

# ISLAMIC *SHARI'A* CONFIGURATION OF *BUKA LUWUR* TRADITION IN KUDUS

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## Abstract

*Buka Luwur* combines Islamic law teaching and Javanese tradition. As an empirical religious phenomenon, its events have meaning and symbol that overlaps the local community traditions with the adopted Islamic *Shari'a* implementation. However, formalist and rational religious understandings view *Buka Luwur* tradition as a *bid'ah*, with no basis in Islamic law. Using grounded research models and Fazlur Rahman's double movement theory, this article portraits *noumena* from a series of *Buka Luwur* traditional rituals. It describes the configuration of the Islamic *Shari'a* implementation in the tradition. The community believes that the tradition symbolizes love for guardians by hoping for a blessing on work and remembering their struggle in preaching Islamic values. Also, the *Buka Luwur* tradition's implementation is a symbol of social solidarity that needs to be appreciated in a plural society. It is a form of harmony and cooperation

in holding ceremonies and rituals among believers. The results show that *Buka Luwur* events' symbolizes a blessing for prayer to be quickly answered, refuse calamity, teach tolerance values preached and practiced by Sunan Kudus, and solidarity in helping one another. The configuration and internalization of Islamic law in the Javanese tradition are found in the election on the 10<sup>th</sup> of *Muharam*, as the top of the *Buka Luwur* rituals series. Furthermore, the configuration of Islamic law in that tradition is found in the teaching of respecting ancestors. Indonesias embrace the religious characteristics of traditional and Sufistic Islam. This facilitates interaction, internalization, and configuration of the Islamic *Shari'a* teachings with Javanese people's traditions and culture, especially the Kudus community.

**Keywords:** *Buka Luwur*, Configuration, Islamic Law, Tradition.

## A. Introduction

*Buka Luwur* tradition is a ceremony for replacing the white cloth covering the tomb of Sunan Kudus (Shaykh Ja'far Sadiq), held once annually on the 10th of *Ashura* or 10 *Muharam*. The tradition is framed in a series of religious rituals by Kudus society and supported by various value adherents. As an empirical religious phenomenon it has a meaning and symbol that overlaps the local traditions with Islamic *Shari'a* implementation adopted by the society.

*Buka Luwur* ceremony is framed by community diversity. As a socio-anthropological terminology, it refers to the symptoms of understanding and implementing Islamic law performed by Kudus society and its surroundings in the individual and collective social life. The understanding and implementation of Islamic values is inseparable from life conditions and socio-cultural context of the Sultanate and

internalization by influential people (Berger, 2005: 3). The process is intertwined with Javanese traditions, rituals, and hereditary beliefs.

There are two fundamentals in implementing this tradition. The first one is the *Mazhab Syafi'i* Islamic values. It describes the reverence for the guardians, and Javanese traditional values, such as *sepi ing pamrih rame ing gawe* (much work without expecting the reward), as well as living in harmony and mutual respect (Falah, Ngemron, and Moordiningsih, 2006: 73–74). Secondly, *Buka Luwur* shows an intimate relationship between Islamic values and the local society traditions. Hence, a series of symbols in *Buka Luwur* tradition have many social and cultural values that have maintained life balance over time (Nuha, 2016: 64). Moreover, *Buka Luwur* illustrates the effective symbols of communicating messages to the public. One such symbol is the ritual of distributing *nasi jangkrik*, which is believed to imply caring for one other (Argarini, 2015: 106).

Various studies on *Buka Luwur* tradition conclude that there is a combination of Islamic values with tradition. However, a problem exists in how Islamic law configuration is internalized in *Buka Luwur* tradition rituals. This study scientifically answers some parties' assumption that the Javanese tradition is full of heresy that is far from Islamic law values. According to Masdar Hilmy (Hilmy, 1999), Mark Woodward (Woodward, 2011), Jochem van den Boogert (Boogert, 2017), and André Möller (Möller, 2005), there is acculturation and internalization of Islamic *Shari'a* values in various Javanese society traditions. This acculturation and configuration resulted in a unique and new tradition from the Javanese Islamic society.

This article portrays *noumena* from a series of *Buka Luwur* rituals and describes Islamic law implementation in that tradition. Using a grounded research model, this article gives meaning to the fact connotation. Moreover, it is expected to reach the substance of the fact meaning in society. This study focuses on the flexibility of Islamic law values and their configuration in the Javanese tradition. It is based on the theories of Clifford Geertz and van Der Kroef, as revealed by Zakiyudin (1995), that the Indonesian culture has been dramatically shaped by, and is inseparable from Islam (Falah, Ngemron, and Moordiningsih, 2006: 65). This study helps understand the configuration of Islamic law in *Buka Luwur* as a unique and distinctive tradition. It is a blend of Islamic values and Javanese traditions of the Kudus society.

## **B. *Buka Luwur* Tradition**

*Buka Luwur* tradition is a ceremony for replacing the *luwur* (mosquitoes), or cloths covering the Sunan Kudus' tomb. It starts with *penjamanan*, or clearing *keris cinthaka*, and the two ends of *tombak trisula* in *pendopo tajug* every mid-month of Zulhijah. This is followed by *pengajian* or studies of welcoming the Islamic New Year, putting of *luwur*, discussion of religious issues, making new *luwur*, Messenger prayers and *terbang papat*. Furthermore, there is slaughtering of *shadaqah* animals, Qur'anic preaching, orphan compensation, *bubur Asyura* (Asyura porridge) distribution, *Qasidah al-Barzanji's* readings, public education, *berkat* distribution, and *Buka Luwur* ceremony (Hasan, 2017). The whole process is conducted around the al-Aqsha Mosque and the tomb of Sunan Kudus.

*Menjamas* (washing) *keris cinthaka* and two *tombak trisula* (trident spears) is performed on the first Monday or Thursday after *Tasyrik* day (two days after *Iedul Adha* in Dhul-Hijjah). *Keris luk sembilan* (*keris* with 9 bends), called *cinthaka*, is washed first. This is followed by washing the *tombak trisula*. According to public belief, the spears and *keris* should be washed at different times because the charisma of one of them would be decreased in case the two heirlooms meet. Therefore, *tombak trisula* must not be in that location when *keris cinthaka* is put into its special container.

The heirloom is cleaned using lime juice to remove impurities (rust) on the iron. It is then soaked in *merang* water of black sticky rice. Next, the two types of heirlooms are returned to their usual place. *Keris Cinthaka* is put in the upper *tajug*, under the roof, while the two *tombak trisula* are placed on either side of the Menara Kudus Mosque pulpit door (Nurhakim, 2017).

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of *Muharam*, the *luwur* covering Sunan Kudus is put off by community elders and guards. They are assisted by the community around the Menara Kudus mosque. The *luwur* is brought to *pendopo tajug*, a small building with *joglo* style located in Sunan Kudus graveyard entrance. *Luwur* is a white cloth about 35-40 meters long. Preparation of mosquito repellents started from 6<sup>th</sup> *Muharam* by measuring, cutting, sewing, and embroidering accessories around the fabric. The *luwur* or mosquito net replacement ceremony is performed once every year. A calamity or disaster befalls the community in case the *luwur* is not replaced. According to a community leader, Kudus Kulon, the *luwur* covering the tomb was once burned. They believe this incident happened because it was not replaced (Aziz, 2017). Visitors and the community always

try to preserve the old *luwur* of Sunan Kudus' tomb to be blessed and avoid bad luck (Supardi, 2017).

On the night of 8<sup>th</sup> *Muharam*, poems of praise are read from *Maulid al-Barzanji*'s book to show love for the Prophet Muhammad. The book's author is Ja'far bin Hasan bin Abdul Karim bin Muhammad bin Abdur Rasul al-Barzanji al-Madani. The author was named *al-Barzanji* because they come from the village of Barzanjiyah in the Kurdistan region. The book's original name is *'Iqd al-Jawahir*, which means jeweled necklace. The Shubuh Prayer is followed by *Khataman Qur'an*. In this period, the committee makes porridge called *bubur suro* from a mixture of rice and spices. The porridge is made as *tafa'ul* (following in Noah's footsteps and behavior) that held salvation after the receding floodwaters, which engulfed people. The tradition of making and distributing *bubur suro* is meant to recollect Noah's boat's rescue and its followers from flash floods (Ahmadi, 2017).

In 2017, there were 6,332 alms-givers for *the Buka Luwur* ceremony. Alms from the community were in the form of mosquito nets, rice, granulated sugar, herbs, salt, coconut, among others. Other alms were given as cash amounting to Rp 87,345,000. Also, others came from the volunteers that cannot be calculated with money (*Jawa Pos Radar Kudus*, 2017).

The raw materials collected every year are always more than the quantity needed at the events. The surplus is distributed to the society, especially the poor, social institutions, orphanages, as well as Islamic committees and leaders around Kudus. Donations in the form of buffaloes and goats are slaughtered and cooked. They are obtained voluntarily because the committee is prohibited from submitting applications for donations to the public. This

prohibition has been passed down from *sesepuh* or old generations (Taslim, 2017).

The processing of ingredients to ready-to-serve food involves hundreds of people. It involves preparing equipment for slaughtering animals, cooking rice and meat, wrapping and distributing food, and other jobs. Rice was cooked in 5 stages. The first 4 stages were 1,440 kg each, while the final stage was 560 kg each. In every stage, 16 pieces of *dandhang* were used, each with a capacity of 80-100 kg of rice. Other jobs that require energy are washing the ingredients, arranging the furnace, wrapping the meat, as well as lifting, cooling, and wrapping the rice. Meat cooking is divided into two categories. In the first category, meat from regular donations is cooked. The second category involves cooking meat intended for voting, *nazar*, or *aqiqah*. Cooked meat is then wrapped into 3 sizes, including small (2 ounces), medium (3 ounces), and large (4 ounces). Also, this type of meat cuisine consists of two kinds. The first type of meat is cooked with *uyah asem* seasoning, while the second is prepared with *bumbu jangkrik*. Both of them are typical dishes of *Buka Luwur* Sunan Kudus (Ma'ruf, 2017).

Goats and buffaloes were slaughtered along with the distribution of *bubur syuro* and *Khataman* Qur'an. One of the *Buka Luwur* event committee members said that 80 to 100 goats were slaughtered. Last year, the committee contributed 10 buffaloes and 70 goats. On the night of 10<sup>th</sup> Muharam, a public lecture was held to commemorate the struggle and personality of Sunan Kudus, which was an example for the society.

On 10<sup>th</sup> Muharam morning, the event highlight is conducted. After Shubuh Prayer, the *luwur* was replaced, starting with a recitation of the Qur'an and *tahlil*, which were exclusively followed by the *kiai*. A new *luwur* was applied to

cover the Sunan Kudus tomb. This process was accompanied by the distribution of rice and side dishes (goat or buffalo meat), cooked and wrapped in teak leaves. These packages are usually called *sego Mbah Sunan* (Sunan Kudus rice), *nasi uyah* (salt rice), or *nasi jangkrik* due to their small sizes (Solikhin, 2017). *Nasi jangkrik* is rice complete with side dishes (buffalo and goat meat) wrapped in teak leaves. It is often called salted rice or *Sega Uyah* because it is very salty. The *Nasi jangkrik* that is cooked using salt and sour seasoning without the sauce is believed to be Sunan Kudus' favorite food. The materials for making *nasi jangkrik* are obtained through voluntary donations from the Muslim and non-Muslim residents of Kudus and its surroundings. People scramble for this rice package because it is believed to have blessings and many benefits, such as curing diseases. Moreover, it is spread in the garden or rice fields to repel pests. The series of *Buka Luwur* ceremony ended after the *luwur* replacement and the distribution of *nasi jangkrik*.

Thousands of people attended the *Buka Luwur* ceremony for various purposes, such as recreation, curiosity, or seeking blessings. Also, some people just came for *nasi jangkrik*, which is believed to maintain body health and treat various diseases. The recipients of *nasi jangkrik* included Muslims and non-Muslims, as well as the Chinese. However, the old *luwur* was not distributed to visitors. It was given only to scholars, community leaders, the committee, and the community around Sunan Kudus' tomb. They believe that this old *luwur* brings blessings.

Some people consider *the Buka Luwur* tradition as a memorial to the death of Sunan Kudus. It is commonly called *haul* (annual commemoration of the death of Sunan Kudus) and is held every 10<sup>th</sup> of *Muharam*. However, some people



think that *the Buka Luwur* tradition is not *haul* of Sunan Kudus' death. This is because the exact date of death is not known, and the establishment of 10<sup>th</sup> *Muharam* is based on community traditions that have been running for years. In Kudus, there are two guardian tombs of *Walisongo/Wali Sembilan* in Java. These are the tombs of Raden Ja'far Sadiq (Sunan Kudus) in Kudus Kulon, precisely in Menara Kudus Mosque complex, and Raden Umar Said (Sunan Muria) on the slopes of Mount Muria, Kudus. Every ritual of *Buka Luwur* of Sunan Kudus and Sunan Muria tombs always attracts public attention. *Buka Luwur* of Sunan Kudus and Sunan Muria tombs are held every 10<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of *Muharam*, respectively. The implementation of *Buka Luwur* tradition on the 10<sup>th</sup> of *Muharam* is based on Islamic historical considerations about the majesty of *Muharam* month, not based on the date of Sunan Kudus' death (Ahmadi, 2017).

In 2017, thousands of people from various regions, such as Pati, Rembang, Jepara, Purwodadi, Demak, and Semarang were willing to queue from midnight until dawn to get *nasi jangkrik* or *nasi uyah*. The community believes that *nasi uyah* from *Buka Luwur* tradition had been prayed for by many *kiai*, bringing blessings. The prayer is held in the courtyard of the Menara Kudus Mosque. In 2017, 450 people attended, consisting of *kiai* and community leaders. The prayer starts with the recitation of *tasbih*, followed by *Asyuro*, and ends with *tahlil* (Ihsan, 2016). To be blessed, they eat the rice with their families, while some is shared with neighbors (Fathonah, 2016).

### **C. *Buka Luwur* Ritual: Between Cultural Symbol and Meaning**

The epicenter of religious culture in traditional Islamic societies is in mosques, tombs, or both. Almost all worship

activities are related to these two places. Activities outside these two places are positioned as worldly purposes. Every traditionalist has almost the same expression that distinguishes between world and hereafter purpose, life, and death affairs. Life is related to worldly affairs, while death concerns the afterlife. Based on this view, traditional ceremonies, *Buka Luwur* rituals of Sunan Kudus and Sunan Muria tombs and others, always attract the attention and visits from the wider community.

The implementation of *Buka Luwur* at Sunan Kudus' tomb sets off a series of such traditional rituals for the graves of community leaders that are considered as guardians around Kudus. Traditionalist Islamic societies tend to respect public figures because of their role in fostering the community. Also, the reverence is due to a story (folklore) as guardians or people with advantages (*linuwih*), such as Sunan Pandanaran, Sunan Geseng, Sunan Prawoto many tombs spread throughout the archipelago, especially in Java. *Buka Luwur* of Sunan Kudus' tomb is then followed by *Buka Luwur* of tombs around Kudus. *Buka Luwur* in other tombs is implemented after *Buka Luwur* in Sunan Kudus grave, but the release of *luwur* is held simultaneously on the night of 1<sup>st</sup> Muharam.

The order of *Buka Luwur* above is positioned by the Kudus community as an honor to Sunan Kudus, considered more charismatic than the other guardians. Some people believe that *balak* or bad luck befalls the community in case other *Buka Luwur* implementation precedes *Buka Luwur* of Sunan Kudus. Although it is empirically difficult to prove, some Kudus society beliefs have become a tradition.

*Buka Luwur* is seen as a party for some Kudus people. This is because the community is actively and massively involved in the event. They are happy to receive ingredients, cook together,

then share or distribute to guests and visitors as a form of gratitude to God Almighty (Mundakir and Hidayat 2019).

According to one community leader, *Buka Luwur* tradition is a form of love for guardians by expecting their blessing. The guardians have extraordinary blessings that are able to protect the wider community, close to Allah, and their prayers are *mustajab*. By loving the guardians, the community believes that they are to gain the happiness of the world and the hereafter. Therefore, it is very natural. They always respect the guardians and the scholars, both living and the deceased (Aminuddin, 2017). In this regard, *the Buka Luwur* ritual is not just an annual tradition routinely performed, but it has many symbols and meanings in various perspectives and paradigms.

Some people believe that part of *Buka Luwur's* ritual material has the *berkat* or blessing and grace of Allah's guardian. The material for consists of old white cloth or *kain mori (luwur)* replaced with a new one, *berkat* is a small rice package (*nasi jangkrik*), used water to wash or *menjamas keris cinthaka*, and *tombak trisula*. Some people believe that it has good luck that repels undesirable things. Most people attend *Buka Luwur* events to meet the spiritual demands for trust in the existence of guardians. However, many other attendees were merely after recreation or wanted to join the society.

Public knowledge about *Buka Luwur* tradition originating from the figures or *kiai* forms perceptions, attitudes, and people's trust in understanding the reality of human existence and their power (microcosm and macrocosm) (Huda, 2017). The relationship between the two entities creates natural ceremonies that run across generations. Historically, this tradition reminds people of the values of the guardians' struggle, especially Sunan Kudus, in living and preaching

Islamic values in a society. According to historical records on Islam, certain dimensions are able to be merged (united) with long-standing teachings in the society. The union between the two teachings results in a new culture by the local society.

The combination of certain teaching dimensions facilitated the Javanese society in accepting Islamic values. Islamic teachers realized that they had to be tolerant of local culture for the Javanese people to accept Islam. This method is used by Sunan Kudus and is a lesson for society. For instance, it is reflected in building a Sunan Kudus Mosque that resembles *kulkul* in Bali, not slaughtering cows to respect the Hindu society that regards cows as purified animals and showing religious tolerance Hindu adherents. Masjid al-Aqsa, better known as Menara Kudus Mosque, was founded in 956 Hijri or 1549 AD. It was built by Ja'far Sodiq, later known as Sunan Kudus. It is seen from the encryption on the stone size 30 cm x 46 cm, located on the mosque's *mihrab*, written in Arabic. This mosque is unique because its building design is a combination of Hindu and Islamic cultures. Buddhism and Hinduism first developed in Java, with relics in the form of temples, before Islam's entry. Menara Kudus Mosque is proof of the fusion between Islamic and Hindu cultures, resulting in a unique and high architectural style building. The mosque building has a tower in the form of a temple and various other Hindu-style ornaments. Moreover, Menara Kudus is the oldest mosque minaret in Java (Pijper, 1984: 54).

The *Luwur Buka* tradition's implementation symbolizes social solidarity in a plural society that deserves to be appreciated. It is a form of harmony and cooperation in the holding of ceremonies and rituals among believers. Additionally, the symbols in the whole of *the Buka Luwur* ceremony imply that the society is accustomed to giving alms

and achieving a goal. Helping each other in social life leads to realizing balance and harmony as a shared life (Huda, 2017).

The 10<sup>th</sup> of *Muharam*, known as *Sasi Suro* in the Javanese society, is selected based on several reasons. First, the date of birth and death of Sunan Kudus until now has not been known with certainty. Hence, it is certainly inappropriate for *Buka Luwur* tradition to be positioned as a *haul* event of Sunan Kudus' death. Second, there is a correlation between Javanese and Islamic tradition. The Javanese society believes that 1<sup>st</sup> *Suro* is a sacred day. Similarly, Muslims believe that the 10<sup>th</sup> of *Ashura* or *Muharam* is a glorified date on which many historical events took place. In this context, it is clear that Islamic influence is more dominant that the 10<sup>th</sup> of *Muharam* becomes the chosen date. Third, there are correlations in the ritual form in a series of *Buka Luwur* tradition. The form of rituals in the Javanese tradition is as part of the Hindu-Buddhist relics. They are animistic and filled with Islam propagators experience as religious practices and rituals, such as making *nasi jangkrik*, observing Sunan Kudus heritage, and replacing *luwur* at Sunan Kudus' tomb. This correlation is a combination of Kudus people's beliefs that interpret *Buka Luwur* tradition as respect for the God guardian and as an opportunity to ask for blessings (Arifin, 2017).

The traditional Kudus community refers to 10<sup>th</sup> *Muharam* as *Bodo Suro* or *Muharam Day*. This is due to the excitement of *Buka Luwur* rituals on Sunan Kudus and other guardian tombs around Kudus. *Buka Luwur* usually starts on the 1<sup>st</sup> *Suro*, taking off a mosquito net or white cloth covering the tomb for one year. That cloth was wanted by the society to receive blessings from the guardians. Society believes that there was a good influence from the pilgrims' prayers to that cloth (Ghufron, 2017).

There is no relation between *Buka Luwur* and the *haul*, but the moment of those two events was always linked. *The haul* is a ceremonial activity that is held at the death date of someone that becomes a religious leader, guardian, *ulama*, and other heroes. It could be said that the momentum of *Buka Luwur* is at once intended to commemorate Sunan Kudus *haul*.

There is Islamic public education during this event. It is intended to fill in and replace Javanese rituals that are not acceptable to Islamic values, as well as enlightening the public against harmful Javanese beliefs. These efforts should be preserved to distinguish the Islamic from Sunan Kudus' values and the ancestral teachings that existed before.

#### **D. Elements of Islamic *Shari'a* in *Buka Luwur* Rituals**

Communities around the graves of guardians and community leaders, such as Sunan Kalijaga in Demak, Central Java, Sunan Ampel in Surabaya, East Java, Sunan Gunung Jati in Cirebon, West Java, have similar religious characteristics to the Kudus society. The community views the traditions and rituals held around the graves of guardians as traditions that must be preserved and actualized in social life (Ghufron, 2017). Such religious actualization reflects the cultural value system and traditional community religiosity. Moreover, they find it significant when associated with the *santri* community's nickname, or as *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah* community. This interpretation is based on the fact that the region is the center of *pesantren* with its traditional characteristics. They appreciate local traditions and respect for ancestors by holding religious rituals around the graves of guardians and people that are considered noble (*linuwih*). By doing this, they aim to receive blessings from Allah through their ancestors.

There is a close relationship between the Islamic law configuration of traditionalist societies in Java and Kudus. The configuration characteristics of Islamic *Shari'a* followers in Java are incorporated in traditionalist dogmatic thought patterns. They are characterized by a typology of religious Sufism having the same epistemology of Islamic *Shari'a*, whose authoritative religious sources are the Qur'an, Hadith, *Ijmak*, *Qiyas*, and '*Urf*. The typology of religious Sufism finds its significance in the traditional Sunni thought (Djatnika, 1991: 5), while the rationalist thought tends to develop into liberalism (Huda, 2009: 33-34).

As part of Javanese religious diversity, the implementation of Islamic *Shari'a* is a configuration formed from cultural values. These values grow and develop as a culture of society, such as towards the ancestors' tombs. Moreover, it is formed from the belief that respecting ancestors brings *berkat* or a positive impact on their lives. *Berkah* or *berkat* (blessing) comes from the word *barakah* (Arabic), which means God's gift that brings goodness to human life. In other words, it is the influence that brings goodness and happiness from respected or sacred people, such as parents, teachers, and religious leaders (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan RI, 1988: 108). The knowledge and understanding of Islam's teachers are dominant elements that influence and shape behavior in Javanese traditionalist Islamic societies, as part of religious diversity. It confirms that the configuration of Islamic law as part of the community diversity has different characteristics based on values, beliefs, understandings, cultural and civilizational backgrounds, and motives. This thesis proves the characteristics of the Islamic *Shari'ah* configuration of traditionalist societies in Javanese society.

For years, the acculturation process has happened through leaders, especially *kiai*, by fostering and shaping community character. Ordinary people hardly recognize the teachings that are accepted and embodied in daily life, whether from the Qur'an, *hadith*, or opinions of scholars. They only know that the teachings of Islam resemble those taught by *kiai*. Therefore, the characteristics of the Islamic *Shari'ah* configuration were formed in various regions in Java. Such society's social construction departs from the paradigm of definitions that place humans as active and creative beings in building their world. One such social world that they have built together (externalization) is in the form of social arrangements that are agreed upon and institutionalized as a joint guide in society (objectivation).

The objectivation of the social order configured with traditionalist Islamic law is interpreted as an attempt to obtain sociological legitimacy. This is achieved by defining and justifying the social world that they build into an agreed objective reality. Objectivation is an institutionalization process of subjective knowledge and forms of interrelation in society, into objective reality. It means that all sources of knowledge and systems of meaning attached to the institution are accepted as a consensus. The realization of a consensus led to the highest level of the universe. This means forming a world of universal symbolic meaning in that society (Parera, 2017: xxiii).

The universal symbols that have gained the consensus of society with knowledge internalized into the community's consciousness form traditionalist Islamic law characteristics. Religion is conceptualized as a religious universe manifesting in the socio-religio-cultural nature of the Javanese community. This concept is one aspect of the norm of life constructed into an institutionalized social order. As stated by the informants,



this regional regulation was set by individuals and social-religious groups. They strive for the realization of regional regulations that overcome commercial sexual exploitation.

The social construction theory of the sociology-religion perspective (the sub-field of knowledge sociology) makes religion an essential source underlying knowledge and interaction forms among individuals. The ideal transcendental teachings of Islam create societal characteristics through the thought products of *mufasir*, in this case, *kiai*. After being conceptualized by *kiai*, these teachings become empirical normative religious formulations, frame the series of *Buka Luwur* rituals, and responded to by traditionalist society as implementation for every individual community. There is a difference in the paradigms of *ushuliyun* among *Mutakallimun* and *fuqaha*. *Mutakallimun* view God's message contained entirely in the text, while the *fuqaha* see it as a dialogue between the spirit of the text and context reality (Sahrodi, 2008: 115).

The background, characteristics, and capacities of preachers and scholars form Islamic law's configuration as a manifestation of people's religious diversity. These characteristics are interconnected with Javanese tradition and culture as a community's subjective reality to form Islamic religious configuration. However, there are Islamic dimensions that coalesce with Javanese traditions and culture. Also, there are dimensions of Islam that are merely adapted to diversity and traditions adhered to by the community. Still, there are dimensions of Islamic values that cannot experience the correlation and adjustments to traditions held by a particular Javanese society. Islam is not the first religion to enter the archipelago, Hinduism and Buddhism had already been embraced by the community, especially in Java. When the spread of Islam through the trade

route reached the archipelago, conversion of religion took place gradually. This does not rule out the growth of animism and dynamism that has been followed by Javanese for centuries (Abdullah, 1996: 5).

The formal legal (rationalist) Islamic religious configurations' characteristics do not adequately accommodate people's traditions and culture in this archipelago. Religious Sufistic Islam (spiritualist) interacts effectively, and some dimensions of its teachings are able to be blended with the traditions and culture of the Javanese people. Sufi Islam's religious diversity characteristics have found its significance with the mystical dimension of Javanese society and develop as traditionalist Islam.

Traditionalist Muslims in Java make mosques and tombs as symbols and epicenters of worship. As the center of traditionalist *santri* activities, various religious rituals around the mosque and tomb finally exist. These rituals are inherited from ancestors and preserved by religious institutions, such as the *Buka Luwur* tradition. They include a series of birth, marriage, and death ceremonies that were originally local traditions, then some elements were replaced and filled with Islamic values.

Over time, the followers of traditionalist Islam, and others do not have a historical understanding of Islamic values' development. As a center for the development of traditional Islamic culture, traditionalist Islamic societies still adapt to globalization's rationalist-empirical currents. Their characteristics are very tolerant and accommodative of the local culture. Consequently, it develops in Java to form the implementation of typical Islamic law. It is referred to as the configuration of Islamic law.

## E. Islamic *Shari'a* Configuration in Javanese Tradition

Islam started to develop in the North Coast of Java Island when the Pajajaran Kingdom in West Java, Hindu Mataram, and Majapahit Kingdoms collapsed and Cirebon, Banten, and Demak Islamic Sultanates existed. The center of power shifted from the rural area to the North Coast, from Javanese to Islamic culture, and finally, Cirebon, Banten, and Demak Islamic Sultanates existed. Although the Sultanate of Islamic Mataram in Yogyakarta was forced back to the rural area, the coastal region has been acculturated with Islamic culture that colors life in the community (Rini, 2008).

The success of the Islam propagators in the archipelago, especially in the North Coast of Java, is seen in the large percentage of followers, at 72% (Sekretaris Daerah Provinsi Jawa Tengah, 2018). An analysis of the interaction of Islamic values in the North Coast of Java, especially in the Kudus Regency, shows various configurations of religious adherents. First, Islamic religious character configuration formed through the knowledge of *shari'a* (formal legal patterned) brought by Islamic propagators. This opinion was supported by Pijnapel Wertheim, a Dutch scholar. The characteristics of Islam brought by the traders are more *shari'ah*. In this style, the validity of religious behavior is measured through the perspective of Islamic *sharia* (Syam, 2005: 63–64). Second, the configuration of the Islamic religious character formed through the spread of Sufi Islamic knowledge. The first type of religious style is nuanced formal legal, while the second is Sufistic. Proponents of the theory of the spread of Islam in the archipelago, especially on Java, find significance through the Sufis paths. This is marked by the ease of compounding elements of Islamic and Javanese mysticism. Scholars with the

same opinion include S.Q. Fatimi, John, and Tjandrasasmita (Syam, 2005: 64).

The religious configuration of Kudus society is based on the characteristics of Islamic knowledge. This knowledge is externalized into social life in the middle of the mystical dimension of traditional Javanese life. The struggle between Islamic teachings, traditions, and the local community's culture takes two dimensions. The first dimension experiences a full struggle, which is then called syncretism. Second, the dimensions that adjust to local traditions are called acculturation (Syam 2005: 4-5). Universal symbols that have gained consensus containing knowledge and public awareness have a variety of sources, as well as social, moral, and religious norms. Religion is conceptualized as a universality manifesting in the socio-religio-cultural community of Kudus society. This concept is one aspect of the norm of life that is constructed into an institutionalized social order.

The religious-formal characteristics of Islam do not sufficiently accommodate the traditions and culture of traditionalist societies. Sufism's religious diversity is more interactive, and some of its teachings are compounded or acculturated with the traditions and culture of traditionalist societies. This Islamic *Shari'a* is a typical configuration as a Sufi mystical religious compound with a Javanese spiritual style. The Javanese Islamic religious configuration, better known as traditionalist Islam, developed from this acculturation process. Therefore, the community with a traditionalist-Sufi diversity is referred to as followers of Islam *Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah*.

The traditionalist Islamic society is characterized by a collaboration between the Javanese Hindu and the Islamic knowledge of the guardians in Java. This process resulted in traditionalist Islamic religiosity, which is known by

religious characteristics of Sufistic-patterned communities that accommodate Javanese tradition and culture. The characteristic of traditionalist Islamic diversity is found throughout the North Coastal (Pantura) communities of Java, such as Cirebon, Demak, Kudus, Tuban, Surabaya, and Madura. These regions were the basis of the spread of Islamic preachers, later known as *Walisongo*. One of the Javanese traditions preserved by traditionalist Islamic societies in the Kudus region is the *Buka Luwur* tradition. The entire series of religious rituals of Kudus society in *Buka Luwur* tradition is framed by Islamic *Shari'a* values. These include putting *luwur*, guarding *keris*, processing and wrapping food served in *Buka Luwur* rituals, distributing *bubur Ashura* (porridge), *berkat salinan*, and *berkat umum* (food distributed after praying) (Mundakir and Hidayat, 2019).

## **F. Conclusion**

The tradition of *Buka Luwur* is a ceremony to replace the white cloth covering the tomb of Sunan Kudus (Shaykh Ja'far Sadiq). It is held once a year, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of *Ashura* or 10<sup>th</sup> *Muharam*. *Buka Luwur* is framed in a series of religious rituals typical of the Kudus community and supported by various teaching adherents. As an empirical religious phenomenon, the *Buka Luwur* tradition has a meaning and symbol that overlaps the local community traditions with Islamic *Shari'a* implementation.

Among the symbolic meanings of *Buka Luwur*, traditional rituals is to reach a blessing for prayer to come true and rejecting disasters. Additionally, *Buka Luwur* tradition teaches the values of tolerance that have always been preached and practiced directly by Sunan Kudus. The implementation involving Kudus society to work together teaches the value

of solidarity in helping one another. The chosen time, 10<sup>th</sup> of Muharam is a combination of Islamic and Javanese people's beliefs regarding the date's sacredness.

The religious characteristics of traditional and Sufistic Islam embraced by the Indonesian people facilitate interaction, internalization, and configuration of Islamic *Shari'a* teachings. This goes in hand with the traditions and culture adhered to by the Javanese people, especially Kudus. The religious characteristics of Sufi Islam found its significance with the mystical dimension of Javanese society. Furthermore, it was supported by the development of Javanese Islamic religious characteristics known as traditionalist Islam in Indonesia. One of them is the implementation of *Buka Luwur* due to Islamic law configuration in the Javanese tradition. The configuration of Islamic law in this tradition is based on values to respect ancestors.

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## **Interview**

- Interview with Abdul Aziz, resident of Sunggingan Kudus, October 13, 2017.
- Interview with Aminuddin, a resident of Kudus, October 30, 2017.
- Interview with Deny Nurhakim, resident of Kudus Wetan, September 19, 2017.
- Interview with Fathonah, a visitor from Grobogan, October 12, 2016.
- Interview with Huda, public figure of Kudus, October 29, 2017.
- Interview with K.H. Arifin, a religious leader of Kudus, October 25, 2017.
- Interview with K.H. Ihsan, an activist of Menara Kudus Mosque and religious leader of Kudus, October 11, 2016.
- Interview with M. Ghufron, resident of Sunggingan Kudus, October 25, 2017.



Interview with Ma'ruf, resident of *Dukuh* Krandon Kudus, October 12, 2017.

Interview with Nadjib Hasan, Head of Yayasan Masjid Menara dan Makam Sunan Kudus (YM3SK), October 10, 2017.

Interview with Solikhin, a visitor from Blora, October 11, 2017.

Interview with Sulaiman, a visitor from Demak, October 11, 2017.

Interview with Supardi, a visitor from Purwodadi, Central Java, October 12, 2017.

Interview with Taslim, public figure of Kudus Kulon, October 12, 2017.

### **Observation**

Ahmadi, K.H. Sya'roni. (2017). "K.H. Sya'roni Ahmadi, Routine Study of Al-Qur'an Interpretation at Menara Kudus Mosque."

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