



## MODIFYING THE TRADITION OF PRAYING FOR THE DEAD: STUDY OF LIVING HADITH

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### Abstract

Muhammadiyah people are not used to carrying out the Javanese Muslim *slametan* tradition of praying for the dead. Even so, Muhammadiyah members in Cakru Village, Kencong Jember East Java, still carry it out. This article discusses the *slametan* tradition of praying for the dead, carried out by Muhammadiyah members—also called the recitation of *dhikr al-mawt* (remembering the death)—using phenomenological analysis. The forms and reasons for holding it and attending it are also discussed. This article focuses more on how Muhammadiyah members modify the tradition, such as reciting verses of the Qur'an without *tawassul* (intercession of prayer by relying on the prophet and ulama to get closer to God) or recitation with *tawassul* before reading Surah Yasin and Tahlil. After that, *tausiyah* (preaching for giving wise advice and Islamic teaching to remember death), praying for the dead, then a banquet (*kenduri* or *berkat*). However, they were forced to carry this Javanese tradition out for preaching (*da'wah*), praying for the dead, consoling the deceased's family, and maintaining Muslim harmony, cohesiveness, and integrity.

**Keywords:** *Javanese Muslim Tradition, Slametan Ritual, Recitation of Dhikr al-Mawt, Muhammadiyah Members.*



## Introduction

Death is an extraordinary occurrence that many people do not expect. However, in the Qur'an ([67]: 2), death is a test for Muslims. Therefore, Islamic teachings encourage Muslims frequently to remember death (*dhikr al-mawt*),<sup>1</sup> praying for the dead,<sup>2</sup> and *ta'ziyah*<sup>3</sup> (visiting the deceased's family) to empathize with them. These three suggestions may be held one at a time or all at once. For the Javanese Muslim, remembering death, *ta'ziyah*, and praying for the dead are usually all held in the *slametan* ritual—some people call *tahlilan*. As Fatah says, the *tahlilan* ritual is carried out to console the deceased's family and take virtue (*i'tibar*) of the death.<sup>4</sup> However, some Muhammadiyah people do not practice this tradition. They assume that it does not find any Islamic arguments (*dalil*) for this tradition in either

the Qur'an or the Hadith, so it is considered a rejected worship; they call it *bid'ah*.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the Muhammadiyah people in Cakru Village, Kencong, Jember, East Java, practice this tradition.

Studies on the *slametan* tradition in Muhammadiyah's view and Java have been extensively researched. Kurniawati said that the *slametan* ritual is one of the rituals that characterize Javanese Islam.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, Karim explained that the death rituals in Javanese Islamic society resulted from cultural acculturation between Islam and Java, thus forming a distinctive Javanese Islamic tradition.<sup>7</sup> Kholil mentioned that although *slametan* is a product of local culture, it has become part of religious culture. He also said that by doing so, people feel pleasure and delight, becoming a treatment for the stress and suffering experienced.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, regarding the *slametan* ritual among Muhammadiyah

<sup>1</sup> The Prophet said, "Keep in mind the barrier to all pleasures, namely death." Ibn Mājah, *Sunan Ibn Mājah II* (Aleppo: Dār Ihya' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyah, 2006), 1422.

<sup>2</sup> The Prophet said, "Ask forgiveness for your brother and patience for him because now he is being asked." Abū Dāwud, *Sunan Abū Dāwud III* (Beirut: Al-Maktabah al-'Asriyah, n.d.), 215.

<sup>3</sup> The Prophet said, "There is no believer *ta'ziyah* to his brother who faces suffering unless Allah will put on the glory of the jewels on the Day of Resurrection." Ibn Mājah, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, I: 511.

<sup>4</sup> Munawir Abdul Fatah, *Tradisi Orang-Orang NU* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pesantren, 2008), 268.

<sup>5</sup> Team of the Tarjih and Tajdid Council, Central Executive of Muhammadiyah, *Fatwa-Fatwa Tarjih: Tanya Jawab Agama II* (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2003), 173.

<sup>6</sup> Farhan Agung Ahmadi & Nurul Qolbi Kurniawati, "Islam Jawa dan Ritual Selamatan dalam Perspektif Antropologi," *An-Nas* 6, no. 1 (2022): 51–62, DOI: 10.36840/annas.v6i1.502.

<sup>7</sup> Abdul Karim, "Makna Ritual Kematian dalam Tradisi Islam Jawa," *Sabda: Jurnal Kajian Kebudayaan* 12, no. 2 (2017): 161, DOI: 10.14710/sabda.12.2.161-171

<sup>8</sup> A Kholil, "Agama dan Ritual Slametan," *El-Harakah* 10, no. 3 (2008): 187–202, DOI: 10.18860/el.v10i3.4758.

members, Faizah et al. revealed that Muhammadiyah members have different and contradictory views: rejecting and accepting.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, Aprillia examined the reasons and motives of Muhammadiyah members in Ploso, East Surabaya, to hold a *slametan* for the dead.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, even though there have been studies on the *slametan* ritual for the dead, it needs to be studied further because (1) the approach to this study uses living hadith about *ta'ziah*, remembering death, and praying for the dead; (2) this tradition is not commonly practiced by the Muhammadiyah community; Muhammadiyah refuses to recite the al-Qur'an together at the house of the dead and serve banquets (*kenduri*) as an act that does not have basic Islamic arguments (*dalil*) in the al-Qur'an and Hadith; (3) Even though it is not following the primary values in Muhammadiyah and different from the traditions of the local people in general, this modification of tradition has meaning for them, and until now it has been maintained.

<sup>9</sup> Khairani Faizah, "Kearifan Lokal Tahlilan-Yāsīnān dalam Dua Perspektif Menurut Muhammadiyah," *Aqlam: Journal of Islam and Plurality* 3, no. 2 (2018), DOI: 10.30984/ajip.v3i2.722.

<sup>10</sup> Fransisca Aprillia, "Motif Sosial Tahlilan Masyarakat Muhammadiyah," *The Sociology Journal Paradigma* 11, no. 1 (2022): 1–22. <https://ejournal.unesa.ac.id/index.php/paradigma/article/view/46585>.

This article aims to discuss the modification of the *slametan* ritual (praying for the dead) to remember the death (recitation of *dhikr al-mawt*) of Muhammadiyah members in Cakru Village, Kencong, Jember, East Java, as follows: first, to describe the mode and procession of reciting *dhikr al-mawt*; second, uncovering the motives and perceptions of the deceased's family towards the recitation of *dhikr al-mawt*; third, uncovering the congregation's motives and perceptions of the recitation of *dhikr al-mawt* in the *slametan* ritual for the dead among Muhammadiyah members.

### **Death-Slametan Ritual: Ta'ziah, Salvation, and Praying for the Dead**

During the *slametan* ritual, Muslims conduct a banquet and pray to God for the salvation of the dead. Praying, according to al-Khattābī, is a Muslim's request to his God for help.<sup>11</sup> Praying is a manifestation of weakness and helplessness that requires help. Thus, praying means worshiping God (*'ubudiyah*). Three *madhhabs* (the schools of Muslim thought) argue about the function of praying. The first *madhhab* argues that praying does not have any function and meaning because God has determined the fate of everything. So, praying

<sup>11</sup> Abū Sulaymān Hamad ibn Muhammad al-Khattābī, *Shā'n al-Du'ā'* (Egypt: Dār al-Tsaqāfah al-Islāmīyah, 1992), 4.

cannot change one's destiny. The second *madhhab* argues that praying is an obligation that can avert disaster and change God's destiny (*qadla'*). While the third *madhhab* argues that praying is an obligation that can only be granted if it is under Allah's *qadla'*. This opinion attempts to mediate from the two opinions above.<sup>12</sup>

In the Qur'an ([47]: 19 and [14]: 41), Allah encourages Muslims to ask God's forgiveness for other Muslims' sins, as well as their sins, parents' sins, and those who believe in Allah. Therefore, Muslims are instructed to pray for one another as Muslim brothers. This command also includes praying for other Muslims' kindness because *istighfar* is the form of worship—for them, praying not only for those still alive but also for those who have died.

Besides, Muslims are also ordered to visit condolence (*ta'ziyah*, which means patience; make or invite people to be patient).<sup>13</sup> The scholar (*ulama*) says that *ta'ziyah* aims to motivate and encourage the deceased's family to be patient and pleased with God's destiny and reward and to pray for the dead. Thus, there are three things contained in *ta'ziyah*: First, consoling and reducing the sorrow of the deceased's family, encouraging them to remain patient,

hoping for rewards, being pleased, and sincere towards Allah's destiny. Second, pray for the deceased's family so Allah will replace it with a reward and give the best reward. Third, pray for forgiveness for the deceased if he is a Muslim.<sup>14</sup>

*Ta'ziyah* may be carried out before or after the funeral. According to most fiqh experts (*jumhur ulama*), the preferred time to do *ta'ziyah* is after the dead has been buried. It is just that *jumhur* Shafi'iyah said that unless his family looked very sad at the time before the funeral, *ta'ziyah* could be submitted before the funeral so that it could eliminate or reduce their sadness.<sup>15</sup> The other scholars' view, as Imam Thawrī said, is that it is makruh to do *ta'ziyah* after the body is buried;<sup>16</sup> it means that the moment is finished after the funeral or completed. Because the *ta'ziyah* aims to comfort the deceased's family, it should be done on time.<sup>17</sup>

Although *jumhur ulama* recommend (*sunnah*) *ta'ziyah* after the funeral,

<sup>14</sup> Wahbah Al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Fiqh al-Islāmī wa Adillatuh II* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), 1572; Ibn 'Abidīn, *Radd al-Muhtār 'alā al-Durr al-Mukhtār II* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1992), 239; Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah al Khirashī, *Sharh Muhtasar Khalīl II* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), 129; Imam an-Nawawī, *Al-Adhkār*, ed. 'Abd al-Qādir al-Arna'ūd (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1994), 148.

<sup>15</sup> An-Nawawī, 306.

<sup>16</sup> Ibn Qadāmah, *Al-Mughnī II* (Egypt: Maktabah al-Qāhirah, 1968), 405.

<sup>17</sup> Muhammad ibn 'Alī al-Shawkānī, *Nayl al-Awtār IV* (Egypt: Dār al-Hadīth, 1992), 116.

<sup>12</sup> Al-Khattābī.

<sup>13</sup> Wizārat al-Awqāf wa al-Shu'ūn al-Islāmīyah Kuwait, *Al-Mawsū'ah al-Fiqhiyah al-Kuwaytiyah XLII* (Kuwait: Wizārat al-Awqāf wa al-Syu'ūn al-Islāmīyah, n.d.), 50.

they limit it to three days. After three days, most scholars consider it not recommended (*makruh*). It is because the purpose of *ta'ziah* is to relieve the grief of the deceased's family; usually, after three days, they no longer feel sad, so there is no need for *ta'ziah*, which makes them sad again. Even so, the jury of scholars made an exception, namely, if there was no *ta'ziah* within the three days.<sup>18</sup> While al-Haramayn said that there is no time limit for *ta'ziah* because the purpose of *ta'ziah* is to pray, motivate him to be patient and not lament, and others. Thus, *ta'ziah* can be for an extended time.<sup>19</sup>

For the Javanese, the *slametan* is a vital ritual—it could be said as the essence of their religious life.<sup>20</sup> The term *slametan* means safe (freed or spared) from calamity, danger, damage, and disturbance, among others. Thus, *slametan* aims to create a state of well-being, safety, and protection from disturbance by invisible beings.<sup>21</sup> Thus, *slametan* aims to create a state of well-being, safety, and protection from disturbance by invisible beings. The *slametan* ritual is usually performed at certain essential moments

in a person's life, such as birth, death, marriage, building a house, the beginning of the planting or post-harvest season, circumcision, holy day celebrations, and many other events. Thus, *slametan* is usually given at a significant moment for a person.

The term *slametan* for death is seen as inappropriate to use in death ceremonies. The *slametan* is a rite for the living, not the dead, so people use another term, *kirim dunga* (praying for the deceased).<sup>22</sup> Many people use the term *slametan* in death rituals; for them, *slametan* is interpreted as a medium to pray for the safety of the deceased and their families who are still alive.<sup>23</sup> The Javanese Muslim community holds *slametan* by praying, *tahlilan*, and *yāsīnan* on the 7<sup>th</sup>, 40<sup>th</sup>, 100<sup>th</sup>, and 1000<sup>th</sup> days.<sup>24</sup>

### Muhammadiyah Decree against the Slametan Ritual

Muhammadiyah prohibits *slametan* for death implicitly. It was recorded in the *fatwa* (decree) of the Muktamar Khusus Tarjih quarter of a century in Jakarta (1936), which stated: "Do not gather at the family's place after being buried where

<sup>18</sup> Imām al-Nawawī, *Al-Majmū' Sharh al-Muhadhdhab V* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), 306.

<sup>19</sup> An-Nawawī.

<sup>20</sup> Jochem van den Boogert, "The Role of Selametan in the Discourse on Javanese Islam," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 45, no. 133 (2017): 352–372, DOI: 10.1080/13639811.2017.1345166.

<sup>21</sup> Kholil, "Agama dan Ritual Slametan."

<sup>22</sup> Kholil.

<sup>23</sup> Bagus Wahyu Setyawan, et al., "Selametan Day of the Dead from a Javanese Cultural Perspective among Santri and Abangan: A Case Study in Tulungagung District," *IBDA: Jurnal Kajian Islam dan Budaya* 20, no. 1 (2022): 25–43. DOI: 10.24090/ibda.v20i1.5182.

<sup>24</sup> Karim, "Makna Ritual Kematian."

they make food for you."<sup>25</sup> This decree does not explicitly address *slametan* for death. However, this decision is often used as the base for Muhammadiyah fellows to reject the traditional *slametan* for death because it cannot be separated from banquets. This stance on the *tahlilan* ritual can be seen from the Muhammadiyah Tarjih Council's *fatwa* as follows:

The basis of the Hadith ordering or giving guidance on *tasyakur* with *Tahlilan* when someone has a child in the womb after seven months or doing *Tahlilan* after 3 days, 7 days, 40 days someone dies is not found by Muhammadiyah, so Muhammadiyah does not practice it [...] holding *Tahlilan* with banquets which sometimes forced people who could not afford to hold them when a family death happened, was also not found in the Prophet's practice. In fact, we find statements from the Companions that, in their time, they held meetings and prepared food after someone's body was buried, including the act of wailing (which was prohibited).<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Tarjih Council, Central Executive (PP) of Muhammadiyah, *Himpunan Putusan Majelis Tarjih Muhammadiyah, Collection of Decisions of the Muhammadiyah Tarjih Council* (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, n.d.), 232.

<sup>26</sup> Team of the Tarjih and Tajdid Council, *Fatwa-Fatwa Tarjih*, 173.

The *fatwa* above clearly shows Muhammadiyah's stance against the *tahlilan* tradition as something "new," which was not exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad. Nonetheless, Muhammadiyah members are not a homogeneous entity that obeys the decisions and *fatwas* of the Tarjih Council—as the Muhammadiyah apparatus in determining religious issues.

Muhammadiyah members are diverse entities. Mulkhan's research on Muhammadiyah members in Wuluhan Jember shows this clearly. In his study, he reveals four variants of the Muhammadiyah people. First, the *muhlisun* group, namely Muhammadiyah members, are puritanical Muslims. Second, Dahlanis (a group of followers of Kiai Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of Muhammadiyah) are pure Muslims but tolerant of other people's practices of TBC (*Tahayyul*, *Bid'ah*, and *Churafat*). Third, the MANU group (Muhammadiyah-Nahdlatul Ulama), namely the Muhammadiyah people, practices the ways of the Nahdlatul Ulama people. This group is also called the neo-traditionalist group. Fourth, Munas Group (Muhammadiyah Nationalist) or Marmud (Marhaenism-Muhammadiyah).<sup>27</sup>

This variant of the Muhammadiyah people illustrates that not all Muhammadiyah people do not perform death

<sup>27</sup> Abdul Munir Mulkhan, *Islam Murni dalam Masyarakat Petani* (Yogyakarta: Bentang, 2005), ii–iii.



*slametan*, as was the case with the Muhammadiyah Tarjih Council's decision and *fatwa*. The third and fourth groups maintain and practice this tradition.

This study uses a qualitative paradigm with a living hadith and phenomenological approach. The qualitative referred to in this study is a research procedure that produces descriptive data from people's behavior.<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile, phenomenology is intended as research that directly investigates the person's experience.<sup>29</sup> In this way, this research can obtain interpretations from Muhammadiyah people in the area, both the deceased's family (*ahlul musibah*) and Cakru residents who attended or congregations (*jama'ah*) of *slametan* ritual for death (recitation of *dhikr al-mawt*) and the meaning of their consciousness.

Thus, the subjects of this study were *ahlul musibah* and congregations selected by the purposive sampling method, people among them considered capable of explaining the tradition well. The data collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentary techniques are then analyzed using data techniques from Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, such as data reduction,

verification, and concluding interactively and continuously.<sup>30</sup>

## The Javanese Muslim Tradition and Muhammadiyah in Cakru

Cakru is a village in Kencong District, Jember Regency, one of the villages on the border with Lumajang Regency. Most of Cakru's population is Muslim (more than 99%). This Muslim population follows Islamic organizations, especially the two major Islamic organizations, the first being the most widely followed is Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), and the next most is Muhammadiyah. Since around the 1930s, Muhammadiyah has developed in this village. In this early period, their religious activities were carried out by Muhammadiyah figures in the six mushallas they built. Each of them has its way or method of educating its *jama'ah*. Therefore, Muhammadiyah members in developing Cakru tend not to be identical; they have particular meanings and characteristics of each of them. From the six mushallas as their preacher center, Muhammadiyah continues to grow in Cakru village.<sup>31</sup>

In 1960, Cakru formally became a branch of Muhammadiyah, which was responsible for other nearby villages,

<sup>28</sup> Lexy J. Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosda Karya, 2012), 3.

<sup>29</sup> Engkus Kuswarno, *Fenomenologi: Fenomena Pengemis Kota Bandung* (Bandung: Widya Padjajaran, 2009), 10.

<sup>30</sup> A. Michael Huberman & Matthew B. Miles, *Qualitative Data Analysis A Methods Sourcebook*, SAGE Publication, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (London: SAGE Publications, 2014), 12–14.

<sup>31</sup> Hisyam Zaini, Interview by author.

such as Balekambang, Igir-Igir, Gondangrejo, Padomasan, and Kraton.<sup>32</sup> This was because, according to the Bylaws of Muhammadiyah, the branch was a unit in a particular area consisting of at least three Branches.<sup>33</sup> Thus, this Cakru has become the center of Muhammadiyah in the surrounding villages. Since 2019, after the Jombang Branch was formed, Padomasan is no longer under the Cakru Branch because the location of the Jombang is closer than Cakru.<sup>34</sup>

## Two Models of the Recitation in Death-Slametan Ritual

Since the beginning of Muhammadiyah in Cakru, there has been no recitation of *dhikr al-mawt* in the death-slametan ritual among Muhammadiyah members in Cakru. According to Zaini, when he was a child, Muhammadiyah in Cakru was the same as Muhammadiyah in other places when someone died: just *ta'ziyah* and no recitation activities. However, the recitation was recently held to accommodate the wishes of the deceased's family, which within them differing views on whether slametan for

the dead was held. It is because, recently, there have been many marriages between Muhammadiyah and non-Muhammadiyah members. Therefore, the recitation is held to avoid conflict when a family member dies.<sup>35</sup>

Hence, the practice of the death-slametan ritual is different. In general, there are two modes of recitation carried out by Muhammadiyah members in Cakru. First, recitation by reading surah Yāsīn and Tahlil. Most of these recitations are carried out by Muhammadiyah members in Cakru, especially in northern Krajan, where most of them are Madurese—on the north side of the river, about 200 meters from the Muhammadiyah boarding school. Second, recitation by reading other surahs of the Qur'an. Most Muhammadiyah members in Cakru do this recitation model.<sup>36</sup> The first and second models are usually added by *tausiyah* (or *mau'idhah*, preaching or lecturing on religious teachings and moral advice). Therefore, they call this activity a recitation of *dhikr al-mawt* (remembering of death).

Meanwhile, the time for reciting *dhikr al-mawt* among Muhammadiyah members in Cakru is no different from the death slametan ritual in the Javanese Muslim tradition, every day for the first 7<sup>th</sup> days, the 40<sup>th</sup> day, the 100<sup>th</sup> day, or

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<sup>32</sup> Deliberation Report of the Regional Leadership (Muspimda) of Muhammadiyah, Jember Regency, Year 2017.

<sup>33</sup> Central Executive (PP) Muhammadiyah, *Muhammadiyah Statutes and Bylaws* (2010), 1–67.

<sup>34</sup> Deliberation Report of the Regional Leadership (Muspimda) of Muhammadiyah, Jember Regency, Year 2021.

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<sup>35</sup> Hisyam Zaini, interview by author.

<sup>36</sup> Zaini.



the 1000<sup>th</sup> day after death. It is just that the deceased's family sometimes has to follow the provisions of these days strictly; some only on the first day, or the third day, or only the fifth day, or the seventh day.<sup>37</sup> Most Muhammadiyah members in Cakru carry out these recitations every day for the first seven days. However, they seldom carry out these recitations on the forty days, the hundredth days, and the thousandth days; if any of them carry it out, the recitation in the *slamaten* is without reading the surah Yāsīn, then it is continued with *tausiyah*.

### Recitation of Tahlil and Surah Yāsīn

The recitation of *dhikr al-mawt* by reading Surah Yāsīn and Tahlil (*tahlilan*) in the death *slametan* ritual performed by Muhammadiyah members in Cakru is no different from the recitation of Surah Yāsīn and Tahlil in the death-*slametan* ritual performed by other Javanese Muslims communities.

The recitation is led by one of the religious leaders in his village (congregation). The procession is as follows: 1) opening, 2) greetings from family representatives (not always done), 3) *tawassul*, or commonly called *tawasulan*, 4) reading Surah Yāsīn and Tahlil together led by a religious figure, 5) *tausiyah*, usually about death (only at certain days), 6)

praying, 7) banquet and, 8) closing with *shalawat*.<sup>38</sup> Besides the banquet, on the last day, the congregation who attended the recitation was given *kenduri (berkat)*—some food was provided to be taken home.

### Reading the Qur'an in Recitation of *Dhikr al-Mawt*

Reading the Qur'an in the recitation was led by a religious leader. The procession of the recitation is as follows: 1) opening; 2) family greeting (sometimes); 3) reading the Qur'an. The congregation is up to reading the Qur'an verses; some read short surahs, some read Surah Yāsīn, and others; 4) *tausiyah* and praying by religious leaders—preaching is usually about death. Therefore, this event is said to be *tadzkirah* or *dhikr al-mawt* (remembering death). *Tausiyah* is not performed every night, only on the day determined by the deceased's family. 5) Banquets. 6) Closing.<sup>39</sup>

As in *tahlilan*, besides banquets, the congregation is also given a feast (*kenduri, berkat*) to take home—this is only given to the congregation attending the recitation, not those who come for *ta'ziah*. What should be noted here is that in this recitation, there is no recitation of surah al-Fatihah and *tawasulan*. Likewise, in reading the Qur'an and

<sup>37</sup> Sumarto, interview by author.

<sup>38</sup> Sigit, interview by author.

<sup>39</sup> Hisyam Zaini, interview by author.

praying, it is not stated that the reward for reading the Qur'an is given to the dead.<sup>40</sup>

## The Perception of Muhammadiyah Members in Cakru

For the deceased's family, holding the recitation of *dhikr al-mawt* in the slametan tradition has religious motives. However, not all of them have the same perception. There are at least four perceptions here.

### 1. Being Forced by Tradition

Most of the deceased's families, Muhammadiyah members in Cakru, were forced to hold the recitation in the death-slametan ritual. They cannot bear social sanctions from the Cakru community and other people around them if they do not hold the tradition—as acknowledged by Sumarto, Bayu, Nasir, and Hisyam Zaini, which perform the slametan when one of their family members dies. Sumarto admitted that—even though it was not following his beliefs—he was forced due to pressure from his big family. To him, they did not understand Islamic procedures correctly. Therefore, he felt down and distressed about this tradition.<sup>41</sup>

Likewise, Bayu said that he did not wholeheartedly perform the slametan because of religious motives. According

to him, the tradition is not in line with his beliefs. Nevertheless, he hopes this activity can ease the burden of the dead's sins.<sup>42</sup> Bayu's view does seem paradoxical.

Meanwhile, Nasir stated that he disagreed with the recitation of *dhikr al-mawt* in death slametan because, according to his knowledge, this tradition had no benefit and no value whatsoever. He did it because of pressure from his family, who felt embarrassed if he did not hold the slametan. He admitted that he had never attended a slametan held by his neighbors.<sup>43</sup>

Indeed, many Muhammadiyah members are forced to adapt to this tradition even though it is not following their beliefs. Because of the social sanctions, they will receive if they do not carry out the ritual, such as ridicule from people, the deceased's family has enjoyed the advantage of what people gave during *ta'ziah*. In the Cakru people's habit, as is the Javanese custom of the village community in general, if someone dies, the neighbors, family, and friends of the dead or their families come to perform *ta'ziah*, carrying rice, sugar, oil, and other things. Something that they carry is what is commonly called *selawatan* goods. Thus, if no slametan is held, people will judge this family for consuming these items.

<sup>40</sup> Zaini.

<sup>41</sup> Sumarto, interview by author.

<sup>42</sup> Bayu, interview by author.

<sup>43</sup> Nasir, interview by author.

## 2. As Medium of *Da'wah* and *Syi'ar*

Tradition can also be used as a medium of Islamic *syi'ar* and *da'wah*. The death slametan ritual is considered by some Muhammadiyah members in Cakru as an effective means of remembering death. Hisyam Zaini, a lecturer at the Muhammadiyah university, said that when his mother died, he held the recitation of *dhikr al-mawt* in the death slametan ritual, intentionally accommodating tradition as a means of *da'wah*. However, in this ritual, he did not intend to send his mother a reward for reciting the Qur'an because he believed it did not reach the dead. The only religious encouragement related to this tradition is *da'wah* because of it is held *tausiyah*.<sup>44</sup> Sumarto said, "There is something that is expected from this tradition, namely the *tausiyah* can provide enlightenment to the community so that gradually society can change for the better."<sup>45</sup>

## 3. Praying for the Dead

Some Muhammadiyah members in Cakru who hold *dhikr al-mawt* recitations in the death slametan ritual expect prayers from the congregation for the dead. When his father died, Sigit also held the slametan ritual. He said the slametan that Muhammadiyah members usually held in Cakru was fine. He con-

siders recitation involves asking other people to help pray for the dead. It is the same as praying by someone or another as long as it is done sincerely. Because of that, he believes this tradition which contains prayers, can be helpful for the dead.<sup>46</sup>

## 4. As Medium for Consolation

Death brings sorrow to the family. The sadness for the forever loss of someone loved is human nature. In this grieving situation, people need something to cheer them up. The attendance and vibrance of the closest people are consolations for the deceased's family. Vibrant surroundings can sometimes divert their sadness. As a result, the ritual (recitation of *dhikr al-mawt*) becomes a means of constructing this situation.

According to Jumadi, reciting *dhikr al-mawt* is a good tradition because this ritual is embedded with religious values. There is also religious teaching in *tausiyah*. When holding recitations to delight his family members because one of his families died, reciting verses of the Qur'an, *wirid (dhikr)*, and selected readings (*kalimah thayyibah*) makes his heart and his family feel consoled.<sup>47</sup> The same thing was said by Sigit, that the death slametan, which Muhammadiyah members usually carry out in Cakru,

<sup>44</sup> Hisyam Zaini, interview by author.

<sup>45</sup> Sumarto, interview by author.

<sup>46</sup> Sigit, interview by author.

<sup>47</sup> Jumadi, interview by author.

can comfort his family, so it is hoped that it can diminish the grief of the dead family.<sup>48</sup>

Meanwhile, the perceptions of Muhammadiyah members in Cakru when attending the invitation to recite *dhikr al-mawt* in the death slametan ritual also varied. At least here, there are four perceptions of Muhammadiyah members about this tradition.

### 1. Cultural and Social Coercion

Like the dead families in Cakru forced to hold slametan rituals, many Muhammadiyah members also attended these recitations due to tradition. Sumarto said that he attended it only because his surroundings forced him. Because of that, he did not always attend the invitations from the deceased's family. If the dead or his family (*shahibul musibah*) are close to or know them well, he attends it only with empathy and respect for them. However, if his house is far away, let alone if he is not close to his family or acquaintances, he does not attend. He hopes this tradition will be restored to follow Islamic teachings and not burden the deceased's family.<sup>49</sup>

Like Sumarto, Hariyadi also said that many Muhammadiyah members in Cakru understood Muhammadiyah's decree not to allow the tradition of sending rewards and eating together at

funeral homes. However, due to strong local traditions, they seem "powerless" against this tradition.<sup>50</sup>

### 2. Facilitating Muhammadiyah's *Da'wah*

The tradition of reciting *dhikr al-mawt* in the death slametan ritual is considered a medium for *da'wah* if there is a *tausiyah*. It is one of the reasons for some Muhammadiyah members attending the slametan. Likewise, based on this consideration, several Muhammadiyah figures in Cakru objected to this tradition being abolished. Because through this tradition, Muhammadiyah's ideas and thoughts can be disseminated to rural communities. According to Kiai Badrun, known as Mbah Badrun, this tradition also aims to maintain unity. Therefore, at one moment, he said social order and relations would be *bubrah* (chaotic) if this tradition were removed because it was already embedded in society. Moreover, this was a means of *da'wah* for rural communities.

### 3. Participating in Praying for the Dead

Many Muhammadiyah members in Cakru also believe praying for people who have died is part of Islamic teachings. Many verses of the Qur'an and hadiths of the Prophet encourage Muslims to pray for those who die first.

<sup>48</sup> Sigit, interview by author.

<sup>49</sup> Sumarto, interview by author.

<sup>50</sup> Hariyadi, interview by author.

Therefore, institutions are needed for living the hadith or the Qur'an in social life. It is considered that this tradition can be an institution of praying for the family members that died. So, their presence at the *slametan* is seen as participating in praying for the dead. Sigit said that he attended the *slametan* because he was motivated by his religious beliefs. For him, a sincere prayer for the dead will be accepted by Allah. For that, he attended the *slametan*.<sup>51</sup>

#### 4. Empathizing and Comforting the Deceased's Family

According to Jumadi, the *slametan* ritual becomes a praying moment for the dead and comforts his family. Muhammadiyah members in Cakru attended to express their consolations and empathize with the sorrows of Muslim brothers—Islam also teaches this; they can perform the ritual to comfort the deceased's family. Therefore, the congregation feels motivated to attend the recitation of *dhikr al-mawt* in the *slametan* ritual. Indeed, he admitted, in particular, that there was no direct instruction regarding the ritual for praying for the dead, *slametan* for remembering the death, or reciting the Qur'an, Surah Yāsīn, Tahlīl, or *tawasulan*. However, this tradition has been firmly attached to the Cakru community.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Sigit, interview by author.

<sup>52</sup> Jumadi, interview by author.

#### 5. Maintaining Harmony and Integrity

Reciting the *dhikr al-mawt* version of the Muhammadiyah ritual in Cakru as a modification of the Javanese Muslim death *slametan* tradition has strengthened social cohesion: brotherhood, togetherness, and Muslim integrity (*sila-turrahim*). One of the motivations for Muhammadiyah members to come to the recitation of *dhikr al-mawt* is to maintain Muslim brotherhood and harmony. It is stated by Bayu, that he attended the recitation but did not believe in the truth of Islamic teachings regarding this tradition. However, he attended it to maintain the people's harmony. He felt uncomfortable with his neighbors if he did not attend the invitation of the deceased's family.<sup>53</sup> Kiai Badrun also said this. In his view, this tradition is still meaningful to maintaining people's integrity.

The recitation of *dhikr al-mawt* in the death-*slametan* ritual for Muhammadiyah members in Cakru is usually carried out every day for seven days, or less, after the Maghrib prayer, with one of two models: (a) Reciting the verses of the Qur'an, with the order of the procession: opening, welcome from the host (family representative), reciting the verses of the Qur'an (free to choose the verse), *tausiyah* (not every night), praying, banquet, and closing; (b) Reci-

<sup>53</sup> Bayu, interview by author.

tation of surah Yāsīn and Tahlil, in the order of the process, such as opening, welcome from the host, *tawasulan*, recitation of surah Yāsīn and Tahlil, praying, banquet, and closing.

The two models above, one with *tawassul* and the other without, can be interpreted with Mulkhan's theory. In his research on rural Muhammadiyah members, he revealed four variants of Muhammadiyah people: the Muhlusun group (puritans), the Dahlanis group (tolerant-adaptive), the MANU group (Muhammadiyah-Nahdlatul Ulama or neo-traditionalist), and the Munas group (Muhammadiyah Nationalist) or Mar-mud (Marhaenism-Muhammadiyah).<sup>54</sup> Muhammadiyah members in Cakru who held the recitation of *dhikr al-mawt* by reading verses of the Qur'an and not *tawasulan* were the Dahlanis group. They try to adapt living traditions by making modifications. In comparison, Muhammadiyah members in Cakru who held the recitations of *dhikr al-mawt* by reading the surah Yāsīn, Tahlil, and *tawasulan* were the neo-traditionalist group (MANU).

Furthermore, there are at least four motivations for Muhammadiyah members in Cakru to hold the recitation of *dhikr al-mawt* in the death *slametan* ritual: being forced by tradition, as a medium for *syi'ar* and *da'wah*, praying for the deceased, and as a medium for

consolation. Meanwhile, the motivations of Muhammadiyah members in Cakru to attend the recitation of *dhikr al-mawt* in the death-*slametan* ritual, there are at least five motives: cultural and social coercion, facilitating Muhammadiyah *da'wah*, participating in praying for the deceased, empathizing and comforting the family of the deceased, and maintaining the harmony and integrity of the ummah.

Various motives for the actions of Muhammadiyah members in Cakru in holding and participating in these recitations can be interpreted by Weber's theory. Weber classifies social action into four types: instrumentally rational, value-rational, affective, and traditional action.<sup>55</sup> To understand these typologies, Jones et al. explain them more operationally with phrases like the following: "I do this because I have always been used to doing it" (traditional action); "What can I do" (affective action); "This action is most efficient for achieving this goal, and this is the best way to achieve it" (instrumentally rational action); and "all I know is doing this" (value-rational action).<sup>56</sup>

<sup>55</sup> George Ritzer, *Teori Sosiologi: Dari Sosiologi Klasik Sampai Perkembangan Terakhir Postmodern* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2014).

<sup>56</sup> Pip Jones, et al. *Pengantar Teori-Teori Sosial: Dari Teori Fungsionalisme Hingga Postmodernisme* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2016), 118-119.

<sup>54</sup> Mulkhan, *Islam Murni*, ii-iii.



Based on Weber's classification, the motives of *da'wah* include instrumentally rational action; praying for the deceased, comforting the deceased's family, and maintaining harmony and integrity are included in the value-rational action; and socially coercive motives, including affective actions. However, this classification is not closed. It means that a person's actions in holding or participating in the recitation of *dhikr al-mawt* can combine these three types.

## Conclusion

Thus, the opinion that Muhammadiyah is anti-traditional or anti-cultural is not (always) valid. It can be seen from the recitation of *dhikr al-mawt* in the death-*slametan* ritual, which was carried out and participated in by Muhammadiyah members in Cakru, Kencong, Jember, East Java. Indeed, the recitation is not exact as the death *slametan* ritual in the Javanese Muslim tradition, although there are Muhammadiyah members who adhere to this tradition. Some Muhammadiyah members in Cakru modified the death *slametan* tradition by not reading surah Yāsīn, Tahlīl, and *tawasulan* but instead reading the Koran and performing *tausiyah*. The day of recitation does not have to be on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, the 40<sup>th</sup> day, the 100<sup>th</sup> day, or the 1000<sup>th</sup> day of death, but it is free to choose. Many of the Muhammadiyah members only had three days, accor-

ding to the deceased's family (*shahibul musibah*).

The motives of Muhammadiyah members in Cakru in holding or participating in the recitation of *dhikr al-mawt* are also different. Following Weber's classification, there are three types of their actions: instrumentally rational actions (motives of *da'wah* and *syi'ar*), value-rational actions (motives for praying for the deceased, comforting the deceased's family, and maintaining harmony and integrity), and affective actions (cultural and socially coercive motives). So, these results are different from other studies. Most studies on Muhammadiyah members holding or attending the death *slametan* ritual are due to traditional motives. It means that it has been carried out for generations by his family. In addition, the reading in the recitation of *dhikr al-mawt* is similar to the *tahlilan*. If it is different, it only summarizes or shortens the reading. While in this study, no traditional motives were found; instead, it revealed a different recitation model, which had been modified, from the recitation in the *slametan* ritual for the death of Javanese Muslims.

This study has several limitations: selected samples, which only focus on men, do not involve women. Therefore, further research is needed that accommodates a larger sample, complete gender, involving a more varied case.

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