

## The Symbolic Meaning of the Baritan Tradition on the First Night of Syuro Rowosari Village, Kendal Regency

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**Abstract.** Baritan is one of the traditions of an agricultural community that has been passed down from generation to generation in Rowosari Village, Kendal Regency. This tradition is carried out as a form of gratitude to God for the abundance of harvests and blessings received by the community. The commemoration of the night of One Syuro is an important moment in the implementation of Baritan, where people pray together and give offerings as a form of gratitude and hope that life will remain prosperous and avoid danger. Through this procession, Baritan not only functions as a religious ritual, but also strengthens social relations between residents. This ritual creates a close connection between the spiritual life, culture and social solidarity of the Rowosari Village community.

**Keywords:** Baritan Tradition, Javanese Culture, Symbolic Meaning, Religious Ritual

### 1. BACKGROUND

Since ancient times, Javanese society has had various traditions related to the cycle of life and the universe. Tradition in the perspective of Anthropology is the process of human adaptation to the natural and social environment. Tradition is formed as a way to solve problems, regulate social life and maintain group identity. Tradition is a depiction of human behavior that has been processed over time and has been passed down from generation to generation (Pambudi 2014) Tradition has the following characteristics; passed down from generation to generation, involving all members of the community group and functioning to strengthen social ties between members of the community. Javanese society is known as a society that upholds tradition. Javanese society itself has a habit of preserving traditions with the aim of maintaining peace, harmony, safety and a form of gratitude to God (Wahyuningtias and Dwi Astuti 2016).

One form of Javanese tradition in welcoming the month of Muharram is Baritan. Baritan is a tradition of selamatan which is usually held at a crossroads to ask for guidance and safety from God. This form of gratitude is held in the month of Syura. People usually bring rice and side dishes with banana leaves as a base (Wahyuningtias and Dwi Astuti 2016). However, the baritan tradition can differ from one region to another.

Baritan is one of the local traditions that is still maintained by the people of Rowosari Village, especially in Ksatrian Hamlet. This tradition has a symbolic meaning as a form of gratitude to God and ancestral spirits for the abundant harvest. In addition, Baritan also functions as a medium of spiritual communication between humans and the universe. In its development, this tradition not only reflects an agrarian culture, but also reflects a strong element of syncretism, where religious values and local beliefs are mixed together. Rowosari Village is located in Kendal Regency, the territory of which is in Rowosari District. The livelihoods of the village community are farmers, traders and fishermen. The people of Rowosari Village are still thick with various traditions. One of them is the Baritan tradition which is commemorated every Muharram.

## **2. THEORETICAL REVIEW**

Baritan comes from the term "lebar rit-ritan" which means after the big harvest (Pambudi, 2014: 16). Baritan is a tradition of selamatan which is usually carried out at crossroads. This tradition aims to ask for guidance and safety from God, and as a form of gratitude from the community which is carried out in the month of Syuro. According to Sholikin (2009: 23), the month of Syuro in the view of the Javanese people is part of the calendar system created by Sultan Agung Hanyakrakusuma. This calendar is often known as the Aboge calendar.

Sholikhin Muhammad in his book entitled "The Mystery of the Month of Suro from the Perspective of Javanese Islam" (2010) further explains that the month of Syuro not only has religious and traditional meaning, but also reflects the philosophy of life of the Javanese people, which is full of religious values and local wisdom. This calendar is an important symbol in Javanese culture that continues to be preserved until now, one of which is the Baritan tradition. In this tradition, people usually bring takir, which is a container made of banana leaves filled with white rice and side dishes, and decorated with janur, or young coconut leaves. The contents of the takir usually consist of rice, side dishes, vegetables, eggs, and serondeng, which is grated young coconut that is seasoned and fried in oil. The Baritan procession, along with the takir carried by the people, contain important symbols in local culture.

## **3. RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with an ethnographic approach. Ethnography is a descriptive study of society and its culture, which aims to explore the

meaning from the perspective of the indigenous people themselves. Through ethnographic techniques, researchers try to understand the views of the people of Rowosari Village regarding the Baritan tradition which is commemorated every night of Satu Syuro. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with several traditional figures, traditional practitioners, and local residents.

The interview process was conducted face-to-face and online. Online interviews used the WhatsApp application for voice calls, while direct interviews were conducted by visiting the village. Participatory observation was also conducted during the Baritan procession to capture the symbolic and social experiences experienced by the community. Researchers also documented these activities through photos and field notes that allowed researchers to see, hear, and feel the phenomena being studied in more depth. With this method, this study provides a rich picture of the symbolic meaning and social function of the Baritan tradition in Rowosari Village, which involves spiritual, cultural, and inter-resident aspects.

#### **4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

There are several reasons why the month of Muharram is considered sacred by some Indonesian citizens, including the most important one: theologically religiously, the month of Muharram is one of the months glorified by Allah SWT (Izzah, 2022). The Baritan tradition in Rowosari Village, which was previously carried out in a less organized manner, experienced a significant increase in its implementation after the intervention of KKN UIN Walisongo Semarang students. This tradition consists of 2 stages, namely preparation and implementation. The preparation stage begins by gathering the community to discuss the division of tasks for leading prayers, cooking, preparing takir, place, and time. The Baritan implementation procession begins at 18.30 at the T-junction near the gazebo in Tengah Dusun. This location is considered strategic for the community to reach because it is located in the middle of the hamlet.

Before 18.30 mothers flocked to bring takir to the venue, fathers prepared carpets to sit on, sound systems and microphones. All the people from children to adults gathered at the three-way intersection. The people who led the prayer sat near the sound system and microphone. KKN students worked together with local community leaders, including Mrs. Tumiah as a community leader of Rowosari Village, to plan the event in a more structured way. They determined the location of the event, the time of implementation, and the duties and responsibilities of each party involved. The location chosen was the three-way

intersection of the hamlet, which was considered strategic and made it easier for residents to gather.

In an effort to increase participation, KKN students invited various levels of society to get involved, from children to the elderly. KKN Coordinator, Lintang Arjunil, led the reading of the Yasin letter and prayers, while village elder, Mbah Royyan, led the closing prayer. The active involvement of various age groups helped create an inclusive and lively atmosphere. Baritan is not only a tradition, but also a means to preserve culture and strengthen Islamic values. The tradition of welcoming the month of Syuro is something that is one of the important cultures for the Javanese Islamic community.

The Baritan tradition is carried out with the aim of warding off disaster/disaster, asking for God's safety, commemorating the Hijri New Year, and commemorating the events of the Prophet's era that occurred on the 10th of Muharram. (Damayanti, 2024) All people pray devoutly and ask for protection from Allah SWT. The next activity is eating together and distributing the takir that has been provided. The Javanese people are a group of people who still maintain the existing ancestral traditions. The values of their beliefs still seem very simple (Restin Trisna Utami, 2023).

The involvement of KKN students and children in this tradition provides important lessons about culture and religion. It is also a way to introduce and instill moral and Islamic values to the younger generation, so that this tradition remains alive and practiced by the next generation. The Baritan tradition, which is closed with a meal together, strengthens the sense of solidarity among the residents. The simple food menu such as rice, salted fish, and urap vegetables served are symbols of togetherness and simplicity, which also strengthen social ties among the residents of the hamlet.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The Baritan tradition in Rowosari Village has deep symbolic and spiritual value for the Javanese people, especially in welcoming the month of Muharram. This tradition is a form of local wisdom that functions to ward off disaster, ask for safety, and commemorate important events in Islamic history. The intervention of KKN UIN Walisongo Semarang students has had a positive impact on the implementation of the Baritan tradition, by making its implementation more structured and involving various levels of society. The active involvement of the community, from children to village elders, creates an inclusive and lively atmosphere. In addition to being a means of preserving culture, this tradition is also a forum for strengthening Islamic values and solidarity between residents through joint activities such

as prayer and eating together. This tradition not only enriches local culture, but also instills moral and religious values in the younger generation.

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