

**Betumbang Apam Tradition as a Medium of Islamic Education:  
Clifford Geertz's Interpretative Analysis of Religious Values**

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**Abstract:**

*The era of modernization has presented various challenges and significant changes in every aspect of life, including education. In the context of these changes, tradition still plays an important role as a medium for conveying religious values in society. This study employs a qualitative methodology with an ethnographic approach, utilizing Clifford Geertz's interpretative framework for analysis. This research aims to analyze the Betumbang Apam tradition as a medium of Islamic education in understanding and strengthening the religious values of the community at the Palajau Sacred Mosque. The results of this study show that the Betumbang Apam tradition is a reflection of cultural wealth and a strong medium in conveying religious values. This tradition reflects faith values, such as belief in Allah, gratitude and early introduction to the mosque to children; moral values, such as respect for scholars and parents; and social values, such as togetherness and friendship. In the context of modernization, this tradition remains relevant because it strengthens people's religious understanding through deep symbolism. The results of this study reinforce Clifford Geertz's "thick description" theory, showing that the Betumbang Apam tradition has layers of meaning that enrich spiritual and social understanding in the Muslim community in Palajau.*

**Keywords:** *islamic education media; tradition; betumbang apam*

**Introduction**

The ongoing era of modernization throughout the world has presented various challenges and significant changes in the social, cultural and religious life of the community. Technological developments, globalization, and changes in lifestyle have affected the order of social values, including cultural and religious values in society. However, in the context of these changes, tradition still plays an important role as a medium for conveying religious values.

The word tradition itself refers to *traditum*, which is everything that is inherited and transmitted from the past to the present, in the form of patterns or images of behavior. It involves beliefs, rules, recommendations, and prohibitions that lead to the repetition of

patterns of behavior that continue to change over time.<sup>1</sup> Tradition and religion cannot be separated from each other because they have a relationship. Religion has a significant impact on belief systems and life practices. Conversely, tradition also has the potential to influence religion, especially in terms of religious interpretation or the performance of its rituals.<sup>2</sup> Tradition, as a cultural heritage passed down from generation to generation, plays a central role in shaping people's identities. The role and importance of tradition is closely related to the understanding of religious values, as it is often a medium that symbolically embodies and conveys religious teachings.<sup>3</sup> In this context, tradition is not simply a series of repeated practices, but a symbol that carries deep meaning and plays an important role in shaping people's perception and appreciation of religious values.

Islam influences traditions, culture and beliefs, and vice versa, culture also influences the way Islamic teachings are implemented.<sup>4</sup> So that the elements formed through human interpretation in interaction with history and other cultural elements are what give birth to a religious tradition.<sup>5</sup> One of them is the Betumbang Apam Tradition. The Betumbang Apam tradition is a form of religious practice that has become an integral part of the life of the Banjar people, more specifically in the Palajau Sacred Mosque. This tradition reflects a cultural heritage passed down from generation to generation and has an important role in strengthening the understanding of religious values in the community.

Palajau Sacred Mosque, as an important center of religious and cultural activities in the local community, plays a central role in maintaining and developing this tradition. The Betumbang Apam tradition, laden with religious values, has become a highly respected ritual in this community. However, there has not been much in-depth research into how this tradition influences the understanding of religious values held by the community of Masjid Keramat Palajau.

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<sup>1</sup> Helda Yuliani dan Arief Rahman, "Acculturation Of Batumbang Apam Tradition Values In Hulu Sungai Selatan," *Proceeding International Conference On Islamic Studies Fakultas Ushuluddin Adab Dan Dakwah Institut Agama Islam Negeri Palangka Raya*, 2021, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Nurus Syarifah dan Zidna Zuhdana Mushthoza, "Antropologi Interpretatif Clifford Geertz: Studi Kasus Keagamaan Masyarakat Bali Dan Maroko," *Humanis* 14, no. 2 (2022): 66.

<sup>3</sup> Erry Nurdianzah, "Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Islam Dalam Tradisi Jawa (Kajian Historis Pendidikan Islam dalam Dakwah Walisanga)," *PROGRESS* 8, no. 1 (2020): 17.

<sup>4</sup> Maisyanah dan Lilis Inayati, "Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Agama Islam Pada Tradisi Meron," *Edukasia: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Islam* 13, no. 2 (2018): 330.

<sup>5</sup> Eka Octalia Indah Librianti dan Zaenal Mukarom, "Budaya Tahlilan sebagai Media Dakwah," *Prophetica: Scientific and Research Journal of Islamic Communication and Broadcasting* 5, no. 1 (30 Juni 2019): 3, <https://doi.org/10.15575/prophetica.v5i1.1306>.

Departing from this, Clifford Geertz argues that an academic or researcher should not only provide a description or explain the rituals performed by certain religious groups and their various rituals. More than that, academics or researchers have the task of searching and finding the meaning contained behind the actions or rituals performed.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the author wants to explore further how the tradition of “betumbang apam” becomes a medium for Islamic education in understanding religious values.

From the above explanation, many researchers have discussed the betumbang apam tradition. However, from the author's short search, the research that has emerged about the betumbang apam tradition still revolves around describing the implementation and meaning of the betumbang apam tradition in general. However, there is no research that specifically discusses the betumbang apam tradition as a medium in understanding the religious values of the community.

For example, Mir'atun Nisa's research (2016) entitled *“Islamic Education Values in the “Batumbang Apam” Tradition at the Al-A’la Mosque, Fall Village, Pandawan District, Hulu Sungai Tengah Regency.”*<sup>7</sup> The focus of this research is the implementation of the Betumbang Apam tradition and the Islamic education values contained in it, such as adab, prayer, friendship, and gratitude. However, this research only discusses these values in a general framework without linking this tradition as a specific medium of Islamic education.

In addition, the researcher who discussed the Betumbang Apam tradition research was Welda Hermawati (2020) entitled *“Values in the Batumbang Apam Tradition in Pajukungan Village, Barabai District, Hulu Sungai Tengah Regency.”*<sup>8</sup> This research highlights the social, material, and religious values in the Betumbang Apam tradition as well as the process of inheriting values through internalisation, socialisation, and enculturation. Although this research touches on aspects of religious value, its focus is more on the social and cultural dimensions. It is different from the author because it positions the Betumbang Apam tradition as a strategic tool in Islamic education that can answer the challenges of modernisation.

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<sup>6</sup> Daniel L Pals, *Seven Theories of Religion* (Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2012), 338.

<sup>7</sup> Mir'atun Nisa, “Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Islam Dalam Tradisi ‘Batumbang Apam’ Di Masjid Al-A’la Desa Jatuh Kecamatan Pandawan Kabupaten Hulu Sungai Tengah,” *Skripsi Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Antasari Banjarmasin*, 2016.

<sup>8</sup> Welda Hermawati, “Nilai Dalam Tradisi Batumbang Apam Di Desa Pajukungan Kecamatan Barabai Kabupaten Hulu Sungai Tengah,” *Skripsi Program Studi Pendidikan Sosiologi, Jurusan Pendidikan Ilmu Pengatahuan Sosial FKIP Universitas Lambung Mangkurat*, 2020.

The next research related to the Betumbang Apam tradition is “*Acculturation Of Batumbang Apam Tradition Values In Hulu Sungai Selatan*.” by Helda Yuliani and Arief Rahman.<sup>9</sup> This study uses an anthropological approach to understand the motives and meanings of the Betumbang Apam tradition, such as gratitude, vows, and answered prayers. However, this study does not discuss the potential of the tradition as an instrument of Islamic education. Our research fills this void by identifying and analysing elements of the tradition that can be translated as value-based learning methods.

The results of this study are expected to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between tradition and religious understanding in the context of the Palajau Sacred Mosque. In addition, the results of this study are also expected to provide useful insights in understanding how religious traditions can strengthen religious values in a particular community. This can make a valuable contribution to the preservation of the rich culture and religious understanding of the Keramat Palajau Mosque and may also provide perspectives that can be applied in other religious and cultural contexts.

## Research Methods

Based on the above phenomenon, this research will explore the history, meaning, and role of the betumbang apam tradition as a medium in strengthening the understanding of religious values at the Palajau Sacred Mosque, Pandawan District, Hulu Sungai Tengah Regency, South Kalimantan Province. This research is a field research with descriptive-qualitative type. The approach used is ethnography, which allows researchers to understand the cultural and social context of the community related to the Betumbang Apam tradition. This research uses purposive sampling technique, where the selection of subjects is done deliberately based on certain categories. In this case, subjects were selected based on their role in the implementation of the tradition and their position in the community. Data collection was conducted through three main techniques, namely observation, interviews and documentation.

1. Observation, researchers made direct observations of the implementation of the Betumbang Apam tradition at the Palajau Sacred Mosque. This observation includes the stages of preparation, implementation, to the core activities of this tradition.

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<sup>9</sup> Helda Yuliani dan Arief Rahman, “Acculturation Of Batumbang Apam Tradition Values In Hulu Sungai Selatan,” *Proceeding International Conference On Islamic Studies Fakultas Ushuluddin Adab Dan Dakwah Institut Agama Islam Negeri Palangka Raya*, 2021, 1.

2. Interviews, conducted in depth with semi-structured techniques to two main sources, namely:
  - a. Mr M., he is the marbot of the Palajau Sacred Mosque who has been taking care of the mosque for a long time. He is a native of the Palajau Sacred Mosque so he is very familiar with the situation and various activities related to the Betumbang Apam tradition. In addition, he also acts as a leader in every Betumbang Apam event, both those attended by local people and those who come from outside the province. Mr M.'s competence as the main informant lies in his deep understanding of this tradition, including how it is carried out, its history, and the perceptions and goals of the people who come to Betumbang Apam. Based on this, the researcher used Mr M. as the main informant.
  - b. Mr PG, a community leader as well as a parent who carries out this tradition.
3. Documentation in the form of photographs, field notes and archives related to the Betumbang Apam tradition and the history of the Palajau Sacred Mosque were used to strengthen the data from observations and interviews.

This research follows certain stages to ensure comprehensive data analysis, which are as follows:

1. Preliminary study, namely conducting a literature review and initial identification of research issues.
2. Field preparation, namely identifying key informants and preparing data collection instruments.
3. Data collection through observation, interviews, and documentation, which were conducted in stages to capture in detail the process of the betumbang apam tradition, including the preparation stage, the core activities, and their symbolic meanings.
4. Data analysis, the author uses Clifford Geertz's interpretative approach, the data is analysed to explore the symbolic and educational values contained in this tradition.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **1. Culture and Religion through the Eyes of Clifford Geertz**

Clifford Geertz, a prominent anthropologist of the 20th century, contributed new concepts and approaches to understanding culture and religion. Through Geertz's lens, culture and religion are not merely seen as a series of actions or rituals but as complex and

profound symbolic systems.<sup>10</sup> He argues that cultural analysis should not be an experimental science seeking universal laws but rather an interpretive science focused on the search for meaning.<sup>11</sup> From this understanding, Geertz highlights the importance of symbols and the meanings behind actions or rituals in comprehending society, emphasizing that these symbolic aspects hold complex significance that cannot be superficially understood.

Geertz views religion not only as a set of beliefs or rituals but also as an integral part of the symbolic system that shapes identity and provides meaning in people's lives.<sup>12</sup> He defines culture as a pattern of meaning transmitted from generation to generation, manifested in symbols used as a means of human communication, reinforcing, and developing their knowledge and attitudes toward life.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, Geertz adds that since culture is a system of symbols, the process of cultural development must be understood, translated, and interpreted.<sup>14</sup>

For Geertz, symbols serve as the vehicles of culture. He emphasizes that symbols should not be studied in isolation; rather, they must be examined in the context of what they can reveal about culture. Geertz's primary interest lies in how these symbols shape the ways individuals in society perceive, feel, and think about the world.<sup>15</sup> As Ortner expresses, societies use these symbols to articulate their worldview, value orientations, ethos, and other cultural aspects.<sup>16</sup>

In explaining human culture, Geertz employs a method known as "thick description." In this approach, Geertz seeks not only to describe the events that actually occur but also to understand and convey the meanings that people ascribe to these events. Therefore, in comprehending a culture, Geertz emphasizes that one should not merely view it as something distinct from others; instead, one should strive to reconstruct the meanings of the

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<sup>10</sup> Ahmad Sugeng Riady, "Agama dan Kebudayaan Masyarakat Perspektif Clifford Geertz," *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama Indonesia (JS.AI)* 2, no. 1 (30 Maret 2021): 16–17, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jsai.v2i1.1199>.

<sup>11</sup> Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," dalam *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 5.

<sup>12</sup> Luthfiah, "Agama, Konflik dan Integrasi dalam Pandangan Geertz," *Jurnal Ilmiah Kreatif* 14, no. 1 (2016): 58.

<sup>13</sup> Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," dalam *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 89.

<sup>14</sup> Eko Punto Hendro, "Simbol: Arti, Fungsi, dan Implikasi Metodologisnya," *Endogami: Jurnal Ilmiah Kajian Antropologi* 3, no. 2 (2020): 162.

<sup>15</sup> Sherry B. Ortner, "Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties," *Cambridge University Press* 26, no. 1 (1984): 129.

<sup>16</sup> Ortner, 129.

symbolic systems manifested through social behaviors or actions, allowing cultural forms to articulate themselves.<sup>17</sup>

The term "symbol" itself originates from the Greek word "symbolion," derived from "syimballo," meaning to draw a conclusion or convey an impression. Symbols serve as tools or media for creating and conveying messages subtly<sup>18</sup> while forming the epistemological systems and beliefs held by individuals.<sup>19</sup> Humans consistently use symbols in their lives as a means to adapt and communicate with their surroundings, including both physical and social environments. Geertz underscores the importance of understanding these symbols within culture, particularly in the context of religion and tradition.<sup>20</sup>

Each symbol carries its unique meaning, which can only be understood by members of society who possess the relevant knowledge. The use of symbols as a medium for communication or social interaction allows for interpretation processes. From this perspective, Geertz considers the deep understanding of these symbols crucial for uncovering the meanings they contain. This includes the context of religion, religious rituals, traditions, and religious symbols, which are components of culture that need to be interpreted with care.<sup>21</sup> Thus, Clifford Geertz's perspective emphasizes the importance of understanding religion within a broader cultural context.

## **2. History of the Betumbang Apam Tradition at Masjid Keramat Palajau**

Masjid Keramat Palajau is located in Palajau Village, Pandawan District, Hulu Sungai Tengah Regency, South Kalimantan Province. According to the book written by Meldy Muzada Elfa titled "History of Masjid Keramat Palajau Barabai," Masjid Keramat is the oldest mosque relic from the Demak Sultanate in South Kalimantan. This mosque was established in the 14th century.<sup>22</sup> There are several reasons behind why this mosque is referred to as Masjid Keramat. One reason, as narrated by Mr. M., the mosque's caretaker, is that during the Dutch and Japanese occupations, this mosque served as a refuge for the community. The colonizers could not enter the mosque because if they did, they would suffer

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<sup>17</sup> Luthfiyah, "Agama, Konflik dan Integrasi dalam Pandangan Geertz," 57.

<sup>18</sup> Nurdianzah, "Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Islam Dalam Tradisi Jawa (Kajian Historis Pendidikan Islam dalam Dakwah Walisanga)," 17.

<sup>19</sup> Fatia Inast Tsuroya, "Kritik Etos, Pandangan Dunia, dan Simbol- Simbol Sakral Terhadap Pandangan Clifford Geertz" 5, no. 2 (2020): 189.

<sup>20</sup> Hendro, "Simbol: Arti, Fungsi, dan Implikasi Metodologisnya," 158.

<sup>21</sup> Hendro, 160.

<sup>22</sup> [https://www.liputan6.com/regional/read/3963368/cerita-masjid-keramat-pelajaubarabai?\\_page=2](https://www.liputan6.com/regional/read/3963368/cerita-masjid-keramat-pelajaubarabai?_page=2) diakses pada Selasa, 07 November 2023.

from illnesses, rashes, and even vomiting. As a result, Masjid Keramat became a safe haven for the local residents.<sup>23</sup>

Regarding the Betumbang Apam tradition at Masjid Keramat Palajau, it is unclear when and where this tradition originated. This betumbang tradition has become a customary practice passed down from the ancestors of the people in Palajau Village. The residents of Palajau Village perceive the Betumbang Apam tradition as a prayer for safety or a ceremonial blessing. This was expressed by Mr. M., the caretaker of Masjid Keramat Palajau, who said, “In our region, the term Betumbang Apam means a doa selamat...”<sup>24</sup>

Mr. M. also noted that the Betumbang tradition has been gradually eroded by modernization. Nevertheless, some members of the community still practice this tradition. This indicates that the Betumbang tradition has not disappeared and is still preserved by the people around Masjid Keramat Palajau. Those who participate in the Betumbang tradition are not only local residents but also individuals from outside the area, including other provinces, such as East Kalimantan and Central Kalimantan, who also observe the Betumbang Apam tradition at Masjid Keramat Palajau.<sup>25</sup>

Betumbang apam at the Palajau Sacred Mosque is mostly carried out on major holidays, such as Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. Although on ordinary days there are also some people who carry out this Betumbang, namely on Saturdays and Sundays, which are mostly done by people outside the Palajau Village area. In the implementation of the Betumbang Apam tradition at the Palajau Sacred Mosque, it consists of several stages, starting from preparation to core activities. In the preparation stage, there are several things that need to be done, including:<sup>26</sup>

- a. Ask permission from the mosque marbot.
- b. Provide food and drinks in the form of wadai apam or other cakes such as sticky rice.
- c. Prepare a cloth that is used as a base for children who fall up the pulpit stairs.
- d. Prepare coins to be distributed to the children.

When everything has been prepared, then just enter the core activities of the betumbang apam tradition at the Palajau Sacred Mosque, which are as follows:<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Interview with Mr M., on 29 October 2023 at 13:00 WITA.

<sup>24</sup>Interview with Mr M., on 29 October 2023 at 13:00 WITA.

<sup>25</sup>Interview with Mr M., on 29 October 2023 at 13:00 WITA.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Mr M., on 29 October 2023 at 13:00 WITA.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Mr M., on 29 October 2023 at 13:00 WITA.



- a. Everyone gathers in the main room of the mosque to carry out the betumbang apam tradition.
- b. Reading the four verses or surahs, namely surah al-Fatihah, surah al-Ikhlâs, surah al-Falaq and surah an-Naas led by religious leaders or mosque marbot.
- c. Reading the congratulatory prayer.
- d. Eating and drinking together the apam cake that has been provided.
- e. Raising the child to the top of the pulpit stairs by reciting sholawat on each step of the pulpit stairs, as well as when descending the pulpit stairs.
- f. Washing the face of the fallen child with water taken from the temple well.
- g. Praying for the fallen child to be a pious child and safe in the world hereafter.
- h. Distributing coins to the children present by throwing the money up for grabs.

### **3. Motives and Objectives of the Palajau Sacred Mosque Community regarding the Betumbang Apam Tradition**

From the studies that have been carried out, the authors get some interesting findings about the motives and objectives of the Palajau Sacred Mosque community in carrying out the betumbang apam tradition. In general, most of the people view the betumbang apam tradition as a hereditary tradition that has long been carried out by their ancestors, but as the author said earlier, this phenomenon is not singular, there is a diversity of perspectives that actually also deserves further exploration related to the positive nuances understood by some people of the Palajau Sacred Mosque about this betumbang apam. In particular, the attitudes and views of the community about educational values that get an interesting space in the community.

The Betumbang Apam tradition, which is often held in South Kalimantan, contains various motives and purposes in the community. Some involve the implementation of this tradition as a form of fulfillment of one's desire or vow, while others are carried out as an expression of gratitude to Allah Swt.<sup>28</sup> The Betumbang Apam tradition carried out at the Keramat Pelajau Mosque has 2 main objectives, as revealed by Mr. M. as the marbot of the Keramat Palajau mosque:

“This tradition is intended to introduce children to the mosque from an early age, with the hope that they will get used to being closer to the mosque until adulthood. Then

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<sup>28</sup> Yuliani dan Rahman, “Acculturation Of Batumbang Apam Tradition Values In Hulu Sungai Selatan,” 2021, 4.

secondly, the child is raised to the pulpit with the aim of receiving blessings from the scholars who built this mosque.”<sup>29</sup>

From this explanation, it can be seen that there are 2 main objectives why people carry out the tradition of betumbang apam tradition at the Palajau Sacred Mosque, namely:

- a. To introduce children to love and connect with the mosque as a center of Muslim worship.
- b. To get blessings from the scholars and parents who climbed the pulpit and who built the mosque.

From this explanation, it can be seen that the main purpose of the community carrying out this tradition is very loaded with education, namely educating children from a young age to love the mosque and respect scholars and parents. This means that the community considers this tradition not just a symbol, but rich in educational values contained in it. And it is important to continue to be passed down to children and grandchildren as a medium in conveying religious values.

Then the people of Palajau Village consider this Betumbang Apam Tradition only as a hereditary tradition from their ancestors that has long existed and continues to be carried out until now at the Palajau Sacred Mosque. As expressed by Mr. PG:

“We carry out this tradition as a form of gratitude for the presence of our child. This tradition is also a custom passed down from our ancestors, which we continue for our children and grandchildren.”<sup>30</sup>

An interesting thing the author got during an interview with Mr. M, he said that:

“We do not carry out this tradition because we consider it sunnah or obligatory, or because we are afraid of calamities if we do not. As Muslims, we believe that only Allah Swt. is able to give benefit and harm to His servants.”<sup>31</sup>

From the results of this interview we can see that this betumbang apam tradition is not considered as something that is obligatory or sunnah, but only a recommendation as a form of following what their parents have done to them in the past. Not because they are afraid that if they do not do this betumbang apam tradition their children will get disaster or unwanted things. Because indeed the essence that provides benefits and mudharat or calamity is only Allah SWT. This also shows that the Palajau Sacred Mosque community has a strong belief in God.

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<sup>29</sup>Interview with Mr M., on 29 October 2023 at 13:00 WITA.

<sup>30</sup>Interview with Mr. PG, on 10 December 2023 at 16:00 WITA.

<sup>31</sup>Interview with Mr M., on 29 October 2023 at 13:00 WITA

#### **4. Educational Values Contained in the Betumbang Apam Tradition at Palajau Sacred Mosque**

The Betumbang Apam tradition is a religious and cultural practice that has become the hallmark of the Palajau Sacred Mosque, a center of religious activity in the area. This tradition is not only limited as a hereditary custom of raising children aged several months to 5 years up the steps of the pulpit and gathering together to eat apam cakes, but also reflects a number of deep religious philosophical values, as Geertz said earlier. Among the educational values contained in the Betumbang Apam tradition are as follows:

##### **a. Values of Faith Education**

- 1) Strong belief in Allah Swt who gives benefit and harm.

The existence of a strong belief in Allah Swt which provides benefits and harms, shows that the basic principles in Islamic teachings that emphasize firm faith in Allah as the only God Almighty are inherent in the people who carry out the Betumbang Apam Tradition at the Palajau Sacred Mosque. This value can be seen from the purpose of the community carrying out the tradition, which is just a hereditary habit, not departing from the belief that traditions that if carried out will provide benefits and vice versa, if not carried out there will be harm.

By internalizing this value, people who carry out the Betumbang Apam Tradition at the Palajau Sacred Mosque create a close bond between religious activities and belief in Allah Swt. A deep understanding of this belief not only creates a sense of piety to Allah, but also provides a strong spiritual framework in carrying out traditions and living daily life.

- 2) Gratitude for the favors that Allah Swt gives

This value teaches the importance of being grateful for all the blessings that have been given by Allah Swt. Gratitude is a form of worship to Allah Swt. In addition, gratitude can also help us to appreciate the blessings that have been given by Allah Swt. This value is illustrated when the child descends the steps of the pulpit, which is symbolized that in world affairs we must look at those below us, so that there will be gratitude to Allah Swt. In addition, this tradition is also a form of gratitude from parents for the presence of their children.

- 3) Introducing children to love and connect with the mosque from a young age.

This value teaches the importance of religious education for children from an early age. Religious education can help children understand religious values, recognize God and worship Him. Children who know the mosque from a young age will be more likely to love

the mosque and worship in it. This is because they have become accustomed to the atmosphere of the mosque and have understood the importance of the mosque in the life of Muslims, so there is a sense of self-linkage with the mosque.

#### 4) Sholawat and praying

The value of sholawat is illustrated when raising children to the top of the pulpit stairs by reading sholawat on each step of the pulpit stairs, as well as when descending the pulpit stairs. This value teaches the importance of praying to the Prophet Muhammad Saw. The value of prayer is illustrated when reading a congratulatory prayer before the betumbang apam event begins, and reading a prayer for the good of the betumbang child to become a pious and pious child when the tradition is completed. These values also teach the importance of praying when starting and closing any positive activity. Prayers and prayers are a form of worship to Allah SWT. Praying to the Prophet Muhammad Saw. is one way to show our love for him. And prayer is a means of asking for help and guidance from Allah SWT.

### **b. Value of Noble Character Education**

#### 1) Honoring scholars and parents by emulating and taking their blessings.

This value is illustrated when the child is raised to the top of the pulpit stairs to take blessings. The pulpit used as a place for the preacher to preach has a high spiritual value in the view of the community. Because only people who are considered knowledgeable in religion and pious by the community are appointed to preach. This value teaches the importance of respecting people who are respected by religion, such as scholars and parents. Respect for parents is one of Allah's commands in the Qur'an. Scholars are people who have extensive religious knowledge. They can be role models for us in understanding religion and practicing it. Parents are the ones who have contributed to raising and educating us. Therefore, we must respect them as a sign of our gratitude.

#### 2) Always look at those who are above us in the hereafter, and look at those who are below us in world affairs.

This value teaches us to always be eager to increase faith and piety to Allah Swt. by looking at those who are above us, this meaning is contained when climbing the pulpit stairs. This emphasizes the importance of choosing a good role model in terms of spirituality and morals. Looking at those below us in worldly affairs, this refers to responsibility and concern for those who may be less fortunate or in need of assistance in worldly aspects, such as material or social needs. This attitude teaches not to be arrogant or boastful towards those

who may be in more difficult circumstances. Instead, one is expected to provide help, support and kindness to those in need. With this worldview, one is expected to have a good balance between spiritual development and social obligations in the world.

**c. Social Education Values**

- 1) Making children happy by giving money and food.
- 2) Giving alms.
- 3) Connecting silaturrahim and fostering social harmony.

These values teach the importance of togetherness, sharing and community harmony. Children are taught the importance of compassion and caring for others, especially children. This is a way of showing love and kindness to children and making them feel happy and cared for. They are also taught to give alms, either in the form of money or food. In addition, this value teaches the importance of maintaining relationships with family, friends and neighbors by connecting silaturrahim. This is a way of building and maintaining strong social bonds, which can help create a sense of community and belonging.

**5. Modernization and Tradition: Betumbang Apam as a Medium of Conveying Religious Values at Palajau Sacred Mosque**

The times continue to demand changes towards a more modern condition or order, often accompanied by technological developments, social changes, and transformation of community values. Modernization can bring changes in various aspects of life, such as education, technology, economy, and culture. Although modernization often brings significant changes in society, traditions are not always displaced or neglected. On the contrary, in some cases, tradition can serve as a form of stability or foundation of values that remain relevant amidst modernization. By understanding the dynamics between modernization and tradition, we can better understand the role of the Betumbang Apam tradition as a medium for conveying religious values and how this tradition remains rooted in a modernizing local context.

The Betumbang Apam tradition in Palajau Village is carried out in the mosque. In contrast to the Betumbang Apam tradition in other areas, which is mostly carried out in the house. Of course, the implementation of the Betumbang Apam Tradition in the mosque has its own reasons, namely as a medium for instilling religious values to children. As revealed by Nurdianzah that traditions that are passed down symbolically are another form of media

in instilling the values contained in the tradition.<sup>32</sup> For this reason, this opinion supports Geertz's theory to understand deeply the symbolic meaning.

The word “media” comes from Latin and is the plural form of the word “*medium*,” which literally means “intermediary or conveyor.” Therefore, media is a tool or means used to convey information or learning messages.<sup>33</sup> In the context of learning, media can include people, objects, or events that facilitate students in acquiring knowledge and skills.<sup>34</sup> Thus, media includes not only modern technology, but also symbols, oral traditions, and practices used to convey religious values.

It is important to understand that tradition is not something static, it evolves over time, reflecting the dynamics of society. In this context, tradition acts as an effective medium in maintaining and conveying religious values to future generations. Religious ceremonies, celebrations of holy days, and worship practices are concrete examples of how tradition serves as a medium for spiritual learning. And religious activities can create integration and harmony in society.<sup>35</sup>

The betumbang apam tradition is an important means of conveying religious values. The practice promotes values such as child education, social care, togetherness and devotion to Allah. These values are reflected in the implementation of betumbang apam, such as teaching children to be attached to the mosque and emulate the morals of previous scholars. This tradition also teaches the importance of sharing and giving to others, as well as providing opportunities to get closer to Allah through acts of devotion.

The betumbang apam tradition is not just symbolic or ceremonial. It is an important medium in conveying religious values to the community. The concepts of tawhid, treatise, prayer, tawakkal and Islamic morals are contained in every aspect of the tradition. This creates an environment where people not only follow the tradition, but also understand, appreciate and internalize the religious values contained therein. In principle, the creation of tradition is a process of symbolization, formalization, or ritualization. It is an attempt to instill certain values or norms in behavior through repetition.<sup>36</sup> From this description, a common thread can be drawn that the tradition of betumbang apam is not only ceremonial, but also

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<sup>32</sup> Nurdianzah, “Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Islam dalam Tradisi Jawa (Kajian Historis Pendidikan Islam dalam Dakwah Walisanga),” 17.

<sup>33</sup> Muhammad Ramli, “Media Pembelajaran Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur’an dan Al-Hadits,” *Ittihad Jurnal Kopertais Wilayah XI Kalimantan* 13, no. 23 (2015): 152.

<sup>34</sup> Syaiful Bahri Djamarah dan Aswan Zain, *Strategi Belajar Mengajar* (Jakarta: PT Rineka Cipta, 2014), 120.

<sup>35</sup> Riady, “Agama dan Kebudayaan Masyarakat Perspektif Clifford Geertz,” 14.

<sup>36</sup> Hendro, “Simbol: Arti, Fungsi, dan Implikasi Metodologisnya,” 160.

full of symbols and cultural meanings. As Geertz theorizes through “*thick description*,” we can explore the layers of meaning behind this practice, such as how this tradition reflects religious values, the importance of the mosque, and the concept of devotion to God.

## Conclusion

The Betumbang Apam tradition at the Palajau Sacred Mosque is not just a series of rituals or a hereditary legacy, but a reflection of cultural wealth and a powerful medium in conveying religious values. In every procession, this tradition leads us to a deeper understanding of the concepts of tawhid, treatise, prayer, tawakkal, and Islamic morals. Although faced with modernization, this tradition continues to strengthen the community's bond with religious values, making the Palajau Sacred Mosque a center of activity that not only functions as a place of worship, but also as a vehicle for lively religious education.

The Betumbang Apam tradition as a medium in instilling religious values plays a vital role in shaping the spiritual identity of the community in the Palajau Sacred Mosque environment. Through tradition, religious values are passed on from one generation to the next, creating a strong bond between the community and their religious teachings. The Betumbang Apam tradition has a deep meaning for the people of Palajau Village, teaching them about belief in Allah Swt., love for the mosque, care for others, gratitude and respect for scholars and parents. It is therefore important for communities to nurture and understand the values embodied in their traditions, while still ensuring that they are in line with the principles of officially recognized religions. In this way, traditions become not only a cultural heritage, but also a form of ongoing spiritual education.

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