

REVISITING *BEPERTUK* AS TRADITIONAL MEDICINE IN ISLAM SASAK

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Abstrak

Muslim di Lombok percaya bahwa jin-jin hidup sebagai penunggu pohon, batu, air terjun dan sungai yang sakral. Ketika seseorang mengunjungi lokasi sakral tersebut, kemudian pulang dalam kondisi sakit, itu dikarenakan jin merasa terganggu. Orang tersebut mesti *Bepertuk*, sebuah ritual dari masyarakat Islam Sasak untuk mengobati penyakit yang disebabkan jin. Meski hal ini sudah termodifikasi seiring berkembangnya Islam, bagian dari kepercayaan lokal masih ada. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menjabarkan *Bepertuk* dalam konteks kontemporer yang masih dilaksanakan di desa Korleko, Lombok Timur. Fokusnya pada penjelasan titik temu antara kepercayaan lokal dan doktrin Islam. Juga, meninjau makna dari setiap aktivitas dalam ritual tersebut yang menghubungkan manusia dengan makhluk di alam lain. Ini merupakan studi kuantitatif melalui telaah literatur dan observasi lapangan. Wawancara juga dilakukan dengan seorang Muslim yang masih melakukan praktik *Bepertuk*. Penulis berargumen bahwa praktik penarikan rambut wanita, mengunyah sirih dan pinang, serta pembacaan mantra di sekitar teko bisa dicocokkan dengan pandangan Islam. Penyatuan kearifan lokal dan nilai Islam tidaklah menjadi masalah untuk terjadinya akulturasi.

Kata kunci: Sasak, Islam, *Bepertuk*, akulturasi.

INTRODUCTION

Islam was taught in Lombok as the spot of Sasaknese through soft phases. Before Islam was recognized, Muslim preachers or known as '*Tuan Guru*' went grounded to local society for learning the culture. Rather than debated all local beliefs, preachers tend to joint those tradition with Islam. By that way, Islam is known as a flexible religion which is suitable for Sasak. *Bepertuk* is a ritual that consists of various activities such as pulling hair of the shaman called *belian*, giving various sacred leaf and reciting *mantras* to metaphorically communicate with the genie that keep the tree or land. In Islamic teaching, keeping in touch and having good relation with every part of nature is also the key practice of Muslism.

On the perspective of world religion paradigm by Tylor (1871) of course *Bepertuk* in Sasak was part of Animist, it was because Sasaknese believed to *Penunggu* (Keeper) from ground, hill, mountain, tree, forest, river, sea, waterfall and stone was disturbed. On the other hand, Mansyur (2019: 36) argues that *Bepertuk* is not animist, it is also part of Islamic doctrine in Lombok. When

hospital medicine does not work, the family of patient usually reciting *mantras* where Al-Qur'an is included. It is customary to strengthen the belief for other realm existence.

For further, Mansyur (2019: 37) explains that *Bepertuk* has strong relation with *Ketemuk*, it is the effect of disturbing the genie. Literally, *Ketemuk* means "meet". It is believed that those who come to the sacred place, meet the keeper but do not realize it. They realize it when there are symptoms such as headache, stomachache and swollen. Those are the indication of *Ketemuk*. *Ketemuk* as the "disease" has the media to heal it namely *Bepertuk* as its medicine.

There are several studies related to *Bepertuk*. Ken Macintyre conducted ethnographic research in West Lombok in 1992 and 1997. He met a *Belian* or shaman who had many experiences for detecting disease. Patient usually prepared areca and betel that was put on *Andang-andang*. Lately, *Andang-andang* known as the service payment, consists of food and money. It is the requirement to meet the *Belian*. The beginning of *Bepertuk* is started by the chewing of areca and betel for fifteen minutes while *Belian* focusing himself to the problem of patient. Eventually, areca concoction is erased while reciting *mantras* and it is put on the fresh betel. The diagnosis result based on the color of betel. Bright red means patient is *Ketemuk* by genie; blurry pink for ghost or ancestor spirit; while lined red for evil. If no diagnosis was found, shaman would pack the betel and ask the patient to bring it home, put it under the pillow and return it next day for further investigation. Treatments after knowing the diagnosis result are given by *Belian*. Shaman massages and spits while blowing the fog of turmeric or onion to patient's head, neck and shoulder. There is special recitation in this part.

Macintyre (1997) in his ethnographic studies notes that Sasaknese believed the ancestors called *Tetoak Laek* had terrific magical power that could be used in wicked way. It is caused by the grave of ancestor is not maintained well by its family. For this case, the patients are asked to go the grave after *Bepertuk*. As the redemption, patients have to maintain the grave better and send prayer to the spirit of ancestor inside.

Another research from Zidni (2017: 13) shows that *Bepertuk* could not be appropriate with Islamic teaching *Syaria*, especially on the scriptural text and prophetic culture, if the patient believes that the curer is shaman. It is fit when the shaman and every asked requirement are understood as only the medium to cure the patient. The patient must believe that he or she are healthy because of God.



Thus, this study aims to re-think the ritual of *Bepertuk*, interprets its meanings and convergences for Sasak and Islamic values, and delivers a new perspective about it. It argues that the acculturation of the two has no problem. Based on available literatures, this study answers three questions: where are the convergences of Sasak value and Islamic teaching in context of *Bepertuk*? How do Muslims of Sasak adjust cultural tradition and religion doctrine to maintain *Bepertuk* ritual? Is it suitable to joint *Bepertuk* and Islamic values?

The methods in this qualitative research are literature study, field observation in Korleko, East Lombok, where the practice of *Bepertuk* is conducted. Also, an interview was conducted with the one who still believes and practices *Bepertuk*.

HISTORY OF ISLAM SASAK

There are some perspectives about early religion for Sasak. The first perspective from Budiawanti (2000: 8) says early Sasak was known by the existence of *Sasak Boda*, a credo that does worship toward local Lord and ancestor. More popular perspective says "*Sasak is Muslim. If you are not Muslim, you are not Sasak.*" It is a famous notion in Lombok. It means that all Sasakneses are basically Muslim. When there are people with other religion, they must be immigrant from other islands. It could be Bali, Java or others. Batholomew (2001) notes that Islam in Lombok was found in two sorts, those are *Wetu Telu* or syncretism Islam, and the complete Islam called *Waktu Lima* (86).

Wetu Telu was a belief system for Sasak Muslims in the past. Even they are Muslim, they did believe on 'ancestral deities' and 'inanimate objects'. Most of the followers of this belief lived in Northern part of Lombok. Even its follower diminishes, it is able to survive and still have old follower in a village namely Bayan. *Waktu Lima* believers literally translate *Wetu* for time and *Telu* for three, they construct the meaning that *Wetu Telu* followers practice all Islamic worships three times. In contrast, Bayanese rejects that concept. People in Bayan understand that *Wetu Telu* symbolically means everyone occurs from three reproduction systems, those are utter, laid and through germ. Another explanation is it comes from *Javanese* language (*Metu Saking Telu*) that means the rules come from three main law considerations in Islam: *Qur'an*, *Hadits* and *Ijma'* (Budiawanti, 2000: 136-137).

Wetu Telu is similar to the concept that is called by Geertz (2017) as *Islam Abangan*. Kusumawardana (2019) did interview with two figures in Bayan, they are Raden Gedearif and Raden



Nyakranom. They said that basically *Wetu Telu* was not purely religion, it is a tradition. It is simply Islam which is collaborated with the practice of Sasak customs. *Wetu Telu* occurred in the sixteenth century from Labuhan Carik (Anyar beach) to Bayan, this claim is based on the existence of the ancient mosque or '*Masjid Kuno Bayan*' as a place for *Wetu Telu* adherent to pray. The mosque now is visited by many researchers and also popular for the historical tourism. Another confession states that *Wetu Telu* was brought by Sunan Prapen when he was doing Islamic expansion with his congregant. His focus for spreading Islam in Lombok is only on faith and the unity (*tauhid*). When Sunan Prapen left Bayan, he did not bring his *Qur'an*. Society thought that he forgot and tried to chase him, but he instructed to keep the *Qur'an* in Lombok which means society had to learn it more so they can practice Islam completely.

Islam was taught not in the revolutionary way. Preachers had to adjust himself with the local condition in Lombok. To respect the activity of local society for conducting many rituals of their own tradition, Kiyai or preacher in the concept of Wetu Telu, may represent non-expert society to do ritual, they do not need to do all Islam rituals. They do worship in various ways, for example they pray zuhur only on Friday, Subuh on two feast days (which is supposed to be everyday). Thirty days of fasting only conducted on the first, middle and last day (Zakaria, 1998: 138). Those practices started to be completed by the preacher of Islam Waktu Lima, called Tuan Guru who finished study in Mecca in the 19th century. From 16th-19th century, Wetu Telu separated not only in northern Lombok, but also in western and central part of Lombok (Asnawi, 2006: 11).

In 1894, Netherland started their journey in Lombok. They began with the narration for helping Sasaknese to get freedom from Bali Kingdoms. Even their first military expedition was failed, they were still able to master Lombok by upgrading the power (Bartholomew, 2001: 97). Under the colonialist of Netherland, *Tuan Gurus* changed the focus of their movement to local revolt where religion doctrines were involved to waylay Netherland. Some involved *Tuan Gurus* were: Ali Batu from East Lombok, Muhammad Sidik from West Lombok and *Guru Bangkol* from Praya or Cental Lombok (Bruinessen, 1992: 217).

Local revolt in Lombok led by *Tuan Guru* brought polarization. Loyal followers of *Wetu Telu* supported their noble traditional leader to defend local heritage, meanwhile *Waktu Lima* followers followed their preacher as the leader. The next phase, Japan substituted Netherland for short period (1942-1945), but Lombok did not get its independence in 1945 because Netherland returned and

tried to retake some islands in Indonesia including Lombok, but failed, Lombok got independence in 1946 and became part of Indonesia (Asnawi, 2006: 14).

Those long phases of polarization added the various adjustments for rituals in Sasak. Islam and local tradition ally to find the path that might be passed together without omitting each other essence. In this case, *Bepertuk* ritual gets the effect of that alignment.

BEPERTUK AND THE CAUSE OF GENIE

Both Islam *Wetu Telu* and *Waktu Lima* acknowledge the existence transcendental creature such as genie, evil, angel and the most transcendental, God. However, they have different way to call God. Islam knows God as Allah, meanwhile *Wetu Telu* puts *Nenek* to call God. *Nenek* literally means grandmother. Yet, Sasakneses do not understand it so. They understand it as God in the context of cosmology. For further, to complain the condition, Sasaknese would not say "Oh my God", they would say "*Ee Nenek Kaji!*" which is similar (Zakaria, 1998).

Genie on Sasaknese understanding known as *Baqiq Beraq*, it is the invisible spiritual creature that created by God. Life of those creatures is like the life of human. They consume things and have bad or good characters. *Baqiq Beraq* that has good character would not disturb any activity of human, meanwhile *Baqiq* that have opposite character would disturb every activity of human (Mansyur, 2019: 18). Because of it, elders really wary to do something on deserted places, for example forest, river or mountain, moreover when they come with children.

When society in Lombok wants to build a house, move or break the big stone, fall the tree and plant the plants for the first time, society usually take permit to the *Baqiq Beraq* by preparing food or slaughtering the chicken. Budiawanti (2004) explains that those tributes are given to prevent the anger and build the harmony with *Baqiq*.

Mansyur (2019) did interview with Aminah about Sasaknese perspective on the effect for not giving tribute or not taking permit to *Baqiq* before doing first time activity in the new land. Aminah says that the effect of it is *Ketemuk*, a temptation from *Baqiq Beraq* to human. When having *Ketemuk*, someone generally has scary dream in the night, such as being chased by creeping animal, monkey, dog, pig and other scary animals. Not only having scary dream, someone also gets some symptoms such as headache, stomachache and swollen. Additionally, on the research of Zidni (2017), it is said that *Ketemuk* not only caused by *Baqiq Beraq*, but also spirit from those who die in

the general tomb. Someone could get *Ketemuk* if someone went to Tomb and greeted by the spirit of his or her grandfather, parents or other dead family.

Bepertuk occurred as one of traditional medicine to cure the patient of *Ketemuk*. It is still conducted by society in Korleko, East Lombok. Korleko is a village on the coastline, included in Labuhan Haji District. For society in Korleko, there are some sacred places: *Rumpang*, a spring in Korleko's river; general grave; large estate and beach. When an elder or a child come to that place, then go home in unhealthy condition, they usually go to shaman called *Belian* to do *Bepertuk*. To be a *Belian*, a person must be the generation of previous shaman or have ever been taught and given legacy to be the next *Belian*. Patient is brought by its family to the *Belian* with betel and areca on the rice. Inside the rice, there is money as the payment of service.

Generally, *Belian* for *Bepertuk* in Korleko is a girl. It is because the main mediator for *Bepertuk* is the hair of a girl. If patients come with their mother, the mother is the mediator. If the mother may not come or already die, other elder girl may change her. The core activity of *Bepertuk* is pulling the hair. Elder girl may sit or stand, *Belian* then take the medium amounts of hair then pull it strongly till there is a sound on the head. The sound could be heard for more than one pulling. Before pulling the hair, patient mention the suspected *Baqiq Beraq* from beach, estate, grave or latest visited place. After it, patient waits for a moment. If the patient vomits, it does not need further recovery. If the patient does not vomit and still unhealthy, further rituals are needed, it is visiting the area where genie bothers the patient. Patient needs to bring a live chicken and *topat lepas* (rhombus). After reciting some *mantras*, the chicken is released and the the *topat lepas* is left as a tribute that eaten by the *Penunggu* or place keeper.

ISLAMIZATION OF SASAK TRADITION

There is a unique phenomenon under Indonesian diversity. Islam in Indonesia is called '*Islam Nusantara*'. It is different from strict Islam in Arab. For example, there are ritual ceremonies giving offerings (*sesajen*) at a certain place and time such as in the sea, forest or cemetery. When a certain event is carried out, one of the goals is requesting to the authorities of the forest, sea, grave or a region. This is surely contrast to Islam doctrine, because the essence of Islam in its monotheism (Ghofur, 2011: 159). Even it opposed Islam tenet, *Tuan Guru* did not directly re-deconstruct it fully.

Preacher and *Datu* (leader of kingdom) in Lombok were trapped by the dichotomy of 'religion' and 'culture'. Every *Datu* basically worry about their dominance could be taken by preacher, and their cultural legacy would be forgotten. Islam was suspected to erase all local wisdoms.

Hamdi (2018: 108) explains that the existence of *Tuan Guru Haji* or TGH. Zainuddin in the early 20th century gagged those *Datus'* hesitation. He offered approach to integrate art, culture and local culture with Islam doctrine. He consistently did huge mobilization not only at religion worship but also massive change of educational field. His preaching was always crowded anywhere.

There are three subtle ways for TGH. Zainuddin on approaching society. The first, *Alhikmah*, literally means soft, fair and precise. There must be a specific target and appropriate time. The priority is detail and based on the condition or capacity of the target, so every step is passed tenderly (Ridha, 2004: 29). The second is *Mauidzatil Hasanah* (good lesson). This method emphasizes 'heart to heart' talk. Heart and mind are two vital parts of human that control all elements. Giving good lesson through story or deep talk influence the mindset and arouse emotional relation. The last is *mujadalah* (mind exchange). Doing deep talk does not mean *Tuan Guru* talk all the time, there must be a dialogue without harassment toward local person. Preacher may not be ambitious to make the person directly believe anything he said. The goal of the dialogue is not to debate or win an argumentation, but to comprehend the subject and object of talked topic (*ibid*, 56).

By those three ways, TGH Zainuddin understood local condition in the past. Sasaknese was non-expert, most of them did not fully practicing Islam because of the *Wetu Telu* effect. In this case, *Tuan Guru* would choose the understandable language of society to approach them.

TGH Zainuddin conducted many open forums to do dialogue with society, he always tried to do his speech in interesting way to attract the audiences and avoid a bored condition. He used Sasak language to answer, give detail explanation and bring simple analogy to be understood (Faqih, Pasir, 2004: 105). TGH. Zainuddin also gave example at his daily live (*bil-hal*). He visited someone's house (*silaturahmi*) to show how good attitude was practiced. It was an honor for those who were visited, they were happy because they got attention from *Tuan Guru*.

In integrating Islam and local wisdom, TGH Zainuddin did not take extreme way. He was moderate for society practice. For example, he never forces a woman to wear veil, Sasak woman generally wear towel to cover her head and he did not have any problem with that (Smith, 2014: 35).

TGH Zainuddin also often using local symbols when sharing materials to integrate Islam with local culture, for example *Amaq Milasih*, *Amaq Anom*, *Selaparang Kingdom* and *Dewi Anjani* (Anjani Prince) who is believed as *mangku* or tamer of Rinjani Mountain. For Smith (2014), it strengthens the faith of Sasak grassroots people that Islam and local culture are very possible to be acculturated.

Pancor is a house of TGH Zainuddin, his grave is now being *Syaria* tourism. It needs only 20 minutes to arrive at Pancor from Korleko by motorcycle. Because of its nearness, Korleko got *Islamization* effect easier in TGH Zainuddin pride era. *Islamization* touched many ritual practices in Korleko including *Bepertuk*.

Polarization of society in Korleko toward *Bepertuk* existence still exists. There is a group that not believe the ritual anymore, they believe that it was just traditional activity that is not relevant in modern era. There is another group that still comes to *Belian* for doing *Bepertuk* because they believe there is a convergence of Islam with the local spirits that explained by TGH Zainuddin as a charismatic *Tuan Guru*.

CONVERGENCE OF ISLAM AND BEPERTUK

I have observed the tradition of *Bepertuk* since I was a child. I live in Korleko where the society does such activity. I also have an interview with H Afif. He is an alumni of *Ma'had Darul Qur'an wal Hadits*, the main institution where TGH Zainuddin shared his Islamic teaching. H Afif has followed the meeting directly with TGH Zainudin. H. afif is a Muslim who still conducts *bepertuk*. He still cures himself in *Belian*. He explains that each part of *Bepertuk* nowadays are slipped Islamic doctrine. Money for the service payment currently has no standard. It is given, not in context to pay the *Belian*, but for sincere charity in Islamic concept (*Ikhlas*). Pulling the hair is not an awkward thing, it is a symbol of releasing the genie inside the body of patient as like *Ruqyah* in Islam that needs part of body to release the genie. What makes *Bepertuk* special is the sound when the hair is pulled. The further activity is also changed, for example when Korleko people go to beach, *Rumpang* or grave, they do not come to just recite *mantras*, they also do *Zikiran* (reciting Islamic incantation).

The belief in the existence of other cosmos' creature as like genie is not a strange thing in Islam. In the verses of *Az-Zariat* it is stated: "And I (God) do not create genies and humans except to worship me." (Qur'an, 56: 17-18). On the other hand, to call God as *Nenek* or genie as *Baqiq Beraq* is not type of allying God (*Syirk*). God must not be called Allah. Javanese calls Allah as *Gusti* and has no



problem. As long as *Nenek* or *Gusti* in the cosmological understanding goes to Allah as the creator or maintainer of everything, it is not a problem.

H. Hafif added the perspective on why patients still believe *Belian* in the modern era. He states that God gave every person special efficacy and skill. A person could be good in writing, another was smart in building, so did *Belian* who is able to strongly pull someone's hair with no pain and detect its illness. In the context of *Bepertuk*, it is believed that *Belian* does not cure the pain, she is just a mediator. Who cures is the only God. When *Belian* asks the patient to visit beach, *Rumpang* or grave to do *Zikr*, it is part of keeping harmony with nature. Also, Islam never forbids the followers to pray for the safety of their ancestors.

Subsequently, betel leaf that is used in *Bepertuk* had been studied by Mustakum, et al. (2020: 5). The study was conducted in Madura, he found that the origin of that traditional medicine coming from the story of the prophet Musa. In the past, Prophet of Musa had the illness for forty years and never recovered. He then prayed to God. After that, God answered his prayer in his dream. God asked him to go out from his room and searched the leaf that he saw in his dream. Musa went out from the room and found the leaf that god meant was betel. Therefore, using the betel for doing *Bepertuk* is not a problem because Musa as Islamic prophet used it for medicine in the past.

CONCLUSION

Sunan Prapen brought Islam to Lombok in 16th century without changing all aspects of local wisdom. He let society did their own rituals and traditions, but softly taught the concept of God existence (*Tauhid*). That syncretism Islam left the new concept called *Wetu Telu*. Sasaknese recognized God, likewise still believed toward the existence of *Baqiq Beraq* where every tree, big stone, mountain and beach had one *Baqiq* (genie).

Baqiq beraq (genie) is understood similar to human condition by Sasaknese. It has daily live and character, there are good and bad genies. Bad genies usually disturb people when they do not take permit by giving tributes before doing activity where the genies stay. The interference from genie called *Ketemuk*, it has symptoms such as stomachache and headache. To cure *Ketemuk*, society needs *Bepertuk*.

No aspect of *Bepertuk* is erased to avoid the rejection of Islam from local figure in Lombok. Practice of *Bepertuk* nowadays is just slipped Islamic doctrine at each part. It has been through long

period from *Wetu Telu*, Netherland, Japan colonialism and contemporary Islam brought by TGH Zainuddin who brings integration of Islam and local wisdom.

In *Korleko* village, Labuhan Haji District, East Lombok regency, *Bepertuk* finds polarization. There is a group that already left the practice, another group still practices it. For those who practice it, they believe *Bepertuk* has no contrast with Islam doctrine. Believe to the existence of genie is already explained by Qur'an at *Az-Zariat* (17-18). Trust to *Belian* is not type of *Syirk*, it is just mediator as part of process to the recovery, as like trusting doctor in the hospital as the agent of God to cure everyone. The further activity of *Bepertuk* has been integrated. Visiting *Rumpang*, beach or forest to do *Zikr* is not a strange thing, and Islam has doctrine to pray for the safety of ancestor. Islam and *Bepertuk* is one example of how the integration of local wisdom and religious doctrine that acculturated without disappearing each other essence.

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