

THE PROPHET'S *MAULID* TRADITION IN CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVES: A LITERATURE REVIEW OF *MULUDAN* CELEBRATIONS IN INDONESIA

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Abstract: This study aims to understand the role and meaning of *Maulid Nabi* celebrations from a cultural and religious perspective through a comprehensive literature review. Using a literature study approach, this research analyses various scholarly works, journal articles, books, and reports related to the implementation of *Maulid Nabi* in Indonesia. The main focus of this article is to explore how this religious tradition is adapted in the local cultural context, as well as how religious and cultural elements influence and enrich each other. In addition, the article also explores the dynamics of the development of *Maulid Nabi* celebrations in various regions, ranging from Java, Sumatra, and Sulawesi to Eastern Indonesia, where each region has unique characteristics in the celebration. The results of the review show that the celebration of the Prophet's birthday not only functions as a means of worship and religious expression but also as a place to preserve local cultural identity. This tradition also facilitates social interaction among the community, strengthens community ties, and plays a role in building religious harmony. Thus, *Maulid Nabi*, from a cultural and religious perspective in Indonesia, is a tradition that contains multidimensional meanings, both in spiritual and socio-cultural contexts. This research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the relevance of the *Muludan* tradition in the context of pluralistic Indonesia.

Keywords: *Maulid*, *Muludan*, Tradition.

A. Introduction

The commemoration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday has become an important tradition in the Islamic world, especially in the month of *Rabiul Awal*, to celebrate his birth. This tradition is not only a religious one but also a cultural one that has become ingrained in many countries, including Indonesia. Islamic law instructs its followers to be grateful for the blessings given by Allah SWT, and the birth of the Prophet Muhammad is considered one of the greatest blessings for Muslims. This is illustrated through the law of *aqiqah*, which encourages Muslims to show gratitude by slaughtering a goat at the birth of a child, just as the celebration of the Prophet's birthday is done as an expression of gratitude for his birth (Dalam, 2018).

In Indonesia, the celebration of the Prophet's birthday is part of the country's official annual agenda, often attended by high-ranking state officials and foreign ambassadors. This celebration is on par with other religious holidays. Through various events such as *Sirah Nabawiyah* studies, recitations, social services, the recitation of *Barzanji* and joint prayers, Muslims remember the noble personality of the Prophet and his mission as the bearer of mercy for the universe.

However, the importance of the celebration of the Prophet's birthday lies not only in its festivities but also in the way it is carried out. Muslims are taught to commemorate the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) with full solemnity and not get caught up in vices such as the mixing of men and women or the use of *haram* musical instruments. The main purpose of this commemoration is to increase love for the Prophet Muhammad, not to cause division between groups of Muslims.

The tradition of the Prophet's birthday only emerged a few centuries after the Prophet's death. During the Prophet's lifetime, there was no record of any commemoration of his birthday. Even during the time of the Companions, *Tabi'in*, and *Tabi'it Tabi'in*, the commemoration of the Prophet's birthday did not exist. This tradition first appeared during the Fatimid Dynasty in Egypt, precisely under the rule of King al-Muiz li Dinillah (341-365 AH), who was a Shia ruler. At this time, the commemoration of the Prophet's birthday was only celebrated by the Shiites.

Over time, this tradition was adopted by Sunni Muslims, starting with Caliph Nuruddin of Syria (511-569 AH), who was the first Sunni leader to record the celebration of the Prophet's birthday. The tradition was later perfected by King Al-Mudhaffar Abu Sa'id Kaukabri, who, in the 7th century AH, organised a massive celebration that lasted for seven days and nights. The celebration involved thousands of goats and chickens as a

feast and was attended by a large number of scholars and people. The purpose of the celebration was to energise the Muslims in the face of the Mongol threat led by Jengis Khan. From here, the celebration of the Prophet's birthday grew widely and became part of Islamic culture.

Although there was initial controversy among scholars regarding the ruling on celebrating the Prophet's birthday, many prominent scholars such as Imam Al-Suyuthi, Al-Sakhawi, and Ibn Hajar Al-Haitami supported this tradition. They argued that the commemoration of Maulid is a form of respect for the Prophet Muhammad and a means to spread the spirit of love for him. Scholarly works such as Al-Hafizh Ibn Dihyah's "Al-Tanwir Fi Maulid Al-Bashir An-Nadzir" reinforce the legality of this celebration among Muslims (Dalam, 2018).

In Indonesia, the Prophet's birthday has become a tradition that is closely related to local culture. The history of the entry of Islam into the archipelago through Arab, Persian and Indian traders in the 7th century AD paved the way for the development of this tradition. These traders not only brought merchandise but also spread the teachings of Islam and its religious traditions, including the *Maulid Nabi*.

The process of Islamization in Indonesia, especially in Java, was influenced by the role of the *Wali Songo*, who used a cultural approach to spreading Islam. *Sunan Kalijaga*, one of the *Wali Songo*, combined the teachings of Islam with local arts and culture, including the commemoration of the Prophet's birthday, which was filled with puppet and gamelan performances. The aim was to make it easier for people who were still Hindu-Buddhist at that time to accept the teachings of Islam.

In Java, the celebration of the Prophet's birthday is known by various names and forms, such as *Grebeg Maulid* in Yogyakarta and *Sekaten* in Surakarta. *Grebeg Maulid* involves a procession of *gunungan* of crops that are paraded around the city and distributed to the people as a symbol of prosperity. *Sekaten*, on the other hand, is a week-long ceremony with various religious and cultural activities, including gamelan performances and recitations (Nadia, 2011).

In addition, the *Maulid* tradition also developed in Aceh under the name *Meuraya*, which is celebrated for three full months and is filled with prayers, recitations, and social activities such as providing food to the poor and orphans. In the Kudus region of Central Java, the Maulid commemoration is known as the "*ampyang*" tradition, where food is decorated with crackers and paraded around the village before being distributed to the public (Yunus, 2019).

The tradition of *Maulid Nabi* is not only a form of expression of joy over the birth of the Prophet Muhammad but also has high religious and social values. Through this commemoration, Muslims are invited to emulate the noble morals of the Prophet in their daily lives, such as self-sacrifice, honesty, and compassion for others. In addition, *Maulid* commemoration also serves as an effective means of da'wah. In *Maulid* events, religious lectures are often inserted to remind Muslims of the importance of following in the footsteps of the Prophet and strengthening faith in Allah SWT. Thus, *Maulid* commemoration is not just an annual ceremony but also a medium of religious education that can strengthen the spiritual bonds of Muslims.

However, Muslims need to maintain the essence of *Maulid* commemoration so as not to be trapped in forms of celebration that are only ceremonial without appreciating its true meaning. The essence of *Maulid* as a momentum for strengthening faith and a reminder of the sharia brought by the Prophet Muhammad SAW must always be maintained so that it does not degrade into just a "people's party".

So exploring the tradition of the Prophet's *maulid* from a cultural and religious perspective in the celebration of the *maulid* is expected to educate all levels of society that the *maulid* celebration contains very high cultural and religious values as our guide in achieving the pleasure of Allah SWT. The purpose of the research is to examine and explore the tradition of the prophet's *maulid* from a cultural and religious perspective. This research is important to do for several reasons as a novelty in this research, including, *First*, tracing the tradition of the prophet's *maulid* from a cultural and religious perspective among the general public, whether it has reached the level recommended by Sharia or not. *Second*, exploring cultural and religious values.

B. Research Methods

The method used in this study uses a method of library research. Library or literature study can be defined as a series of activities related to library data collection methods, reading and recording and processing research materials. The type of research used is library research or literature study, where researchers rely on various literature to obtain research data and use a qualitative approach because the data produced is in the form of words or descriptions. Library research or literature research is research whose place of study is literature or literature. In this research, research is carried out by utilising studies which are similar or related (Basri, 2024).

In literature study research, there are at least four main characteristics that writers need to pay attention to, *First*, the author or

researcher is dealing directly with text (*nash*) or numerical data, not with direct knowledge from the field. *Second*, library data is “ready to use”, meaning that researchers do not go directly to the field because researchers are dealing directly with data sources in the library. *Third*, library data is generally a secondary source, in the sense that researchers obtain material or data from second-hand and not original data from the first data in the field. *Fourth*, that the condition of library data is not limited by time and space. Based on the above, data collection in research is carried out by reviewing and/or exploring several journals, books, and documents (both printed and electronic) as well as other sources of data and/or information that is considered relevant to the research or study (Supriyadi, 2017).

After collecting various literature related to the study under study, the researcher made observations in Sumberjo Village, Subdistrict, Lamongan Regency, then the object of research was explored through various library information both from books, natural journals and so on to analyse the *Maulid Nabi* tradition.

The research object is the research location where the activity is carried out. The choice of research location is intended to explain or simplify the field that will be the focus of the research. The reason for choosing the research location in Sumberjo Village, Subdistrict, Lamongan Regency, as the research location is that the community carries out the tradition of *maulid nabi*. Researchers will conduct observations on the prophet’s *maulid* activities, which have socio-cultural and religious values (Supriyadi, 2017).

Data sources are one of the things that can support a study. Operationally, this research can be divided into two types, namely human data sources and non-human data sources (Yunmandori, Sarbini, and Kohar 2021). Then, it was analysed using literature studies. This is done through the observation process and then documenting it so that it can be used as a data source. In addition, researchers also use various literature that are relevant to the problems that researchers examine.

Data collection techniques here are the ways taken and the tools used by researchers in collecting data. The data collection techniques used in this study include two types, namely primary data and secondary data (Supriyadi, 2017).

The primary data source used in the study is observation data. Observation is the systematic observation and recording of the symptoms under study. Observation becomes one of the data collection techniques if: (a) by the research objectives, (b) systematically planned and recorded, and (c) can be controlled for its control and validity. Observations

regarding this research are direct observations of the location of Sumberjo Village, Subdistrict, Lamongan Regency, which conducts prophet *maulid* activities, then recorded and analysed using literature studies.

Secondary data is data that is already available, so we just need to search and collect. To get the right data and meet the research objectives, we need several considerations, including the following (Supriyadi, 2017).

1. The type of data must be based on the research objectives that we have previously determined.
2. The secondary data needed does not emphasise quantity, but on quality and suitability, therefore, researchers must be selective and careful in choosing and using it.
3. Secondary data is usually used as support for primary data; therefore, sometimes, we cannot just use source data as the only source of information to solve our research problems.

The secondary data used as one of the data collection techniques in this study is documentation. Documentation is a data collection technique that is not directly addressed to the research subject. The documentation studied can be of various kinds, not only official documents. Documentation in this study is in the form of data which is in the form of documents, including ethnomathematics journals and journals about the prophet's *maulid* and books related to research. Apart from being in the form of documents, there is also in the form of pictures, namely when observing the tradition of the prophet's *maulid*.

Data analysis or data interpretation is the process of systematically searching and organising records of research findings through observation and others, which are useful for increasing the researcher's understanding of the focus studied and making it a finding for others, editing, clarifying, reducing, and presenting it. The data generated through observation and literature review will be managed using several techniques. Data analysis techniques are carried out with several steps, namely reducing data where researchers select the necessary data and which data is not needed. Then, the next step is to present the data that has gone through the data reduction process. After that, the data that has been presented will then be interpreted through the data analysis process (Supriyadi, 2017).

C. Results and Discussion

1. A glimpse of the Prophet's *Maulid*

The word *maulid* or *milad* in Arabic means birthday. The celebration of the Prophet's birthday is a tradition that developed in the Islamic community long after the Prophet Muhammad died. In substance, this commemoration is an expression of joy and respect for

the Prophet Muhammad. Maulid, as part of a religious tradition, can be seen from a historical perspective as well as from a socio-cultural perspective. From a historical perspective, it can be found in Al-Sandubi's notes in his work "*Tarikh Al-Ikhtilaf Fi Al-Maulid Al-Nabawi, Al-Mu'izzli-Dinillah*" (341-365 AH or 953-975 AD). He revealed that in the history of Islam, the ruler of the Fatimah family, who first settled in Egypt, was the first to organise a celebration of the Prophet's birth. Then, in the next period, the tradition that was originally celebrated only by the Shi'ah group was also carried out by the Sunni group, where Caliph Nur Al-Din, the ruler of Syria (511-569 H / 1118-474 AD) was the first Sunni ruler recorded celebrating the Prophet's maulid. The first large-scale celebration of Maulid was carried out by King Mudhaffar Abu Sa'id Kokburi bin Zain al-Din Ali bin Baktatin (549-630 H / 1154- 1232 AD), ruler of Irbil, 80 KM southeast of Mossul (Asiva Noor Rachmayani, 2015).

The commemoration of the prophet's *maulid* was first organised at the initiative of Sultan Salahuddin Yusuf al-Ayyubi (r. 1174-1193 AD or 570-590 Hijri) of the Bani Ayyub dynasty, known in European historical literature as "Saladin". Although Salahuddin was not an Arab but came from the Kurdish tribe, the centre of his sultanate was in Qahirah (Cairo), Egypt, and his territory stretched from Egypt to Syria to the Arabian Peninsula (Yunus, 2019).

Islam was under a wave of attack from various European nations (France, Germany, England). This is known as the Crusade. In 1099, European soldiers captured Jerusalem and turned al-Aqsa Mosque into a church. Muslims at that time lost the spirit of struggle (*jihad*) and brotherhood (*ukhuwah*) because politically, they were divided into many kingdoms and sultanates, although the caliph remained one, namely Bani Abbas in Baghdad, as a symbol of spiritual unity.

Salahuddin Al-Ayyubi believes that the fighting spirit of Muslims must be revived by strengthening the people's love for their prophet. He appealed to Muslims around the world so that the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, 12 Rabiul Awal, which every year passes without being commemorated, is now celebrated en masse. This was not Salahuddin's original idea but a suggestion from his brother-in-law, Muzaffaruddin Gekburi, who became an atabeg (a kind of regent) in Irbil, Northern Syria. To compensate for the rampant celebration of Christmas by Christians, Muzaffaruddin, in his palace, often organises the commemoration of the prophet's *maulid*, but the celebration is local and not every year (Farid, 2016).

Salahuddin wanted the celebration of the prophet's maulid to become a tradition for Muslims around the world to increase fighting spirit, not just an ordinary birthday celebration. At first, Salahuddin's idea was opposed by scholars because, since the time of the Prophet, such commemorations had never existed. After all, there are only two official holidays according to religious teachings, namely Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. However, Salahuddin asserted that the celebration of the Prophet's Maulid was only an activity that enlivened the propagation of religion, not a ritual celebration, so it could not be categorised as a forbidden *bid'ah*. When Salahuddin asked for approval from Caliph An-Nashir in Baghdad, the caliph agreed. So on the pilgrimage in the month of Zulhijjah 579 Hijriyah (1183 AD), Sultan Salahuddin al-Ayyubi, as the ruler of Haramain (the two holy lands of Mecca and Medina), issued instructions to all pilgrims so that when they returned to their respective hometowns immediately convey to the Islamic community wherever they are, that starting in 580 Hijri (1184 AD) the 12th of Rabiul-Awwal is celebrated as the prophet's *maulid* day with various activities that arouse the spirit of Muslims (Farid, 2016).

Among the many activities carried out by Sultan Salahuddin on the first commemoration of the Prophet's birthday in 1184 (580 Hijri) was to organise a competition to write the history of the Prophet along with praise for the Prophet in the most beautiful language possible. All scholars and writers were invited to take part in the competition. The first winner was Shaykh Ja'far al-Barzanji. His work, known as Kitab Barzanji, is often read by people in villages on the occasion of the Prophet's birthday.

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This is one of the efforts to recall the history of the prophet, to then arise a new spirit to emulate the spirit of preaching the Prophet, how the Prophet's morals in everyday life and how to encourage his loyal followers to become the best generation of generations ever. All of this requires our reflection together to what extent the behaviour of the Prophet Muhammad SAW can be applied in our daily lives.

In line with this, there is a phenomenon that must be criticised by all of us: many Indonesian people prioritise traditional values rather than spiritual values, so there are not a few practices that lead to the practice of polytheism in the context of the prophet's *maulid*. Instead of glorifying and honouring the birth of the prophet, they prefer to have fun so that they forget the essence of the true celebration, plus, what is concerning is the practice of expecting blessings from objects that are considered sacred and have *tuah* (more benefits). This should be a serious concern, especially for religious leaders, to jointly find solutions and straighten out *aqidah* and practices that can lead to superstition, *bid'ah*, *khurafat* and even more *syirik* practices.

2. Definition of *Maulid Nabi*

The term "*Maulid*" is familiar to Indonesian Muslims. Etymologically, the term "*Maulid*" comes from the Arabic "*Walada Yalidu Wiladan*", which means birth. This word is usually juxtaposed or associated with the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Historically and sociologically, the date of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad is not known with certainty. Some contemporary historians who conducted research stated that the date of the Prophet Muhammad's birth was 9 *Rabi'ul Awal*, not 12 *Rabi'ul Awal* (Sakti, 2023).

Every 12th of *Rabi'ul Awal* in the Hijri calendar, the *Maulid* of the Prophet is celebrated throughout the Muslim-majority world. Interestingly, Saudi Arabia is the only country with a majority Muslim population that does not make *Maulid* an official holiday. This is because the majority of Saudi Arabian Muslims adhere to the dominant

Wahabi ideology, including salaf and Taliban understanding. The celebration of the Prophet's birthday is considered heresy.

The celebration of the Prophet's birthday is a tradition that developed in the Islamic community sometime after the Prophet Muhammad died. The celebration for Muslims is a tribute and remembrance of the greatness and example of the Prophet Muhammad with various forms of cultural, ritual and religious activities. However, until now, there is still controversy about the commemoration among some scholars who view it as Bidah or not Bidah. But today, the Prophet's Maulid is widely celebrated throughout the world, including Indonesia's cultural traditions. The spirit is precisely the momentum to unite the spirit and passion of Islam (Ishak, 2022).

The celebration of the Prophet's birthday is a tradition that developed in the Islamic community long after the Prophet Muhammad died. In substance, this commemoration is an expression of joy and respect for the Prophet Muhammad. With the commemoration of the Prophet's birthday, it is hoped that the positive result will be to bind the Muslims back to Islam and tie us back to the history of the Prophet Muhammad SAW so that we can make the Prophet Muhammad SAW a role model. When the commemoration of the Prophet's *Maulid* is also expected to increase the awareness of Muslims, arouse the spirit of practising religion, and make the younger generation aware of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, then the commemoration of the Prophet's Maulid is something good (Hanafiah 2023).

The commemoration of the Maulid of the Prophet Muhammad SAW aims to remind us how persistent the struggle of the Prophet Muhammad SAW was in pioneering and developing the teachings of Islam amid Arab cultural traditions, which at that time were in a state of ignorance. One thing that Muslims must do is emulate the attitudes and actions, especially the noble and great morals of the great Prophet Muhammad SAW. Not just ceremonial, the celebration should be absorbed in a deep heart and try to emulate and practice the noble morals of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. When throwing praise and *sholawat*, it should not only be aimed at the physical and worldly but also the morals of the Prophet, who is so great and noble, in terms of worship, the noble and great morals of the Prophet Muhammad SAW are what must be imitated, emulated and exemplified (Hamim, 2014).

3. Religion and Cultural Acculturation

The relationship and collaboration between Islam as a “grand text” or “grand narrative” and local culture can no longer be seen in the frame of subjugation and Islam subjugates (or) subjugated by local culture, but must be seen that the acculturation process increasingly shows the richness or diversity of Islamic cultural expressions after intersecting or meeting with local cultural buildings. Islam is not only seen in the dimension of its universality, although at this point, people who are Muslims must still believe that the teachings of Islam are complete and universal, but also the language and accommodating attitude of Islam in accepting and appreciating local culture. On the other hand, we should not merely see local culture as a part that must always give in to Islam, but local culture must have its glasses in discussing Islam according to its perspective. This kind of perspective will result in the construction of a new understanding whose role is very significant in the process of renewal and fusion between two different cultural elements to produce massive cultural acculturation and take root in society without eliminating the substance of the two cultural elements that meet (Arifin, 2016).

Religion, including Islam, contains symbols of a socio-cultural system that provides a conception of reality and a design to realise it. But the symbols that concern this reality do not always have to be the same as the reality that is realised in real terms in people’s lives. In any religion, the human conception of reality is not derived from knowledge but from belief in an absolute authority that differs from one religion to another. In Islam, the conception of reality comes from the revelation of the Qur’an and Hadith. The basic conception of reality provided by these two sources is seen as absolute and, therefore, transcendent of social reality (Nuridin, 2016).

But religion is also a social reality, it lives and manifests in society. Here, the religious doctrine, which is a conception of reality, must deal with the reality of existence and even the necessity of *sunnatullah* in the form of social change. Thus, the Qur’an, which Muslims believe to be the final truth that cannot be changed and applies to all times and places, clashes with the ever-changing social reality (Syafudin 2022).

The Prophet’s birthday, in its context, has been regarded as an aspect of Islamic culture and propagation that needs to be preserved. This is due to the flow of religious thought, which is also due to local cultural factors of the Islamic community who live in a place. The difference in time form of celebration of the Prophet’s birthday is not

a substantive issue because the Prophet's birthday is bound by the Islamic creed as a belief for Muslims to glorify the Prophet Muhammad SAW (Pipit, 2020).

Cultural acculturation, talking about customs (traditions), is no longer something rare in Indonesian society. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary, it is stated that the term customs refers to a behavioural system that is eternal and passed down from generation to generation as a legacy so that its integration with the patterns of community behaviour is strong (Jannah, 2021). As for other meanings, customs are referred to as something that is done repeatedly continuously until it finally sticks, is thought of and is understood by everyone without the need for explanation. It is in these customs that three forms of culture are found, as explained by cultural expert Koentjaraningrat: first, the form of culture as ideas, values or norms. Second, the form of culture is an activity or pattern of human action in society. Third, the form of culture is an object of human work (Darmoko, 2018).

The development of tradition will occur in acculturation, where this term is more used in the combination of one culture with another to find the value contained in the culture. With this cultural fusion, people can accept and make it a way of life from the social side to create an interaction (Abidin 2009). Meanwhile, religion comes from Sanskrit, from the word *a*, which means "not", and *gama* means "chaotic". The two words, when combined, mean something that is not chaotic, so the function of religion in this sense is to maintain the integration of a person or group of people so that the relationship with God, fellow humans and the surrounding nature is not chaotic. The chaos is due to the morality and values of life being ignored in society. Humans as cultural actors need interaction with the highest reality vertically (of god) and horizontally (of humans) (*hablu minallah wabablu minannas*). Religion is the answer to humans to the highest appearance mysteriously, and some even say it is fascinating (Rahman, 2013). Before the arrival of religion, a person arbitrarily willed himself without thinking about others; the weak were always oppressed, and the strong were always oppressed.

In the beginning, people chose leaders based on mutual agreement and through a long process for prospective leaders but later changed into a monarchy, where the leader was directly appointed by the previous leader based on descent. Because the king has full rights over the people and the country (formerly the kingdom), even though the king and prospective king do not have the potential to become a leader, they assumed that the king was a messenger of god according

to that time. Then, from the once equal order of society, the Indians made levels commonly referred to as castes, namely Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Waishas, and Sudras. Caste is a style of Hindu culture brought by the Indians. The religion of animism and dynamism, which is the root of the original Indonesian culture, especially the Javanese people, has a strong resistance to the influence of developing outside cultures (Hasan 2012). This situation provokes the emergence of the theory of the thickness and resilience of the original Indonesian culture. So, for the original Indonesian people, especially those who are still unpretentious, religious values are the main values that are binding and influence other values. Religious values manifest in mystical beliefs, which then influence customs in various ways and a complex series of ceremonies (Syamsuddin 2018).

In Indonesia, the celebration of the prophet's maulid is authorised by the state as a national holiday. In recent years, it has been held at the Istiqlal Mosque and is always attended by the President. In Indonesia, the celebration of the Prophet's birthday is organised in surau, mosques, majlis *ta'lim* and Islamic boarding schools in a variety of festive ways and with several events, including mass circumcision, recitation, and various competitions. The evening of the 12th of Maulid is the highlight of the event. Usually, they recite the *Sirah Nabawiyah* (the history of the Prophet's life from his birth to his death) in prose form in alternating ways and sometimes in song. People in every region have their way of celebrating the birth of this great man. Although there is often no direct connection between the birth of Prophet Muhammad and the ceremonies they performed (Yunus 2019).

In the Yogyakarta area, the *muludan* tradition is carried out by the Sekatenan cultural tradition. Sekaten is a preliminary ceremony to commemorate the birth of the Great Prophet Muhammad. A Javanese cultural tradition that is usually carried out by certain communities is the ritual of bathing heirlooms. Heirlooms such as kris, spears or other heirlooms are bathed in water that has been mixed with a seven-color flower concoction, and then the water used to "*bathé*" the heirlooms can be taken. Some people believe that water contains various properties and is useful for various purposes and blessings (Yunus 2019). The word Sekaten is traditionally a transformation of the phrase "*Syahadat*". Syahadatain, which is often pronounced as Syahadatain, then merged with the local language, especially Javanese

culture and literature, to become *Syakatain* and eventually transformed into the term *Sekaten* until now.

Meanwhile, residents of Loram Kulon Village, Jati Subdistrict, Kudus Regency, Central Java, on Tuesday commemorated the birth of the Prophet Muhammad by holding a *maulid* “*ampyang*” tradition. The “*ampyang*” tradition commonly known by residents is a tradition of commemorating the birth of the prophet by serving food decorated with “*ampyang*” or crackers that are paraded around the village before heading to the Wali At-Taqwa Mosque in the local village (Farid 2016).

The tradition of celebrating the Prophet Muhammad’s birthday has been widely held by Muslim communities almost all over the world. Bangka Belitung Province is no exception, which is thick with its traditions. The form of this celebration varies in various regions in Bangka Belitung. Usually, *Sepintu Sedulang* activities are held, which are characterised by “*ngangung*” together, mass circumcision, competitions, gathering like a feast day, and so on.

Toboali Sub-district is one of the sub-districts located in South Bangka Regency, Bangka Belitung Islands Province. This sub-district also holds a *Maulid* celebration of the Prophet Muhammad SAW regularly every year. The form of activities also varies, this year, various competitions were held with the target of the majority of teenagers. This celebration is expected to increase the love for the Prophet Muhammad SAW, which will then give birth to obedience to Allah and the Messenger of Allah.

These activities can increase the love and obedience to Allah and the Messenger of Allah, where the role model of the Prophet Muhammad SAW can be absorbed in the behaviour of the community, especially the younger generation. This, of course, also has an impact on their religious character. Departing from this, in this paper, the author will discuss the activities of commemorating the *maulid* of the Prophet Muhammad as a means of strengthening the religious character of adolescents in Gadung Village, Toboali District (Bradbrook and Čapek 1994).

The activity of commemorating the *maulid* of the Prophet Muhammad SAW was held in Gadung Village, Toboali District. Activities There were competitions and night activities to commemorate the *maulid* of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, as well as handing over prizes to participants who won. Participants who take part in the competition are a maximum of 23 years old. This activity is carried out to strengthen religious values, especially among adolescents. The competitions held are: *First*, in the *shalawat*

competition, participants follow a maximum of five people per team. The purpose of this shalawat competition is to strengthen the love and respect for the Prophet Muhammad SAW, improve cohesiveness, increase creativity and provide a creative space for participants in Islamic art. This competition was attended by 11 teams, with participants ranging from elementary/*Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* students, junior/middle school students, high school/*Madrasah Aliyah* students, students, and mosque youth. *Second*, the competition to create and read poetry about the Maulid of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The purpose of this competition is to foster interest in reading literacy while strengthening a sense of pride in the Prophet Muhammad SAW. This competition was attended by 5 participants from elementary school students, junior high school students, high school students, and the general public. *Third*, writing an essay about the *Maulid* of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The purpose of this competition is to explore the potential of the writing field. This competition was attended by 4 participants, including high school students, university students and the general public. In addition to participating in the competition, teenagers in Gadung Village also enlivened the celebration of the anniversary night of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday at the mosque. The celebration was also held, as well as the inauguration of GEMMAS members for 2020/2022.

In Sumberjo village, sub-district, Lamongan district, the commemoration of the Prophet's birthday is held by reading the book of al-Barzanji, children and adults come with various fruits. What is unique in this commemoration is that there are always many flowers that are arranged and then attached to a banana tree, and when the event is over, the flowers are distributed to the attendees.

In connection with this unpretentious society, the value of solidarity, which in the Javanese expression *gotong royong* and rukun, is quite high. According to St. Takdir Alishjhabana's view, Islam and Javanese culture or Javanese Islam are still dominated by religion followed by solidarity and artistic values. While in its democratic nature, the value of power in the structure of society is weak, science too, because rational thought has not yet developed. The religious interaction between Islam and culture resulted in a syncretic form of Islam. However, caution is needed in addressing the relativity of social processes. If religious values can become the basis for individual and community cultural patterns, it will certainly be a better colour of life (Marzuq AM and Muhid 2022).

The ideal concept of religion is if religious values succeed in animating existing cultural values. What has not been achieved means that religious appreciation has not been carried out fully or seriously. So, religion and culture cannot be separated; both are a unity that has different meanings. The spreaders of religion, especially Islam in the *walisongo*, are believed to be spreading and voicing Islam using various media to facilitate the treatise being carried. The media used by the *walisongo* have become the culture of the local community, and some of these cultures are ingrained in their lives. Pewayangan was used as a tool to convey religious teachings by Sunan Kalijaga without having to shed prolonged blood because the religious teachings conveyed did not conflict with their customs. From this point of view, the importance of the Prophet's maulid tradition in the spread of Islam in the archipelago can adapt to local traditions but does not lose the essence of the teachings of Islam itself (Salamah 2017).

D. Conclusion

The celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday in Indonesia, also known as "*Muludan*", is an important tradition that reflects the synergy between religious values and local culture. Religiously, this celebration is a moment for Muslims to commemorate the birth of the Prophet Muhammad and emulate his traits and teachings. From an Islamic perspective, this celebration is seen as a form of gratitude and respect for the Prophet as the bearer of the message that unites the people.

From a cultural perspective, the *Muludan* tradition functions as a medium to unify the community, strengthen cultural identity and build social solidarity. Many local cultural elements, such as performing arts, rituals, special foods, and customary symbols, are absorbed into this celebration, which makes it not only a religious event but also a celebration of togetherness.

In conclusion, the celebration of the Prophet's birthday in Indonesia shows a harmonious integration between religion and local culture. This tradition is not only a religious ceremony to commemorate the birth of the Prophet Muhammad but also a platform for rich and varied cultural expressions across the archipelago. Through this celebration, the Islamic identity that is tolerant, moderate and respectful of local culture is strengthened, creating the unique characteristics of Islam Nusantara. This is one example of how religion and culture can go hand in hand, strengthening social solidarity and enriching the nation's cultural heritage.

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