

**NILAI SPIRITUAL TRADISI SEDEKAH BUMI DI DESA MURAHARJO,  
KECAMATAN KUNDURAN, KABUPATEN BLORA: PERSPEKTIF PSIKOLOGI**

***THE SPIRITUAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL VALUES IN “SEDEKAH BUMI” OR  
THE EARTH ALMS TRADITION IN MURAHARJO VILLAGE, KUNDURAN SUB-  
DISTRICT, BLORA DISTRICT***

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**Abstrak**

Tradisi sedekah bumi masih tetap dijalankan oleh masyarakat setempat. Hal ini membuat peneliti ingin mengetahui Tradisi Sedekah Bumi berdasarkan sudut pandang Agama Islam dan Psikologi. Subjek penelitian ini merupakan empat informan yaitu masyarakat, sesepuh, kepala desa, dan guru Desa Muraharjo, Kecamatan Kunduran, Kabupaten Blora. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan penelitian kualitatif yang didesain dengan menggunakan metode etnografi. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan tiga metode pengumpulan data, yaitu wawancara mendalam dengan informan, diskusi kelompok, dan observasi. Analisis data menggunakan tiga langkah, yaitu reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa: (1) Tradisi Sedekah Bumi masih dilakukan secara rutin setelah panen dan menggunakan tata cara atau proses tradisi Sedekah bumi di Desa Muraharjo, Kecamatan Kundura, Kabupaten Blora. (2) Tradisi Sedekah Bumi berdasarkan sudut pandang Agama Islam boleh dilakukan karena ucapan rasa syukur kepada Tuhan dan untuk menghormati para leluhur dengan cara slametan/shodaqoh. (3) Dari sudut pandang Psikologi mengenai kepercayaan masyarakat melaukan Tradisi Sedekah Bumi dapat dilihat dari kognitif, afektif dan perilaku.

**Kata Kunci:** tradisi sedekah bumi, agama islam, psikologi

**Abstract**

*“Sedekah Bumi” or the Earth alms in Muraharjo village is a traditional ritual conducted as a form of thanksgiving to God for the bountiful harvest. This study aims to determine Islamic spiritual value and the psychological value of the inhabitants of Muraharjo village on the earth alms tradition. The approach used in this research is a qualitative approach with ethnographic methods. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling. Participants in this study consisted of 4 people with the criteria of residents of Muraharjo village, Kunduran, Blora who have lived in the village for more than ten years, aged 20 years and over, participated in organizing earth alms, and understood the origins of the village's earth alms. The data collection technique was done by interview and observation. The data analysis technique used descriptive analytic technique namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion making. This study indicates that the tradition of earth alms giving in the village of Muraharjo, Kunduran, Blora is still implemented every year. According to the participants' understanding of Islam, the earth alms tradition does not violate Islamic law, nor is it an act of shirk (syirik). People cognitively believe that carrying out the ritual of Earth alms will bring safety, fertility, and abundant future harvests from a psychological perspective. From a practical point of view, people feel calm, happy, and safe so that behaviorally, people still carry out and preserve earth alms activities up to this present.*

**Keywords:** earth alms tradition, Islam, psychology.

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with the most extensive archipelago where various ethnicities, religions, and cultures can still be found today. Many cultural traditions are considered necessary by Indonesian society, which is carried out from generation to generation. The community often holds the belief in a cultural tradition in Indonesian regions to respect their ancestors. The tradition itself comes from the Latin word '*trader*', which means to inherit or pass down. According to Murgiyanto (2004: 10) tradition is a way of passing on from ancestors to posterity in the form of thoughts, beliefs, habits, dances from generation to generation, and art orally. According to Maulana (2014: 25), tradition is the harmony and similarity of ideas and material objects from the past but still exist and maintained without being damaged or destroyed.

The Javanese have many traditions, and one of them is 'sedekah bumi' or the earth alms tradition. Earth alms are still being carried out today although not all regions conduct the tradition. Walisongo as the leaders and promoters of Islam in Java Island used various ways and methods to promote Islam. They slowly injected the values of Islamic teachings through the traditions or customs of the Javanese people, and one of them is the earth's almsgiving. Walisongo did not eliminate the existing earth alms tradition but they instead made the earth alms tradition a means of promoting the teachings of the Islamic religion on faith. They suggested that people only need to fear only to Allah SWT, which in Javanese is known as '*eling lan waspodo*'. This means that Muslim are not allowed to worship other than Allah SWT as God and they always need to obey Allah. Muslims also need to carry out what is ordered and they also may not approach what has been forbidden by Allah SWT. The ritual of giving food or commonly called "sesaji" or food offerings, was offered to nature in the past. Over the time, the food was then given to humans, especially to the poor and orphans, without discriminating against religion, ethnicity, race, culture, and class (Nugroho, 2018).

Alms earth is a traditional ceremony to welcome the arrival of the rainy season (*rendeng*). The earth alms giving is done in the purpose to express gratitude to God for the harvest and to ask for good results in the following year. The implementation of earth alms varies on every village. However, generally the procession of earth alms is carried out by collecting food from villagers and then bring the food to the field or rice fields to pray together and then after that the people will eat together. In some villages, some community conduct performances in the form of shadow puppets with certain theme (Oktaviana, 2011). Earth alms are provided by farmers to offer alms and hoping that the earth where they plant will be maintained fertile and provide abundant yields (Kasih, 2017).

Today, many young people do not know the traditions or customs in Indonesia, even the traditions in the area where they live since they were born. They are aware that certain traditions or customs are carried out in their village. However, many young people do not know the meaning of

the ritual or how to carry out the earth alms ritual. During the observations and short interviews with children in the village of Muraharjo, the researchers found that no child understood the meaning of the earth alms tradition and how the procession carried out. They only understand that the earth's alms are held after the harvest by preparing food and pray together in certain place such as the '*punden*' and the field as the village's gathering point. Besides, many also think that doing something like that is something mystical, so they are reluctant to explore deeper or even study about the ritual. This shows that sensitivity of the younger generation about traditions or customs, which is the nation's culture passed down from their ancestors that should be preserved, has decreased. However, there is a no evidence that support a direct conclusion about a strong attitude of the young generation of being reluctant to study the nation's culture.

One of the studies that also discusses earth almsgiving is conducted by Herliyan Bara Wati from Muhammadiyah University of Purworejo. In her study entitled "The Influence and Educational Values of the Earth Alms Ceremony on the Community of Badung Sumberhadi Village, Prembun District, Kebumen Regency", the researcher explained about the earth alms tradition in Badung Sumberhadi Village, Prembun, Kebumen. According to Wati, the earth alms has educational values namely the value of religious, moral, social and community education. This research also found the effect of the earth alms ceremony on the village. This ritual has two influences i.e. a good influence or positive character and a bad influence or negative character.

Unlike previous research, the writer here emphasizes the spiritual values and psychological studies of earth alms in the village of Muraharjo, Kunduran District, Blora Regency. This is very important to be studied in order to make it clear to the community, especially the young generation of the Indonesian nation, to know the values both spiritual and psychological values, in existing traditions or customs. By understanding the values, the people will not easily be affected by incorrect information. It is essential to know the description, procedures, and processions and the meaning of the earth's alms tradition because if the tradition is not preserved, it will become extinct along with the development of times.

The objectives of this research are 1) To find out how the description, procession or implementation procedure, and the meaning of the earth almsgiving in the village of Muraharjo; 2) Knowing the perspectives of the local community regarding the earth almsgiving in the village of Muraharjo; 3) Knowing how the view of spiritual values in Islam earth alms in the village of Muraharjo and; 4) Knowing how to view the psychological values of earth alms in the village of Muraharjo.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Design**

This study used a qualitative approach. According to Sugiono (2008), qualitative research is carried out by developing concepts and collecting data without testing. Researchers used an

ethnographic approach design in order to reveal the reality of the earth's alms. The ethnographic method is understood as a picture of a culture. In this case, the image of culture in society results from the researcher's composition using various information obtained while researching the field.

### **Location and Time of Research**

The location of this research is in the village of Muraharjo, Kunduran District, Blora Regency. The research was conducted when the earth's alms tradition was taking place, ie. in September 2020.

Researchers used four stages in this research namely 1) literature study, 2) fieldwork, 3) compiling research results, and 4) writing reports.

### **Research Subjects**

The research focuses on the social circumstances consisting of the context of the place, activity, and actor. Research subjects in this study are called informants. Researchers used purposive sampling in determining the informants. According to Sugiono (2001) purposive sampling is a sample collection technique that uses specific considerations. The criteria for purposive sampling in this study were (1) residents of the village of Muraharjo who have lived for more than ten years, (2) residents of Muraharjo aged 20 years and over, (3) participating in the tradition of earth almsgiving, and (4) understanding the origins of earth alms in the village of Muraharjo. Based on these criteria, the researcher obtained informants, namely the Village Head of Muraharjo, teachers, elders, and farmers who took part in carrying out alms earth.

### **Data Collection Techniques**

Data on earth alms were obtained using interview and observation methods. Researchers conducted the interviews online and via WhatsApp chat. Meanwhile, observations were made by the researcher while going to the field directly, participating in the ritual, and observing how the earth alms procession took place.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

The data analysis process in this study used descriptive-analytic technique. Researchers describe the data obtained so that they can explain something following existing facts. The analysis result is a description to be studied in a narrative description. Besides, the description of the findings must be systematic and comprehensive so that the explanation is more coherent, logical and the meaning is easy to understand. Some of the steps used in the data analysis are data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion making.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The total population of people in Muraharjo, Kunduran District, Blora, until 14 October 2020 was 3,338, with 1,168 male residents and 1,170 female residents. There are places of worship,

namely four mosques and eight prayer rooms/prayer rooms. Meanwhile, there are educational facilities, namely 1 PAUD, 1 Kindergarten, and 1 SD.

### **Description of the Tradition of Earth Alms in Muraharjo Village, Kunduran District, Blora**

According to the first participant, K (52 years), Head of the village of Muraharjo, Kunduran District, Blora (interview on 16 September 2020), earth alms are a form of gratitude to Allah SWT for the blessings that has been given to the villagers. Earth alms are carried out during the great harvest season for rice. This earth almsgiving is the legacy of the ancestors whose believed that this earth alms ritual continues to develop. Sometimes it is conducted with *barongan* entertainment to accompany the rituals which are believed to respect the struggle of the ancestors in developing education in the village.

According to the second participant, P (50 years), an early childhood education teacher at a PAUD school, precisely in Brangus, Muraharjo Village, Kunduran District, Blora (interview on 10 October 2020) that earth almsgiving is a tradition or thanksgiving in the Central Java region because it shows the people's gratitude to Allah SWT. Earth alms are carried out after the main harvest. In the Blora region, the rituals takes place in the month of *Selo* (Java month). Earth alms are carried out because it shows the people's gratitude to Allah SWT after they have been given blessing and harvest from plants that they enjoy.

The third participant, E (39 years), a farmer in Gapuk, Muraharjo Village, Kunduran District, Blora (interview on 12 October 2020), stated that an earth almsgiving is a form of gratitude for the abundant rice harvest. Earth alms are carried out after every rice harvest. Earth alms are still carried out today because it is a form of respect for the ancestors.

According to the fourth participant, H (59 years), elders (elders), a religious leader and also a farmer in Ngepung, Muraharjo Village, Kunduran District, Blora (direct interview on 13 October 2020) stated that alms earth means to open the earth. To open earth means establishing a village. Thus, it can be called a commemoration to the founders of the village or the celebration of the day when the village was born. This is intended so that the farmers will get rain and a form of respect for those who founded the village. Then the farmers do alms or food sharing in the streets. Therefore, it is stated as the earth's alms. Earth alms are carried out every dry season, usually April and August, to ask for rain.

Based on the opinions of the informants, it can be concluded that the tradition of almsgiving in the village of Muraharjo, Kunduran District, Blora is a tradition or custom that is carried out as a form of gratitude for the community, whose livelihoods are based on farming. They express thanks to God for His bountiful harvest or yield. It is also a form of respect for the ancestors who contributed to establishment of the village.

## **Procedures or Processions of the Earth Alms Tradition in Muraharjo Village, Kunduran District, Blora**

Participant K (52 years old), the Head of Muraharjo Village, Kunduran District, Blora (interviewed on 16 September 2020), stated that the village of Muraharjo is divided into four *dukuh* or hamlet. Each *dukuh* consists of two neighborhood units (RW). RW 01 consisted of Dukuh Brangus and Dukuh Blongoh, then RW 02 is Dukuh Gapuk and Dukuh Ngepung. The earth alms program for RW 01 was held on Friday *kliwon* after the rice harvest. Meanwhile, in RW 02 Earth almsgiving is held on Friday *pon* after harvest. The traditional foods that must be served are *bugis*, *pasung*, *tape* sticky rice, and *gemblong* sticky rice.

According to participant P (50 years), the earth alms procession can be done by slaughtering cattle, by bringing *tumpengan* and food or cake to a certain place in a village called *punden*. Then the people will pray and eat together in the place. The food that must be available in the village must be made from natural products, such as *pasung* from rice flour, *tape*, *jadah*, and *bugis* from glutinous rice.

According to participant E (39 years), the procession or procedures for earth alms takes place started by making "*ambeng*" in each household. *Ambeng* is a wrapped rice with side dishes and vegetables placed on a tray and served on the banana leaves. Other special snacks are *bugis* sticky rice, *tape* sticky rice, *jadah* sticky rice, and bananas. The rituals were then held at the village hall. After the people gathered and prayed together, the *ambeng* then thrown on the ground.

According to participant H (59 years), during earth almsgiving, every household make *ambeng* with rice and a side dish such as eggs, and vegetables and wrapped in banana leaves. The food was then taken to road intersections in each village or an alley between villages. After everyone gathered, a prayer session was held, hoping that the fortune will be given by God to the people. They also expect the rain and the village would be kept away from *bala'* (catastrophe). Before the prayer session, first, the people starting to open the *ambeng* and make a wish from each resident by stating their expectation. The event leader performs ritual named '*tanduk*', usually carried out by the local spiritual leader called '*modin*.' After the *modin* or elders do the '*tanduk*' and all the residents make the wish, then the people pray together. Prayers are usually led by elders or religious leaders in the village by reciting *tahlil* and prayers. The last session was throwing *ambeng*. The *ambeng* was thrown on the ground to ask for rainfall from God.

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the procedure or procession of the earth alms tradition takes place as follows:

- Each household makes *ambeng* rice. *Ambeng* rice is usually rice wrapped in banana leaves complete with side dishes or simple vegetables depending on the residents ability. Besides, there are usually typical traditional snacks for the alms of the earth in Muraharjo, such as *jadah* from glutinous rice, *pasung* from rice flour, *tape* from glutinous rice, and *bugis* from glutinous rice. Most snacks are made from sticky rice.

- Each resident brings *ambeng* to the gathering place or gathering point for all villagers, such as village halls, crossroads, inter-village alleys, or fields.
- The event start with an opening by the village *modin* by performing '*tanduk*'. The '*tanduk*' is carried out by opening *ambeng* and followed by all residents. Then at the same time, all people make pledge to say what is expected or desired.
- Furthermore, the prayer session is led by elders or *modin* by reading *tahlil* and prayers in the hope of getting safety, keeping the village away from *bala'* (catastrophe), getting enough rain, successful in the next harvest, and so on.
- The last session was throwing *ambeng* rice, which was brought to the ground on in order to get the rain.
- The residents returned to their homes and waited for the guests to come to visit. Usually, guests are distant relatives, close friends of either their parents or their children's friends, or acquaintances. Guests will be served special foods from the village's earth alms where some of which have been used as *ambeng*. The *ambeng* used for prayer is a small portion of the dishes made by residents in each household.

### **Participants' Views of Earth Alms in Muraharjo Village, Kunduran District, Blora**

According to participant K, this earth almsgiving is very good to develop understanding about this ritual, and to give insight to the young generation about the tradition. Education for residents needs to be carried out so that the ritual of earth alms will not be seen as mystical activity. However, instead, the event, which has almost faded for a long time, is being held again. In the socio-religious community, the ritual is not considered taboo or mystical for modern millennial circles.

According to participant P, earth almsgiving is good to be done because the people can feel gratitude to Allah SWT, feel togetherness, stay in touch with relatives and neighbors. Because with earth alms, the community can build harmony and share with others. Earth alms must still be carried out and not to be abandoned because this earth alms tradition has been passed down from generation to generation. Besides, the people will always have a sense of gratitude for the harvest of the crops that Allah SWT has given.

According to participant E, earth almsgiving is a tradition or custom passed down from generation to generation, and the people must continue to preserve it.

According to participant H, earth almsgiving is suitable for preservation because this earth almsgiving is a form of gratitude to Allah SWT, who has given an abundant harvest and respect for nature and the people who contributed in developing the village. However, throwing rice on the ground in the earth's method alms procession is seen as unfortunate because the rice becomes wasted (*mubadzir*). *Mubadzir* is seen as an act that is close to devil or demons and it is prohibited by religion. Nevertheless, he said based on the book of the *Ahli Sunnah Wa Al Jama'ah* that:

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*"opo-opo sing wis dadi pengadatane manungso ki gak oleh diowah-owahi."*

Meaning that " Everything that has become a tradition or custom for humans means that it cannot be contested."

Based on the description above, the informants consider that Earth almsgiving is good to be implemented and preserved because earth alms have become a tradition passed down from generation to generation and a form of gratitude to God.

### **The spiritual values of Islam in the alms of the earth in the village of Muraharjo**

Participant H said that the tradition of almsgiving from the earth is a way to express gratitude to Allah SWT carried out by the villagers. They thank for the blessings given in the form of abundant agricultural products. The earth alms tradition does not violate Islamic law and is not an act of shirk (syirik) either. It is said to be shirk when asking, begging, and worshiping other than Allah SWT. However, in this tradition, the farmers pray only to Allah SWT. Participant H said:

*"We are free to ask, beg, pray wherever it is, whether, in the 'punden', the field, or on the street as long as it is only to Allah SWT that we pray these prayers, of course, it does not matter and it does not violate the teachings of Islam. Then, even though we pray in our Islamic places of worship such as mosques, prayer rooms, or prayer rooms, if we say prayers to others than Allah SWT, still it is said to be wrong."*

According to participant H, the earth alms tradition is carried out to honor their ancestors and those who have contributed to development of the village. Islam itself teaches that every Muslim should pray for his predecessors. He stated that this is also explained in the word of Allah SWT in the Qur'an surah Al-Hasyr verse 10, namely:

*"And those who came after them (Muhajirin and Ansar), they prayed," O our Lord, forgive us. Furthermore, our brethren believed before us, and thou shalt not instill envy in our hearts towards those who believe. O our Lord, indeed, You are Most Compassionate, Most Merciful."*

### **The value of psychological values on earth is almsgiving in the village of Muraharjo.**

The informants' behavior in believing in the earth alms tradition shows no difference because the processes and procedures carried out are still the same as those practiced by the ancestors. Local people believe that if they do not do *slametan* or earth alms, their future life will not be peaceful and calm and the harvest will not be bountiful. The local people's believe that if *ambengan* is thrown into the *punden*, it will rain, and the harvest will be abundant. However, the myth also stated that if rice is not thrown, it will not rain and the harvest will decrease. The belief arises in the local community that there will be consequences if the community does not practice traditions or rituals that are missed or not carried out. This belief develop in the local community because their culture have become a vital part of religion.

Local people experience psychological changes due to feelings of insecurity and uneasiness when the earth alms tradition is not implemented. Feelings of uneasiness and insecurity will arise



when the earth alms tradition, which has been carried out from generation to generation and has existed since the ancestors' time, is not carried out as usual. Earth almsgiving is also a way to thank God, who has given great earth products. For this reason, local people continue to carry out their traditions routinely every year.

Based on this finding, the tradition can be seen from cognitive, affective, and behavioral. Earth almsgiving has psychological values, namely:

**a. Cognitive**, its psychological value is the person's belief in an object (Hawkins and Mothersbaugh, 2010: 392).

The local community of Muraharjo Village, Kunduran District, Blora believe that doing the earth alms will bring prosperity to the village. They also believe that "when they give alms to the earth, God will let the earth to provide the products of the land for the welfare of the people (farmers)." This statement means that if people give alms to nature, the alms will return to them in the form of safety, fertility, and abundant crops.

**b. Affective**, the psychological value is the feeling or emotional reaction to an object (Hawkins and Mothersbaugh, 2010: 395).

From a practical point of view, if people carry out alms from the earth, they will feel calmer, happier, and more secured because they have carried out the existing rituals. However, if one of the rituals is not carried out, the community will feel worried and anxious.

**c. Behavior**, the psychological value is the tendency to respond with certain forms of behavior towards particular objects or activities (Hawkins and Mothersbaugh, 2010: 397).

Earth alms behavior in the village community of Muraharjo is actively carried out every year after harvest.

The villagers of Muraharjo did earth alms based on their own motivation. The motivation of the people to continue conducting the ritual sustained because this tradition has existed from the old times to the present. There are several benefits of doing alms on the earth in the village of Muraharjo. The people can share food with others, show respect for their ancestors, and also to thank God. Earth alms are also carried out because of the motivation from the community driven by mental needs. By doing earth alms, the people can feel calmer, safer, and more peaceful.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the earth's alms are carried out during the rice harvest season. The people of Muraharjo Village, Kunduran District, Blora Regency believe that if they do the earth alms, their life will be peaceful in the future because the rice harvest will be abundant. If they do not perform these rituals or traditions, there will be negative consequences. For example, if they do not do the ritual of throwing *ambengan* on the ground, they believe that there will be no rainfall

and the agricultural yields will decrease. The belief of the people of Muraharjo Village has psychological values in the aspect of cognitive, affective, and behavioral. It is cognitively related to the public belief that the earth's almsgiving brings safety, fertility, and successful harvests. Affectively, if the people conduct the earth alms, they will get a feeling of calm and joy. The motivation drives the people to conduct alms earth in Muraharjo Village as a tradition that has been carried out and preserved from the time of their ancestors to the present.

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