

Communication of Ritual Scripture System in Bojong Kondang, Cijulang, District of Pangandaran

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Abstract. The Sheikh Layang Tradition is one of the rituals performed by the Bojong Kondang people of Cijulang sub-district, Pangandaran Regency. Its implementation is in the form of reading the ancient manuscripts and tawasulan by providing various kinds of ritual equipment in the framework of manaqib Sheikh Abdul Qodir Jailani, all of which have a certain meaning in living the life. This research aims to determine the meaning of Layang Syekh ritual communication and the meaning of symbols used in that ritual by cultural activists involved. The method used in this research is descriptive with data collection techniques of interviews and literature study of documents and books relevant to the problem under study. The result of the research shows that the ritual of Layang Syekh tradition is the implementation of ritual communication, which in Islamic terminology is the same as that one of Sheikh Abdul Qodir Jaelani's. There is also a mixture of cultures in the form of ancient manuscripts, mantras, ritual equipment, and religion in the form of prayer readings and "tawasulan", undertaken jointly in order to build shared feelings and understandings which enable the participants to transcend in terms of time, place, and even themselves. The process of establishing the meaning of ritual communication and its symbolism in the Sheikh Layang tradition by ritual actors is based on the experience it realizes. As long as he interacts with nature and environment, the collective awareness is awakened in a form of a shared belief that the ritual can obtain the blessings of God and elders.

Keywords: Sheikh Layang, Ritual Communication, Cultural Activists, and Symbols

Introduction

Pangandaran is one of the newest regencies in West Java which is full of Sunda Buhun's culture. Cultural diversity becomes potential opportunity to be a tourist destination in addition to coastal tourism and nature reserves that are well known by both domestic and foreign tourists. The popularity of cultural diversity found in Pangandaran Regency is still under the popularity of exotic beach tourism, so its existence is still rarely known to tourists.

Most tourists are more aware of the tradition of the sea that is celebrated every month of Muharam, whereas in Pangandaran Regency scattered cultural sites, either in the form of graves or "trail", and other cultural rituals.

To introduce and preserve the diversity of other cultures, some cultural activists in Pangandaran Regency try to bring other cultural traditions to the community, either through mass media or social media, or directly invite various parties in certain rituals at the downhill location of the tradition.

One of the traditions held in Pangandaran Regency is "Sheikh Layang" in Bojong Kondang, Cijulang District. This tradition is a local wisdom and cultural product that has been abandoned by the younger generation in Pangandaran Regency, especially in District of Cijulang. The younger generation in this area tends to prefer the instant, practical, and hedonistic pop culture, whereas the sheikh's overpass rituals are more spritiquely/spiritually meaningful and uphold the value that is beneficial for the less desirable lives.

The ritual of the Sheikh Layang tradition is the same as the manakib of Sheikh Abdul Qodir Jaelani, a symbolic world full of meaning, and can only be understood by those who directly involved in the ritual. This is because the Sheikh Layang is a sustainable, non-duress formal tradition, and is loaded with transcendental values which can build a patterned behavior with the intention to reflect the influential symbols in social life.

Spirit of togetherness is visible in the gathering of various elements of Bojong Kondang Cijulang society led by the Chairman of Adat (custom) and other invitees to be united in performing rituals to expect the blessings of Allah and glorify His guardians. Spirit of gotong royong (communal cooperation) is visible in a joint effort by the community to help each other and prepare various offerings needed in the implementation of rituals of Layang Syekh to be done well.

Similarly with the value of friendship, many participants of the Sheikh Layang ritual traditions that are already bound by custom spiritual bonds, are getting closer, solid and even become a big family of indigenous communities. While a new member who join them will be well received and treated as long as his existence in the ritual has the same purpose as they do.

The ritual of the Sheikh Layang tradition can affirm a shared belief that respecting a guardian is a must for society, since it has been very meritorious to change the mindset of people who initially tend to animism to become a society more familiar with one belief, that is believe only to God the Almighty which a man must worship and beg for help.

This study aims to determine the meaning of the rituals of Sheikh Layang and the symbols used in the ritual, both in the form of verbal symbol (language) and nonverbal symbol (behavior) of some cultural activists involved in the ritual.

Radford (2005: 15) in Andung (2012) states that, "the pattern of communication in ritual perspective is not that the sender sends a message to the recipient, but as a sacred ceremony in which everyone shares a common part in fellowship and assembly as well as doing Holy Communion. In the view of ritual, the more important thing is the community togetherness in praying, singing and ceremonial".

Meanwhile, Hamad (2006: 2-3), outlines the characteristics of ritual communication as follows:

1. Ritual communication is closely linked to sharing, participating, getting together, being friendly from a community with a common belief.
2. Communication is not directly intended for the transmission of messages, but to maintain the integrity of the community.
3. Communication is not built directly to convey or impart information but to represent or re-create the common beliefs of society.
4. The communication pattern built is like a sacred ceremony where everyone is gather together (for example; performing common prayers, singing and other ceremonial activities).
5. The use of language through both artificial and symbolic (generally in the form of dances, games, stories, and spoken speeches) is intended to confirm, describe something that is considered important by a community, and show something that is going on and breaks easily in a social process.
6. As in ritual ceremonies, communicants are endeavored to engage in the holy drama, and not just be observers or spectators.
7. In order for communication to dissolve in the communication process, then the selection of communication symbol should be rooted from the tradition of the community itself, such as things that are unique, original and new to them.
8. Communication ritual or expressive communication depends on emotions or feelings and understanding of the people. It also emphasizes the intrinsic satisfaction of the sender or receiver.
9. Messages conveyed in ritual communications are latent, and ambiguous, depending on the association and symbols of communication used by the culture.
10. Between media and messaging is rather difficult to separate. The media itself can be a message.

11. The use of symbols is intended to symbolize ideas and values relating to hospitality, celebration or worship, and fellowship ceremonies.

Raho (2007: 106-114) states the function of symbol as follow:

- Enables people to connect with the material and social world by allowing them to name, create categories, and remember objects they find everywhere. In this case, one that has an important role.
- Improve human ability to understand the environment.
- Improve human ability to think
- Improve human ability to solve problems.
- Allows people to transcend in terms of time, place, and even themselves.
- Enables people to imagine metaphysical realities, such as heaven or hell.
- Prevent people from being enslaved by their environment.

As for meaning of ritual according Koentjaraningrat (1985: 56): "ritual is the ordinance in a ceremony or a sacred deed performed by a group of religious people, which marked by the existence of various elements and components, namely the time, places where the ceremony is done, the tools in the ceremony, as well as the people who perform the ceremony".

Research Methods

This research uses descriptive method, data collection technique through interview, and literature study. The informants are representatives of the government, and traditional leaders.

Research Result

Sheikh's kite ritual is held every month on Thursday evening before Kliwon Friday night, which according to Abah Erik, a cultural activist in Pangandaran, is "a tradition which often called Manakib Sheikh Abdul Qodir Jailani by the clerics, and aims to expect Allah's blessings by glorifying His guardian, from the relationship with the elders".

The symbols used in the rituals of Sheikh according to Abah Erik consist of "Pangsi (black long sleeves t-shirt and loose maxi pants)

clothes, offerings of rice tumpeng (two pieces), young coconut (dawegan), seven fruit, rambutan fruit, durian, salak, and plantain. For fragrances, it is using black incense, drink water, milk, and black coffee.

The meaning of the symbols used in the Sheikh Layang ritual according to Abah Erik:

"The symbol of the tumpeng illustrates that in reaching the degree of glory, one must scold the tests and obstacles from the bottom until finally reaching the peak of glory. In life, everything is always in pairs; there is a girl, two tumpeng (pairing). The symbol of coffee and milk as black and white means there is a bitterness and sweetness. The coconut symbol represents the world as a field for the afterlife. When the coconut is reversed, the water will go down and we are ready for the hereafter. Therefore, we need to do as much benefit as coconut fruit has in order to live for the afterlife. "The symbol of rambutan fruit, durian, salak, and plantain describe life in the world with all kinds of taste and form. As human beings, we must choose what is good for us and not to make the trinkets of this life become madhorot (something bad) for us".

Furthermore, Abah Erik explains, "in the ritual of Sheikh Layang tradition, there are differences of roles; grandfather's Ajim (72 years) as elder role and reader of ancient text, Mang Didin Jentreg (36 years) as the successor and acting as reader of text of Sundanese version and Rajah (king) Siliwangi, while Abah Erik himself served as the interpreter of the ritual".

A similar view is expressed by Abah Kunay which said that "the Sheikh's kite tradition is an activity of which the local culture should be maintained in honor of the guardian of Sheikh Abdul Qodir Jailani, and to obtain Allah's blessings which performed together with the elders." The rituals of Sheikh Layang are hereditary traditions performed by the elders together with the customary clothing, tumpeng, fruits, and milk, water, and fragrances in black. Its meaning is as a manifestation of life that must be passed by human to reach happiness in this world and hereafter".

Different opinions expressed by the Culture Tourism Office of Pangandaran regency which interpreted cultural activities in rituals of Sheikh Layang as "one of the cultural tourism attractions utilized by Pangandaran Local Government to attract tourists", while the symbols contained in the ritual as a medium to express the psychological atmosphere of ritual participants".

Based on these interviews, it can be seen that the ritual of Sheikh Layang is interpreted as the hope of the seeker of Allah's blessings, the elders's, and cultural tourism attractions, while the symbols of ritual are interpreted as the trinkets of human life that must be passed by humans for happiness in the hereafter, and as media to express the psychological atmosphere.

Here is a photo of the ritual practice of Sheikh Layang tradition in Bojong Kondang, Cijulang District, Pangandaran Regency:



Picture 1.

Ajim's grandfather was reading the script ancient



Picture 2.

Sheikh Layang ritual equipment in the form of a cone, a fruits, a waters, a coffees and a milks



Picture 3. Abah Erik is Leading a Prayer Discussion

The ritual of Sheikh Layang tradition is often called Manakib Syekh Abdul Qodir Jailani by the clerics. This ritual is a combination of culture and religion (Islam) which is reflected from the reading of ancient manuscripts, the provision of ritual equipment combined with *tawasulan*. This ritual has long been practiced by local indigenous communities in order to obtain blessings from Allah and the elders. In the ritual, the role of elder becomes very dominant because in addition to being a ritual leader, they also believed to give blessings to the participants. Therefore, according to Geertz (1973: 94) in Suparlan (2008), "religion, myths and ceremonies are a way of understanding of how humans understand and accept the essence of their position and role of social life in their society."

As a blend of culture and religion, the ritual of Sheikh Layang tradition in Bojong Kondang Cijulang requires the participants to obey the social order according to their status and role. Gaining the status of *adat* elders, each one of them has and performs different roles, such as the role of the reader of the codex, the leader of the "*tawasulan*", etc., so that the participants of the ritual will be motivated to participate in it. This is in accordance with Turner's opinion in Winangun (1990: 67):

"The rites held by a society are apparitions of religious conviction. Those rituals encourage people to do and obey a particular social order. The rites also provide motivation and values at the deepest level."

The ritual of Sheikh Layang tradition is a ritual communication since its implementation contains a group of people who participate together in carrying out an activity based on a similar belief. In the ritual there are offerings consisting of two from *tumpeng*, water, coffee, milk, young coconut, durian, rambutan, salak, and plantain, reflecting the symbol of life in this world. This ritual is an implementation of the thoughts of the actors since the first according to their respective roles. This is in accordance with the opinion of Suparlan (2008), which stated:

"The ceremony has a position as a symbolic intermediary, or perhaps more accurately referred to as an intermediary of metaphor in relation to the subjective culture and thought which makes it possible for both (ceremonies and cultures) to be able to exchange places and roles."

In addition, the symbolic meaning of the ritual equipment according to Raho (2007: 106-114) is "allowing humans to connect with the

material and social world by letting them to name, create categories, and remember objects they find everywhere. It is perfecting the human ability to think, improving human ability to solve problems, enabling human beings to transcend in terms of time, place, and even themselves, and enabling humans to imagine metaphysical realities like heaven or hell. "

The implementation of Sheikh's Shepherding tradition is a ritual communication since it is done collectively by Pangandaran cultural community which is conducted every year related to the respect for the religious leaders (Wali), and done mutually, symbolically, and sharing the commitment, so that the ritual becomes the glue of unity among them. In the ritual, there is no pattern of sending and receiving messages from one party to another, but rather to the reading of certain spell and prayers. This is in accordance with the opinion of Carey (1992) which states that:

"Ritual communication is not a process of delivering information from communicators to communicants, but rather a communication linking to terms such as "sharing," "participation," "association," "fellowship," and "the possession of a common faith", so that the communication is more to the function of communication itself; that is to share, build participation, association, friendship, and reinforce a shared belief ".

The process of establishing meaning about ritual communication and symbolism is based on the experience of ritual participants, as long as they interact with their natural and social environment. Thus, it is forming their knowledge of the ritual communication of the Sheikh Layang and its symbolism as a hope to be blessed by God and the elders. This is in line with Stanley Deetz's opinion in Sham (2009: 166): 1) Knowledge needs to be realized. Knowledge is not found only from experience, but comes from conscious experience; 2) Meaning can mean an explanation of an action. How one relates to an object is dependent on its meaning; 3) Language is the "vehicle" to formulate meaning.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion, it can be concluded that:

The ritual of Sheikh Layang tradition is the implementation of ritual communication in Islamic terminology similar to that of Sheikh Abdul Qodir Jaelani, in which there is a mixture of cultures in the form of ancient manuscripts, mantras and ritual equipment, and religion in the form of prayer and "tawasulan" readings together, in order to build shared feelings and understandings that enable participants to transcend in terms of time, place, and even themselves.

The process of establishing the meaning of ritual communication and its symbolism in the Sheikh Layang tradition done by ritual actors is based on the experience that it realizes as long as it interacts with nature and its environment, thus awakening the collective consciousness in the form of a shared belief that the ritual would earn the blessings of God and the elders.

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