

## FORMS OF TOLERANCE AMONG SURAKARTA CITY RESIDENTS: A STUDY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRAISE TRADITION

**Umu Hana Amini**

Sanggar Tari Wijoyo Kusumo, Surakarta, Indonesia 57126

[uuhanaaa@gmail.com](mailto:uuhanaaa@gmail.com)

### Citation:

Amini, U. H. (2023). Forms of Tolerance among Surakarta City Residents: A Study of The Implementation of the Praise Tradition. Javanologi: International Journal of Javanese Studies, Vol.7 (1), pp.37-42. doi: <https://dx.doi.org/10.20961/javanologi.v7i1.84122>

### **ABSTRACT**

*Puji-pujian* (praise) is the chanting of *selawat* or *dhikr* which is usually done during the break between the call to prayer and the *ikamah* in the mosque/prayer room. This tradition can be called oral literature. The implementation of praise is often found in Indonesia, especially Java. One of them is Surakarta. With the diversity that exists, the implementation of praise in Surakarta apparently reflects tolerance between its citizens. The qualitative research using descriptive qualitative methods examines the implementation of the tradition of praise in Surakarta, especially in Kentingan, Jebres Urban Village, where the population is quite diverse. Data in the researcher's research were obtained from observations, interviews, and literature study. The results of the research show that there is no conflict or coercion regarding the implementation of praise. If there is a conflict, the parties resolve it amicably until they find a middle ground. This can then be a form of tolerance towards the implementation or absence of the praise tradition.

**Keywords:** *oral literature, puji-pujian (praise) tradition, tolerance*

## INTRODUCTION

Praises in Islam are chants of *selawat* or *dhikr* that are usually done during the gap between *azan* and *ikamah* in the mosque / *musala*. This is called a tradition in addition to being able to be found in many regions in Indonesia, especially Java, which the community has also carried out for generations. Fauzin said that based on research conducted by Clifford Geertz in the early 1950s, a provisional conclusion can be drawn that praise was the first part of the *walisanga* da'wah method in the archipelago (2018).

Based on form and practice, praise can be categorized as oral literature. According to Juwaiti (2018: 5), oral literature itself is part of an oral tradition or culture that grows and develops in society and is passed down from generation to generation orally as common property. There are two functions of oral literature, namely as folklore and to convey local wisdom.

Oral literature as folklore builds and binds a sense of group unity, where oral literature becomes the identity of a group. The definition of folklore itself is part of the culture of a collective

which is spread and passed down from generation to generation, among any kind of collective, traditionally in different versions, both in oral form and examples accompanied by gestures or mnemonic devices (Danandjaja, 1985: 2). Meanwhile, the function of oral literature to convey local wisdom is as a conveyor of moral messages and socio-cultural values. This is in line with Ratna's statement (in Isnanda, 2018) that local wisdom is a form of wisdom that resides in certain areas and is then applied for generations as a means to realize social stability.

Apart from being a method of da'wah, praise as an oral tradition can also be helpful in fostering unity in society. The implementation of praise can create a sense of ownership of traditions or customs, also closely related to the use of local languages to strengthen collective awareness that a community needs to take care of each other and live harmoniously. In oral literature, language creativity in the form of literature is revealed in which the human nature of the people of the archipelago is highlighted so that until now the creation still has value and function (Baried: 1985: 88). However, currently the intensity of the implementation of praises has decreased. This is due to many factors, such as the absence of the next generation of traditions, the understanding of society that has begun to be adapted to the religious way of each school/school, or the environment that does not allow the praises to be carried out.

Surakarta is one of the cities in Central Java that was influenced by the da'wah of *walisanga*. Islamic teachings developed in Surakarta City cannot be separated from the role of *walisanga* with the existence of the Surakarta Kasunanan Palace, which has historical ties with the Demak Bintoro Sultanate (Najmuddin, 2020). The implementation of the tradition of praise in this city can still be found in some areas. In addition to Islam, the population of Surakarta City is very diverse. According to 2020 BPS data sourced from the Surakarta City Population and Civil Registration Office, there are the most adherents of Islam in Surakarta among other religions (Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and others). In addition to religious diversity, there are also various community organizations (CSOs) in one religion that also influence the implementation of the tradition of praise. In Surakarta, there are several fairly large mass organizations, such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, MTA, and LDII.

The study of the praise tradition in Surakarta was previously conducted in 2021 by Sarirotul Ishmah, et al. In a scientific article entitled "The Influence of Community Background on the Implementation of the Praise Tradition in Surakarta", the study concluded that there are types of people who support the existence of the praise tradition and there is also the opposite. The background of the community that maintains the existence of this tradition is the environment of Islamic boarding schools that understand *ahlussunah wal jamaah (aswaja)*. Meanwhile, environmental conditions with different backgrounds, such as residential environments, neutral plural community environments, and

environments that dominate certain religious beliefs regarding the law of implementing praises, also affect the absence of these traditions.

The study has discussed tolerance as one of the factors in the persistence and failure of implementing the praise tradition in Surakarta. However, the object of the study covers Laweyan District, Surakarta. Meanwhile, this study focuses on one quite diverse village because it is surrounded by several campuses, namely Kentingan Village, Jebres District, Surakarta. This plurality resulted in the researcher choosing the area as the object of research, even though the type of environment in Kentingan, Jebres Urban Village is different from the neighborhoods in Laweyan District in the sense that there is no Islamic boarding school environment, housing, and so on. This study also highlights the forms of tolerance in Kentingan, Jebres Urban Village, that are related to implementing the tradition of praise.

## **METHOD**

This research is qualitative research with descriptive qualitative methods. Researchers use literature study techniques, observations, and interviews to obtain data. The observation aims to find out which mosques or *musalas* carry out the tradition of praise. According to Moeloeng (in Haris, 2010: 131), an interview is a conversation with a specific purpose carried out by two parties, namely the interviewer and the interviewee. The interview aims to find out the reason for whether or not the tradition is carried out, the response to the implementation or absence of the tradition of praise from the source or the response received from local residents. Meanwhile, literature studies are intended to be used by researchers as a way to obtain data on previous community conditions and assist researchers in analyzing current conditions. Data from the literature study can be in the form of information from scientific journal articles or books.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the observations, researchers obtained data in the form of mosques that carry out praises, namely the Barokah mosque. Meanwhile, the mosque that does not carry out praises is the Muttaqin mosque. The distance between the two mosques is quite close, only different RW. These two mosques were also taken as data sources through interviews to find information about the implementation factors and responses of local residents, so researchers could obtain information about this form of tolerance.

### **Factors of Implementation/Non-Implementation of the Tradition of Praise**

A source from the Barokah mosque, Fina, said that the implementation of the tradition of praise has existed since the mosque existed. Barokah Mosque has indeed since its establishment been oriented

towards *ahlussunah wal jamaah* (aswaja).

*"Indeed, since the establishment of this before (still) musala until now (becomes) a mosque, indeed here, specifically a mosque here, the participation of ahlussunah wal jamaah or NU, Nahdlatul Ulama." (Fina, 10/22/2023)*

The resource person also said that worshippers did like to visit while waiting for congregational prayer time at the mosque. Praises are meant to fill the empty time, the pause between azan and ikamah.

*"For those people (aswaja), it is true that the call to prayer is not silent, there is no activity, rather than empty, well, (to) fill the empty time filled by children or others while watching. Let me fill the empty time." (Fina, 10/22/2023)*

According to Hasan Mahmud as a source for the Muttaqin mosque, there used to be praises. However, over time, from around 1985 to 1990s, the tradition was no longer carried out. This is due to the increase in public knowledge about the propositions that encourage worshippers to perform Sunnah prayers and remembrance and not interfere with other worshippers who are doing Sunnah worship in the mosque.

*"There used to be (praises) but the increasing knowledge of the community and worshippers here no longer has praises because it is feared that it will disturb people who are praying Sunnah, for example." (Hasan Mahmud, 10/16/2023)*

### **Local Community Response**

During the implementation of the tradition of praise at the Barokah mosque, according to Fina, some parties protested or did not like it. The reason is that the sound of praise from the loudspeaker according to some residents is too loud so it is quite disturbing. Based on the source's statement, the protest or dislike came from the party who protested, namely from members of other religions.

Over time, the mosque understood the other party's objections by turning down the volume and changing the direction of the loudspeakers or reducing the number so that they were no longer potentially intrusive. According to the source's statement, the matter has been discussed carefully to find a middle ground and avoid further conflict.

*"Finally, the microphone was turned down and the direction (toa or loudspeaker) was reversed. In the end, over time the people (who protested) gradually understood and now the protest is gone." (Fina, 10/22/2023)*

Meanwhile, the Muttaqin mosque, which is no longer carrying out praises, when asked for information about the potential to be held again with praises, for example, one of the worshippers who began to carry it out, the source said did not rule out the possibility. So far, no residents have asked for a ceremony or compulsion to be held in the mosque. In addition, there is also no conflict between executors and non-executors of praise.

### **Attitude towards Differences as a Form of Tolerance**

Hasan Mahmud did not explicitly classify the Muttaqin mosque as one that adheres to one particular belief. Based on his narrative, the mosque is a public mosque and is widely attended by people from various groups. Although not performing the praises, the source did not label the mosque as a non-aswaja mosque—given that the majority of the perpetrators of the praises were aswaja. The interviewees also refer to the attitude of not carrying out praises in the Muttaqin mosque as an attitude that does not mean blaming or forbidding, it's just that they do not choose to carry it out.

*"If asked, this mosque (Muttaqin mosque) is NU mosque, what is MTA, what LDII is Muhammadiyah, yes, the answer is this is a public mosque only, al-Islam mosque, for all Muslims." (Hasan Mahmud, 10/16/2023)*

The form of tolerance as an effort to respect other groups was also carried out by the Barokah mosque, which had received protests or reprimands, a dislike from local residents towards the implementation of praises, by finding a middle way from the conflict so that it was not sustainable and both parties were not harmed. This is as the researcher explained in the previous subchapter regarding the response of the local community regarding the implementation of praises the issue was finally discussed carefully between the mosque and residents, and then the decision was made to reduce the volume and change the direction of the loudspeakers.

## **CONCLUSION**

Field conditions as data in the chapter Discussion on the implementation of the tradition of praise then show that tolerance has been applied by the residents of Surakarta City, especially the Kentingan area, Jebres Urban Village, Jebres District, Surakarta. There is no opposition or coercion to the observance of the tradition of praise. People respect each other's differences. When there are groups of citizens who feel disturbed, the other party seeks a good resolution to the conflict. This further strengthens harmony and harmony between people of each religion or people in one religion.

Meanwhile, this harmonious condition can dismiss the discourse that Surakarta is a relatively violent and radical city, as reported several times in the media. Thus, the results of the study show that there are forms of tolerance related to the implementation of these praises, strengthening the image of Surakarta residents as tolerant citizens who were previously weakened by this news.

These forms of tolerance need to be well maintained by all citizens. However, authorities such as religious officials also need to invite the community to always maintain harmony. Not to forget, the government also needs to strive for policies that do not favor one group and still give the right to every religious community, every group, to carry out their worship. For example, the volume of the sound is limited, it should not be too loud, changing the direction and reducing the number of loudspeakers, or determining the duration of praise time.

## REFERENCES

- Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Surakarta. (2019). *Jumlah penduduk menurut kecamatan dan agama yang dianut di Kota Surakarta*.
- Baried, S. B., dkk. (1985). *Pengantar teori filologi*. Jakarta: Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa, Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan.
- Danandjaja, J. (1985). *Folklor Indonesia*. Jakarta: PT Pustaka Grafitipers.
- Fauzin, A. (2018). The optimization of *puji-pujian* tradition before praying in congregation in mosques and *mushalla* as a medium of da'wah and prevention of corruption. *Asia Pacific Fraud Journal*, 3(2).
- Haris, H. (2010). *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif*. Jakarta: Salemba Humanika.
- Ishmah, S., dkk. (2022). Pengaruh latar belakang masyarakat terhadap pelaksanaan tradisi *puji-pujian* di Surakarta. *Mlangun*, 19(1).
- Isnanda, R. (2018). Sastra lisan sebagai cerminan kebudayaan dan kearifan lokal bagi masyarakat. Dalam *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Lingkungan Lahan Basah* (hlm. 500–503). Banjarmasin, Indonesia.
- Juwati. (2018). *Sastra lisan Bumi Silampari: Teori, metode, dan penerapannya*. Yogyakarta: Deepublish.
- Najmuddin, A. (2020). *Menyambut satu abda NU*. Surakarta: CV Karya Jaya Sentosa.