

## Sedekah Bumi (Nyadran) as an Expression of Gratitude in Javanese and Islamic Traditions of the Sumur Village Community, Brangsong District, Kendal

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**Abstract.** Culture is the result of human thought so that it is manifested by humans in everyday life. The form of culture cannot be separated from the existence of space and time which are produced from cultural elements. Javanese society in general who live in rural areas in living and carrying out daily life is covered by various traditions. Nyadran comes from Hindu and Buddhist traditions that originated in the 15th century, and Walisongo combined this tradition with his preaching so that he could easily embrace Islam. Initially, the saints tried to straighten out the Javanese people's beliefs about animism, which in Islam is known as polytheism. To avoid misunderstandings with these traditions, the saints complemented them by taking them, filling them with verses such as the Qur'an, tahlil, and prayers. Earth Alms (Nyadran) as a form of gratitude for the Javanese and Islamic traditions of the Sumur Village Community, Brangsong District, Kendal, usually in the Sumur village they carry out the nyandran tradition right on Friday Kliwon in the month of Mubarrum (Suro). This tradition is carried out by the Sumur village community to commemorate the ancestral heritage site of the Sumur village in the form of a spring to meet the needs of the Sumur village community in the form of water before the existence of PAMDES. The event is filled with prayers addressed to the ancestors who preceded them.

**Keywords:** Gratitude, Javanese, Nyadran.

**Abstrak.** Kebudayaan merupakan hasil pemikiran manusia sehingga diwujudkan oleh manusia dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Wujud kebudayaan tidak lepas dari adanya ruang dan waktu yang dihasilkan dari unsur-unsur kebudayaan. Masyarakat Jawa pada umumnya yang tinggal di pedesaan dalam menjalani dan menjalankan kehidupan sehari-hari diliputi oleh berbagai macam tradisi, Nyadran berasal dari tradisi Hindu dan Budha yang berasal dari abad ke-15, dan Walisongo memadukan tradisi tersebut dengan dakwahnya agar dapat dengan mudah memeluk agama Islam. Awalnya, para wali berusaha meluruskan kepercayaan masyarakat Jawa tentang animisme, yang dalam Islam dikenal sebagai kemusyrikan. Untuk menghindari kesalahpahaman terhadap tradisi-tradisi tersebut, para wali melengkapinya dengan mengisinya dengan ayat-ayat suci Al Qur'an, tahlil, dan doa-doa. Sedekah Bumi (Nyadran) sebagai bentuk rasa syukur atas tradisi Jawa dan Islam Masyarakat Desa Sumur, Kecamatan Brangsong, Kendal, biasanya di desa Sumur melaksanakan tradisi nyandran tepat pada hari Jum'at Kliwon di bulan Mubarrum (Suro). Tradisi ini dilakukan oleh masyarakat desa Sumur untuk memperingati situs peninggalan leluhur desa Sumur yang berupa sumber mata air untuk memenuhi kebutuhan masyarakat desa Sumur berupa air sebelum adanya PAMDES. Acara ini diisi dengan doa yang ditujukan kepada para leluhur yang telah mendahului mereka.

**Kata kunci:** Syukur, Jawa, Nyadran.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Culture is a complex unity or interweaving that includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and other abilities acquired by individuals as members of society. As a characteristic of human personality, culture contains norms and values that need to be possessed, internalized, practiced, and observed by its supporters.

Culture is the result of human thought, manifested by humans in their daily lives. The manifestation of culture is inseparable from the presence of space and time, which are

produced from cultural elements. The Javanese society, especially those in rural areas, are surrounded by various traditions in their daily lives. These traditions reflect the relationships between society and God, between members of society, and between society and the natural environment, all of which are still encompassed by symbols and traditions.

In relation to mutual cooperation, the people of Indonesia, especially those in rural areas of Java, have long been familiar with the concept of mutual cooperation. Indonesia is known as a nation with strong mutual cooperation values that have been deeply absorbed by individuals within society. As a result, the concept of mutual cooperation has been deeply rooted in the soul of society. Indonesian society, especially those living in rural areas, is known for having characteristics of a peaceful, calm, harmonious life, selflessness, a willingness to help others, and a strong spirit of mutual cooperation (Anam, N.d).

## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research uses a qualitative research method with an ethnographic approach to describe in detail the processes and values contained in the tradition of sedekah bumi (Nyadran) in the Sumur Village community, Brangsong Subdistrict, Kendal. Ethnography is a social science research method that highly values immersion, personal experience, and participation whenever possible, not just observation by researchers trained in the art of ethnography (Emzir, 2011). Ethnography focuses on sociological meanings through close field observation of sociocultural phenomena, and ethnographic researchers typically concentrate their studies on a specific community (Ramdiani, 2014).

As for the data collection techniques used in this study, they involve several stages, namely: 1. Literature Review: Conducting a literature review to understand the historical and theoretical context of the sedekah bumi tradition within Javanese and Islamic cultures. The sources used include relevant books, articles, and journals. 2. Interviews: Conducting interviews with community leaders in Sumur Village, including religious leaders, traditional leaders, and ordinary residents. These interviews aim to obtain direct information about how the sedekah bumi tradition is perceived and practiced. 3. Observation: Directly observing the sedekah bumi activities in Sumur Village. This observation helps to gather data on the implementation process of the sedekah bumi tradition, including the rituals performed and the values contained. 4. Field Notes: Making field notes during observations to record unforgettable details. By using qualitative research methods and diverse data collection techniques, this study can provide a comprehensive picture of Sedekah Bumi (Nyadran) as

an expression of gratitude in Javanese and Islamic traditions within the Sumur Village community (Suwardi, 2006).

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Profil of Sumur Village.**

Sumur Village, located in Brangsong District, Kendal Regency, is a village in Brangsong District that directly borders the area of Kaliwungu Selatan District. It is the southernmost village in Brangsong District. Specifically, the eastern part of Sumur Village borders Magelung Village in Kaliwungu Selatan District, the southern part borders Kedungsuren Village in Kaliwungu Selatan District, the northern part borders Blorok Village, and the western part borders Penjalin Village.

Sumur Village is a village situated in Brangsong District, Kendal Regency. It is considered underdeveloped due to the challenging access, which requires passing through forests and rivers to enter and exit the village. Reaching Sumur Village involves traveling through several remote villages from the Kendal Regency government center. The village is still rich in customs and traditions, as Sumur Village often holds a tradition called "nyadran" or earth thanksgiving (sedekah bumi). The name 'Sumur Village' is believed to have originated from the past difficulties in constructing wells for drinking water. The village has no rivers, making wells or water sources the gathering places for the residents, leading to the name 'Sumur Village' (Well Village).

To meet their water needs in the past, the villagers of Sumur would draw water from ancient springs, which still flow today. There are three remaining springs: Sendang Gandeng, Sendang Gempol, and Sendang Gayam, which have been turned into wells by the local residents and are used as locations for the 'nyadran' tradition. The majority of the residents of Sumur Village are farmers, primarily growing cassava, and goat breeders.

#### **Definition of Nyadran**

Nyadran originates from Hindu and Buddhist traditions dating back to the 15 th century, and Walisongo integrated this tradition into their preaching, making it easier for people to embrace Islam. Initially, the guardians (wali) sought to correct the Javanese people's beliefs in animism, which in Islam is considered shirk (polytheism). To avoid misunderstandings with these traditions, the guardians adapted them by incorporating verses from the Qur'an, tahlil (Islamic recitations), and prayers.

Nyadran is a series of rituals performed by the Javanese people, especially those from Central Java. Nyadran typically involves the tradition of sweeping or cleaning graves in

rural areas. In Javanese, the term 'nyadran' is derived from the word 'Sadran,' which means 'Ruwa Shakban.' Nyadran is a set of cultural practices that involve cleaning the graves of ancestors and placing flowers, usually accompanied by events such as kenduri (communal meals) or slametan (ritual feasts) at ancestral graves.



**Gambar 1.** nyadran disandang gandeng 1

The Nyadran tradition is a Hindu legacy with an Islamic touch. Nyadran is a form of ritual communication among the Javanese people, and Nyekar (grave visiting) is believed to allow the Nyadran community to connect with the Creator through the deceased village ancestors who performed the ceremony. Nyadran involves rituals that symbolize gratitude to the Creator.

According to Prasetyo, the Nyadran tradition, also known as Sadranan, is a Javanese tradition of expressing gratitude before the fasting month of Ramadan, taking place in the month of Sha'ban (in the Hijri calendar) or Ruwah (in the Javanese calendar), in villages and settlements by visiting the graves of ancestors (Novia, 2023).

In Sumur Village, Nyadran is held in the month of Muharram or Suro. The villagers usually perform the Nyadran ritual regularly on the night of Jum'at Kliwon, specifically at the springs—Sendang Gandeng, Sendang Gayam, and Sendang Gempol. Generally, the people of Sumur take turns conducting the Barikan Tradition in local community areas, such as in prayer rooms (mushola) or along local roads. According to Budi (65 years old), there is a belief among the residents of Suruhan Hamlet that anyone who does not participate in Nyadran will face misfortune affecting their family. This event takes place before the main Nyadran ceremony. The term Barikan itself is derived from the Arabic word 'bara'a,' which means blessing. The event includes communal prayers with the intention of seeking blessings and safety to avoid misfortunes or calamities. Typically, locals bring their own food as a symbol of mutual cooperation, and they eat together.

The people of Sumur view Nyadran as an expression of gratitude for the legacy of the springs, which are considered sacred by the surrounding community. The area has springs

believed to have many benefits. In the past, these springs were used by the locals to meet the needs of the entire community. The purposes of performing Nyadran include:

### **Expression of Gratitude to God Almighty**

The primary purpose of the Nyadran tradition is to express gratitude to the Creator for the blessings received, whether those are in the form of sustenance or family health. Fundamentally, the essence of Nyadran is gratitude—being thankful for whatever has been received from the Almighty. The people of Prambon hope that through Nyadran, their future lives will be better, and that they will be protected from all forms of danger, whether it be to the village or to their families. Thus, life will become more peaceful and harmonious.

### **Preserving Javanese Culture.**

As a form of Javanese culture, the Nyadran tradition must be maintained and preserved because it includes several local arts, such as Jaranan (traditional horse dance), Ludruk (Javanese theatrical performance), Wayang Kulit (shadow puppetry), Wayang Krucil (wooden puppetry), Kentrung (storytelling with music), Tayub (traditional dance), and Reog Ponorogo (traditional dance with lion and peacock masks). A tradition, often unconsciously, also provides identity to its preservers, as each tradition, even if similar to those in other regions, has differences in its execution. This diversity is one of the elements that make up Indonesia.

### **Offering Prayers to Ancestors for Their Legacy**

The Nyadran tradition is also intended to offer prayers to the ancestors who played an important role in the village, allowing the village to thrive to this day, as well as to honor what they left behind, such as the springs (Sendang), which have served as a substitute for wells to meet the needs of the local community up to the present time (Syifa, 2023).

## **4. CONCLUSION**

Sumur Village, located in Brangsong District, Kendal Regency, is the southernmost village in its district and is bordered by several other villages. Due to its remote location, access to Sumur Village is challenging, involving travel through forests and rivers. Despite this, Sumur Village is rich in cultural traditions, particularly the Nyadran or earth thanksgiving (sedekah bumi) ritual. The village name 'Sumur,' meaning 'well,' reflects past difficulties in accessing water sources, with wells and springs becoming central to community life.

Nyadran is rooted in Hindu and Buddhist traditions from the 15th century and was adapted by Walisongo to facilitate the acceptance of Islam. The tradition involves rituals

that symbolize gratitude to the Creator, including cleaning graves and communal meals. In Sumur Village, Nyadran is performed in Muharram or Suro, with specific rituals conducted at local springs. The Barikan Tradition, a pre-Nyadran event, involves communal prayers for blessings and protection.

## **5. SUGESTION**

Further research suggestions can be made by proposing a more in-depth study on how the tradition of sedekah bumi (Nyadran) interacts with the social and economic aspects of the Sumur Village community. Additionally, future research could also explore the impact of globalization on the sustainability of this tradition. Thus, this research could make a more significant contribution to understanding the complexity of culture and traditions in the area.

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