

Cultural-Religious Harmony in the Mitoni Tradition Perspectives from Nahdlatul Ulama Figures in Bangil, Pasuruan

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Abstract

Mitoni is a tradition that has been passed down through generations in the community, and it is a customary practice that is consistently observed when a pregnancy reaches its seventh month. The term *mitoni* not only refers to the number seven (*pitu* in Javanese), but *pitulungan*, or assistance. This reflects a prayer to the Almighty for the well-being and safety of both the mother and the unborn child throughout pregnancy delivery. Recognizing this reality, this paper intends to elucidate the harmonious values that exist between culture and religion by utilizing one of the *ijtihad* methods, specifically 'Urf, alongside a dialectical model of the Qur'an in relation to culture. The focus of this study is on the culture within a religious community, specifically Islam. The Nahdlatul Ulama figures in Bangil District, Pasuruan Regency, have their own perspective in responding to this tradition. Over time, its development is not viewed merely as a cultural phenomenon, but also reflects religious values that need to be preserved. Ultimately, through a series of opinions from various figures and the chosen methodological approach, this research finds that this tradition, although not explicitly mentioned in the sacred texts of the religion, possesses local wisdom and religious values that can be preserved. These include requests for assistance, prayers, nurturing relationships, and charitable acts toward neighbors or relatives. Moreover, the *mitoni* tradition illustrates that Islamic teachings are not rigid in their interpretation of local customs. Instead, Islam seeks to observe and consider the positive values that these customs and cultures bring forth, aligning them with the core principles of Islamic teachings.

Keywords: *Mitoni Tradition, Cultural-Religious Harmony, Nahdlatul Ulama.*

Abstrak

Mitoni adalah tradisi yang telah turun temurun di masyarakat, dan merupakan praktik adat yang secara konsisten dilakukan ketika kehamilan mencapai bulan ketujuh. Istilah *mitoni* tidak hanya merujuk pada angka tujuh (*pitu* dalam bahasa Jawa), tetapi juga *pitulungan*, atau pertolongan. Hal ini mencerminkan doa kepada Yang Maha Kuasa untuk kesejahteraan dan keselamatan ibu dan janin yang dikandungnya selama proses persalinan. Menyadari kenyataan ini, tulisan ini bermaksud



untuk menjelaskan nilai-nilai harmonis yang ada antara budaya dan agama dengan menggunakan salah satu metode ijtihad, yaitu 'Urf, di samping model dialektika Al-Qur'an dalam kaitannya dengan budaya. Fokus dari penelitian ini adalah pada budaya dalam sebuah komunitas agama, khususnya Islam. Tokoh-tokoh Nahdlatul Ulama di Kecamatan Bangil, Kabupaten Pasuruan, memiliki cara pandang tersendiri dalam menyikapi tradisi ini. Seiring berjalannya waktu, perkembangannya tidak hanya dipandang sebagai fenomena budaya semata, tetapi juga mencerminkan nilai-nilai agama yang perlu dilestarikan. Pada akhirnya, melalui serangkaian pendapat dari berbagai tokoh dan pendekatan metodologis yang dipilih, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa tradisi ini, meskipun tidak secara eksplisit disebutkan dalam teks-teks suci agama, memiliki kearifan lokal dan nilai-nilai religius yang dapat dilestarikan. Nilai-nilai tersebut antara lain permohonan bantuan, doa, memelihara hubungan, dan tindakan amal terhadap tetangga atau kerabat. Selain itu, tradisi mitoni menggambarkan bahwa ajaran Islam tidak kaku dalam menafsirkan adat istiadat setempat. Sebaliknya, Islam berusaha untuk mengamati dan mempertimbangkan nilai-nilai positif yang dibawa oleh adat dan budaya tersebut, dan menyelaraskannya dengan prinsip-prinsip inti ajaran Islam.

Kata kunci: Tradisi Mitoni, harmoni agama-budaya, nahdlatul ulama

INTRODUCTION

The *mitoni*, also known as *ningkebi* or *tingkeban*, is a tradition held to commemorate the seventh month of pregnancy. The term *mitoni* is derived from Javanese, meaning "approaching seven," referring to the seventh month of pregnancy. This tradition is carried out as an expression of gratitude for the health of the unborn baby and the mother, as well as a prayer to the Almighty for their protection from any harm. Additionally, it contains prayers and hopes that the unborn child will grow up to be a righteous individual, honour their parents, receive abundant blessings, and be beneficial to religion, society, the nation, and the state (Purwadi, 2005).

The practice of this tradition demonstrates that the Javanese are bound by historical aspects, customs, and religion, which subsequently shape them into a cohesive community. It is important to recognize that Islam was not the first religion to be known in Java or throughout Indonesia; several religions, both indigenous and non-indigenous, preceded the arrival of Islam (Darori Amin, 2000). Thus, the Javanese mindset in perceiving life is shaped by traditional Javanese customs, Hindu beliefs, and Islamic teachings. (Herusatoto, 2000) Looking at the customs surrounding the lives of Muslims, Islam recognizes that local wisdom; traditions, customs, and cultural practices within society have cause-and-effect relationships and carry legal significance. This causes a legal principle known as *Al-'Adatu al-Muhakkamah* (custom can serve as a source of law). (An-Nadwa, 2018)

Humans are cultural beings; they exist and co-exist with the surrounding space and time. If culture is understood as the product of human feelings, creativity, and aspirations, then humans continue to engage in cultural practices as long as they live. The history of human development is always marked by the cultural products it produces. Because humans are separated by space and time, the cultural products of one community differ from those

of another (Mustaqim, 2017). When different community groups intersect because of their interactions, a blending of surrounding cultures and customs occur. This leads to mutual influence, intertwining, and complex interplay between the groups. From this point on, a blending emerges, referred to as acculturation, which involves the adoption or acceptance of one or more cultural elements stemming from the interaction of two or more interrelated or converging cultures. This process leads to the creation of a new cultural form without erasing the original identity of each culture. Acculturation often occurs in multicultural societies and encompasses various cultural aspects, such as language, customs, art, technology, and beliefs.

In the village Air Panas, located in the Pentalian IV Koto district of Rokan Hulu Regency, Riau Province, most population consists of transmigrant Javanese ethnic groups. For this reason, the *Mitoni* culture continues to be preserved to this day, by both Muslims and non-Muslims. The preservation of this tradition is rooted in the belief and hope for the safety off God Almighty, both for the unborn child and the mother who is pregnant. The origins of this tribal identity are the reasons why this tradition has not disappeared, despite the relocation of people from Java to Sumatra. For those who follow Islam, the tradition begins with the *siraman* ritual, followed by a communal meal (*kenduri*), the recitation of selected Qur'anic verses, and a closing prayer. Meanwhile, for non-Muslims, the tradition is preserved merely as a way of maintaining Javanese cultural heritage. For example, the *mitoni* ceremony is often held on the 7th, 17th, or 27th day of pregnancy. It would be even better if one of the three dates fell just before the mother's own birthdate. However, if none of these dates are suitable, one of the three option provided is sufficient (Al-Qur'an et al., 2020).

A tradition similar to *Mitoni* is also observable in Dusun Kunti, Mranggen Village, Purwoasri District, Kediri Regency, East Java. The difference lies in the terminology, specifically the terms "*Telonan* and *Tingkeban*". The former is performed when the pregnancy reaches three months, while the latter is performed when the pregnancy reaches seven months. This tradition is our ancestors' heritage, rooted in the belief in forces beyond human control. Based on this belief, ceremonies are held that symbolize certain foods and signify hope, for the health and safety of both the unborn child and the expectant mother. Over time, this tradition has undergone shifts, changes, and adaptations in accordance with Islamic teachings, especially with the arrival of spiritual teachers or *mursyid*, commonly referred to as "*pujonggo-perjonggo*" (Purwaningrum & Ismail, 2019).

Iswah Adriana further stated a similar opinion, stating that the term '*walimatul hamli*' is an appropriate expression for this tradition, even though in practice, it is often performed during the fourth month of pregnancy rather than the seventh. To avoid polytheism and simultaneously preserve this tradition, changes and additions incorporating Islamic values have become customary, such as reciting the *kalimah thayyibah*, prayers, distributing charity to others, and the recitation of Surah Yusuf or Surah Maryam. (Iswah Adriani, 2011) The focus of this research is to explain the views of Nahdlatul Ulama figures in Bangil District, Pasuruan Regency, regarding the *Mitoni* tradition and to connect it with one of the *ijtihad*

methods in Usul Fiqh, namely 'Urf. This ijihad method is closely related to societal customs, as it examines whether a particular tradition can be accepted or rejected from the perspective of Islamic teachings. The issue presented in this study is the operational framework of the 'Urf ijihad method regarding how religious figures from the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) organization in Bangil District, Pasuruan Regency, perceive and interpret *Mitoni* rituals and customs. In line with the issues presented, the aim is to answer the question of whether *Mitoni* customs align with the Islamic values, thereby categorizing them as either 'Urf Sahih (valid customs) or 'Urf Fasid (invalid customs).

DISCUSSION

Culture and Religion

The relationships between religion and culture are two distinct elements that can be differentiated yet remain inseparable. Religion holds absolute values that remain unchanged despite temporal shifts in time and place, as its teachings are derived from sacred texts or divine revelations. However, even religiously-based cultures evolve and across different contexts.

Most cultures are based on religion, rather than the other way around. Some groups that disagree with the notion that religion is culture argue that religion does not originate from humans but originates from God, and that which comes from God cannot be classified as culture. Furthermore, some scholars argue that religion is a cultural practice, as religious practices cannot be separated from cultural contexts. It is indeed true that the revelations forming the foundation of religion fundamentally originate from God; however, their realization in life is a human affair that entirely depends on one's ability to understand and implement the revelation in daily life. Thus, the actualization and realization of religion have truly entered the realm of culture, making religion whether one likes it or not a part of culture (Asy'arie, 1999).

In this regard, the manifestation of culture related to ideas, concepts, values, norms, regulations, and so on will cause a tradition. Tradition is a collection of material and thoughts, that encompasses all that remains from the past, is not destroyed, damaged, discarded, or forgotten, and is passed down or transmitted to the present day (Sztompka, 2004). Therefore, culture can be understood as an aspect related to intellect and values. Koentjaraningrat states that there are at least three forms of culture, namely (Koentjaraningrat, 1992):

1. The manifestation of culture as a complex of ideas, concepts, values, norms, regulations, and so forth.
2. The manifestation of culture as a complex of patterned behavioral activities of humans within society.
3. The manifestation of culture as objects created by humans.

Azzumardi Azra offers an intriguing perspective, stating that religion, including Islam, encompasses sociocultural symbols that provide a conception of reality and a framework for realizing it. These symbols provide guidance, instructions, and rules regarding how reality should be understood and lived, as well as offering a framework for manifesting that reality in daily life and ensuring adherence to these symbols, guidance, instructions, and rules. However, symbols related to reality do not necessarily have to align with reality manifested in the actual live of society. According to this definition, religion can be understood as a cultural system (Azra, 1999) (Efa Ida Amaliyah., 2015).

Historically, in promoting Islamic values through his preaching, both in Mecca and Medina, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) did not immediately abandon or destroy the local cultural wisdom that existed before his arrival. Instead, he took a wise approach in dealing with culture, carefully considering how to integrate it into the development of Islamic teachings in both Mecca and Medina. In general, reactions to the presence of local wisdom and culture at that time can be categorized into three models: modification/refactoring, acceptance followed by improvement, and prohibition/discontinuation of its implementation. Thus, at any time and place, the Qur'an interacts with diverse and evolving cultural values. Although it does not explicitly provide direct indications of social dynamics, it offers insights into cultural identity and the qualities of a community (Suparji, 2018).

As a practical rule, the Qur'anic revelations are delivered within a society deeply rooted in its culture. Historically, the Qur'an has not emerged isolated from its context. As a divine message, the revelations were specifically aimed at the Arab society of the 7th century CE. In terms of authenticity, Islamic teachings originate from transcendental revelation; however, from an objective system, revelation encompasses teachings, regulations, rituals, and cultural elements within Islam. Qur'an integrates values into evolving traditions, thus result in a new and improved culture. The process of indigenization was carried out harmoniously, allowing the Arab community to embrace Islam without feeling a loss of their Arab identity. In other words, Qur'an not only delivers religious teachings but also absorbs and adapts existing elements of Arab culture.

Qur'an not only reforms the culture of its recipients but also regulates social order and eliminates the negative effects of the existing social system. All this is accomplished by assigning roles to the community and its social institutions in cultivating and shaping a new, positive, and functional culture. The involvement of the community and its traditions demonstrates a process of normative learning through internalization of the teachings of the Qur'an into society. In addressing culture, Islam sets clear boundaries for its implementation. In the concept of *Ikhwanul Muslimin*, this is known as *Tsawabit* and *Mutaghayyirat*. *Tsawabit* refers to aspects that cannot be altered because of its fundamental principles, such as *aqidah* (creed) and core tenets (*ushul*), which are

definitive and allow no interpretation, substitution, or change at any time, in any place, or by anyone—such as the pillars of faith or Arabic as the language of the Qur'an. On the other hand, *Mutaghayyirat* offers flexibility in responding to the developments of the times, including cultural matters. In the realm of Islam, culture is commonly referred to as '*Urf*' or '*Adah*'. Qardhawi explains that '*urf*' refers to the customs and behaviors of society in daily life, which are then established as traditions passed down through generations, whether in the form of speech or actions, both general and specific. Since the '*urf*' is an inseparable part of humanity, the *ushuliyun* position the '*urf*' as an important instrument for developing laws. This can be seen from the concepts outlined by the *ushuliyun*. Moreover, the significance of the position of '*Urf*' can also be observed from the emergence of the principle of *usul* which states "*al'Adah Muhakkamah*," meaning that customs and traditions can serve as legal provisions or have legal implications (Badrudin, 2014).

Islam does not emerge in a cultural void; rather, it arrives and engages with customs and traditions that have already existed and evolved within a pluralistic society. Islam upholds good customs while rejecting those that are harmful or inappropriate. However, there are customs that contain both positive and negative aspects. Such customs are rectified by Islam. For example, the foster child system during the pre-Islamic era was improved by allowing the adoption of children, although their status did not exactly the same as that of biological children. Consequently, an adopted child is not entitled to inherit, although the adoptive parent is permitted to bequeath to them no more than one-third of their total assets (Hasan, 2018).

In the historical context, the revelation of the teachings of the Qur'an intersects and even clashes with the culture of Arab society. This is evidenced by the numerous verses in the Qur'an that discuss various customs and traditions of Arab society. There are even several verses that directly engage in dialog with the Arab inhabitants that are the primary targets of these teachings. In this process, the Qur'an performs enculturation to restore, reconstruct, and even deconstruct the traditions that prevail in society. In this context, the status of Arab tradition serves as a medium or means to cultivate the teachings of the Qur'an (Sodiqin, 2013). In Islam, there are three models of dialectics between the Qur'an and local culture:

1. Tahmil Model: The role played by Islam in this model is to accept and refine local culture through elegant and Islamic means. Practices such as trade and the veneration of sacred months, as well as the rituals of Hajj and Umrah, are customs established before the advent of Islam. In terms of implementation and substance, Islam indeed seeks to perfect these practices. The contribution of Islamic principles to such local culture has led to a more accommodating response from the community that upholds local traditions, thus making it more receptive to Islamic teachings.

2. **Tagyir Model:** In this model, Islam acknowledges the existence of traditions but alters or reconstructs the manner in which they are implemented. The traditions of the community still exist, but their implementation has been modified to align with the principles of monotheism (Tawhid). Historically, societies had traditions regarding modest attire, marriage, inheritance, adoption, and retribution (Qisas). All these societal traditions were transformed in accordance with Islamic teachings.
3. **Tahrim Model:** In this model, Islam explicitly prohibits or halts its implementation, because it contradicts Tauhid principle. The traditions of gambling, alcohol consumption, usury, and slavery have long been present in society; with the advent of Islam, all these practices must be halted, rejected, and no longer tolerated.

Since the advent of Islamic teachings, interaction and acculturation have occurred between the Qur'an and local cultures. In the process of interaction and acculturation, the manifestation of varied responses to existing traditions indicates that Islam does not maintain distance or impose limitations on culture; rather, it serves as a medium for conveying universal Islamic teachings.

Mitoni in Bangil District, Pasuruan Regency

For all Muslims, everything that is done must adhere to Allah's will to realize faith in Him. The will of Allah is found in the collection of revelations conveyed to His Prophet (the Qur'an) and in the explanations provided by the Prophet regarding Allah's revelations (Hadith). This gives rise to the study of the relationship between these two primary sources in Islam, illustrating that the Qur'an and Hadith are inseparable. They are like two sides of the same coin, symbolizing an essential understanding of their interconnection.

As time progresses, the issues that arise continue to evolve and become more complex. Sometimes, the issues present today are not explained in detail in the Qur'an and Hadith. The flexible and dynamic nature of Islamic law views practices that evolve within society as events that warrant careful observation. This leads to the formation of legal principles that align with the realities of the times, ultimately resulting in the method of *ijtihad* known as '*urf*. In his explanation of the term '*Urf*, Agus Moh Najib asserts that '*Urf* is no longer merely a method of *ijtihad* as outlined in the books of *usul al-fiqh*, but has even become a legal source on the same level as the Qur'an and Hadith. The relationship between the Qur'an, Hadith, and '*Urf* is inseparable, which is why the concepts of *Asbab an-Nuzul* (the causes of revelation) and *Asbab al-Wurud* (the causes of Hadith) surround both, making it possible to say that while the Qur'an and Hadith serve as textual sources of law, '*Urf* is a practical source of law. In his contribution to an anthology of Islamic studies, Agus Moh Najib aptly titled his work *Al-Qur'an, As-Sunnah dan 'Al-Urf Sebagai Tiga Sumber Hukum Islam – Rekonstruksi Konsep Mashadir Al-Ahkam Dalam Ilmu Ushul Fikih*. (Najib, n.d.)

Included in the study of *'urf* in this context are traditional ceremonies within society and are part of the cultural heritage. Through these customs, the Javanese fulfill their spiritual needs, while remaining mindful of their origins and history (*eling marang purwa dukina*). The spiritual life of the Javanese is rooted in religious teachings rooted in local culture. Therefore, the religious orientation of the Javanese community always focused on the noble values inherited from their ancestors (Mustaqim, 2017). According to Javanese tradition, pregnant women must perform several safety rituals. These rituals are carried out for various purposes to ensure that the baby's birth proceeds smoothly, safely, and successfully, ultimately allowing the child to enjoy a happy future.

The *mitoni* tradition is a custom that is still practiced by the Javanese community. In practice, each region adopts different procedures, but the substance and meaning of the event remain the same. A community that still practices the *mitoni* tradition is the residents of Bangil District, Pasuruan Regency. The community of Bangil District demonstrate great respect and upholds the cultural values passed down through generations, which are considered the heritage of their ancestors. Consequently, the *mitoni* tradition continues to be practiced by the residents of Bangil District and has been passed down through generations to date. However, along with the progression of time, developments have occurred, particularly in the changing mindsets of those involved in the tradition. Nevertheless, some scholars still maintain its authenticity.

The *Mitoni* tradition in Bangil District is performed for the first pregnancy, specifically when the gestational age reaches the seventh month. *Mitoni* derives from the word *Pitu*, which means seven, indicating that the pregnancy has entered the seventh month. The term "*Pitu*" can also be interpreted as a word for assistance. This contains hope or a prayer that the mother and the unborn child receive assistance from the Almighty God to be protected from harm until the time of delivery. As expressed by Mrs. Habibah, a mother who has participated in the *Mitoni* tradition.

"*Mitoni* is a tradition celebrated for the seventh month of pregnancy and for the first child. Meanwhile, the celebration of the second child and subsequent children is only held as a *tingkeban*. This tradition is performed to express gratitude for the health of the baby and the mother, as well as to pray that no hardships or difficulties befall the mother and baby until the time of birth." The *Mitoni* tradition in Bangil District is conducted in the seventh month of the mother's pregnancy, with the date determined to coincide with the *Wage* day, which falls in the middle of the month according to the Javanese calendar and takes place at the residence of the expectant mother. *Wage* is a *pasaran* name listed in the calendar. There are 5 *pasaran* in the calendar: *Kliwon*, *Legi*, *Pahing*, *Pon*, and *Wage*. The *pasaran Wage* is determined by its inherent meaning, which emphasizes speed, smoothness, ease, and the absence of difficulties. The community of Bangil District believes that the traditional ceremony for a pregnant mother should be

held on the pasaran Wage day, with the intention that the baby will be born quickly and smoothly once born. The event will be divided into two (2) sessions:

1. The first stage includes the *siraman*, *brojolan*, and costume changes;

The *siraman* ceremony for the pregnant mother occurs in the morning at approximately 08:00 AM. This ceremony is attended by female relatives of the pregnant mother, from older to younger generations which are already married, her biological and mother-in-law. The ceremony was also attended by a midwife who was responsible for leading the proceedings.

In the bathing ceremony (*siraman*), there is no requirement for water from seven springs. The ceremony begins with the pregnant woman seated in a chair, while the attendees alternate pouring a pitcher of water over her. After that, the midwife bathed the pregnant woman, and then the attendees took turns pouring a jug of water over her. The *siraman* ceremony is then completed, followed by the *brojolan* ceremony.

The *brojolan* ceremony is held after the *siraman* (bathing) ceremony. The pregnant mother wore a *kemben* (a traditional Javanese wrap) and was guided by the midwife to the living room, where she was seated on a chair. Then, two ivory coconuts prepared a week in advance and decorated with images of Arjuna and Sembadra are taken. These two ivory coconuts are given to the pregnant mother to roll between their thighs, with the coconut featuring Arjuna rolling from her right thigh and the coconut featuring Sembadra rolling from her left thigh.

The Bangil District community believes that the coconut that rolls the farthest will determine the gender of a baby. If the ivory coconut depicts Arjuna, then the gender represented is male and vice versa. The ivory coconut that rolled the farthest was taken by the midwife and cradled as if carrying a baby to be laid down in the pregnant mother's room.

The next step is the ceremony of changing the attire. In this process, there are no requirements related to the fabric pattern. In this ceremony, the pregnant woman changes her attire seven times, and each time she changes, a midwife asks the attendees "*Wis patut apa durung?*"¹ The audience responded in unison, "*Durung patut !*".² At the final clothing change, the midwife again asked the attendees, "*Wis patut apa durung ?*". This time, the attendees will respond together, "*Wis!*".³

2. The second is the *kenduren* or *kenduri* ceremony, which involves a visit to a neighboring community;

The ceremony is conducted after the Maghrib prayer and takes place on the terrace of a pregnant woman's house, led by a religious leader. The *kenduren* or

¹ Is it appropriate or not?

² Not yet appropriate!

³ Already appropriate!

kenduri begins with the recitation of *salawat*, followed by the readings of Surah Yusuf, Surah Maryam, Surah Luqman, and Surah Muhammad. The event was closed with a prayer and the distribution of *berkat* to attendees present at the gathering, to be taken home.

The term "*berkat*" refers to a complete meal served in a single container resembling a plastic tray, which includes rice, vegetables, side dishes, and seven types of traditional snacks. The offerings of this *berkat* are not consumed at the event location; instead, they are taken home after a communal prayer led by a local religious leader.

"The *mitoni* ceremony is divided into two events. The first event is performed by the pregnant mother and includes *siraman*, *brojolan*, and changing of attire. The second event is conducted by the men, which involves the recitation of *salawat*, the reading of Surah Yusuf, Surah Maryam, Surah Luqman, and Surah Muhammad, and closing with a prayer."

"*Mitoni* is held as a celebration of gratitude for the health of the baby and the mother, as well as a prayer to ease any difficulties faced by both the baby and the mother. *Mitoni* is also held as a tribute to the traditions of our ancestors, to maintain relationships, and to seek blessings."

Among the factors underpinning the continued practice of the *mitoni* tradition to this day are the following:

1. The belief of the Bangil District community regarding customs and traditions.
2. Preserving and maintaining the *mitoni* tradition to this day.
3. Strengthening social bonds and fostering a sense of community among residents.

The *mitoni* tradition ceremony in the morning was attended by relatives of the pregnant daughter, ranging from older to younger family members who are already married. Meanwhile, in the evening, the husband of the pregnant woman attended and invited her relatives. Although the community in Bangil District generally believes that there is no obligation for a seven-month pregnant woman to participate in the *mitoni* tradition, this belief varies among individuals, and it is seen as a custom that may be carried out or left aside.

According to Mrs. Karlok, the *mitoni* tradition in Bangil District has currently undergone shifts and changes. Initially, the *mitoni* tradition involved rituals solely for pregnant mother; however, in contemporary times, it also includes the participation of neighboring community members in the form of *Kenduren* or *kenduri* ceremonies. Additionally, some rituals have been discontinued, such as the *nyelorot telur* ritual. *Nylorot* (sliding) an egg to the ground was performed by the pregnant mother until the egg broke, symbolizing the hope that the baby would be born smoothly and normally. The discontinuation of this ritual was due to the community's growing religious understanding, as they had learned more about Islam from religious leaders.

“The *mitoni* ceremony today is different from the past. The *nyelorot telur* ceremony no longer exists. Nowadays, many people are studying the Quran, which has increased their understanding of Islam.”

Perspectives of Nahdlatul Ulama Figures

The *Mitoni* tradition is not explicitly outlined in the Qur'an or Hadith; however, there is no prohibition against its practice. It serves as an expression of gratitude for the blessing of pregnancy and a prayer for goodness, health, ease, smoothness, and safety during childbirth to the Almighty. The LBM PWNu of East Java, in its decision regarding Islam Nusantara on February 13, 2016, in Malang, presented an overview of Islamic da'wah practices in the Nusantara when faced with various traditions/cultures that, in their authenticity and origins, do not stem from Islamic culture. In this regard, four approaches can be used:

1. The adaptation approach is implemented to address traditions/cultures that, in principle, do not conflict with religious law (are not prohibited).

This is indeed an implementation of the noble character advocated by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The traditions or cultures addressed through an adaptive approach include those that emerged after the spread of Islam and those that predate. For example, the *Kromo Inggil* and *Krama Alus* language traditions in Javanese society reflect politeness toward elders.

Kromo Inggil and *Krama Alus* form part of a linguistic hierarchy or levels in the Javanese language, used during conversations between children, teenagers, older, and respected individuals. This adaptation serves as a manifestation of the hadith narrated by At-Tirmidhi: "... and interact/ behave with others with good interactions/behavior."

2. The neutralization approach is applied to address traditions/cultures that mix prohibited elements, which can be removed, with permissible elements.

The neutralization of such cultures is achieved by eliminating the prohibited aspects and preserving the rest. As mentioned in Surah Al-Baqarah (2): 200, which means:

“When you have fulfilled your sacred rites, praise Allah as you used to praise your forefathers ‘before Islam’, or even more passionately. There are some who say, “Our Lord! Grant us ‘Your bounties’ in this world,” but they will have no share in the Hereafter.”

The reason for the revelation (*Sabab an-Nuzul*) of this verse is that the people of Jahiliyyah, after completing their worship, would gather and boast about their ancestors and lineage, which is explicitly forbidden in Islam. Subsequently, this verse was revealed, which does not forbid their gathering but rather instructs that its content should be replaced with the remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*). This indicates

that Islam does not advocate for the outright elimination of traditions or cultures; rather, it encourages the rectification of aspects that are not aligned with Islamic teachings.

3. The minimization approach is implemented to address cultural elements that contain prohibitions that cannot be immediately eliminated.

The minimization of such cultural practices is carried out through the following methods:

- a. Reducing their prohibitive nature as much as possible, by gradually replacing them with less severe prohibitions until they are eliminated or at least diminished;
 - b. Allowing them to exist to the extent that their prohibitive nature distracts the practitioner from engaging in more serious prohibitions.
4. The amputation approach is used to address cultures containing prohibitions that must be completely eliminated.

This cultural amputation is performed gradually, as in animistic and dynamistic beliefs. although this approach involves completely eradicating beliefs, it is implemented step by step. This is similar to how the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) dealt with pagan beliefs in Arab society by destroying physical idols, along with associated beliefs, thoughts, and cultures. This tradition was successfully eradicated, but it was only achieved on a large scale during the conquest of Mecca (*Fath Makkah*) in 630 CE/8 AH, after 21 years of Islamic propagation.

One of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) figure in the Bangil District interprets the *mitoni* tradition as an expression of gratitude and prayer. This is based on the hadith of the Prophet:

"The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) narrated to us, and he is the one who speaks the truth and is believed: "Indeed, the creation of one of you is gathered in the womb of his mother for forty days as a drop of fluid (nuthfah), then it becomes a clot of blood ('alaqah) for the same duration, then it becomes a lump of flesh (mudghah) for the same duration. Then an angel is sent to blow the soul into it, and the angel is commanded to write four things: his provision, his deeds, his lifespan, and whether he will be miserable or happy."

By Allah, there is no true deity but Him. Verily, one of you may perform the deeds of the people of Paradise until there is but an arm's length between him and Paradise, but what has been decreed overtakes him, and he begins to act like the people of Hell, and thus he enters it. And verily, one of you may perform the deeds of the people of Hell until there is but an arm's length between him and Hell, but what has been decreed overtakes him, and he begins to act like the people of Paradise, and thus he enters it." (Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim)

The hadith explains the stages of human creation in the womb. It begins with sperm, transforms into a mass of blood, then become a mass of flesh, and at every moment, it continues to grow. Certainly, that matter is thankworthy. One way to express gratitude for pregnancy in Javanese society is through the tradition of *mitoni*. The traditions of the Javanese people are generally the result of the Islamization of customs and culture practices carried out by the *Wali Songo* (Islamic saints).

In the cycle of human life, from conception to death, the *Wali Songo* depicts this journey through the *macapat* songs. One type of *macapat* is *tembang maskumambang*. This song holds the philosophy of human life, starting when a person is still in their mother's womb and not yet born, and their identity remains unknown, including whether they will be male or female.

Another prominent NU figure, Muhammad Khairil Mustofa, stated that the *Mitoni* tradition is a good practice. First, although no explicit references are given in the Qur'an or Hadith, from the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence, this tradition can be allowed. This is based on the principle of *Al'Adatu al-Muhakkamatu*, meaning that custom can serve as a legal basis when it does not directly contradict the Qur'an or Hadith. Second, the activities and prayers recited during the event should be carefully observed. The ritual prayers themselves are beneficial, as their aim is to pray for the well-being of the mother and her child. This tradition should be preserved and continued because it has become a culture that does not contradict religious principles. Moreover, it can foster enthusiasm and curiosity from others, as well as from the family or the mother herself. Many people pray together is better than pray alone, and we never know whose prayers will be answered by Allah.

Muhammad Anas stated that, the *Mitoni* tradition is in harmony with Islamic law because it contains many prayers offered to mothers and their unborn children. Muhammad Anas cites the following verse from the Qur'an:

1. Q.S. Al-A'raf (7): 189;
 "He is the One Who created you from a single soul, then from it made its spouse so he may find comfort in her. After he had been united with her, she carried a light burden that developed gradually. When it grew heavy, they prayed to Allah, their Lord, "If you grant us good offspring, we will certainly be grateful."
2. Q.S. Ibrahim (4): 40 - 41;
 "My Lord! Make me and those 'believers' of my descendants keep up prayer. Our Lord! Accept my prayers"
 "Our Lord! Forgive me, my parents, and the believers on the Day when the judgment will come to pass."
3. Q.S. Al-Furqan (25): 74;
 "'They are' those who pray, "Our Lord! Bless us with 'pious' spouses and offspring who will be the joy of our hearts, and make us models for the righteous."

4. Q.S. Al-Ahqaf (46): 15;

“We have commanded people to honour their parents. Their mothers bore them in hardship and delivered them in hardship. Their ‘period of’ bearing and weaning is thirty months. In time, when the child reaches their prime at the age of forty, they pray, “My Lord! Inspire me to ‘always’ be thankful for Your favours which You blessed me and my parents with, and to do good deeds that please You. And instil righteousness in my offspring. I truly repent to You, and I truly submit ‘to Your Will’.”

The verses explain the prayers of parents for their children, which is why the Javanese community, especially in Bangil, continues to perform the *Mitoni* ritual to this day. The provisions given after the *kenduren* or *kenduri* are part of the practice of charity or sharing, as explained in the book *Al-Majmu’ Syarh Al-Muhazzab*:

يستحب الإكثار من الصدقة عند الأمور المهمة

(It is recommended to increase charity in important matters).

The *Mitoni* tradition, from a social aspect, has a significant function and value in fostering togetherness and brotherhood among community members. As conveyed in the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), narrated by Abu Hurairah:

“Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak good or remain silent. Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should honor his neighbor. Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should honor his guest.”

Psychologically, it is possible to educate a child still in the womb by exposing them to readings from the Qur’an, with the hope that they will grow into righteous individual and thus become a source of blessings for their parents. As conveyed in the words of the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad SAW, as narrated by Abu Hurairah:

“When a person dies, all their deeds come to an end except for three things: ongoing charity, beneficial knowledge, or a righteous child who prays for them.”

Building upon the explanation above and considering the series of modifications, changes, and inherent virtues within the *Mitoni* tradition, this custom reflects the joy surrounding a moment eagerly anticipated by every married couple—the arrival of a child, or the expected baby carried by the mother-to-be. This moment is also eagerly awaited by both extended families, the prospective mother and father because the marriage previously established serves to bind the two families and carries the hope of continuing the cherished family lineage.

In the realm of religion, although this tradition lacks explicit and detailed evidence from the Qur’an or Hadith, it can be understood in a general sense as outlined above. By focusing on its positive aspects, such as expressing hope to the Almighty through prayers, maintaining relationships with others through communal gatherings, and fostering generosity through shared meals and the exchange of food to be eaten

home. These acts symbolize noble teachings from religion, making this a valuable tradition that future generations should cherish.

All figures of Nahdlatul Ulama in Bangil District, Pasuruan, believe that the *Mitoni* tradition is positive tradition and there are no issues with its continued preservation. There is consensus that the *mitoni* tradition falls within the terms recognized in *al'Urf al'Amali*, *al'Urf al'Am*, *al'Urf al-Khash*, and *al'Urf as-Sahih*.

Referred to as *al'Urf al'Amali*, *al'Urf al'Am*, and *al'Urf al-Khash*, this custom represents an activity that has been practiced over an extended period and is thus continuing to be upheld. It is characterized as *al'Urf al'Amali*, which is general in nature within Javanese society and is also specifically practiced by the community of Bangil, denoted as *al'Urf al-Khash*.

After the establishment of the three types of *'Urf*, and due to the emergence of various forms of goodness and benefits that do not contradict religious values, such as continuing the tradition of good deeds like reciting *salawat*, reading the Qur'an, praying, giving charity, and fostering good relations with neighbours, the *mitoni* tradition is also included in *al'Urf as-Sahih*. The term *al'Urf as-Sahih* refers to something widely recognized by the community as good and not in conflict with the provisions of the Qur'an and Hadith, while also preserving benefits and preventing harm (Az-Zuhaili, 1999) and (Khallaf, 1993).

CONCLUSION

Islamic law, which is flexible and dynamic, views practices that evolve within society as events that must be carefully considered, this led to the development of legal principles that aligned with the realities of the time, ultimately resulting in the method of *ijtihad* known as *'Urf*. The figures of Nahdlatul Ulama in Bangil view the *Mitoni* tradition because of the Islamization of local traditions and culture carried out by the *Walisongo*. This type of Islamization involves acceptance preceded by change, or *at-Tagyir*. This means that there is a transformation, a reconstruction of rituals, values, and purposes that were once distant from Islamic nuances, gradually shifting toward Islamic values. These include recitations of *kalimah thayyibah*, *salawat*, verses from the Qur'an, prayers, and acts of charity for neighbors, as well as the value of fostering *sillaturahim* (social bonds). The implementation of the *Mitoni* tradition on *Wage* day, the use of ivory coconuts, the change of attire in seven different styles, and other cultural nuances are not problematic, as these elements are purely symbolic, each carrying positive intentions that do not contradict religious teachings.

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