

Batatamba As A Local Healing Tradition In The Banjar Community Of Kalimantan: Mantras, Mediums, Rituals And Continuity

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Abstract

This article examines the Batatamba tradition among the Banjar community in Kalimantan, focusing on its mantras, mediums, rituals, and continuity. The Banjar community is known for its strong connection to Sufi traditions, which are notably inclusive of local customs. One such local tradition is Batatamba, which seeks to integrate religious language with indigenous culture. The article employs an anthropological approach to analyze the cultural aspects of this tradition, treating them as central to the study. The choice of an anthropological perspective allows for a deeper exploration of the interaction between cultural and religious elements within the Batatamba practice. The findings indicate that Banjar Islam has emerged from a process of acculturation, blending Islamic teachings with various local traditions, religions, and beliefs, a process that is especially evident in the Batatamba tradition. This integration can be observed in practices such as the recitation of mantras that combine Quranic verses with local invocations, or the incorporation of the Islamic declaration "laa ilaha illallah muhammad rasulullah" at the end of local mantras. In a predominantly Islamic community, Batatamba—a form of traditional healing—continues to thrive, despite the dominance of modern medicine. Traditional healing practices are often linked to local communities, while modern medicine is more associated with purist groups aiming to 'purify' Islamic teachings and diminish the role of local traditions within the broader Islamic framework.

Keywords: Batatamba; Banjar Community; Mantras; Medium; Rituals

Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji fenomena tradisi Batatamba di kalangan masyarakat Banjar di Kalimantan, dengan fokus pada mantra, media, ritual, dan keberlanjutannya. Masyarakat Banjar dikenal luas dengan tradisi Sufi yang sangat akomodatif terhadap adat dan budaya lokal. Salah satu tradisi lokal yang berkembang adalah Batatamba, yang berupaya menggabungkan bahasa religius dengan elemen budaya lokal. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji mantra, media, ritual, serta keberlanjutan tradisi Batatamba dalam masyarakat Banjar. Pendekatan antropologis digunakan untuk membaca dan menganalisis subjek dan objek kajian, dengan menekankan aspek budaya sebagai fokus utama investigasi. Temuan artikel ini menunjukkan bahwa Islam Banjar merupakan hasil akulturasi antara Islam dengan berbagai tradisi, agama, dan kepercayaan lokal yang telah lama berakar di masyarakat, terutama dalam konteks tradisi Batatamba. Akulturasi ini dapat dilihat, misalnya, pada pembacaan mantra yang menggabungkan ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an dengan mantra lokal, atau pada penutupan mantra dengan pernyataan keberkahan "laa ilaha illallah muhammad rasulullah." Dalam masyarakat yang mayoritas beragama Islam, praktik pengobatan tradisional yang dikenal dengan Batatamba diharapkan tetap bertahan meskipun pengobatan modern lebih dominan. Secara khusus, pengobatan tradisional lebih erat dikaitkan dengan komunitas lokal, sementara pengobatan modern lebih identik dengan kelompok puritan yang berupaya memurnikan ajaran Islam dan mengurangi peran 'lokalitas' dalam praktik keagamaan Islam.

Kata Kunci: Batatamba; Masyarakat Banjar; Mantra; Medium; Ritual

Introduction

The presence of the COVID-19 pandemic, aside from bringing various issues, also brings positive impacts in the form of an increasing number of academic studies in Indonesia regarding COVID-19. Some examine it from an economic perspective, education, learning, politics, theology, psychology and mental health and so on.

Despite the diverse perspectives surrounding the understanding of COVID-19, the search for alternative healing solutions has become one of the most sought-after and necessary approaches within communities. Interestingly, in the remote regions of Kalimantan, where the pandemic likely had its impact, the local population continues to prefer using traditional knowledge and locally sourced materials to address the symptoms of COVID-19 they experience. This preference for alternative (non-medical) treatments

remains a deeply ingrained tradition in the region, with the traditional healing practice known as batatamba still widely practiced despite the widespread availability of modern medical treatments through the BPJS system, which mandates membership for all residents.

In the broader cultural context of Kalimantan, illness is often categorized into three types: medical illness, psychological illness, and magical illness. For the first two categories, patients are typically referred to health centers or hospitals for treatment. However, when it comes to the third category—magical illness—individuals are directed toward traditional healing practices, such as batatamba¹. This categorization reflects the community's continued reliance on indigenous healing methods, particularly for ailments they believe are rooted in spiritual or magical causes.

Magical illness is generally categorized into four distinct causes: 1) Illnesses caused by disturbances from the spirits of deceased close relatives; 2) Illnesses caused by disturbances from ancestral spirits, often represented by their “muwakkal” (a spiritual companion or emissary); 3) Illnesses induced by disturbances from supernatural beings or entities; and 4) Illnesses resulting from the magical actions of others, such as shamans².

However, traditional healing practices do not solely address magical illnesses; they are also applied to a wide range of ailments prevalent in the community. In rural areas, the role of batatamba becomes particularly significant, as it serves as a viable alternative to modern medical treatment, especially when access to healthcare is limited. As a longstanding tradition, batatamba continues to function as an essential aspect of local wisdom and cultural heritage in Kalimantan. This tradition not only represents a form of spiritual and physical healing but also embodies a valuable source of indigenous knowledge that has endured over time in the face of modern healthcare advancements.

The Batatamba tradition, a unique form of traditional healing within the Banjar community in Kalimantan, has long been an integral part of the local culture. This practice, which blends Islamic teachings with ancestral rituals and local wisdom, involves the use of mantras, mediums, and specific rituals aimed at healing both physical and spiritual ailments. However, a significant problem arises from the lack of standardized, objective, and verifiable measures in its practice. The effectiveness of Batatamba healing is primarily based on patient testimonials and word of mouth, leaving its results subjective and difficult to measure scientifically. Moreover, unlike modern medicine, the transmission of expertise in Batatamba does not follow a formal educational structure or institution. Practitioners are typically regarded as “chosen” individuals, inheriting their knowledge through a distinct, often familial, training process.

Amidst these challenges, it is important to examine the enduring nature of Batatamba, a local heritage deeply rooted in the cultural identity of the Banjar ethnic group. This tradition, while facing various issues related to its practices and methods, presents a fascinating intersection of Islam and Kalimantan’s historical traditions. Its combination of religious elements, local mantras, ritualistic practices, and mediums makes it a subject of interest for understanding how traditional healing practices adapt and persist over time. This article aims to explore the unique characteristics of Batatamba within Banjar culture, shedding light on its continuing relevance despite the influence of modernity and the global rise of evidence-based medicine.

The central issue in the Batatamba tradition lies in the lack of formalized standards for assessing its effectiveness, which remains reliant on anecdotal evidence and personal

¹Jamalie Zulfa, “Batatamba: Ritual Pengobatan Tradisional Dalam Masyarakat Banjar” (Konferensi Antar Universiti se Borneo- Kalimantan (KABOKA VI) Tahun 2012, Palangkaraya, 2012), <http://idr.uin-antasari.ac.id/13946/>.

²Alfani Daud, *Islam Dan Masyarakat Banjar* (RajaGrafindo Persada, 1997).

testimonies. The absence of institutionalized training and accreditation for practitioners further complicates the evaluation of this practice. Additionally, as a tradition passed down through specific lineages and considered to be divinely bestowed upon practitioners, Batatamba lacks the formal, regulated frameworks that characterize modern medical education. These factors contribute to the ongoing challenges of understanding the full scope and effectiveness of Batatamba, especially in relation to its integration with Islamic beliefs and local customs. This article seeks to investigate how Batatamba continues to thrive and evolve in the Banjar community, while also addressing the complexities surrounding its practice and sustainability in the modern era.

Literature Review

The tradition of batatamba, a form of traditional healing practiced by the Banjar community in Kalimantan, has been the subject of several studies, each focusing on different aspects of the practice. Below is a categorized review of these works, highlighting the contributions and identifying the gaps in the existing literature.

One of the prominent studies on the intersection of Islam and local traditions in the batatamba practice is by Zulfa Jamalie and Muhammad Rif'at in their article titled *Cultural Preaching: The Dialectics of Islam and Culture in the Batatamba Tradition*³. This study explores the dialectical relationship between Islam and local cultural elements in the practice of batatamba in South Kalimantan. However, their study primarily focuses on the theoretical and cultural dynamics of this integration, rather than on the practical aspects, such as mantras, mediums, rituals, and the continuity of the tradition itself. While insightful in terms of cultural integration, this study does not delve into the specifics of batatamba rituals, mantras, or the sustainability of the tradition within the community.

Zulfa Jamalie's solo work, *Batatamba: Traditional Healing Ritual in Banjar Society*⁴, examines the traditional healing rituals within the Banjar community. This article focuses specifically on one aspect of the batatamba tradition: its ritualistic nature. While it provides a detailed description of the healing practices, it does not address the broader elements such as the specific texts used, the role of mediums, or the long-term sustainability of the practice. The study is limited to rituals and does not encompass the complete framework of batatamba, such as its texts, mediums, and the continuity of the tradition.

Muhammad Zainal Abidin and Ridhatullah Asy Sya'bani's article, *Sufi Healing in South Kalimantan: Forms, Methods, and Sources*⁵, adopts a Sufi healing perspective to explore the traditional healing practices in the Banjar community. This paper investigates the methods and sources of Sufi healing, which are integral to the batatamba tradition. While this article offers valuable insights into the Sufi elements of batatamba, it focuses mainly on the philosophical and theological dimensions, not on the practical application of the tradition, such as the use of mantras, the role of mediums, or the continuity of the practice. The focus on Sufi healing limits the scope to a spiritual understanding, leaving out the phenomenological and cultural dimensions that shape batatamba practices in everyday life.

Hamlan's thesis, titled *Sufistic Dimensions in the Practice of Banyu Tatamba by Guru Syairozi in Antasan Senor Village, Banjar Regency*⁶, examines a specific practitioner's use of

³Jamalie Zulfa and Rif'at Muhammad, "Dakwah Kultural (Dialektika Islam Dan Budaya Dalam Tradisi Batatamba)," *Al-Hadharah* 11, no. 21 (2012): 51–65.

⁴Zulfa, "Batatamba."

⁵Muhammad Zainal Abidin and Ridhatullah Asy Sya'bani, *Sufi Healing Di Kalimantan Selatan: Bentuk, Metode, Dan Sumber* (Yogyakarta: Kurnia Kalam Semesta, 2020).

⁶Hamlan Hamlan, "Dimensi Sufistik Dalam Praktik Tatamba Banyu Oleh Guru Syairozi Di Desa Antasan Senor Kabupaten Banjar" (masters, Pascasarjana, 2021), <https://doi.org/10/LAMPIRAN.pdf>.

water in the batatamba practice. This study explores the Sufistic elements embedded in the local practice of batatamba through a case study of Guru Syairozi in Martapura. The focus is on the Sufi perspective, particularly how water is used as a medium in healing. While it contributes valuable insights into the spiritual and ritualistic practices of batatamba, it provides a limited case study and does not address the broader context of mantras, mediums, or the ongoing sustainability of the batatamba tradition.

Another related study is by Barkatullah Amin and Anastasia Haryati, titled *Indigenous Counseling: Guidance and Cultural-Based Banjar 'Batatamba' Counseling Overcoming Verbal Aggression in Adolescents*⁷. This article explores the application of batatamba as a form of counseling, particularly in addressing verbal aggression among adolescents. While this study highlights the therapeutic role of batatamba in psychological counseling, it does not focus on the traditional healing rituals, mantras, or the broader cultural and religious contexts. This study examines batatamba from a psychological perspective, neglecting the cultural, ritualistic, and spiritual dimensions of the tradition, particularly its sustainability in the face of modern challenges.

D.S. Farrer's study, *The Healing Arts of the Malay Mystic*⁸, addresses the healing practices within Malay mysticism, particularly how calligraphy and martial arts are used for protection and healing. While this study offers valuable insights into Southeast Asian healing traditions, it does not directly address the batatamba tradition, focusing instead on Malay mysticism more generally. This study provides a comparative analysis of mystical practices but does not explore batatamba or its specific manifestations within the Banjar community, leaving a gap in understanding the unique characteristics of batatamba.

While numerous studies have touched on various aspects of batatamba, including its Sufi influences, healing rituals, and cultural practices, there is a notable gap in the literature concerning a comprehensive study of the tradition's mantras, mediums, rituals, and continuity. No study has holistically explored these aspects within the context of the Banjar community, especially in relation to their sustainability over time. This article seeks to fill this gap by offering an in-depth examination of how these elements function together in the ongoing practice of batatamba, analyzing its persistence in contemporary society despite the dominance of modern medicine and the evolving religious landscape.

Methods

This article employs a cultural anthropology approach to analyze the batatamba tradition as a local healing practice within the Banjar community in Kalimantan. This approach was chosen because cultural anthropology allows for a deeper understanding of the relationship between healing practices and the social, religious, and cultural contexts in the Banjar community. In this case, batatamba is not only viewed as a medical practice but also as a cultural practice involving spiritual symbols and religious values. This approach helps to explore how batatamba functions within the social structure of the community and how this tradition is influenced by and adapts to social changes, including the influence of Islamic teachings and modernity.

The primary method used in this study is ethnography, with the author conducting participatory observation to directly engage in batatamba practices across various Banjar communities. This observation allows for a deeper understanding of how healing rituals,

⁷Berkatullah Amin and Anastasia Hariyati, "Indigenous Counseling: Guidance And Cultural-Based Banjar 'Batatamba' Counseling Overcoming Verbal Aggression in Adolescents," *Humanization and Religio-Culture: Critical and Decolonial Voices*, 2019, 77.

⁸D. S. Farrer, "The Healing Arts of the Malay Mystic," *Visual Anthropology Review* 24, no. 1 (2008): 29–46, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-7458.2008.00003.x>.

mantras, and media are used in daily practice, as well as how the community perceives and interacts with this tradition. Through observation, the author captures the social dynamics that occur in batatamba practice, such as the role of practitioners within the community, the interaction between healers and patients, and the community's acceptance and interpretation of batatamba as part of their cultural heritage. This approach also provides insight into how batatamba is seen as a practice that merges Islamic elements with the local cultural traditions of the Banjar.

In addition, the article also utilizes symbolic analysis to understand the role of mantras, media, and rituals in batatamba. This analysis focuses on how the symbols used in this healing practice create deeper meanings for both practitioners and patients and how these symbols function in the process of spiritual and physical healing. The mantras used in batatamba, which often combine verses from the Qur'an with elements of local cultural beliefs, serve as a point of convergence between Islamic teachings and the cultural traditions of the Banjar people. Through this approach, the article examines how batatamba functions not only as a healing practice but also as a means of preserving cultural and religious identity in the face of social change. This cultural anthropology approach provides a holistic view of how batatamba persists, evolves, and adapts within the social and religious dynamics of the community.

The Mantra of Healing

The term "mantra" originates from the Sanskrit language, composed of two words: "man" (mind) and "tra" (tool), which literally translates to "tool of the mind." According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian Dictionary), a mantra is a phrase or utterance believed to possess supernatural power, capable of producing specific effects, such as healing, causing harm, or providing protection. Mantras are frequently used in various ceremonies or rituals, where they are spoken with a particular intention. In practice, mantras may consist of word arrangements with poetic elements, such as rhyme and rhythm, which are believed to contain mystical powers. They are typically recited by shamans or spiritual healers to counteract or neutralize harmful supernatural forces⁹.

Different types of mantras are used in society depending on their intended purpose. Some mantras are used for malevolent purposes, often referred to as "evil mantras," which aim to bring disaster or harm to others. On the contrary, there are also mantras used for protection, which aim to safeguard individuals from danger or misfortune. Healing mantras, or "mantra penawar" (curative mantras), are used in the practice of healing to address ailments or injuries. Additionally, there are mantras with specific effects, such as the "mantra pitanggung," which is believed to make a woman unattractive to men or unable to marry for life, as no man will love her. The use of such mantras demonstrates how certain words or utterances are perceived to have a significant influence on a person's life.

The term "memantrai" refers to the act of invoking or reciting a mantra. For example, in some stories, after a shaman performs a mantra (memantrai), an individual may fall unconscious. Meanwhile, the term "memantrakan" means to recite a mantra for a specific purpose, such as when a priest recites a mantra over ashes and bones in a religious ritual. This practice illustrates how mantras are not only used as a form of spiritual communication

⁹“Arti Kata ‘Mantra’ Menurut Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia | KBBI.Co.Id,” accessed December 4, 2024, <https://kbbi.co.id/arti-kata/mantra>.

but also as tools to invoke the desired supernatural effects, either positive or negative, in one's life¹⁰.

In the Banjar community, mantras are often referred to by various terms such as *bacaan* (recitations), *tiupan* (blowing), *isim* (incantation), *penawar* (healer), and *sumpah* (oath). Although these terms have different functions and applications, they all essentially refer to the use of words believed to have spiritual power. For instance, "*bacaan*" refers to texts that are recited for a particular purpose, while "*tiupan*" involves blowing the recitation onto an object such as water or a wound. "*Penawar*" refers to mantras used for healing or protection, while "*sumpah*" signifies a mantra used as a declaration of fate or oath binding a subject or object. The term "*isim*" pertains to recitations largely derived from Islamic teachings, highlighting the relationship between mantras and religious doctrine.

The use of Quranic recitations in the practice of mantras in the Banjar community reflects the development of Islam, which brought with it spiritual values intertwined with local cultural practices. As explained by Alfianoor, the language of mantras among the Banjar people can be categorized into three types: 1) the original Banjar language, 2) a mixed language incorporating elements from Sanskrit, Kawi, and Arabic, and 3) the full use of Arabic. Therefore, Quranic recitations play a significant role in this healing tradition, illustrating the fusion of ancient beliefs with Islamic teachings¹¹.

In Hinduism and other spiritual traditions, mantras are regarded as possessing extraordinary mystical power, where the words are not merely uttered but are deeply contemplated with full attention and concentration. In this context, mantras are seen as instruments for communication with divine forces, carrying a high sacred value. Sources of mantras in Hinduism, such as "Om," hold cosmic meaning and symbolize the creation, preservation, and destruction of the universe. In the practice of Mantra Yoga, mantras are defined as words, phrases, or syllables that are recited with focused attention and increasing concentration. This underscores that mantras are special expressions with spiritual significance and are believed to contain profound power, often beyond the comprehension of ordinary reasoning.

In Hindu tradition, the concept of a mantra closely parallels the Latin terms "alpha" and "omega," signifying the beginning and the end, encapsulated in the word "Om" (or Aum), which consists of three letters: A, U, and M, each carrying its own symbolic meaning. The letter "A" represents the god Brahma, the divine force of creation, with the mouth opening when it is uttered; "U" symbolizes the god Vishnu, the preserver of the universe, with the lips slightly apart as if protecting the inner mouth; and "M" represents Shiva, the destroyer and transformer, with the lips tightly closed, symbolizing a return to the source. The power of "AUM" reflects the divine essence that creates, sustains, and transforms the universe, carrying a profound spiritual message, as exemplified in the Hindu mantra "Asato Ma Sat Gamayo", meaning "Lead me from the unreal to the real." In this way, mantras, especially in Hinduism, serve as potent tools for spiritual communication, connecting devotees to the divine realm¹².

However, following the arrival of Islam in Indonesia, the term and practice of mantras continued to evolve, albeit with adaptations in line with Islamic teachings. In the traditional

¹⁰Yolanda Álvarez-Pérez et al., "Effectiveness of Mantra-Based Meditation on Mental Health: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, no. 6 (January 2022): 3380, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19063380>.

¹¹Alfianoor Alfianoor, "Ayat Al-Qur'an Dalam Mantra Banjar," *NALAR: Jurnal Peradaban dan Pemikiran Islam* 1, no. 1 (July 29, 2017): 27–47, <https://doi.org/10.23971/njppi.v1i1.900>.

¹²Ridhi Agarwala, Prashant Mishra, and Ramendra Singh, "Evaluating the Impact of Religious Icons and Symbols on Consumer's Brand Evaluation: Context of Hindu Religion," *Journal of Advertising* 50, no. 4 (September 30, 2021): 372–90, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2021.1940394>.

healing practices of the Banjar people, Quranic recitations play a vital role as sources of mantras. These recitations are commonly used to dispel illness, eliminate disturbances, or restore health. Like other traditional healing practices, these recitations typically begin with the phrase "Bismillah" and end with "berkat Lâilâhailallâh Muhammadurrasûlullâh", signifying that the healing is performed in the name of Allah and by His will.

A concrete example of using Quranic recitations as mantras in healing is the practice of reciting specific verses to treat wounds. In this tradition, recitations are spoken with full attention and sincere intent, transforming the words into a tool for healing¹³. Similarly, the "Tawar dingin" (cooling mantra) is commonly employed to alleviate pain or discomfort, using Quranic verses or prayers believed to have mystical healing properties. Overall, the practice of utilizing Quranic recitations as mantras within the Banjar community underscores the harmonious influence and development of local culture and Islamic teachings. These recitations are not merely words; they are infused with spiritual intention, regarded as prayers and efforts aimed at healing. This tradition reflects the belief that every letter and word recited from the Quran carries blessings and holds the potential to promote well-being among humanity.

In Banjar culture, mantras can be classified into three broad categories based on their language and the influences they carry. The first category consists of mantras that are exclusively in Quranic Arabic, often referred to as "Qur'anic healing" or ruqyah therapy. These mantras are believed to carry profound spiritual significance and are primarily used for healing, based on the belief that the sacred recitations from the Quran possess healing powers capable of addressing various physical and spiritual ailments. The second category includes mantras composed solely in the Banjar language, which are deeply rooted in the oral traditions of the Banjar people and passed down through generations. These mantras are commonly used by shamans or traditional healers who recite prayers or mantras to alleviate illness or remove disturbances, relying on the supernatural forces believed to be inherent in the local language. The third category encompasses mantras that combine Banjar with Arabic elements, reflecting the fusion of local traditions with Islamic teachings. This unique blend enhances the spiritual potency of the mantras through the inclusion of Arabic, while maintaining the familiar and intimate tone of the Banjar language for the community. This integration underscores how the Banjar people have harmoniously merged Islamic values with their indigenous beliefs and practices.

These three categories demonstrate the diversity and richness of the mantra tradition within the Banjar community, with each type serving a specific function and meaning in healing practices and spiritual life. The fusion of local elements and Islam in these mantras also reflects how Banjar culture has adapted and evolved, preserving traditions while aligning them with the teachings of Islam.

Below are examples of recitations or mantras commonly used in healing (batatamba) among the Banjar community:

NO	MANTRA RECITATION	BENIFITS
1	Bismillahirrahmanirrahim. Kemarau ari. Langkang bumi. Hujan ari. Rapat bumi. Barakat Lailahailallah Muhammadur rasulullah.	Mantra obat luka
2	Bismillahirrahmanirrahim. Alam tara kai fa fa'ala rabbuka. Langit tasingkai. Bumi tabuka	Immunity mantra

¹³Hasyim Muhammad et al., "The Qur'anic Mantras Recited by Shamanic Santri in Java, Indonesia," *HTS Theologise Studies / Theological Studies* 77, no. 4 (2021), <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/hts/article/view/233127>.

	Barakat Lailahailallah Muhammadur rasulullah.	
3	Bismillahirrahmanirrahim. Yanaru Narukuni salamun ala waala Ibrahim. Barakat Lailahailallah Muhammadur rasulullah.	Cooling mantra
4	Bismillahirrahmanirrahim. Qul a'uudzu bi Rabbin naas. Malikin naas. Ilaahin naas. Min syarril waswaasil khan naas. Al ladzii yuwaswisu fii suduurin naas. Minal jin Barakat Lailahailallah Muhammadur rasulullah.	Stomach ache healing mantra

The Medium of Healing

Water is the most commonly used medium among successful batatamba practitioners, as reported by those interviewed for this study. Subject TN, who has been practicing batatamba for 15 years, emphasized that water, either through blowing or bathing, is the primary medium in his healing practices. He treats various ailments, both medical and magical in nature, such as difficulties in finding a life partner, infertility, menstrual cramps, tonsillitis, and other conditions reported by his patients. According to Subject TN, the significance of water in healing is rooted in its essential role as the origin of human existence. He explains, "essentially, water comes from the wind, which comes from fire, and fire comes from Nur Muhammad. The nature of water is pure and it purifies everything that is dirty."

In batatamba, water is used in conjunction with specific mantras. These recitations include Istighfar, followed by tawajjuh and tawassul to the Prophet, sending blessings through the recitation of four chapters: Surah Al-Fatihah, Al-Ikhlās, Al-Falaq, and An-Nas. Afterward, the healer surrenders to Allah, prays with closed eyes, and asks for the patient's healing. The recitations are believed to invoke guidance and divine power, with the phrase "berkat Laa ilaha illallah Muhammad Rasulullah" marking the conclusion. The recitation of Istighfar serves as a form of self-purification, making prayers more likely to be answered by Allah. Tawajjuh and tawassul are seen as acts of respect for the Prophet Muhammad, whose blessings are believed to facilitate the acceptance of the prayer. The four main chapters are understood as the structural elements of a spiritual house, with the Shahadah as the key, Istighfar as the pillar, blessings upon the Prophet as the door, and the four chapters as the roof, with prayers as the furnishings, varying from individual to individual.

Additionally, water is used as a medium for bathing in a practice known as "mandi 9" or repentance bathing. This type of bath, intended for heart purification, involves reciting the intention to repent from all sins for the sake of Allah (nawaitul gusla littaubati minadz dzunubi lillahi ta'ala). Water is then poured three times on the head, three times on each shoulder, and over the entire body, while reciting: "astaghfirullah, innallaha ghafururrahim."

Another practitioner, Subject NA, a 54-year-old healer from Tapus Dalam, Hulu Sungai Utara, has been practicing batatamba for 24 years. Subject NA emphasizes that water is an essential medium for healing, particularly in alleviating pain caused by supernatural disturbances, such as jinn or negative energies. In these cases, water is combined with techniques like massage or rubbing at specific points, accompanied by recitations from the Quran, including Istighfar, Surah Al-Fatihah, Al-Ikhlās, Al-Falaq, An-Nas, and Ayat Kursi.

In line with the practices of these healers, the use of water as a healing medium is consistent with Islamic traditions. Subject AD's method of blowing or using water in batatamba aligns with practices attributed to the Prophet Muhammad, who would blow onto his hands while reciting protection surahs and then wipe his body, as narrated in hadith collections. Additionally, the Prophet Muhammad is reported to have used water in healing, such as when he treated Tsabit bin Qais by mixing water with soil from Buthan and applying it to the patient. This practice of using water in healing, combined with Quranic recitations, is supported by scholarly consensus. Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani notes that Ruqyah (spiritual healing) is permissible as long as it involves the words of Allah, His names, and attributes, is

recited in Arabic or understood meanings, and is based on the belief that healing depends on the power of Allah, not the recitation itself. Therefore, the practices of healers like Subject AD, which incorporate Quranic recitations and the use of water, are consistent with both Islamic teachings and traditional healing practices.

The Rituals of Batatamba Tradition

In performing healing practices, practitioners usually have their own rituals, which are considered aids to enhance the effectiveness of their treatments. It's possible that the recitation of mantras is the same, but due to differences in the practitioner's quality, the results may vary. At this stage, rituals become crucial as a confirmation of “the man behind the gun.”

NO	SUBJEK	DIMENSI RITUAL
1	Subjek AD	There are various rituals, including Tahajud prayers, recitation of Asmaul Husna, Khalwat (seclusion), Israq prayers, Dhuhā prayers, Rawatib prayers, Taubat (repentance), Awabin prayers, Dhikr, and Salawat. All these deeds and sunnah prayers must be sincerely dedicated to Allah SWT. Specific practices include reciting Al-Fatihah 41 times, Surah Taha verses 1-8 three times, Laqadzā akum to the end of the verse, and Asmaul Husna. Additionally, Subject AD often recites Surah Al-Fatihah, Al-Ikhlās, Al-Falaq, and An-Naas to honor their mother, grandmother, ancestors, and saints such as Sheikh Semman Al-Madani, Sheikh Arsyad Al-Banjari, Imam Al-Ghazali, Guru Zaini bin Abdul Ghani, and others.
2	Subjek YF	The rituals include waking up between midnight and 2 AM, performing ablution, offering at least two cycles of voluntary prayers, sitting in silence while regulating breathing, feeling the breath, and remembering the blessing of God in the form of breath. They recite Istighfar 100 times, Tahlil 100 times, and Salawat 100 times. Subject YF emphasizes the importance of maximizing the remembrance of God during prayer times to overcome forgetfulness throughout the day.
3	Subjek SN	The healing ritual begins with ablution, facing the setting sun, and raising a bottle or glass of water to the healer's mouth. The treatment commences with the recitation of Istighfar three times, praising Allah (reciting Hamdalah), sending blessings to Prophet Muhammad, and reciting Surah Al-Fatihah seven times, Surah Al-Ikhlās three times, Al-Falaq, An-Nas, and Ayat Kursi. They conclude with seven prayers, blowing into the water bottle three times, and stating “berkat Lâ ilâ ha illallah, insya Allah sembuh” (with the blessing of 'There is no god but Allah,' God willing, be healed). This process is repeated three times.
4	Subjek YM	intending solely for Allah, having faith that Allah will heal the disease, and sincerity for Allah alone
5	Subjek KA	The intention is for Allah, purity involves performing ablution before treatment, faith that Allah will heal the disease, patience in treating patients, and pure intention to help others.
6	Subjek MH	Gained knowledge through khalwat (seclusion), isolating oneself for a minimum of 100 days, suppressing worldly desires until inner strength arises. They always bathe at 4 AM and follow a specific wiridan (spiritual exercise) by sitting and performing wirid from one hour before the Fajr prayer until sunrise, and from after Maghrib prayer until 10 PM. Subject MH emphasizes that the initial three weeks were challenging, marked by numerous disturbances.

The Continuity of *Batatamba* Tradition

As part of the continuation of the *batatamba* tradition, it is necessary to first address various types of treatments that have developed in the present time. In modern medicine, the term “medicine” is known, which in Latin is called “*medicus*,” meaning doctor. Medicine encompasses various healthcare practices that have evolved to maintain and restore health through the prevention and treatment of diseases. As a term, medicine is usually described as the science and practice based on the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of diseases¹⁴.

Modern medicine typically utilizes biomedical science, biomedical research, genetics, and medical technology to perform diagnostic work, treat, and prevent injuries and diseases. In practice, this is usually done through medications or surgery, in addition to various therapies such as psychotherapy, splints and external traction, medical equipment, biological treatments, and ionizing radiation. Modern medicine, influenced by empirical sciences, has made science a reference in medical knowledge, confronting alternative treatments, which, despite being marginalized, still find a place in society.

In addition to medicine, another popular type of treatment among modern society is counseling therapy. Counseling is often interpreted as a assistance process provided by an expert to individuals experiencing a problem. There are several types of counseling therapies, including: 1) Couples therapy; 2) Behavior therapy; 3) Psychoanalytic therapy; 4) Humanistic therapy; 5) Dynamic Interpersonal Therapy; 6) Gestalt therapy; 7) Dancing therapy; 8) Resistance analysis; 9) Cognitive therapy; 10) Transference analysis therapy; and 11) Music therapy.

The two models of modern treatment or healing mentioned above, in practice, complement each other, although they are not always aligned. Medicine generally deals with the physical (bodily) realm, while counseling, usually performed by therapists or psychologists, deals with the mental or psychological realm. Both, based on empirical science, generally have logical-rational characteristics (sensitivity/reasoning), assuming that the object must be observable and measurable. They generally reject involvement in anything mystical, supernatural, or even spiritual in their practices, often coming into conflict with other types of treatment or healing models that utilize these sources as their main medium.

In relation to Islam, this modern treatment intersects with the model of modernist Islam, which offers the idea of purifying Islam, returning to authentic Islam, the Quran and Sunnah, and views local traditions as innovations contrary to the religion. This perspective is, of course, opposed to the traditional Islamic model, which is very accommodating to local traditions.

The types of traditional treatments or healing within traditional groups have a wide range of variations. Genealogically, they can be considered successors to classical medicine, practitioners of which are called “*thabib*” or physicians¹⁵. Traditional models of treatment or healing are considered alternatives for people amidst the capitalism of modern medicine, which can be very expensive. Some believe that traditional treatments are equally effective as modern medicine, and in some cases, the impact is felt more directly.

In Sundanese treatment, terms such as traditional herbal medicine (*jamu*), reflexology, massage, bone-setting massage, prayers and spells (*mantras*), gargling and cupping (*bekam*), transferring diseases to animals, *prana* energy, and taboos are known. In Javanese treatment, terms include traditional herbal medicine, reflexology, massage, prayers and spells (*mantras*),

¹⁴Sara N. AlRawi et al., “Traditional Arabic & Islamic Medicine: Validation and Empirical Assessment of a Conceptual Model in Qatar,” *BMC Complementary and Alternative Medicine* 17, no. 1 (March 14, 2017): 157, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12906-017-1639-x>.

¹⁵Samir S. Amr and Abdelghani Tbakhi, “Ibn Sina (Avicenna): The Prince Of Physicians,” *Annals of Saudi Medicine* 27, no. 2 (March 2007): 134–35, <https://doi.org/10.5144/0256-4947.2007.134>.

prana energy, taboos, and transferring diseases to animals. In Sumatran treatment, terms include traditional herbal medicine, remedies from animals, prayers and mantras, and inner energy (tenaga dalam). In Balinese treatment, terms include traditional herbal medicine, remedies from animals, meditation, mantras, and the use of specific objects. Meanwhile, in ath-thibun nabawi treatment with Habatussauda, water, ruqiyah, cupping (bekam), prayer (shalat), and fasting¹⁶.

One traditional treatment model in Banjar society, as mentioned earlier, is batatamba. The Banjar people believe that a pananamba, possessing magical healing powers, is due to at least three aspects: 1) Genealogically, they have a lineage as a pananamba; 2) As a gift from God after undergoing specific rituals and processes to attain these abilities through meditation, wiridan, penance, fasting, and so on; and 3) Because of the high level of religious knowledge and worship, such as a master or religious scholar.

Furthermore, the magical offering, blessing, or mana possessed by a pananamba is usually channeled through: 1) Supernatural powers with recitations, such as prayers or mantras; 2) Writing and symbols to ward off harm, such as amulets, bird claw symbols, leaf motifs, and banaspati (kala); 3) Blessed water consumed, bathed in (bamandi-mandi), washed on the face (batimpungas), sprinkled (dipapai or ditapungtawari), or sprayed (basambur); 4) The use of specific objects believed to contain power and feared by supernatural beings, such as fabric (Sasirangan fabric), yellow-colored fabric, mirrors, combs, small knives, jariangau grass and bilaran (a type of plant), enau or coconut leaves, ijuk rope, black thread, betel leaves, shallots, sahang (pepper), picis, and others.

Moreover, the Banjar people believe that specific recitations such as prayers, zikr, or tawa'udz taken from the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad contain magical powers that can ward off evil supernatural influences or be used to heal those affected by supernatural beings¹⁷. Verses from the Qur'an that have healing properties against diseases and are used as a form of treatment are called 'ayat-ayat syifa.'

As for the popular treatment method among the Banjar community, it involves the use of healing water (banyu tawar). Healing water, also referred to as 'blessed water,' is usually consumed, used for bathing (bamandi-mandi), washed on the face (batimpungas), sprinkled (dipapai or ditapungtawari), or sprayed (basambur)¹⁸. The Banjar people understand that blessed water is essentially water containing blessings or goodness because specific recitations (such as verses from the Qur'an or prayers) have been recited by an individual (a religious scholar or teacher, pananamba) or a group of people during a ceremony (such as Yasinan, recitations of blessings, religious festivities, and so on). Therefore, blessed water is believed to contain a kind of blessing with properties to treat magically influenced diseases¹⁹.

In Sufi teachings, the term "blessing" undergoes a specific meaning, referring to spiritual influence or divine abundance. Thus, a blessing can be understood as a prayer of approval or positive influence from someone or something believed to have unique qualities capable of bringing safety, happiness, or the fulfillment of desires, such as parents, teachers (mursyid), scholars, and sacred places. Therefore, a blessing is intended as the transfer of

¹⁶Nurdeen Deuraseh, *Health and Medicine in the Islamic Tradition Based on the Book of Medicine (Kitab al-Tibb) of Sahib al-Bukhari* (International Society for the History of Islamic Medicine, 2006).

¹⁷Lubna Alaydrus, "Tinjauan Hadis Tentang Pengobatan Nabi 'Studi Kritik Sanad Dan Matan Hadis Nabi Tentang Pengobatan Menggunakan Kurma Dan Madu,'" *Al-Munir: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 1, no. 02 (2019): 1–34, <https://doi.org/10.24239/al-munir.v1i02.38>.

¹⁸Zulfa Jamalie, "Dakwah Kultural: Dialektika Islam Dan Budaya Dalam Tradisi Batatamba," *Alhadharah: Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 11, no. 21 (2017): 58.

¹⁹M. Arli Rusandi and Ledy Oktavia, "Nilai-Nilai Batatamba Masyarakat Banjar Bantaran Sungai Dalam Mengatasi Gangguan Psikologis (Gelisah Dan Gangguan Tidur) Kedalam Bimbingan Dan Konseling," in *The 5th Malaysia-Indonesia (MALINDO5) International Seminar on Counseling* (Malaysia, 2017), 322.

spiritual influence from someone perceived to have excellence or uniqueness. As a result, it is common to find some people requesting “banyu guru” (meaning water that has been recited by the teacher with specific verses) or water that the teacher has drunk, and the remaining water is taken and consumed by the student with the intention of gaining blessings from the teacher. In the context of sacredness, individuals who visit the graves of scholars, saints, or datu hope to receive blessings from their pilgrimage to these graves²⁰.

Considering the context of the Banjar community, which is relatively familiar with Sufi traditions, the batatamba tradition, as a result of the convergence between local traditions and Islam with a strong Sufi influence, is expected to continue. This situation differs in modernist communities that are closer to modern medicine, and in some aspects, they may view the batatamba tradition as a deviation in religious practice, although this cannot be fully generalized.

Conclusion

In conclusion, several key points can be drawn to address the questions raised in the introduction of this study. In the batatamba tradition among the Banjar community in Kalimantan, Qur'anic verses are the primary source of mantra recitations. These include complete chapters such as Surah Al-Fatiha, Surah Al-Ikhlâs, Surah Al-Falaq, and Surah An-Nas, as well as excerpts like Ayatul Kursi or shorter healing verses known as Ayat Syifa. Additionally, other recitations, such as istighfar, hamdalah, salutations (shalawat), and other blessings, are commonly used. The presence of Islam in the community is evident in the integration of Qur'anic verses with local chants, or the concluding of recitations with phrases like "la ilaha illallah." Water serves as the primary healing medium in batatamba practices, often applied through blowing (banyu tawar), bathing, or placing it on plates. Other mediums, such as needles, nails, and oil, are also used for specific healing purposes.

In terms of rituals, batatamba practitioners typically perform spiritual practices to strengthen their capacity during treatment. This is crucial, as the outcome of the treatment is often determined by the practitioner's spiritual strength, even when identical recitations are used. Therefore, the subjective role of the pananamba is a decisive factor in the success of healing. Regarding the continuity of the batatamba tradition, the integration of Islam and local traditions in the Banjar community reflects a historical process of acculturation. Islam has adapted to local practices, and this can be seen in the way mantra recitations often combine Qur'anic verses with local chants or conclude with phrases like "laa ilaha illallah Muhammad rasulullah." While modern medicine remains dominant, batatamba continues to thrive within traditional communities. However, it tends to be more closely associated with local communities, while puritanical groups focused on purifying Islamic teachings may downplay the role of such local traditions.

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²⁰Asmaran Asmaran, “Membaca Fenomena Ziarah Wali Di Indonesia: Memahami Tradisi Tabarruk Dan Tawassul,” *Al-Banjari: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 17, no. 2 (December 31, 2018): 181, <https://doi.org/10.18592/al-banjari.v17i2.2128>.

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