi texts between the mid fifteenth and seventeenth century. The island set as migrating line from the time of sailorship of the Austronesians to Bugisnese and Makassarese has traditional healing treatments using a wide range

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of plants and ritual plantation to preserve the herbs in the forest. Consequently, the indigenous ethnic of Lombok known as Sasaknese maintain the tradition and rituals in the scripts known as '*UsadaRara*'(5).

In the thirteenth century, Islam began to penetrate into other parts of the Indonesian Archipelago, which was inseparable from the writing artefacts and dissemination of scripts, either religious, historical or even healing texts. Through these scripts, the medical theories and treatments in Islam thrived since the era of al-Razi(841-926 M) in the ninth century were spread and adopted in archipelagos (6).

In Lombok, local religious rituals performed as the mythical belief comprising of supernatural beliefs in the use of Qur'anic mantras for healing rituals of Sasak. These rituals are prevalent in the peripheral regions of the island Lombok as practiced by Sasak Muslims in villages. Islam Sasak is spread by Tuan Guru through mystics or Sufism(7), which results in the employment of Qur'anic mantras among the ethnic Sasak Lombok for healing purposes, generating inward power, securing houses and properties, and matchmaking (love magic) and so forth(8).

II. METHOD

This study using anthropological approaches. An ethnography study primarily aims to understand the perspectives of the indigenous people, their relationship with their lives, and their world. Additionally, ethnography is meant to establish systemic understanding of all human cultures drawing on the perspectives of those having studied the cultures. Such an approach is termed 'interpretive approach' by Clifford Geertz. It examines the religions from the stance of the doers (*insider*) and aims to unfold the meaning behind their religious practices(9). The instruments used to garner the data are literature review, participative observations, and in-depth interviews. In analyzing the data, the researcher draws on the structural-functional approach, which is a view of sociocultural systems emphasizing that the structures observed show the functions in certain structures, or the structures show the functions in broader systems.

III. DISCUSSION

Identity Construction of Sasak Religiosity

According to Budiwanti, the SasakBoda religion is characterized by animism and pantheism. The worship of the ancestral spirits and other local gods are the foci of their religious practice. The Boda are small communities and still found in the early 20th century(11). They live in the northern part of Mount Rinjani in Bayan and Tanjung Subdistricts, as well as in some villages in the southern part of the mountain. Allegedly in the past, they came from the central part of the island of Lombok and flee to the mountainous areas to avoid the Islamization process. However, since the enactment of a law requiring all Indonesian citizens to embrace any of the five official religions recognized by the government, especially since the collapse of the PKI in 1965, the Bodaists were forced to convert their beliefs to an official religion, the Buddha. Since then practically the beliefs and practices of Boda as the original religion of Sasak have been politically declared to be banned by the government in the island(12).

Those who have experienced a complete process of Islamization are classified as the followers of the five-time Islam, the ordinary and legal Islam. They are identified as devout and perfect Muslims who carry out their religion according to the Qur'an and the hadith, such as the five-time prayer, zakat, fasting, pilgrimage, and Shahadah

claiming Muhammad as Allah's messenger. Their number is the majority of Sasak people scattering almost all parts of the island of Lombok. In contrast to five-time Islam, WetuTelu followers are identified as those who in the practice of everyday life are very strongly adhered to the traditions of their forefathers. In the teachings of WetuTelu are many Islamic nuances(13). However, their articulation is more associated to the local idioms(14), while in fact both cannot always run together. The mixture of religious practices and the custom characterizes WetuTelu to be very syncretic. This religion was embraced by the original Sasak community in Bayan-Lombok, who claimed to be Muslims. Islam WetuTelu is considered as a syncretic religion, local Islam, an animistic-mythical and andromorphic. In contrast, the five-time Islam is considered a "true Islam" and a pantheist.

IV. RESULTS

The Practice of Qur'anic Mantras in the Healing Rituals of Sasak Community

The healing rituals of Sasak tribe in Lombok since the first century AD, along with some other old tribes, such as the Mentawai tribe and the Flores tribe, has been developed as a treatment system that uses herbs of various types of leaves which are reinforced by mantra(15). Centuries after the period, that is during the massive migration of Javanese to Lombok in between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, particularly during the collapse of Majapahit kingdom, these rituals remain secured and become parts of rites of Sasaknese. Due to its paramount importance of the medical rituals, it is preserved in the form of manuscripts in the early era of Islamic penetration in Lombok between the fifteenth and sixteenth century.

Among the texts are *Teak Suara, Wariga Maling and Usada Rara*(16). Of the three manuscripts, the most widely documented type of medicinal plant in Lombok is Usada Rara Manuscript. This manuscript contains track record of ways of Sasak society since the past to utilize certain types of plants that exist around their environment as a medicinal herb. This text contains various prayers in Islam and teachings related to Jurisprudence. The results of inventory carried out by the Museum of West Nusa Tenggara and the community of this manuscript are the collection of two hundred and sixty six types of Medicinal Plants in Lombok(5). These plants vary and spread from the South to the North of Lombok, and from the forests of West to that of East Lombok. (15,17).

In many Mantras in the manuscripts, the recitation of the prayer in Islam, such as *Bismillahirrahmanirrahim*, remains the obligatory ritual of traditional healers in giving medical treatment to his or her patients. In the history of Lombok's manuscripts, there are various barriers impairing the popularity of this traditional healing, namely the insufficiency of language, the availability of the herbs, and the preference of the local people towards modern medication. One of the mantras used by several Sasakneses is as beneath:

"Bismillahirrahmanirrahim.

Kayuqbilajarikendalan,

kayu pace ramonsambi,

lamunsidajaribantelan,

bani mate satus kali".(18)



Figure 1: One of the Usada manuscripts

The other Qur'anic Mantras usually recited by traditional healers are as the followings:

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ (٤) لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ (٣) اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ (٢) قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ (١)

Wa lam yakun lahu kufiwan ahad; lam yalid wa lam yuulad; Allahu al-Shamad; Qul huwa Allahu Ahad.

In reciting the mantra, the traditional healer keeps reading the letters in reverse, from the last verse to the first. The recitation of the Qur'anic mantras by reversing the order of letters has the wisdom that the revelations will restore magic or submissions from others, such as witches, pellets, and others. The science is obtained from generation to generation and inherited according to family line(19). Not only to reverse the order of verses, even the verses are frequently read over and over, or cut off verses and followed by Sasak language. In addition to reading the verses of the Qur'an, they also use some media as the requirements for the healing, such as holy water, sekuh, cigar (cigar), yellow coconut, canang or offerings, and herbs from the forest. Like a bubble (the result of a rice collision mixed with a kind of turmeric snoring, then followed by the recitation of the magical words, the Qur'anic and Sasak mantras.

Many of the Sasak mantras are believed to bring about good physical and psychological health. Among the Qur'anicSasak mantras are the *Senggeger* (love magics) of Prophet Daud's regarding romance and the *Nganak Mantra* (delivery mantra) and others as the followings(20).

Mantra Nganak (Mantra for delivery)

Bismillahirrohmanirrohim

Allohummasolli' alaSayyidina Muhammad

Ku laloanengsapit

Aiqngempollesembawa

Leqbaotaoqnesakit

Ne kejembolanengbawaq

BerkatkalimahLailahaillallohMuhammadarRasululloh.(20)

The spell is recited by the healer to help a pregnant woman who may find it difficult to give birth during the period of her delivery. It is done by taking a glass of water from a well and spelling the mantra. Half of the water is given to the woman, and the other half is wiped over her belly.

Mantra for Healing

Bismillahirrohmaanirroim..... 21 x
Bismillahirrohmanirrohim
Kun payakunkumkumpayakun
benangputeqbenangkuning
nabidautselaqseangin,
nabiidrisselaqse air
penjageawaqnurneneqkaji
nurbaginde Muhammad
umarmayemandingompor
nurcahaye surge mapanakugadoh
ilmupelaloqroge
berkatlailaahaiillallah, muhammadurasullah(21)

Apart from reciting *Bismillahirrahmanirrahim*, the recitation of Shahadah by the healer remains obligatory when making medical herbs. The following are the herbs mentioned in the UsadaRara manuscript(5):

Table 1: The name of the diseases, medicinal herbs, and herbal making procedure in Usada Rara

No	Diseases	Medicinal herbs	Herbal making and healing procedure	Picking up procedure
1	Stomachach , pains around the stomach	Egg shells, Jeringau (Sweet flag)	Burnt out till turning into charcoal and wiped over the stomach	The sweet flag is partially picked by leaving stems and young shoots
2	Stomachache with hard faeces	Gegerit leaves and Ginger	Milled and placed on the stomach	The Gegerit leaves are picked out accordingly and Ginger is taken adequately
3	Dysentery	Api-Api leaves (avecennia marina) and candle nut, turmeric, Adas (anise).	Milled and squeezed and scrubbed over the stomach and waist	The stem of api-api leaves are taken
4	Fever and trance	Gandarussa leaves, Seneq leaves, IsinBujak, coriander, SebieGawah (Piper retrofractum)	Pounded until smooth, and stretched across the body from top to bottom	The fruits and old leaves of the Piper are taken
5	SakitKoreng Raja (Chancroid)	Ketimus skin, pepper, Bangle (Zingibercassumunar)	Milled and scrubbed	Ketimus skin is taken by leaving the young skin
6	Kidney stone	BatangPohonPatahTulang (Tungkul)	Boiled and drunk	The stem is sliced off accordingly and take the internal part

Some types of the herbs are variants of plants mostly growing around water sources in the forest and villages in Lombok. The water sources remain an important element for the lives of Sasaknese. They often regard the source of water as *Kemaliqin* their indigenous language. The perspective of *Kemaliq* that places the source of water as the main *Kemaliq* has become very strong since the arrival of Islam on the Island in the sixteenth century (22).

For Sasaknese, the Usada manuscripts serve as a reference for the implementation of three traditions: The Tradition of healing, the Tradition of forest conservation, and the tradition of Jurisprudence. Whether the Tradition of healing and forest conservation have been in the existence since the era of Buddhism in Lombok or not, they do form the pattern of social structure and superstructure of the community, and at the same time they underlie Islam in Southeast Indonesia, that is naturally and environmentally friendly Islam. In the level of social structure, the aristocrats and Water Regulator or Pengayah hold the most important role in the cropping the pattern of Rice Field and Forest cropping pattern. Whereas in the superstructure level, Medicine Experts or Belian and Islamic figures, such as Islamic clerics and Gurus through Karmah and 'miracle' play a role in the rules and procedures of medical treatment using medicinal herbs among rural communities. For Islamic Guru and clerics, these rules and ordinances are based on an understanding of Islamic Jurisprudence in the teachings of the Imam Syafii Jurisprudence. Here is, some Tuan Guru, i.e. Tuan Guru Haji Umar Buntimbe used Lontar as a means of writing and teaching the jurisprudence in Islam, such as the teachings of Halal and forbidden food in Islam (10). That is why, it can be said that the teaching of medical texts cannot be separated from the rituals and traditions of Islam, and also with the teachings of Jurisprudence per se.

V. CONCLUSION

One of the signs of this acculturation practice is the healing tradition of the Sasak people in Lombok who place the Qur'an as a magic by reciting the mantra from a piece of Qur'anic verses mediated by the use of herbs of forest plant deriving from ancient medical texts. Islam Sasak known as Islam WetuTelu believes that the supernatural power of the religion coming from the verses of the Qur'an can be used as a spell that influences good and evil. Goodness brings to the healing, safety, romance, matchmaking, trade, agricultural fertility, environmental preservation through meditation rituals with intermediaries and the use of media such as water, rock, yellow coconut, herbs of forest plant leaves from a sacred water source (*kemaliq*).

UsadaRara manuscript becomes a reference for the implementation of three traditions: the tradition of curing, the tradition of preserving the forest, and the tradition of practicing fiqh. The medical treatment tradition that incorporates the aspects of prayer in the Qur'an and spellings is an awareness of the importance of preserving the environment as found in various ancient manuscripts in Lombok. Similarly, as in the tradition of curing described in the UsadaRara Manuscript, it is to reinforce the tradition in the form of Sasak Medicinal tradition through the teaching of environmental jurisprudence.

In the level of social structure, the aristocrats and Water Regulator or Pengayah hold the most important role in planting pattern of Rice Field and forest. Whereas in the superstructure level, the healer or Belian and Islamic figures, such as Islamic clerics and Gurus play a central role in the rules and procedures of medication using medicinal plants among the people in the periphery.

The practice of the Sasakqur'anic mantra is a dialectical form of Islamic harmony and local pre-Islamic traditions. Islam in its interaction has even inspired and colored the local tradition with the spirit of Islam. The recitation of Basmalah (*Bismillah*) indicates the the start of the community activities, and the recitation of *Shahadah* becomes the closure like a symbol in the mantras. In fact, there is no religion existing in the vacuum in the absence of culture. "Syncretism" in a certain sense underlies spiritual and social values.

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