

PARCUKU: A RELIGIOUS RITUAL OF THE FAK-FAK COMMUNITY

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Abstract

Local Islam which is synonymous with the implementation of rituals is always interesting to discuss, either through free discussion or in the academic sphere, which will map out the speakers at both confronting and accommodating areas. Similarly, the Parcuku religious ritual of the Fak-Fak community gave rise to a wide range of supporting and opposing arguments for various reasons respectively. This paper provides a description of cultural activities of the Fak-fak people, which is closely related to the religion of Islam, in the face of the reality of the society which tends to be misunderstood by outsiders, or by Fak-fak people who have gained a new awareness in terms of religious (Islamic) teachings. The results of this research indicate that the Parcuku ritual, practiced by the community of Fak-fak, is a semi-religious ceremony with the main purpose of attempting to find a way of salvation for the people. Nevertheless, through the Parcuku ritual, a variety of positive things could be fostered in society such as cooperation, mutual help, and various other constructive social values that can be used in the realization of a harmonious society. Also, through a variety of ritual activities, we can witness the characteristics of a community in its religious expression, and therefore it should not be a justification for blasphemies because it turns out that God is so great that He has a lot of names in the human mind. The next most important thing is that it appears there is only one God in the many religions on Earth.

Keywords: *Parcuku, religion, ritual, community, Fak-fak*

INTRODUCTION

Watching the local people running their everyday activities may present a wide range of interpretations and prejudice to someone outside of the community. We often hear prejudices toward obedient followers. The life of a community would be threatened and intimidated because they are not in line with the majority who claim to be on the right path. Such reality is beginning to appear in the form of increased tension between communities among the Indonesian society. Almost every day a variety of mass media expose the persecution of an individual or a group of people because they have different views on certain subject. This trend of vandalism is getting worse in the form of expression

of anger especially when it comes to the affairs of belief (religion). It is not uncommon -in the name of questionable truth, someone loses their life for something trivial. Terms such as stereotype, stigma, infidelity, society's garbage, or *bid'ah* are still haunting a person or a group of people who are viewed by the majority as against the mainstream.

In fact, tensions related to beliefs in a community have occurred almost throughout the history of human civilization. In the Islamic world, particularly, the tension between followers of different beliefs have started since Islam was first revealed on the 17th of Ramadan, 13 Years before the *Hijrah* (departure to Madinah) by the Prophet Muhammad, then introduced to the inhabitants of Mecca about 10 years before the *Hijrah*. A wide variety of stereotypes and stigma were addressed to the Prophet against the religion he brought to the people *Mekah*, because it contradicted the beliefs of the majority at the time. More specifically, the conflict has reached the stage of killing each other between the followers of the faith, and become a legacy that cannot be rejected by all Muslims, and it in fact has been foreseen in one of the *Hadiths* of the Messenger of Allah who said, "In the end, my *ummah* will split into 73 groups and only one will stay on my path." Of course we remember the events of the war and the battle of *Shiffin* and *Jamal* battles as well as the event of Karbala, from which a seed of conflict has continued to exist between the *Sunni* and *Shia*, and has extended to all parts of the world where Islam is present and growing until today.

If one looks into Indonesia's current society, it seems that groups have been enriched by different cultural characteristics, so the differentiator will become increasingly apparent. Islam in Aceh will certainly be very different from that of Java and Sulawesi, let alone Papua, where Islam is a relatively new a religion among the Papuans. Ideologically and latently, such groups are transformed into social movements on behalf of the same political and religious belief (Islam). For example, the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) with its traditional style clashes ideologically with the reformist Muhammadiyah (modern). Other groups appear more vocal in voicing their the truth according to their own version, such as the Dakwah Council, Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), Liberal Islam Network (JIL), Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), and various other groups that indicate plurality of Muslims.

In the context of the local characteristics, the groups should not be condemned if they are developing Islam with the pattern of the local community, without having to fear, blame or regard their practice as heresy as long as it is not disrupting the oneness of Allah, as in the case of the Muslim community in Fak-Fak District who carry out all Islamic activities filled with local culture

and tradition inherited from their ancestors. Many of their traditions, if viewed from the perspective of other cultures, would be considered heresy by other groups, such as *mandi safar*, *tambormak* or *Parcuku* which is the focus of this research. It should be seen as a form of expression of the Fak-Fak community's religiosity in the glory of Prophet Muhammad, whom they believe to be the Supreme Leader of Muslims and to be a savior and a healer.

HISTORY OF *PARCUKU* COMMUNITY IN FAKFAK

Who first carried out the ritual and introduced the tradition *Parcuku* in the Fak-Fak society has yet to be described in detail, because of lack of documentation available about this ritual. One of the Fak-Fak community leaders said that the knowledge of *Parcuku* has been passed down from one generation to the next. He got his knowledge of the ritual from his father, his father inherited it from his grandfather. If observed, the ritual has been practiced in the line of the Iribaram descendants, and was brought by the Islamic proselytizers from Ternate-Tidore who came to the Gulf of Patipi. Is this ritual knowledge systematically and structurally known only to the *Iribaram* lineage? The research showed that it is the case, because the main character who becomes the *imam* of the village (*Labe*) --as observed by the author-- in the performance of the ritual of *Parcuku* in the District of Fak-Fak is exclusively performed by Haji Muhammad Iribaram as heir to such knowledge. Almost every day he toured the towns of Fak-Fak to perform the ritual of *Parcuku*, particularly for those who request it.

If one looks closely at the manuscript used in the reading of the narratives of the *Parcuku*, they will notice that it is a script consisting of a variety of stories written with the Arabic alphabet but using the Malay language (Indonesian). Among the stories included are narratives or accounts about the examples set by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Treating the *Parcuku* as a separate entity from the manuscript is a choice for the people of Fak-Fak, who believe that the ritual has more values compared to the other stories contained in the manuscript. Based on the texts provided by key the informant, almost certainly it is impossible to trace where the text was obtained, because physically the *Parcuku* manuscript was only partly available, while other parts of the manuscript have been lost. The *pacurku* script only contains a special story about how the Prophet shaved, and it has been experiencing improvements, plastered with regular book paper as its cover. The complete passage of how the Prophet shaved will be discussed in the next part (implementation of the *Parcuku* ritual).

Although there is no written record that describes when and where and how the tradition of the *Parcuku* began, either in the form of text or the initial practice in the community of Fak-fak in Patipi which then spread to the towns of Fak-Fak, if closely observed, *Parcuku* as a ritual, viewed from the text used, is one of the many literary works that have Malay influence, or even tend to be influenced by Persian as revealed by Sunyoto (2012), the language and literature which flourished in the society were heavily influenced by Persian and Hindi languages. This is further proven by the historical data that Islam first was spread over the archipelago through the Alawiyyin since the 7th century AD.

According to Sunyoto, based on the opinion of Robert N Bellah, Islam came to Indonesia after going through the process of acculturation with the Persian cultural heritage, or more broadly in this case, Iran (Aryan people), which can be seen in the architectural style of the building, the arts, literature, science that refer to a combination of the different elements of the core of civilization heritage of the Semitic Iran. Persian vocabularies widely used in the tradition of the archipelago are words such as *Kanduri* (Feast), *Astana* (Palace), *Bandar* (port), *Diwan* (Council), and so forth. In addition, a very strong Persian influence in literature associated with the process of Islamization is a system for teaching the Holy Quran, found the Persian-speaking terms to refer to *harokat* (vowels) in Arabic. Almost all the Arabic words in the Indonesian language are derived from and through the Persian language. The influx of Persian vocabulary in the language of the country was gradually followed the influx of literary works translated from Persian and Hindi. A number of well-known texts in the literary tradition of the archipelago have been a translation of a source of Hindi and Persian, among others *Qissah Insyiqaq al-Qamar* (the moon split narrative), *Rawdat al-Ahbab* (the Light of Muhammad narrative), *Wafat Nameh* (account of the Prophet's death), *Mustafa al-Qissah Wassiyah li imam Ali* (the Prophet's teachings to Imam Ali), *Qissah Amir al_mu'minin Hasan wa Husain* (Hasan and Husain narrative), *Qissah i Ali Hanafiah* (Muhammad Hanifa narrative), *Qissa i, Emir of Hamzah* (Amir Hamzah narrative), *Qissas al-Anbiya* (the narrative of the prophets), *Qissa i Bakhtiar* (Bahtiar Narrative), *Tutinameh* (Bayan Budiman narrative), and *Keratako Wa Damanakala* (Kalilah and Daminah narrative).

Going through a series of history revealed above by Sunyoto leaves a question, on which part of the narrative is the Prophet's shaving (*Parcuku*) placed? Since based on the historical research, the account is not mentioned as one of the literary works of the translation from Persian and Hindi, rather it is based on information either from the interviews and observations of the existing texts

provided by the informant, that the story of the Prophet's shave is compiled in one book together with the narratives mentioned above, thus suggesting a strong evidence that the Prophet's shave is part of the literary works of the translation from Persian and Hindi literature. The script, written with the Arabic alphabet in the Malay language, was then used as a reading material for the spread of Islam in the Indonesian Archipelago, until it was finally brought by the followers of Islam in the Sultanate of Ternate and Tidore to the Gulf of Patipi in the Fak-Fak District (Papua). This conclusion requires further archaeological and philological research to uncover more accurate facts and historical data.

THE PROCESS OF PREPARATION AND PERFORMANCE OF THE RITUAL

Observing this tradition (*Parcuku*) from the preparation to the implementation, we will see a tradition or custom that is not too unique, actually, if viewed from the perspective of the Indonesia communities that are known for their diverse traditions, but we take a moment to observe more thoroughly, then we will encounter something different of a society. For a relatively important ritual in the local community's life, a very tolerant and permissive attitude is displayed in its implementation; objects or the means used tend to be adapted to the conditions and circumstances, or can be adapted to existing resources.

The *Parcuku* is usually requested by the community members of Fak-Fak. It often coincides with the events considered important by the community, for example at a time when one is about to travel far outside the region. Sometimes the *Parcuku* is held as one of a series of the preparation for the pilgrimage, or for the children who will continue the education in a far-away place, for the inauguration of a new house or a new vehicle, or during a baby's hair-cutting ceremony (*aqikah*), and for several other activities. To carry out the ritual of *Parcuku*, it does not require elaborate preparation, because in this ritual the most important figure is the person who reads the account of the Prophet's shave. The objects and means used to carry out this ritual are tailored to the event celebrated. However, the main aspects of the ritual are the leader of the ritual, water, fire, soil, and air.

The presence of the invited guests is important as a complement to the ritual. The stages of preparation for the activity of the *Parcuku* reading can be explained as follows. Starting with the intention of someone who intends to perform a wedding celebration, the *Parcuku* becomes an important event that must be done, and the party with such intention can contact the village *imam* who understands how to carry out the ritual. Then the organizer will have to

provide several objects requested by the *imam* as a means of implementation of the ritual. Common objects commonly provided by the organizer of the ritual are water in a particular container (either a teakettle, pot, jug or glass), incense-burning stove, ember, while the book of *Parcuku* is provided by the village imam, as well as several other accessories which are adjusted to the events or what is prayed for.

The *Parcuku* ritual ceremonially starts with providing all the means and media that have consciously been prepared by the organizer. The process of procurement of the means and materials is done while waiting for the presence of the invited guests and the village *imam* (*Labe*) as the leader of the ritual. The Ritual is usually carried out in the main room of the organizer's home. The selection of the room for the ritual has no specifications, but is adapted to the circumstances and capacity of the room. On several occasions, the organizer sometimes had to set up tents on the yard to accommodate the invited guests and relatives who attended the ritual. Given the common shape of the home which is generally rectangular, usually the room is also rectangular, and the village *imam* will occupy the position of the room on wide area, while the guests will sit on the left side and the right side is reserved for the village *imam*.

The village *imam* sometimes can occupy a different position of the room, because the ritual should face the direction of the setting sun or the Holy Mosque (in Mecca), because it is believed that facing the *Qibla*, prayer and *Parcuku* read would be easier to be fulfilled. So usually the village *imam* will find the sitting position that faces the *Qibla*. After the invited guests and relatives are seated in the room and the objects and media for the ritual placed right in front of the village *imam*, the ritual begins by burning incense on the ember, accompanied by certain recital by the ritual leader, with hope that through the intercession of the wind, the prayer to be read out can be delivered as intended, i.e. to God Almighty. Then it is continued with the joint recital of surah *Al-Fatihah* with a loud voice by the audience led by the village *imam*. After *Al-Fatihah* is recited, the *imam* reads prayer and praise to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) personally with a softened voice. Next the *imam* reads the *Parcuku* narrative written with the Arabic alphabet but in the Malay language (Indonesian).

In the process of reading of this narrative, the attendees will listen attentively, even in some of the activities, children are forbidden to play and make a noise which can interfere with the reading of the narrative. After the narrative is read out, the ritual concludes with a prayer read by the village *imam*, and the ritual is considered done. Then the organizer uses water placed in front of the *imam* during the reading of *Parcuku* as a medium which is believed to have

the power to counteract the disaster and give a blessing. So it is no wonder after the ritual is over, the organizer will splash the water around the home or on a newly purchased vehicle, or drink the water, and even store it in plastic bottles and take it along when traveling. Until this stage, the ritual of *Parcuku* is contextually completed and continued with other social activities.

ACTIVITIES AFTER THE RITUAL

After the reading of the narrative is complete, the next event is having meals together attended by the organizer and the guests. After the objects used for the *Parcuku* ritual are set aside into the family room, the host will bring out a white cloth laid in the middle of the room, and then the whole dish was placed on the white cloth. It is, of course, interesting to discuss various symbolic objects used in the ritual of *Parcuku*, including the use of white cloth in a ritual procession of dish serving. The use of another piece of cloth as a place to store dishes in addition to the plates and various other kitchen utensils is a form of *Fak Fak* community's show of gratitude for what they earn, so any leftover will not be allowed to be wasted, so that the food that falls on the cloth during the process of eating together can be collected and used for other purposes, for example for feeding farm animals, or in other words, it is a way of being grateful for the blessings given by Allah. This simple conclusion is drawn from observation and conversation the researcher had during dinner with the local people, and it has become a habit that all dishes are served on a mat with a sheet of white cloth laid on it before placing the tableware. Of course, future research on the symbolic meanings of the use of this fabric is very important to reveal the values of the local culture.

When observed further, the dish presented is tailored to the host's economic condition; the dish is typical of the *Fak-Fak* people with side dish (fish) being dominant, either fried, grilled, or ground. The procedure for the dish preparation is also unique, reflecting the custom of the society. Women who regularly prepare meals in the kitchen will issue a hand-wash container (*kobokan*), which also has a glass of water to drink placed in it, distributed evenly to all attendees. Next the spoons and plates will also be distributed evenly to all attendees, and after the tableware is distributed evenly, the dish will then be served and eaten together. A procession of eating together is not over when the attendees have finished eating a meal, but the process will continue with the dessert, a serving of coffee (*mehak*) and tea with strong cinnamon aroma served along with cake or cookies. The serving of desserts such as this appears to be very effective in establishing communication in the community, as the attendees will have a variety of discussion and dialog,

from small talk, gossip about the village, to the shared community affairs, or discussion on preparation of other rituals in the community. At this stage, it can be said that formally the *Parcuku* ritual has been completed.

COMPONENTS OF *PARCUKU*

1. Village *Imam* (Labe)

The village *imam* (*Labe*) is the primary and most important part in the ritual of *Parcuku*, because without the *imam* the ritual cannot be performed. Why is this so? Dhavamony (1975: 175) distinguished a ritual into four kinds. First, a ritual is an act of magic associated with the use of materials that work because of mystical power. Second, a ritual is an act of a religious cult of ancestors that also work this way. Third, a constitutive ritual which expresses or changes social relationships with regard to the sense of mystical conceptions, in this way the rituals of life become distinctive. Fourth, a ritual that improves productivity or strength, or purification and protection or in a certain way increases the welfare of a group of people.

The division of a ritual into the four activities that lead to certain ritual activities, although there are rituals that do not require a leader physically. For that matter, Suhardi's explanation becomes important to look at the role of the village *imam* (*Labe*) in the ritual of *Parcuku*. He classified the ritual into 3 categories. First, a secular ceremony that has social and political functions, with the main purpose to increase the community's sentiment and political awareness. Second, a semi-religious ceremony, a ceremony in which the purpose is to alert life cycle events and the like. Even though such ritual has a secular purpose, it is also clearly based on something sacred in an attempt to find a way of salvation, both in the form of bringing the community together and in the repellence of metaphysical beings. Third, a religious ceremony, which is a ceremony that is truly an effort of looking for salvation of soul through worship. Its primary purpose is for establishing communication between human beings with transcendent nature, generally done in the congregation.

Based on Suhardi's opinion above, it appears that the ritual of *Parcuku* in the Fak-fak community falls into the category of a semi-religious ritual, since its main purpose is to find a way to salvation, which is generally related to the transcendent world (metaphysics). Thus to find the way to salvation, it requires the help of others, because there is a kind of helplessness of the individual, such as a lack of knowledge of the ritual, as well as other factors such as habits that have developed in the community. In such conditions, it is the existence of the village *imam* (*Labe*) that becomes important in the ritual of *Parcuku*, since not everyone has the ability.

2. Incense

Discussing the ritual of *Parcuku*, we certainly will always take into account the meaning contained over a range of activities, either in the form of tools, statements, words, or the activities of the performers. In addition to water and the text of *Parcuku*, incense is one of the important elements in the performance of the ritual. The first activity that must be performed by the village *imam* is burning the incense. The use of incense as a welcome ritual will remind us of the tradition of Chinese people who always use the *hio* (incense) in worship, or the Hindus in Bali who also use incense as a tool and a means of worship to the Almighty.

Incense in the history of human civilization has existed since centuries ago. It is obtained from tree resin was the most prestigious and expensive commodity in the trade on the Silk Road. On the trade route stretching from China to Turkey, incense was even more expensive than gold and diamonds. Traders sought after incense because of high demand from kings, rich people, and religious leaders. The goal was diverse. In Egypt, the people of ancient Egypt made use of incense imported from Yemen as one of the ingredients for mummy preparation. In Jerusalem, the people of Israel burned incense in front of the temple in a container for incense fragrances when conducting prayers. In Arabia and Sham, incense was placed in a container to scent the Palace halls and houses. In South Asia and East Asia, incense was burned in temples as a means of worship.

Tuliman revealed that many people still regard incense only as a tool for the mystical rituals by sorcerers, idolaters (polytheist habits), and the like. They compare the scent of incense with calling the ghosts and scary fragrances, which is thought to be able to invite spiritual beings. Tuliman further reveals that:

Such phenomena which often appear in the mats of the occultists, popularized in the wide-screen movies, horror themed, have increasingly contributed to the cynical view of incense. However, in Indonesia incense is widely used not only in the mystical activities mentioned above but also in some boarding schools, where incense is burned prior to performing *tarawih*, which aims to give a fragrant scent (typical incense) indoors or at a mosque. In some areas, incense is burned in a wedding (*walimatul 'ursy*). There's also a burning of incense in gatherings such as the *ta'lim*, *tahlil*, or in events of celebration, a place of pilgrimage (such as at the *wali's* cemetery, and so forth.

Whether or not the use of incense in the *Parcuku* ritual is also seen in the context mentioned above as a medium of service, it will be important in this section to discuss, since the use of incense in religious rituals (Islam) lately have been denounced because it is considered *shirik* (polytheistic practice) by mainstream fundamentalist Islamic groups. While moderate Islamist groups tend to be permissive since the tradition can still be considered tolerable as a cultural product that is acceptable as long as its objective is not polytheistic in nature.

Incense has been used in some of the Islamic rituals since the time of Prophet Mohammed (pbuh), although its use has mostly been restricted to death rituals, so the refusal by the reformers (Islam) is the perversion of history. Another positive thing is that it turns out that incense has many benefits. In addition to create fragrances, it is also used for medicine, herbs, even for aroma therapy. Incense contains olibanum, resin material, and terpene. Other substances contained include saponins, flavonoid, and polyphenol. Now scientists have observed that there is a substance in the incense which stops the spread of cancer, but it is not yet known if incense can serve as anti-cancer herb. In the 10th century AD, Ibn Sina, a treatment expert, recommended incense as medicine for tumors, ulcers, vomiting, dysentery and fever.

To find out the importance of incense in the *Parcuku* ritual, the thesis presented by Suhardi is important for reference. He stated that the ritual is religion in action Then he revealed:

A rite symbolically describes human efforts to establish communication with the transcendent power, whether it is the spirit of the ancestors, spiritual beings, gods, God or magical power. The main purpose of human practicing the rite is to find the way to salvation spiritually, with the hope that his soul will survive and enter the realm of transcendence as conceptualized in the respective religious teachings, whether it's heaven, *moksha*, *nirvana*, or on the *tuma* island in belief of the Trobriand.

Based on the above thesis, what becomes an important point of entry is the disclosure of the concept that states that "the rite symbolically describes human efforts to establish communication with the transcendent power" is a general concept that becomes the point of departure to explain the position of incense in the *Parcuku* ritual. If the rite is a symbolic effort, then surely there must be objects or media as well as the language used in communicating with the transcendent world. For the ritual of *Parcuku*, in addition to the text, of course incense is one of the objects to connect with the transcendent world which is used by the village *imam*.

Of course the fact that incense is chosen as an additional accessory in the ritual of *Parcuku* is not without reason, and it must be admitted that this medium (incense) is a product of the culture of acculturation kept alive by the permissive attitude of the society of Fak-fak to outside culture that received a strong influence from the society and culture of Buton with a variety of unseen things that transformed into rituals in daily life that are still being carried out to date, such as *Pakande Jini*, *Pakande Wurake*, and *Pakande Kiwalu*, as well as other forms of rites of death, birth, etc.

Furthermore, on the use of incense, the informant revealed: Why do we need incense? Because the human body is composed of 4 parts, i.e. earth, water, fire and wind. So, burning incense is an important part of a ritual because by burning incense, wind can be seen to exist. Simple translation by the informant is not the main reason to accept the use of incense in the *Parcuku* ritual, but it can be seen as something that is believed by the community that needs to be valued and appreciated as a form of local culture capable of keeping the spirit of community in religion. In practice the use of incense has a variety of other positive sides, in addition to the benefits of religious society in the observing religious activities because in it there are aesthetic, economic, and social values that cannot be understood by the people or groups that have prejudice.

From the aesthetic viewpoint, the incense used in the ritual can be a natural deodorizer, non addictive substances (toxins) and alcohol that are commonly found in the air freshener. While the price is economical, incense used by the village *imam* (Labe) is usually very cheap, and sometimes at no cost, because the incense used in the ritual of *Parcuku* is a particular wood burned to produce the scent of perfume. Another important function is the incense can be to strengthen neighborly relationship, because each family can share incense between neighbors. If by chance the ceremony ran out of incense or someone forgets to buy incense, then neighbors will provide it voluntarily to be used in the ritual *Parcuku*.

In this case, the difference is quite obvious in the use of incense in Fak-fak community tradition as compared to other societies (Chinese and Balinese) discussed above. In other societies, incense actually becomes the main path or medium to convey the appeal to authority, while in the community of fak-fak, incense in addition to religious function also has the aesthetic, economic, and social purposes.

3. Efficacious Water

In the ritual of *Parcuku*, another object no less important than incense is

water filled in a specific container, which is placed in front of the village *imam* (Labe) during the ritual. Interesting for further research is what kind of water is used in the ritual and what is it used for after going through the ritual of *Parcuku* and why is water selected as one of the important media in the ritual? Sunaryo et al (2005) argued that water is the element that cannot be separated from human life. Without the development of water resources on a consistent basis, human civilization will not reach the level enjoyed today. Therefore the development and processing of water resources forms the basis of human civilization. One use of water in daily life is for drinking. Clean water must be free of disease-causing microorganisms and chemicals that can harm human health and other living creatures. Water is the substance of life, where none of the living things on this earth can live without it. Research shows that 65-75% of the weight of the human body is made up of water. According to the science of health, everyone needs water to drink as much as 2.5 to 3 liters per day, including water contained in foods. Humans can survive for 2-3 weeks without eating, but can only last for 2-3 days without drinking.

Masaru Emoto concluded that the particles of water can be influenced by the sound of the music and prayers written and dipped into it. Some of the water molecules are shaped irregular, however there is one water crystal that looks so beautiful compared to the other, shaped like a flower that displays a dozen diamonds. What water molecule is it? Asked Masaru Emoto. A sudden silence, the audience seemed to be puzzled, not knowing exactly about the molecule. Suddenly, a lecturer from the University of Malaysia held out his hand and said "that is the zamzam water molecule ". Then Masaru Emoto asked "Why do you think so?". The lecturer replied, "Because the zamzam water is the most precious in the world, so it's only fair if it has a sparkle like diamonds". It turns out that professor is correct. Masaru Emoto's research has shown that the zamzam (water) has the most beautiful molecules than any other water. This finding also explains that water can cure diseases, which used to be considered merely a suggestion, turns out to have a point because the water molecule can capture the message of recovery, store it, and then its vibration propagates through other water molecules in the body of the patient since the human body is made up of 75% water.

No wonder if the water is selected as one of the major media in the ritual, but it certainly needs to be elaborated further. Generally the water in the ritual of *Parcuku* is used for three purposes, i.e. for drink, being splashed on particular spots, and being carried on a trip. So the water used in the ritual is water that can be consumed. The average water used in the ritual *Parcuku* is water that is boiled and generally stored in a glass wrapped around the waist during a

procession. After the ritual procession, the water is drunk, or poured directly on the four corners of the house, or stored in plastic bottles to for traveling.

PARCUKU AS PROTECTION FROM DANGER AND DISASTERS

However, social peace is only temporary, because society is dynamic and filled with the behavior of individual and group interests, which is why the rite is repeated periodically. This opinion will be the initial foothold to explain the benefits of *Parcuku* religiously and socially in the Fak fak society, because the ritual is constantly carried out though not continuously in one family, but nearly evenly done in the community.

Of course the meaning of this ritual is important, but before discussing this matter, it is interesting to try to look into the text of *Parcuku* itself, what can be drawn from the text recited and what suggestions felt by the ritual performers. Reading the *Parcuku* textually at least there are 6 (six) promises found in it, but it also contains a threat, for those who do not believe in it, it can be identified on a partial extract in the following text: (1), *Bismillahirrahmanirrahim. Wabihi nasta'inubillahi ta'ala'* this is the story of the Prophet of God shaving; whoever reads or listens to this story, their sins will be forgiven by God the Almighty at all time (2), then the words of Allah decreed to all children of angels "O children of the angel, go right down to the earth and take the hair of my beloved messenger shaved Gabriel and a piece of his hair must not fall to the Earth. Take a piece of the hair as a miracle, tie it around your wrist, and I will fogive all your sins." (3) then the words of Allah were revealed to His Prophet "O my beloved messenger, whoever keeps this fairy tale of Shaving, I will free them from all the dangers of the world and the hereafter and the death will take their life in a polite manner, they will be guarded from the vice. (4), whoever keeps this tale of shaving, and guards it well and does not give it to the ignorant and despicable and that you offer it to the believers and that you give it to a household in a village, and Allah will forgive all your sins (5) whoever keeps this fairy tale of shaving, Allah will bestow His blessings on your house tens of charity and sustenance. Allah will also keep them from harm and disaster and from envious people, and even thieves will be unable to break into their house and if they sleep and suddenly wake from their sleep, and on the job, and if all has been destroyed and so forth, and the goods will be safe, and in the war, they will gain victory and all weapons can never hurt them thanks to blessings from this shaving fairy tale; (6) if it is passed down to whomever and it shall be present at his house, it will bring the grace of God to his house thanks to the fairy tale of shaving, once the grace of Allah goes down at his home and so it is every day; whereas the text that contains a threat

can be found in the statement Then the Prophet said, “Whoever does not keep my fairy tale of shaving, , that person is not one of my *ummah* and I’m not his prophet.”

From text of the *Parcuku* above, most of the information suggests that observing, listening, and practicing the *Parcuku* have good benefits for life, either individually or in groups, it is as described by the informant. Keep six thousand six hundred sixty-six pieces of the Prophet’s hair, then anyone who reads the tale at their home, their home will be visited by angels as many as the count of the hair, if we read and listen to it from beginning to end, the our sins will be forgiven. The belief embedded in the community is reasonable if we refer to Suhardi (2009) in which he argued that in a semi-religious ritual, the benefit derived from it is temporary in nature so it forces people or groups of people to unconsciously repeat the ritual. Similarly, in the fak-fak community the same individual will continue to repeat the ritual of *Parcuku* depending on their interests, whether for health, safety, or for commemorating the rite throughout the life cycle.

Of course it is difficult to prove the real benefit of this tradition, but the ritual performer consciously acknowledges that there are benefits that they get from running the rite. At least there are two indicators that can be cited to affirm this assumption. First, the ritual is carried out by the same person and the same village *imam* (Labe) although for different purposes. Second, there is an integration of ethnic actors in the *Parcuku* ritual, while initially it was only performed by the Fak-fak people who come from the Gulf of Petipi, nowadays it is also common among ethnic Javanese, Makassar, Buton, and some other ethnic groups who live in Fak-fak.

TRUE ISLAMIC TRADITION?

After outlining the elements and benefits of the ritual of *Parcuku*, there is a simple question that should be answered. Is this tradition allowed, or even forbidden in muslim society in accordance with the common traditions and customs of other muslim societies? The author does not want to get trapped in discussions on the right and wrong against a habit of a certain community, as such discussion is like a coin with two sides that are always inseparable. The ritual of *Parcuku* will certainly bring two different interpretations between those who perform it and those who oppose it. However, it is interesting to explain the phenomenon by citing the opinion of Esposito (2010): If you want to find out what people believe in, if you want to capture the reality of their daily lives, you must see, borrow an academic jargon textually and contextually. Understanding the beliefs of others not only requires knowledge of the sacred

religious sources (scripture, creeds, dogmas, and the law), but also knowledge concerning what exactly is held and carried out by these people. Respect for the important things in a religion cannot be done without an awareness of the diversity of its forms and expressions.

The awareness put forward by Esposito is very important to be understood by people from different religions. Whether it is recognized or not, everyone's religious expression would vary. In muslim society, there are many different ways of welcoming the holy month of Ramadan, and can be observed throughout the day. For example, every Muslim who have reached puberty (mature) believe that Ramadan is a month full of blessings and forgiveness, all the practice of kindness will be multiplied, and the demons will be shackled. At the same time, it can be seen that many Muslims welcome the month with various expressions, but there is no moral police who will judge each person based on his/her expressions. Some are busy discussing the food to break his fast, food for early morning meal, the themes of sermon, empty rows at the mosque during half way of Ramadan.

Of course one cannot compare the *Parcuku* with the activities of Ramadan, that certainly can be distinguished, that Ramadan is obligatory and must be observed by Muslims who have reached puberty. Meanwhile the *Parcuku* is a tradition in a certain community (Fak-fak), and it actually is what Esposito referred to as an "expression of religious community in diversity". This assumption also means that Ramadan is obligatory but expressed in different ways in the muslim community, while the *Parcuku* tradition which is a semi-religious ritual according to Suhardi, certainly will have various expressions.

The problem is how can a tradition like this take place in the middle of the Muslim society? The author repeats the statement of not wanting to get caught up in the dialectic of what should and should not be done. The author of course agrees with Esposito that political activism and social backgrounds of Islam became a debatable topic in which the interpretation will be broadly divided into two polarization, confrontation and accommodation. Reaching such a conclusion, the author would tend to get in on the accommodative stronghold. The selection of position like this can be done by observing the phenomenon that the confrontationist would assume that the ritual of *Parcuku* is a threat to the purity of the teachings of Islam, *bid'ah kurafat* or even *sirik*. While in the view of the author such activity performed by the community is simply a form of expression that can be tolerated and reasonable in a community that observe what they believe is true, and does not deviate from the common practice of other Muslims. Finally the author concludes that there is no right or wrong in the religious ritual activities of the community including the ritual of *Parcuku*,

because all these practices are based on what is perceived, experienced, and believed to be required by the owner of the culture. The obligation of anyone with the capacity to help remind the performers should these practices be considered deviant without trying to judge a community because of what they believe in, as we are not the sole representative of God on the face of the Earth.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Through a variety of efforts to link all the data, facts, information collected, with regard to the ritual of *Parcuku* in the Fak-fak society, here comes the final preposition of this research. First, the *Parcuku* ritual is continuously performed by the community in Fak-fak is not the original Fak-fak community's cultural product, particularly the Gulf Patipi people, rather it is a ritual passed down through generations, which was obtained from the Sultanate of Ternate and Tidore. It was passed to the Iribaram clan in the Gulf of Patipi as a result of Fak-fak community's permissiveness in the past, or because other factors. Even based on a variety of existing literature, the text of *Parcuku* is a legacy of the Persians as a result of the Islamic teachings which was heavily influenced by the Persians at the beginning of the spread of Islam in the country.

Second, as a cultural activity that takes place as a symbol of religious expression, the *Parcuku* as a ritual expression of a community in observing religion has a positive value in the life of the community, among others, fostering the passion of friendly religious activities, although it will be labeled as a deviant religious practice by those who oppose it. In addition, the solidarity of the community can be built through helping each other, which is reflected clearly in the ritual of *Parcuku*. Another important benefit is that through the ritual of *Parcuku*, the Fak-fak society generally shows that the importance of understanding local communities in observing religion becomes very crucial in a plural society, as through this way harmonization in public life can be achieved.

Third, the thesis proposed by Suhardi regarding ritual, in fact does occur, especially as a semi-religious ceremony, a ceremony in which the purpose is to alert life cycle events and the like. Even so, such ritual has a secular purpose, but also clearly and in fact is based on something sacred as well as other purposes, namely the attempt to find a way to salvation, both in finding harmony among the society and preventing transcendent beings from disturbing, where the *Parcuku* is organized to meet the needs as unveiled by Suhardi, namely efforts in searching for the way to salvation, with confidence based on religious teachings, and the path taken is through a distinctive cultural product based on the expressions of the community.

Bearing in mind from the beginning regarding the assumption that a ritual in society as a form of religious expression that often does not have a place in the culture of the religious life, the writer would like to give suggestions but does not intend to reduce the presence of marginal groups in Indonesia, that diverse communities with different religious expressions should not be an excuse for blaspheming and blaming each other, because it turns out God is so great that He has a lot of names in the human mind. The important thing is that it turns out there is only one God in the many religions on the face of the Earth. Hence the wisdom of thinking and acting must be practiced by all people who observe religion because there is no such thing as single society, but the truth is society is naturally always plural, as the providence of God Almighty who created man to know, respect, and help each other.

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