

Pro-Cons of Sea Alms Traditions in the Perspective of Religion and Culture

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Abstract

Sea alms (Nyadran) is a tradition that is carried out once a year in the coastal communities of the island of Java. The traditional process includes giving (Sesaji) to Nyi Roro Kidul. In the religious perspective, this is strictly prohibited, but this tradition has become an Indonesian cultural identity. This study will discuss the Sea Alms Tradition in perspective of religion and culture using literature study method.

Keywords: Sea Alms, Religion and Culture.

INTRODUCTION

According to Sri Widati, sea alms (*Nyadran*) is a ceremony of giving *Sesaji* by the community on the 1st Suro (the Javanese calendar). Generally, people who do this tradition are fishermen and shipowners. The ceremony for disposal of objects into the sea is very diverse. including the buffalo's head, various types of fruit, traditional snacks, snacks and side dishes, to women's equipment and accessories such as cloth, scarf and hair bun. This ceremony is shown as an offering of gratitude for the presence of God Almighty through Nyi Roro Kidul. The belief in the existence of Nyi Roro Kidul is not only owned by fishing communities but also owned by the general public (Sartin 2012: 9).

The tradition of sea alms has become an entrenched culture in the coastal communities of Java. This tradition is done every once a year and is a manifestation of gratitude to God for the blessings of the fish that caught by the fisherman. Sea alms is a unique tradition because this tradition can be only carried out by coastal areas communities, so this tradition is very important because it adds Indonesia's culture diversity.

In cultural perspective, the sea alms tradition is an ancestral heritage that deserves to be preserved. On the other side, this culture draws controversy from the *ulama* community because it is also a Hinduism-Buddhism religious ritual to worship Nyi Roro Kidul. The community, the government, and many people like this tradition as a chance to promote local maritime tourism or local culture, but several people consider

that the culture of sea alms is a waste of food. From the discussion above, the author aims to find out about how the sea alms tradition in the perspective of socio-culture and also in religious perspective.

METHOD

The method used is literature study where the author searches for various written sources, whether in the form of books or journals related to research objectives. So that the information obtained from this literature study is used as a reference to strengthen existing arguments.

DISCUSSION

Sea Alms Tradition in Cultural Perspective

According to Selo Soemardjan and Soemateman Soematdi in Introduction to Sociology (2010) culture is all the work, taste and creativity of the community. Whereas according to E. B Taylor (Introduction to Sociology 150: 2010) culture is a complex that includes knowledge, belief, art, moral, law, customs, other abilities and habits obtained by humans as members of society.

Sea alms tradition is a culture produced by humans, which includes elements of culture and belief. According to the cultural perspective, sea alms ceremony is a depiction of the customs of the community where the custom is believed by the

community as a culture that must be carried out for generations. Various *sesaji* are given or disposed in the sea as a symbol of the belief of the local people themselves. *Sesaji* in the form of a buffalo head which symbolizes humans must throw ignorance and become intelligent human beings, traditional snacks describe humans living only a while like shopping in the market and going back to God Almighty, red and white porridge symbolizes birth, tumpeng is a symbol of Godhead who created human (Suryanti, 2008)

In the cultural perspective the tradition of sea alms is a tradition that is favored by coastal communities. They assume that the tradition can provide safety in the sea and the abundance of harvested fish. In addition, in a series of activities related to sea alms there are traditional arts which are often performed such as *Jalungmas (Jaipong, Calung Banyumasan), Lenggeran, kuda lumping* and *wayang kulit*. It becomes an entertainment for the community and can provide economic value because it provides food business or other business opportunities. The local government makes sea alms as a potential to package the tradition so that it can attract local and outside tourists. In addition, the existence of sea alms can maintain and preserve marine biodiversity

Local people believe that the sea alms ritual is a form of offerings and requests for permission from the ruler of the southern sea Nyi Roro Kidul that arise because there is hope and encouragement as well as concerns about the dangers. For this reason, the community is very guarding and respecting the ancestral traditions inherited from their ancestors.

Sea alms connects the community as a big family, they can foster harmony between each other. Sea alms can also instill a mutual social spirit in the local community and its next generation. The tradition of sea alms is also a chance for local people to meet others (*Silaturahmi*) in *wayang kulit* performance before the sea alms ceremony begin (Wildfire, 2015).

In cultural perspective, the existence of sea alms which is held routinely once a year turns out to be able to preserve local culture even though its value change. Wildan (82: 2015).

Sea alms tradition as a culture has a positive impact that can be felt by the surrounding community. They assume that sea alms is an effort to manifest gratitude for the blessings from God Almighty. The economic benefits that they get and also to keep the sustainability of marine biodiversity, make local people reluctant to leave the tradition and continue to preserve it from generation to generation.

Sea Alms Traditions in the Religious Perspective

In the Islamic religion, giving *sesaji* to Nyi Roro Kidul include in prohibited acts and major sins. This tradition is considered as *syirik* or worship of anyone or anything

beside Allah SWT. The law of *syirik* has been explained in the Qur'an (Surat An-Nisa :48)

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا يَتَّبِعُوْا اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَكْفُرُوْنَ
عَظِيْمًا اِنَّمَا افْتَرٰى فَقَدَ بِاللّٰهِ يَشْرِكُ وَمَنْ

"Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. And he who associates others with Allah has certainly fabricated a tremendous sin."(An-Nisa ': 48).

وَاعْبُدُوْا اللّٰهَ وَلَا تَشْرِكُوْا بِهِ شَيْئًا

"Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him" (An-Nisa ': 36).

Sea alms is a tradition that gives *sesaji* to Nyai Roro Kidul. *Sesaji* are in the form of a goat or buffalo head. In Islam if the animal is not slaughtered in the name of Allah then this is not allowed. Giving alms must be targeted at the right people as explained in the Al-Qur'an letter (At-Taubah: 60)

اِنَّمَا الصَّدَقٰتُ لِلْفُقَرٰى وَالْمَسٰكِيْنَ وَالْعٰمِلِيْنَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُوَلَّفَةِ قُلُوْبُهُمْ
وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْعٰرَمِيْنَ وَفِي سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيْلِ مَفْرِيضَةً مِّنَ
اللّٰهِ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ

"Zakah expenditures are only for the poor and for the needy and for those employed to collect [zakah] and for bringing hearts together [for Islam] and for freeing captives [or slaves] and for those in debt and for the cause of Allah and for the [stranded] traveler - an obligation [imposed] by Allah. And Allah is Knowing and Wise" (At-Taubah: 60).

وَاٰتِ ذَا الْقُرْبٰى حَقَّهُ وَالْمَسْكِيْنَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيْلِ وَلَا تُبْذِرْ تَبَذِّرًا

"And give the relative his right, and [also] the poor and the traveler, and do not spend wastefully" (Surat al-Isra: 26)

اِنَّ الْمُبْذِرِيْنَ كَانُوْا اِخْوَانَ الشَّيْطٰنِ وَاَنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ لِرَبِّهِ كَفُوْرًا

"Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils, and ever has Satan been to his Lord ungrateful." (Surat al-Isra: 27)

Alms that are thrown away to the sea are better given to the poor, faqir and others who need it more. In Islam we are also prohibited from doing wasteful because wasteful is a friend of Shetan and hated by Allah SWT. Culture is a feeling, intention, creativity produced by humans. Culture becomes the identity of society in a nation and country. So that the culture of

the ancestors needs to be sustained. As a multicultural society we are required to respect the culture in society, tolerate each other and maintain harmony among people, preserve and continue culture from generation to generation but culture which can damage religious values or monotheism must be eliminated or renewed its values so that they can run in harmony and not deviate from the religious elements.

CONCLUSIONS

Sea alms raises Pros and Cons in the community, on the other hand it also has positive and negative sides, there are people who agree with the culture because they get economic benefits, establish friendship and preserve local culture. The ulama community rejected the tradition, because it was a Hindhu- Buddhism tradition carried by ancestors. In the view of Islam sea alms or sesaji given to Nyi Roro kidul is a form of syirik because it is served to the spirits. the reality of sea alms is activities that are wasteful. This has been explained in the Qur'an that we must be frugal.

Islamic cost Program (PPK) UIN Sunan Kalijaga is an effort to realize the integration-interconnections of science and religion. This program can also disregard religious radicalism among Science and Technology students. The benefits of PPK include the increasing of

students religious knowledge: strengthen the aqidah, good morality and worship. PPK enhances students' ability to read the Qur'an, memorize the Qur'an and understand the Qur'an. So science students have a balance between science and religion.

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