

Empowerment of Islamic Ethics and Javanese Hindu Ethics in the Formation of National Character

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Abstract:

This research seeks to examine the strengthening of Islamic and Hindu ethics in Java, playing a pivotal role in shaping the character of Javanese society and extending influence to the broader Indonesian community. Given the dominance of Javanese traditions, particularly in societal behavior, the empowerment process unfolds through interconnection and transformation within religious activities. This process brings forth the inherent genius of the local Javanese populace, fostering a religious dimension. This empowerment occurs by emphasizing the concentration of feelings (rasa) as the basis for behavior and the objectification of Javanese people's religious beliefs. The analysis methodology adopts content analysis with a comparative approach and an anthropological perspective. The goal of this methodological approach is to unveil the mechanism for cultivating profound self-awareness in relation to others, translating acquired knowledge (kaweruh) into tangible actions as a religious model. The resulting model of religious objectification represents the local genius and behavioral characteristics of Javanese Muslims. The study reveals that the features of religious objectification, expressing the truths inherited from ancestors, transform into local wisdom with an Islamic or Hindu religious essence. This transformation is indicated by three key Javanese cultural values: harmony, functional structure, and transcendental aspects. The applicability of these three values, especially for the Surakarta and Yogyakarta areas, also serves as an identity for the ethos of religious harmony and a factor in forming the behavioral character of Javanese Muslims and may extend to influence the Indonesian people in general.

Keywords: Empowerment, Hindu Ethics, Javanese Islamic Ethics, National Character

INTRODUCTION

This study is grounded in the initial context that the Javanese people are recognized for their elevated ethical standards, encompassing both speech and conduct, ultimately coalescing to shape a distinct culture. If studied in depth, this culture actually originates from the synergistic empowerment process involving Islamic and Hindu ethics. These cultural specifics indicate an inclination or capacity to assimilate, discern, and process ethical teachings from both religions, culminating in the development of Javanese

ethics. This capacity, as asserted by Syukur (2015), is akin to possessing the aptitude to be a local genius. Javanese culture has evolved into a religious entity, referred to as Javanese Islam or Javanese Hinduism. This inherent capability has become a hallmark of Javanese culture, showcasing its ability to preserve authenticity by empowering various cultural or religious values inherent in Javanese culture, as expounded by Franz Magnis Suseno (2001). Sibarani further elucidates that despite historical leaders lacking formal education, relying solely on local wisdom traditions or local geniuses, they demonstrated the sagacity to effectively guide the people (Sibarani, 2021).

However, the comprehensive exploration of the empowerment process as a local genius ability within Javanese culture has been relatively overlooked by experts, with only a focus on the dominant elements. These elements are embedded in Javanese Islamic literature, particularly since the advent of Hinduism and Islam (Simuh, 1988). An example is found in the teachings of Serat Wirid Hidayat Jati concerning ethical conduct towards both God and humans, which are essentially Hindu teachings presented in an Islamic guise (Hadiwijono, 1983). Contrary to this viewpoint, Simuh argues that labeling these teachings in Wirid Hidayat Jati as Hinduism in Muslim attire is inaccurate. Despite addressing ethics towards Allah as the Absolute Being and outlining ethical principles for humans, Simuh contends that it is inappropriate to categorize this instruction as Hinduism within the teaching of Islam (Simuh, 1988: 321).

Examining these two backgrounds indicates that the first two directions, the empowerment of Islamic ethics with Hindu ethics by Javanese Muslims based on local genius, have not been studied by experts. This means that the empowerment of Javanese Islam or Javanese Hinduism originates from local religious genius which does not originate from Islamic or Hindu holy books, especially ethics that have not been studied by experts. According to Subagya, local Javanese genius which is religious, is called native religion or local religion based on "knowledge", as an expression of feelings and thoughts about the Metaphysical. Javanese Muslims refer to it *as ngelmu or kawruh sangkan paraning dumadi* which is identified with the title Hyang Murbeng Dumadi (The Ruler of the Living World) like Allah in Islam or Atman in Hinduism (Subagya, 1987). Therefore, secondly, this article examines or analyzes the first direction, especially as forming the character of Javanese Muslim behavior according to the demands of obligations and needs of the contemporary world of life.

These two instructions focus on the primary concerns. Firstly, they explore the Javanese reactions to the introduction of Islam and Hinduism. Secondly, they delve into the components of Islamic and Hindu ethics within Javanese culture, examining their influence on local genius and their religious implications. Lastly, the instructions inquire about how the transformation of Islamic or Hindu ethics contributes to the development of religious ethics, shaping the behavioral character of Javanese Muslims or Indonesians. The comparative method is employed to address these three main issues, and a content analysis with an anthropolinguistic approach is utilized for thorough examination. To

analyze the first issue, it is essential to comprehend the religiosity of the Javanese before the advent of Hinduism and Islam.

DISCUSSION

Religiosity of Pre-Hindu and Islamic Javanese

Before the arrival of Hinduism and Islam, the religious life of Javanese people was still animistic-dynamic in style (Romdon (ed.), 1980:36) called their native religion or local religion (Subagya, 1987:66-67). The original religion is a fertile ground for the development of mysticism (Lorens Bagus, 2002:653) with various names such as Tribal Religion, Javanese Sufism, *Kebatinan*, *Kejawen*. The government refers to *Penghayat Kepercayaan* to differentiate them from religion (Subagya, 1987:29). The expression *manunggaling kawula gusti* for Javanese people is a kind of confession of faith (credo) which contains a deep theological meaning of God as the *Nominus* or the Divine who is called *Hyang Murbeng Dumadi* (The One Who Masters the World of Life) (Suseno, 2001; Sudarto, 2016).

The development of mysticism in the original Javanese religion found a better place, when Hinduism and Buddhism came. The proof is that when Hinduism arrived in Java, which was pioneered by Indian sailors and especially Brahmins, they gained a strong position, such as advisors to kings who often carried out religious ceremonies of *Abhiseka* (repentance) and *Mahatmya* (reviving customs). Therefore, the process of Hinduism in Southeast Asia, including Java, began in 300 BC (Shatri, 1963). According to Sopater, the Hindu religious group that came to Java was from the Shiva group as adhered to by the Sanjaya wangsa (dynasty) from Ancient Mataram. At the same time, Mahayana Buddhism has also gained followers, especially among the Syailendra dynasty. These two religions can coexist because they both contain the strong character of mysticism or spiritual thought (Supater, 1987).

Mysticism in Hinduism has a central position with various names such as *prajnya* (inner knowledge), *atmajnana* (pure consciousness), *kaivalya* (absolute personal freedom), *vairagya* (freedom from lust), *maya* or *moksa* (freedom from the similar or false), *antaryamin* (being simply led by the inner teacher). It entails a disconnection from the external world, facilitating an ecstatic state of *dhyana* or *samadhi*, transcending the empirical realm. Subagya contends that these diverse terms are appropriately identified as *kebatinan* (Subagya, 1987). This concept is closely tied to a theory concerning the introduction of Islam to Java. According to Benda, Islam reached Java (Indonesia) not directly from the heart of the Middle East but via India. This form of Islam bears the influence of the Indian religious experience, particularly Hinduism, characterized by its distinctive mysticism (Benda, 1980). Nurcholis Majid suggests that the unique characteristics of *kebatinan* are evident in the teachings of Sufism (Islamic mysticism), representing the aspect of Islamic teachings most readily and seamlessly assimilated into the elements of Javanese mysticism (*kebatinan*) (Majid, 1997).

Gertz suggests that the manner in which Islam arrived in Java gave rise to a distinctive religious characteristic previously overlooked—namely, the syncretic religious

tradition. This tradition involves a fusion (syncretism) of various elements, including Hinduism, Islam, and indigenous Javanese elements. The identification of syncretism is exemplified by myths and rites wherein Hindu deities, Muslim prophets, Christian saints, and local spirits coexist harmoniously (Gertz, 1992). The Javanese people exhibit signs of syncretism through their worldview, described as Javanese by Mulder. Mulder clarifies that Javanese is not a religious classification but rather denotes an ethical and lifestyle orientation inspired by Javanese thought. *Kejawen*, at its core, represents a "distinctive attitude" towards life or a mental disposition aimed at transcending religious differences (Mulder, 1996). The Javanese mental attitude leans towards syncretism and tolerance (Bagus, 2002), forming the basis for virtuous behavior and fostering an attitude of respect for diverse expressions of religious experience within the formal religious framework that embodies the unity of Javanese life (Mulder, 2001).

This explanation signifies the intention to perceive the syncretic and tolerant ethic and lifestyle as religious ethics within the context of Javanese local genius or local wisdom (Haris, 2004). The implications of this understanding are evident, firstly, in relation to the origin of religious experience. This does not pertain to an experience within a specific religion but rather draws from local beliefs and the expressive truths of ancestors (Thohir, 2013), encapsulated as local genius or local wisdom (Sibarani, 2021), inherently possessing a religious nature. Secondly, the experience encompasses not only a vertical, spiritual dimension but also a horizontal aspect aligned with the obligations and ethical needs dictated by the worldview of that era. Building on these implications, it becomes imperative to scrutinize the application of elements from Islamic and Hindu ethics as foundational sources of religious ethics within Javanese culture.

Religious Ethics in Javanese Culture

Java, is defined as a very diverse set of ideas, norms, beliefs and values. Such a definition results in the difficulty of describing Javanese culture as a unified whole, which is shared by Javanese people. According to Cederroth, our attention should be focused on the distribution or reproduction of the diverse knowledge of local communities (Cederroth (Ed.), 2001). The purpose of this explanation is to understand Javanese culture here not in its essence, but as a characteristic of local beliefs and the expressive truths of ancestors as local wisdom of a religious nature, Islam or Hinduism. Sumodiningrat explained that although the nature of Javanese culture is difficult to know, experts from abroad and within the country agree that the distinctive characteristics of Javanese cultural moral values are three categories: harmonious, structurally functional and transcendental. The three characteristics of Javanese culture apply especially to the Surakarta and Yogyakarta areas (Sumodiningrat (Ket.Pan.), 2003). The description of the three characteristics of Javanese cultural moral values is as follows.

1. Harmonious Values

Harmonious values, in the context of Javanese culture, denote its characterization as an anti-conflict culture with an ideal vision that envisions the "world" to be orchestrated in harmony. The term "world" here encompasses *jagad cilik* or the microcosm, which is the individual's soul, mind, and conscience, and it is expected to be in sync with *jagad gede* or the macrocosm, representing the larger community or society. The approach to establishing or attaining harmony involves embracing tolerance towards the teachings of Hinduism or Islam in Java. Tolerance, in this context, doesn't fundamentally scrutinize the correctness of a religion or question whether it is a revealed religion; instead, it embodies an attitude of benevolence and respect toward diverse expressions of religious experiences. Eliade posits that kindness and respect essentially align with the inherent characteristics of the original religion (local religion) of the Javanese, characterized by dynamism and animism as traits of primitive humanity (Mircea Eliade, 1958).

The term "dynamism" finds its roots in the Greek word "dynamis," signifying inner strength (Mudhofir, 1996). In the realm of religious history and comparative religion studies, this inner strength is commonly referred to as "mana," as elucidated by Baharudin (1973). In the worldview of the Javanese people, this concept is known as "pamong," denoting the guardian of safety or welfare (Suparlan, 1981), equivalent to "numinous" in Latin (Suseno, 2001), or "tuah" in Indonesian (Alwi (Pim.Red), 2001). The goal of humans in religions that understand dynamism is to have as much *mana* or *tuah* as possible to save their lives and losing *mana* means death, so in dynamism religions teach their adherents to obtain as much good *mana* or good luck as possible and stay away from evil *mana* (al-'Akkad, 1973).

The original Javanese religion also incorporated animism, derived from the Latin word "anima," signifying soul. In primitive society, there was a comprehension that all objects, whether living or inanimate, possessed a spirit composed of an exceedingly "fine" substance or material, akin to steam or air. This spirit was believed to hold power and will, capable of experiencing happiness and anger. To safeguard human life, it was deemed essential to nourish the spirit through sacrificial offerings or specific celebrations. In the case of deceased family members, their spirits needed to be attended to, often involving ceremonial observances. Similar to the concept of dynamism, only specific individuals possessed the knowledge and expertise to control and navigate the rituals aimed at appeasing the spirits, preventing their anger, averting harm to human life, or ensuring their presence in a fetish (a lucky object). This applied to any object, with special statues crafted, especially for this purpose (al-'Akkad, 1973).

Based on this understanding, it encourages the worship of statues with various forms of prayer, especially giving sacrifices or offerings and prayers. According to experts, dynamism increases to animism and animism increases to polytheism (Mudhofir, 1996). The difference between a monotheist and a polytheist lies not in understanding one or many Gods, but also in the form and nature of their respective beliefs. For example, a monotheist when he sees something amazing or strange and strange, he says: "how great"

(Masha Allah for Muslims). However, a polytheist in such a case would say: "Oh, a new god". Therefore, in a polytheistic society something that is mysterious is immediately deified, but such things are amazing to people who are not used to living in a polytheistic society (Nasution, 1983).

Polytheism within the Javanese perspective is exemplified through wayang art, heavily influenced by Hinduism. In the Javanese wayang cosmos, gods, whether benevolent or malevolent, govern the universe. In the Javanese worldview, the gods hold a status and position that is not merely worshipped but serves as a realm of identification for the Javanese people (Zarkasi, 1977). In the wayang world, the audience encounters a diverse array of characters, including gods, *brahmins*, knights, giants (*buta*), *punakawan* (clown), and especially Semar. Each character adheres to distinct norms of behavior, prompting various moral inquiries, yet each also navigates their own destiny determined by the gods. Through these wayang characters, the Javanese people find a means to identify themselves and gain insights into the meaning of life (Anderson, 2003). The narratives of Javanese wayang seek to unveil the position of Javanese human existence concerning the supernatural system (the metaphysical or Numinous), interpersonal relationships, and one's relationship with oneself (Benedic R.O.G. Anderson, 1977).

The amalgamation of dynamism, animism, and polytheism within Javanese thought constitutes a unified worldview, exemplified through the *slametan* ritual (Suseno, 2001). In the Javanese perspective, the slametan ceremony is not intended as an act of worship but rather as a manifestation of kindness, respect, and harmony towards everything (the cosmos) and others. Rooted in this worldview, the Javanese often articulate the phrase: "all religions are the same (*sedoyo agami sami kemawon*)" (Gertz, 1992). This expression encompasses three key meanings. Firstly, it reflects a monotheistic perception of God (*tawheed*) in accordance with Islamic teachings, rejecting polytheism, henotheism, deism, or agnosticism. Secondly, it serves as a recognition of plural theology, embodying Javanese multiculturalist attitudes at the levels of conception, perception, language, and the naming of God, without absoluteness or deification. Thirdly, it implies the resolution of the essence of God as the essence of religious truth (Asy'arie, 2001), asserting that the essence ultimately revolves around and centers on God, the creator of all existence. In the Javanese worldview, the issue is expressed as the Divine being "*tanpa rupa datanpa warni tan gatra tan satmata*" (without form, color, or visibility) (Soebardi, 1975). The crux lies not in essence but in existence. As elucidated by As'arie, the Javanese look forward to the essence, emphasizing that essence is found in existence, not in the noun, but in the actualized verb (Asy'arie, 2001).

Examining these various explanations shows that Hinduism has influenced local beliefs and expressive truth as local Javanese genius. The special influence is shown in the understanding that humans are also considered as *bawana alit* (microcosm) and the universe as *bawana ageng* (macrocosmos). Both partners must always maintain a harmonious relationship with love (*tresno*) such as the love between husband and wife (Kartoatmodjo, 1983). The characteristic of Javanese cultural harmonization, apart from being influenced

by Hindu traditions, also received strengthening from Islamic ethics. Zarkasi explained that many people think that *wayang* is a creation of Hindus or Buddhists from India, even though if they are shown *wayang* characters, they do not know about them because they are not known in India (Zarkasi, 1977). According to Khalim, few people know that *wayang* was transformed (built) and created by the saints, which contains various elements of Islamic teachings, especially regarding the science of Sufism (Islamic mysticism). The transformation of *wayang* was carried out by saints such as Sunan Kalijaga, who composed new *wayang* plays and he, as the puppeteer during the performance, asked for wages from those who asked for it, in the form of his willingness to recite the two *Kalimah Shahadat* (Khalim, 2008).

Islamic elements in *wayang* are also shown, among other things, through cone-shaped mountains or *kayon* like *tumpang* in *slametan* ceremonies or mountains in temples, from Hinduism (Aryandini, 2002). The Islamic element is shown through the *gunungan* or *kayon* which is said to come from Arabic: *hayyun* means, living, as a symbol of *wayang*-puppet can be considered alive if the *kayon* has first been stuck (on the trunk of a banana tree or *gedebok*) in the middle. The images carved on the *kayon* consist of: first, a giant image (*buto*), in the science of the nature of objects, it means the number five, which is meant as a symbol of the five pillars of Islam. Second, there is a picture of a gate and it has the character 9, depicting the number of *Walisanga*. Third, on the right and left of the gate door there is a giant image, which is meant as a symbol that humans are always watched over by two angels, namely Raqib and 'Atid. Fourth, next to the *wuwungan* gate there is a *tatwa*, which means that human life is influenced by the environment. Fifth, in *kayon* there are diverse animal images serving as symbols for various human desires. Specifically, the tiger represents anger, the bull symbolizes the desire for *lawwamah*, the monkey embodies desire for *shufiyah*, and the bird signifies the desire for *muthmainnah* (Khalim, 2008).

The shift in Javanese religious orientation toward Hinduism and Islam, adopting a syncretic and tolerant stance, serves two primary purposes. Firstly, the syncretic approach is not intended as an effort to blend or merge Hindu and Islamic elements. Instead, it reflects an attitude of indifference toward notions of right or wrong, encompassing elements from both revealed religion (*samawi*) and cultural religion (*ardhi*) in Hinduism and Islam. Secondly, it signifies a positive attitude of respect and consideration for everything, including the values embedded in Hindu or Islamic religious experiences. These dual intentions manifest as a tolerant disposition and the practical embodiment (objectification) of positive attitudes, respect, care, and harmony toward others. The Javanese implementation of this tolerant outlook aligns with a parallel social ethic, coexisting with the pursuit of a harmonious demeanor advocated as a principle of justice (Suseno, 1983).

The manifestation of a tolerant attitude among Javanese Muslims, as portrayed in Javanese Islamic literature, is evident in various expressions of Javanese language not directly derived from doctrinal sources such as the Qur'an or Hadith. Instead, these expressions draw from local beliefs, serving as the expressive truth representing the local genius or wisdom of Javanese ancestors. The moral values embedded in these expressions

align with the objectives of Islam through their objectification. According to Kuntowijoyo, the objectification of Islam involves implementing the beliefs of Javanese Muslims in a manner that conforms to the demands of worldly obligations and needs. This implementation is intended to be universally accepted, irrespective of an individual's religion or social status. Non-Muslims perceive this implementation as a normal and natural occurrence, rather than as the execution of religious acts that they must agree with in terms of moral values. For instance, the realization of moral values in the tradition of mutual cooperation is seen as the Islamic objectification of *ukhuwwah* (Kuntowijoyo, 1997). This implies that the application of harmonious moral values, rooted in the original Javanese culture, aligns with functional structural values, the significance of which is analyzed as follows.

2. Functional Structural Value

The second characteristic of Javanese cultural moral values is that Javanese culture in the modern context is more in line with the functional structural paradigm which assumes that each person or institution has its own place and is required to behave or work according to where it is located. The understanding of "place" is not a *zakelijk* understanding but as something conditional or relative. Structural functional means that the social structure of Javanese moral values by poets is functioned or empowered as a concept of relationships between individuals in the contemporary world of social life. The concept is a moral norm of behavior for *priyayi* or *wong cilik* (ordinary people) who live either in colonial conditions (colonialism) (Loomba, 1998) or now in postcolonial conditions (Rumadi, 2007). For instance, in *Serat Wulangreh*, authored by Sunan Paku Buwana IV, moral guidance for nobles is outlined, particularly when they present grievances to the king. They are expected to wholeheartedly and dutifully obey all commands issued by the king. They are advised not to harbor hesitation and should liken themselves to being "*sarah munggeng jaladri, darma lumaku sapakon*," meaning akin to debris in the sea, bound to follow the king's orders. Nobles are encouraged to remain *mantep* and *madhep* (resolute and unafraid in the face of challenges). They are instructed to manage the king's resources with *gemi* (not wastefully), according to orders he must *nastiti* (pay careful attention) and *ngati-ngati* or careful in guarding his master (king) day and night. The attitude when in *paseban* is that you must come before the king, and must appear in the *paseban* orderly on certain days, even if the king does not leave the *kedhaton* (Resodidjojo (ed.), 1929).

These *priyayi* moral norms are based on the belief that the king's attention to all servants (people) such as a master or father who raises his children in a family pattern, is the standard model for Javanese social communication (Moertono, 1985). The characteristic of its ethos is that it is feudalistic (Supriadi, 2001). The characteristic of the feudalistic ethos is that the attitude towards superiors in carrying out their duties is only waiting for orders, and full obedience to the orders of their superiors or king. Loyalty is high but the respect given is excessive, so he is humiliated because his service is to provide satisfaction and pleasure to the power of his superior (king) (Sartono Kartodirdjo, 1993).

The concept of Javanese king's power is in line with the meaning of power in absolutism. This understanding implies a great responsibility as a balance to the king's absolute power. His power has implications for moral obligations to the state and the people as expressed through the phrase *be virtuous, berbudi bawa leksana, ambeg adil para marta*, meaning, overflowing with noble virtue, being fair to others (Kartodirdjo, 1993). However, the implementation of royal power in colonial conditions actually tended to be individualistic (ego-oriented) in the Javanese worldview and collectivistic (superego-oriented) towards Western (Dutch Colonial) culture (Suseno, 1983). This attitude was shown by King Kasunanan Surakarta during Sunan Pakubuwana VI (1823-1830) or Sunan Pakubuwana IX with his queens who liked to dress in Dutch fashion (Siswokartono, 2006). Kuntowijaya stated that the Surakarta Kasunanan kings were individualists because they were among the Javanese kings who spent glory and authority on themselves (Kuntowijoyo, 2004). Even though Sunan Pakubuwana IX outwardly had a collectivist attitude towards Western culture, his moral attitude tended to be confrontational towards the Dutch Colonial. This was shown when receiving guests from Arthur Early, a trader from England and Dutch Resident. He showed various attitudes that were so unethical (disrespectful or unkind) that Arthur Early commented: "This king (Sunan Pakubuwana IX) has the character of the most insolent barbaric king in the world (Pemberton, 2003).

The application of the characteristic moral values of Javanese culture - functional structural - in Javanese Islamic literature has been transformed by King Mangkunegara IV through his literary works which are referred to as Javanese Islamic literature in colonial discourse. This transformation intended to enforce the Dutch Colonials (invaders) not as enemies who had to be eradicated with revenge but as fellow human beings with dignity and good attitudes. Therefore, they can be invited to cooperate in a mutually beneficial manner in accordance with the demands of obligations and needs of the world of social life during colonial conditions. This transformation, as stated in *Serat Tripama*, contains three stories of struggle, namely Sumantri, Kumbakarno and Adipati Karno. The identification of transformation is mainly shown through Kumbakarno, who is a symbol of colonialism and non-Muslims. He is a monster (*buto*) who is disgusting or scary, but he is also virtuous or ethical. This is as stated in *Serat Tripama*: "*Sanadyan tekading buta, tan prabeda ngudi panduming dumadi marsudi ing kotaman*" meaning, even though Kumbakarno was a giant, his spirit and purity of heart were the same as humans. He aspires to be able to save the lives of others and tries to become the main (virtuous) human being (Bratasiswara, 1998).

Mangkunegara IV's expression through the wayang realm delineated his virtuous qualities in two aspects. Firstly, he exhibited kindness, respect, and care towards everything. Secondly, he demonstrated kindness, respect, care, and harmony towards others, irrespective of their religion or social standing during colonial conditions. According to the Javanese worldview, Kumbakarno's fundamental inner purity is equated to Semar, symbolizing the metaphysical, supernatural, divine, or transcendent in *rasa*. *Rasa*, considered the wellspring of awareness for a virtuous individual with ethical values, aligns with the religious experience of Javanese Muslims, encompassing all human beings

regardless of their identity or religious beliefs. Consequently, Semar is regarded as the guardian (pamomong) of all warrior figures (Poedjawijatno, 1975).

Rasa serves as the origin of awareness for virtuous individuals, and the religious experience of the Javanese is a shared phenomenon applicable to every human being, regardless of their religion. In this context, the meaning of religious experience takes on a dual nature. Firstly, it is not confined to a specific religious context, whether Islam or any other faith. Secondly, it does not align with Islamic religious experience as a societal culture (great tradition) or a cultural reality (little tradition). Instead, it harmonizes with the cultural and religious experiences of Javanese Muslims as expressions of local genius or local wisdom. The implementation strategy is in concordance with the objectification of Islam and modern pluralism, welcoming acceptance from individuals of any religion during colonial conditions. Kumbakarno and Semar serve as symbols of *rasa* in accordance with the cultural and religious experiences of Javanese Muslims, embodying metaphysical, supernatural, divine, or transcendent qualities, the analysis and comprehension of which are detailed as follows.

3. Transcendental value

Javanese culture appreciates things or values that are transcendental. That is, something related to the transcendent, which is not the material world, but, which for philosophy is called something metaphysical or *nominous* (the Divine). This transcendental value is contained in *kejawen* (Javanese mysticism) or *kebatinan* which in Javanese literature is called *suluk*, *wirid*, *primbon*, *serat*, and other similar terms. This transcendental characteristic is motivated by the belief that life always depends on Him, the Almighty God (Sumodiningrat, 2003).

Some meanings closely related to the word "transcendental" are something of a superior quality, or beyond what human experience provides. Life leads to the transcendental meaning, as that which is able to reveal the entire objective reality that is being worked on and expresses it totally up to the most final meanings of life (Leahy, 1994). The meaning of transcendental in the Javanese worldview is contained in *rasa sejati*, called *wahyu* (revelation) (God's gift) as a kind of "climate" for the appreciation of nobility (Surahardjo, 1983), referred to as the true nature as mystical *ngelmu* (knowledge) (Suseno, 2001) and the enactment of the religious experience of Javanese Muslims. King Panembahan Senopati is an example of an ideal king for Javanese people because he is considered to have attained true taste through asceticism (*tapa brata*) as a practice to obtain *ngelmu* of mysticism (S.Z. Hadisutjpto, 1979).

There are many examples of how to gain *ngelmu* (knowledge) by meditating as an understanding of Javanese traditionalism. Berg explained that numerous Javanese narratives recount tales of beings, not limited to humans, who, through prolonged meditation or practice, acquired formidable knowledge and power, enabling them to conquer the entire world to the extent that even the gods feared them. This phenomenon has ingrained itself as a distinctive aspect of the Javanese worldview and lifestyle, influenced by Hinduism as

disseminated through various Javanese literary works, including Kejawen Islamic literature. Consequently, from ancient times to the present, the Javanese have maintained a strong belief in the profound connection between ascetic practice and extraordinary accomplishments (Berg, 1985).

There are various types of traditional *laku* (practices), such as *mutih*, which means abstaining from food other than rice, *pati geni*, which is like fasting in a dark, opaque room. *Ngalong* means hanging upside down, both legs tied to a tree branch, *ngluwat* means meditating in someone's burial place for a certain period. *Bolot* means not bathing for a certain period of time, *ngrambang* means, being alone in the forest and only eating plants, etc. (Koentjaraningrat, 1994). For example, during the Hindu era, King Erlangga lived for many years in the forest with the priests meditating (*semadi*) in order to gain *ngelmu* (knowledge) of supernatural powers or magical powers (Vlekke, 1959).

Perhaps he was motivated to uphold the tradition of asceticism (*laku*) as practiced by the Mangkunegaran, particularly Mangkunegara I and Prince Mangkubumi (Sultan Hamengku Buwana I) from the Sultanate, and by R.Ng. from Kasunanan Surakarta. When Ranggawarsita, then known as Bagus Burhan, was studying at the Tegalsari Islamic Boarding School, Mangkunegara I engaged in meditation on Mount Mangadeg and the summit of Mount Lawu, while Sultan Hamengku Buwana I pursued meditation on the peak of Mount Merapi (Ricklefs, 2021). On the other hand, R.Ng. Ranggawarsita acquired *kapujanggan* knowledge through meditation in the Watu River (Simuh, 1988). These three instances of practice illustrate the approach to acquiring knowledge through ascetic practices. As Bagus elucidates, asceticism is a perspective advocating the rejection of various desires or pleasures to attain elevated moral and religious ideals (Bagus, 2002). This tradition has persisted over time, becoming a part of Javanese cultural and religious experiences (Anderson, 1977) or according to the practices of Javanese Muslims.

By engaging in such practices, they achieved the manifestation of their own inherent power, which is fundamentally interconnected with the Divine (Suseno, 1983). The unity sought in Javanese mystical pursuits (*kebatinan*) is often referred to as "the union of servants with God," denoted by various terms such as *pamore*, *manunggaling*, or *jumbuhing kawula Gusti* (Mulder, 2001). Nevertheless, in practice, the empowerment or application of this knowledge in the realm of communal existence invariably gives rise to numerous challenges for all involved parties, particularly during colonial conditions.

The primary cause of this issue lies in the fact that the strategy of empowerment or the application of knowledge tends to be perceived in a pejorative mystical sense. This situation carries two significant implications: firstly, it fails to foster a spirit of religious harmony among Javanese Muslims, and in reality, this religious experience is not embraced by individuals of any religion during that time. Secondly, their moral stance or ethos hinders the cultivation of humane progress. If their knowledge is indeed empowered, it does not align with the demands of their responsibilities and the contemporary needs of the world during colonial conditions. These dual implications were exemplified by Javanese

Muslims from the Kasunan Surakarta perspective through their moral conduct in the realm of trade (Daryono, 2022).

Upon ascending to the throne as King Mangkunegaran IV, the approach to acquiring knowledge underwent a transformation distinct from asceticism. This transformation is evident in the adoption of an apprenticeship practice within the family tradition of the Mangkunegaran palace. In the realm of religious experience, Mangkunegara IV diligently and persistently adhered to Islamic teachings while reflecting upon local beliefs and the expressive truths of his ancestors, embracing them as local genius or local Javanese wisdom. This shift in strategy aimed to empower ancestral moral attitudes that deviated from the typical moral values of Javanese culture—harmonious, structurally functional, and transcendental—developed during colonial conditions. The transformation was realized through the modernization of ancestral moral attitudes of Javanese feudalism into a Dutch (Western) feudalism framework, fostering a mutually beneficial understanding grounded in "mercantilism." The strategy of transformation involved the implementation of a moral attitude or ethos of *tepo seliro* (tolerance) and *andhapasor* (humility), guided by the principles of *ojo mitunani wong liyo* (do not harm others) and *amamangun karyenak tyasing sasami* (strive to ensure the well-being and prosperity of both oneself and others).

Furthermore, this transformative strategy results in the cultivation of a moral attitude or ethos characterized by religious harmony among Javanese Muslims, shaping their religious experience through three commendable attitudes (*budi nourishment*). Firstly, there is a commitment to kindness, respect, and care for everything. Secondly, there is an emphasis on being kind, respectful, caring, and harmonious with others. Thirdly, these principles align with the cultural or religious experience of Javanese Muslims (Daryono, 2017). These three ethos identities not only epitomize religious harmony among Javanese Muslims but may also contribute to the formation of character and behavior for both present-day Javanese Muslims and the future Indonesian nation.

CONCLUSIONS

According to the aforementioned investigation, it is evident that the response of the Javanese people to the introduction of Hinduism or Islam was highly receptive, displaying an inclusive stance toward foreign cultures. This adaptive quality has become a defining aspect of Javanese culture, showcasing its ability to preserve its authenticity by assimilating and transforming incoming cultural or religious elements. Moreover, the syncretic and tolerant ethics and lifestyles are perceived as religious ethics embodying local genius or local Javanese wisdom. The implications of this perspective are demonstrated in connection with sources of religious experience, local beliefs, and the expressive truths of ancestors as local genius or local religious wisdom.

The transformation strategy for Islamic or Hindu ethics, capable of giving rise to religious ethics as a constituent shaping the behavioral character of the Javanese or Indonesian people, is rooted in the moral values of Javanese culture—harmonious, structurally functional, and transcendental. This transformation is facilitated through the

adoption of a moral attitude or ethos characterized by tepo seliro (tolerance) and andhapasor (humility), with the intention of adhering to ojo mitunani wong liyo (not causing harm to others) and amamangun karyenak tyasing sasami (striving to ensure the well-being and prosperity of both others and oneself) (Daryono, 2023).

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