

PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE CEMETERY OF KING AND SAINTS OF GORONTALO

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Abstract

This study aims to elucidate the community's perception of the royal cemetery in Gorontalo by using the approach of religious phenomenology. The result pointed out that the cemetery was interpreted as a human resting place afterlife. The purpose of cemetery pilgrimage covers religious traveling, praying in an efficacious place, pursuing the blessing by praying for the deceased, recalling the goodness of the heroes and the messengers of Islam, and learning the history and ladunni. The way of praying during the cemetery visit can be done either individually or led by a priest. The ritual of visiting the cemetery of Sultan Amai involves graping the water believed to have a blessing, while at Ju Panggola, the water is provided before the cemetery and prayed by priests and also takes its glebe to get grace. The pilgrims expect to get the grace of life by praying to the King and the saints, appreciating the kindness of Islamic spreaders and heroes, and learning that human beings will die and return to their God.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji persepsi masyarakat tentang makam raja dan wali Gorontalo dengan menggunakan pendekatan fenomenologi agama. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa makam dimaknai sebagai tempat peristirahatan manusia setelah alam dunia. Adapun tujuan ziarah makam meliputi: berwisata religi; berdoa di tempat mustajab; mendapatkan berkah dari Allah dengan mendoakan si mayit; mengenang jasa pahlawan dan pembawa Islam; serta untuk belajar sejarah maupun ilmu ladunni. Prosesi pelaksanaan ziarah kubur dilakukan dengan berdoa sendiri atau didoakan oleh imam. Adapun ritual yang menyertai ziarah makam Sultan Amai adalah mengambil

air sumur yang diyakini memiliki berkah sedangkan di makam Ju Panggola mengambil air kemasan yang ditempatkan di depan makam yang didoakan oleh imam dan mengambil tanah makam untuk mendapatkan keberkahan. Hikmah bagi peziarah antara lain mendapatkan keberkahan hidup dengan mendoakan raja dan para wali Allah, menghargai jasa para pengembang Islam dan para pahlawan; serta mengambil pelajaran hidup bahwa manusia pasti akan mati dan kembali kepada-Nya.

Keywords: perception; cemetery; pilgrimage

Introduction

The process of Islamization of Gorontalo cannot be separated from the role of Sultan Amai. History records that Sultan Amai was the son of King Dedu who succeeded his father in 1503. He enlarged his conquered territory in Tomini Bay. In Palasa he fell in love with Owutango, the daughter of King Bonenato of the Gomenjolo kingdom. The princess' parents accepted the proposal of the Amai king. Owutango's daughter required Amai that his descendants and all Gorontalo people should embrace Islam (Yasin, 2013: 101). The Gorontalo people's acceptance of Islam is a form of their obedience to the king. However, it does not mean that their Islam is only limited to Sultan Amai's wedding gift to his wife. This is proven by their sincerity in accepting Islam and animating all aspects of their lives.

With a method similar to what the Wali Songo did in Java, Raja Amai made Islam accepted little by little in Gorontalo. He did not immediately abolish the existing customary laws but introduced Islamic values. Amai's principle; *syara'a hulo-hulo'a to adati* (sharia rests on adat). This emphasizes that the main source of law is customary law. From Owutango, Amai obtained a son named Matolodulakiki who was crowned king of Gorontalo in 1550. His first and main struggle was to make Islam the kingdom's religion. The Islamic faith firmly instilled by his mother and the petty kings of Gomonjolo made him a true champion of Islam. Through a hard struggle, in 1563 (13 years after he ruled), Matolodulakiki succeeded in making Islam the official religion of the kingdom believed by all the people. His worldview of "*syara'a hulo-hulo'a to adati* (sharia rests on adat) was renewed to

“adati hulo-hulo’a to syara’a, syara’a hulo-hulo’a to Adati” (adat rests on sharia, sharia rests on adat). This principle of life puts Islamic law on par with customary law (Yasin, 2013: 102). This is reflected in Gorontalo's traditional ceremonies, such as birth, marriage, welcoming guests, coronation and awarding of titles, and ceremonies of the funeral (Botutihe & Daulima, 2003: 2-353).

Thus, the model of Islamization carried out by Sultan Amai and continued by his son (Matolodulakiki) is a culturally friendly model of Islamization. This has positive implications for the development of Islam which is easily accepted by the Gorontalo community which is very thick with its local culture.

Besides Sultan Amai, the development of Islam in Gorontalo is also inseparable from the services of a spiritual teacher named Sheikh Syarif bin Abdul Azis who came from Mecca to Gorontalo. For their services, Islam has developed in Gorontalo until now. For this reason, his cemetery is visited by many pilgrims as a form of appreciation for the services he has left behind. The two figures' cemeteries are side by side in front of the mihrab of the Hunto mosque, which is now one of the cultural heritage in Gorontalo.

Another cemetery that is visited by many people in Gorontalo and even from outside Gorontalo is Aulia Raja Ilato Ju Panggola in Gorontalo West City. This indicates that the figure had a great influence on the development of Islam in Gorontalo. According to Syaifullah Amin, not only on certain days, such as Friday or before the holy month of Ramadan, there is a pilgrimage tradition of Gorontalo people which is quite unique. One of the uniqueness of pilgrimage in Gorontalo is the traditional baby pilgrimage. This tradition takes the form of accompanying babies under the age of 40 days to the king and the saint's cemetery, one of which is the cemetery of Aulia Raja Ilato Ju Panggola in Gorontalo West Town. The baby is prayed for at the cemetery of the saints, then the baby is rubbed with water that has been given prayers. The cemetery of Ju Panggola or Aulia Raja Ilato is most visited by the public. Around his cemetery, there are also cemeteries of residents who live around Ju Panggola's cemetery. Therefore, it is not surprising that this cemetery is visited by many people (Amin, 2015).

Cemetery pilgrimages have a deep dimension of religious belief and emotion from the pilgrims. They believe that the pilgrimage can be a means to solve worldly problems, such as trading businesses and to cure diseases.

Cemetery pilgrimages turned out to be a tradition that had been institutionalized in the pre-Islamic period and later developed in the archipelago. There is a relevance of the tradition of saint's cemetery to pilgrimages to temples or other sacred places in the pre-Islamic period (Masyhudi, 1999: 54).

Pilgrimage to the sacred king and the saint's cemetery still leaves problems in society because not all pilgrims come only as a form of appreciation for the services of the king and the saints. The various intentions behind the cemetery pilgrimage arise based on their perceptions of the king and the saint's cemetery. For this reason, it is important to study people's perceptions of the sacred king and the saint's cemetery so that they can understand the phenomenon of local people's religiosity.

This paper focuses on the public perception of the king and the saint's cemetery of Gorontalo, which includes the king and the saint's cemetery of Sheikh Syarif bin Abdul Aziz, Sultan Amai, and King Ilato Ju Panggola, with sub-problems: 1) What is the meaning and purpose of pilgrimage to the king and the saint's cemetery? 2) How is the pilgrimage process at the cemetery of Sheikh Syarif bin Abdul Aziz, King Sultan Amai, and King Ilato Ju Panggola? 3) What is the wisdom behind the pilgrimage to the cemetery of Sheikh Sharif bin Abdul Aziz, King Sultan Amai, and King Ilato Ju Panggola pilgrims?

Literature Review

Religious beliefs are nothing but a reflection of society itself, with religious rituals strengthened through group solidarity and belief in moral order (Abdullah, et al. 2008: 3). Rites or religion in action have different variants in their implementation in society (Ghazali, 2011: 50). For this reason, each region has its own characteristics in positioning the cemetery of a saint. In Java, for example, according to the results of Syam's research, which took place in Palang sub-district, Tuban, East Java, and villages located in coastal areas, namely Panyuran, Tasikmadu, Kradenan, Gesikharjo, Palang, Glodok, Leran Kulon, Karangagung, and Pliwetan villages, there are three sacred loci in Javanese Islamic life, namely mosques, cemeneteries, and wells. The three loci in the conception of culture are called cultural spheres or cultural spaces that bring together various social groups, namely the *abangan* and *santri*. The mosque is a meeting place for *santri* affiliated with NU and Muhammadiyah, while the well and cemetery are meeting places for the *abangan* and *NU santri* (Syam, 2007: 116-117).

Cemeteries are also sacred places. In most Javanese cemeteries, *manganan* ceremonies are held. In this ceremony, elements of the community, the *abangan* and *NU santri* perform *manganan* ceremony activities to carry out local traditions, clean the cemetery, and pray for the deceased family. In the past, this ceremony was simply an activity of bringing food to the cemetery and being prayed for by the village modin, then some of the rice was simply thrown at the cemetery. Now, in line with the intensification of the Islamization movement, the event is added with *tahlilan* or *yasinan*, especially before the *nyadran* ceremony is held. There is nothing special about this ceremony, except for the fact that culture allows the meeting of desires and beliefs (Syam, 2007: 119-120).

Buildings erected for cemeteries vary greatly between different cultures. The pyramids in Ancient Egyptian culture were built in such a way that they are still one of the wonders of the world, which is about death and the journey of life after death. The culture of embalming corpses and then storing them in pyramids or stone caves, and inscribing hieroglyphs around the corpses, were all built in such a way because of the belief in the immortality of life after death. The Taj Mahal Mosque was built by Shah Jehan in 1632, one of the wonders of the world, in memory of his beloved wife. Shah Jehan himself is also buried by his wife's side. The mosque was meant to immortalize both of them. Statues of great people were built in several parts of the world by Eastern and Western cultures also to visualize immortality (Agus, 2007: 278). Another case with Wahabi.

All buildings and excessive ceremonies for the dead, even the dead bodies of leaders, they violently eradicated. None of the cemeteries of the Prophet's companions in Makkah and Madinah were built. The cemetery stones were ordinary river stones that were not written at all about who was buried in each cemetery (Agus, 2007: 278).

The portrait of Gorontalo community life shows the existence of three sacred loci, namely mosques, cemeteries, and wells, which are similar to sacred loci in Java. At the location of the cemeteries of Sheikh Maulana Syarif Abdul Aziz and Sultan Amaj, there is also the Sultan Amaj mosque and the sacred well left by Sheikh Syarif near the mosque. The same thing is found at the cemetery of King Ilato where the mosque is located to the east of the cemetery. For this reason, it is important to examine the public's perception of graces sacred/saints in Gorontalo

as a motivation for pilgrims to come to these cemeteries. This is it which is the significance of this research.

Method

This research is categorized as descriptive field research using a religious phenomenology approach. Data collection techniques are observation, interviews, documentation and reference searches.

Phenomenology seeks to understand culture through the views of the culture owner or culprit. According to phenomenology, science is not value free, free of any value, but value bound, having a relationship with value (Endraswara, 2006: 65). Phenomenologist Edmund Husserl stated that the object of science is not limited to the empirical (sensual), but includes phenomena that consist of perceptions, thoughts, desires, and beliefs of subjects that demand a holistic approach, placing the object of research in a researcher's construction, seeing the object in a natural context, and not partial (Endraswara, 2006: 67).

Cox (1992: 24) using Husserl's concept, defines the phenomenology of religion as a method that adapts the procedures of epoché (postponement of previous judgments) and eidetic intuition (looking into the meaning of religion) to the study of various symbolic expressions that are responded to as infinite values. This definition indicates the existence of two main elements inherent in the phenomenological approach, first, epoché which comes from the Greek meaning "moving away from" and "not giving voice". Husserl uses epoché for the term free from prejudice. With epoché, we put aside the initial judgments, biases, and considerations we have toward the object. In other words, epoché is a disconnection from our previous experiences and knowledge (Kuswarno, 2009: 48).

Biography of Syekh Syarif bin Abdul Aziz

Sheikh Syarif bin Abdul Aziz is a spiritual figure or can also be categorized as a wali who came to Gorontalo to develop Islam. The arrival of Sheikh Syarif bin Abdul Aziz to Gorontalo was not a coincidence. According to the traditional leader DK. Usman:

It is said that Maulana Sheikh Sharif bin Abdul Aziz was the key holder of the Kaaba. It is said that every time Sheikh Sharif opened the Kaaba he found two people, a man and a woman, inside. That thing

made Sheikh Sharif proud of these two people. Therefore, Sheikh Sharif bin Abdul Aziz decided one day to visit Gorontalo to meet that person. Upon his arrival at the port of Gorontalo, he coincidentally met a coachman who was the person he was looking for. That person was Tau Datao. Tau Datao offered to take Sultan Amai to his destination. Sheikh Sharif also told him that he was looking for someone he used to meet in the Kaaba. But Tau Datao has not admitted that he is the person Sheikh Sharif is looking for. Finally, Tau Datao took Sheikh Sharif to his house. Arriving at his house, it was prayer time. Tau Datao invited Sheikh Sharif to be the Imam, and that's when Sheikh Sharif knew that Tau Datao was the person he was looking for. They finally discussed and Sheikh Sharif decided to stay in Gorontalo to teach Islam. (Interview, August 4, 2015)

In another case according to the Takmir of Sultan Amai Mosque, Syamsuri Kaluku, stated that the person whom Sheikh Sharif met inside the Kaaba had several opinions, some said Sultan Amai, some said Kali Balunda, there was also another opinion that the person was Kali Balunda's grandfather who had *ladunni* knowledge. It is said that with his knowledge he could go to Mecca in a short time, the fish he brought from Gorontalo to Mecca had not died when he arrived (Interview, June 15, 2015).

The complete life history of Sheikh Sharif bin Abdul Aziz has not been found, but according to DK. Usman, he can be categorized as a Sufi tariqah. Even DK. Usman himself admits that he is the thirteenth generation of the Qadiriyyah order. This indicates that the religious style in Gorontalo is heavily influenced by the Qadiriyyah order. This can be proven by the existence of dhikr and wirid chanted by the community after prayer referring to the Qadiriyyah tariqah.

The position of Sheikh Syarif bin Abdul Aziz as a spiritual teacher is very significant in the development of Islam in Gorontalo, but no data was found that he had a family in Gorontalo, so his lineage cannot be known. However, according to Syamsuri, in the future, a trace of the family of Sheikh Sharif bin Abdul Aziz can be done because someone who is the key holder of the Kaaba is not an arbitrary person. At least, it can be assumed that he is a royal family and may have a family relationship with King Abdul Aziz, the King of Saudi Arabia. The results of the author's research on the saint of the Kaaba show that there is a connection

namely the name Abdul Aziz which has been held for generations by Abdul Aziz's family. However, these preliminary findings still need to be developed for certainty.

The religious style developed is the style of *tariqah* or precisely the Qadiriyyah *tariqah*. According to DK. Usman, the religious style in Gorontalo developed by Sheikh Sharif until now is a *tariqah* style. This can be proven by the *wirid-wirid* recited after prayers in mosques and other religious rituals (Interview, July 20, 2015). The same thing was expressed by Umar Abu Bakar, a prayer reader at the Ilato Ju Panggola cemetery who stated that in the prayer at the cemetery, Abdul Qadir al-Jilani's name was mentioned as a *wasilah* (Interview, July 19, 2015).

Thus, the majority of the religious patterns of the people in Gorontalo are very thick with Sufistic/*Tariqah* nuances. This can be stated as a form of success from Sheikh Syarif bin Abdul Aziz in developing the Qadiriyyah *tariqah* in Gorontalo.

Biography of Sultan Amai

Sultan Amai was the first king to embrace Islam and was followed by his people, According to Syamsuri Kaluku:

After establishing the Hunto mosque, Sultan Amai gathered all his people in the mosque to be Islamized. At that time, Gorontalo people still embraced the Alifuru belief (a belief system that worships spirits and objects that are considered auspicious). Once gathered, Sultan Amai ordered to slaughter a pig and the blood was put on the foreheads of all the people present at that time. The ceremony is known as the traditional oath ceremony "Bonthon", a local language acronym for *bolo yingoyingontiyolo monga boyi* (this is the last day we eat pork). The prohibition of eating pork symbolizes that they accept Islam as their religion. And for those who violate the oath will experience various kinds of calamities, die or be attacked by a disease that cannot be cured (Interview, June 15, 2015).

Another source states that during his reign, Amai and the eight kings in the area produced 185 customary formulations covering marriage and death ceremonies, family behavior, social reception of guests and coronation of leaders. The result of this formulation is known as the principle *Saraa Topa-Topango to Adati* or sharia (Islamic law) rests on adat (<http://degorontalo.co/sumpah-bonthon-sejarah-orang-gorontalo-masuk-islam/> accessed 22 Agustus 2015).

In a book entitled "Memori Gorontalo; Territory, Transition and Tradition" by Basri Amin, it is mentioned that Arabic script has been used in Gorontalo since 1525. The principle of adat initiated by Amai, then perfected during the reign of King Eyato who ruled in 1673-1679, became *Adati Hulahulaa To Saraa, Saraa Hulahulaa To Quruani* which means Adat Bersendi Shariat, Shariat bersendi Kitabullah (al-Qur'an) became a philosophy that until now is held by Gorontalo residents. His cemetery, located behind the historic mosque, is often visited by many people from all over the region, including during Ramadan. On his cemetery stone, Sultan Amai is given the title Ta Olongia Lopo Isilamu (King who spread Islam). (Terrajana, 2015).

Regarding the establishment of Sultan Amai's cemetery, D.K. Usman stated that: Basically, the determination of Sultan Amai's cemetery in front of the Hunto mosque was the guidance of his tariqah teacher Syawal. Thus, there is no doubt that it was in front of the Hunto mosque that Sultan Amai was buried (Interview, July 23, 2015)..

Thus, the location of Sultan Amai's cemetery is in front of the Hunto mihrab/mosque. No other views have been obtained regarding the location. The same thing happened to the cemetery of King Ilato Ju Panggola, whose whereabouts were previously unknown. However, one day a cemetery appeared on the hill which was later believed by the community to be the cemetery of this figure. To this day, no research reports or community findings state that his cemetery is elsewhere. Thus, both the cemeteries of the saints of Sheikh Syarif bin Abdul Aziz, Sultan Amai, and King Ilato Ju Panggola are still believed to be in that location.

Biography of King Ilato Ju Panggola

Ju Panggola was a famous scholar, warrior, and pious man in the 16th century. In short, Ju Panggola was a charismatic figure whose cemetery is sacred and is still visited by many people. As a tribute, Ju Panggola's cemetery was built behind the mihrab of Quba Mosque - a small mosque, at the top of a hill with a beautiful panorama around it.

According to Farha Daulima, Chairman of the Banthayo Pobo'ide Tourism Organization, Ju Panggola is a title, which means "elder figure". Gorontalo people in the past always knew Ju Panggola as an old man in a white robe that reached his knees. He was also known as Ilato. Alias "Kilat", because of his struggle against

the Dutch colonizers he was able to disappear, and reappeared if the country was in distress. Because of his services, Ju Panggola received the customary title "*Ta Lo'o Baya Lipu*" or a person of merit to the people", as a symbol of honor and nobility of the country.

Ju Panggola is also known as a propagator of Islam. Thanks to his high mastery of religious knowledge, he is not only known as a scholar, but also as a saint. As a warrior, he is also known as an expert in martial arts, which in Gorontalo is called *Langga*. Thanks to his magic, he didn't need to train his students physically, but only by dripping water into the student's eyes, and after that, the student got amazing martial arts moves. But there is another version of the legend that *Ilato* was the "King". But no one can confirm whether *Ilato* Ju Panggola was also King *Ilato*, the son of King *Amai* with the title "*Matoladulakiki*" who ruled the Gorontalo kingdom from 1550 - 1585, and established Islam as the kingdom's official religion. To be sure, on a stone inscription on the hill that is also the foundation of the Quba mosque, the inscription reads: Quba Mosque, cemetery place of Ta'awuliya King *Ilato* Ju Panggola, Ta Lo'o Baya Lipu, 1673 AD, died Sunday 1 Muharram 1084 AH.

As with many legends, one version says Ju Panggola died in Mecca. But another version says that he did not die, but rather disappeared, disappeared supernaturally. So what about the cemetery behind the mihrab of the Quba mosque that is believed to be Ju Panggola's cemetery? According to Farha Daulima, the cemetery was built by local residents only thanks to a miracle in the land where the cemetery is now located. The white soil smells very fragrant. According to the old-timers, Ju Panggola once said, "Where there is a fragrant smell and the soil is white, that's where I am," and that's where Ju Panggola used to live and meditate. That's why the locals think Ju Panggola "took a long rest" there. Ju Panggola's cemetery is in a room measuring 3 x 3 M. The floor is made of white ceramic tiles, the same color as the mosquito net covering the wall that hangs down to the floor. A fan is attached to the ceiling of the cemetery (Ju Panggola, 2012).

To this day, his cemetery is visited by many Gorontalo people even from outside Gorontalo. Not only on certain days, such as Friday or before the holy month of Ramadan, there are pilgrimage traditions of Gorontalo people that are quite unique. One of the most interesting pilgrimage traditions in Gorontalo is the tradition of marching the baby. This tradition is in the form of accompanying a

baby under the age of 40 days to the cemetery of a saint, one of which is to the cemetery of Aulia Raja Ilato Ju Panggola in Gorontalo West Town. The baby is prayed for at the cemetery of the saint, then the baby is rubbed with water that has been given prayers. The cemetery of Ju Panggola or Aulia Raja Ilato is the most visited. Around his cemetery, there are cemeteries of residents who live around Ju Panggola's cemetery. Therefore, it is not surprising that this cemetery is visited by many people (Amin, 2015).

The Meaning and Purpose of the Cemetery Pilgrimage of the Saints and Kings of Gorontalo

The meaning and purpose of pilgrimage to the cemeteries of the saints and kings of Gorontalo for pilgrims depends on their perception of the cemetery itself. (Kotler, 2000: 32) explains perception as the process of how a person selects, organizes, and interprets information inputs to create a meaningful overall picture.

Perception is an introduction or identification using the five senses. The impression received by the individual is very dependent on all experiences that have been obtained through the process of thinking and learning and is influenced by factors that come from within the individual, perception is also defined as a process where the individual tries to organize and interpret the stimulus received through his senses into a meaning. Several factors influence perception, namely personal factors and structural factors. Personal factors include the learning process, motives, and needs, while structural factors include the environment and social values in society (Arisandi, 2011: 14).

In general, the results of interviews with pilgrims regarding the meaning or understanding of cemeteries state that cemeteries are resting places after the natural world. However, in terms of their goals, they are very varied, including:

Cemetery as an alternative tourist attraction;

According to the results of interviews with several pilgrims, religious tourism is a visit to the cemetery to remind ourselves that in the end humans will return to God, after all, humans must die. For this reason, making a pilgrimage to the cemetery can make us realize the importance of living in accordance with religious guidance.

Cemetery as an alternative tourist attraction is an interesting phenomenon in the midst of the many offered of tourist attractions in Gorontalo. The three cemeteries are not only crowded during Eid al-Fitr,

Eid al-Adha, and Nisfu Sha'ban but also on ordinary days, although not as crowded as during Eid. Apart from being free of charge, the cemeteries also provide their own satisfaction for visitors. For example, at Ju Panggola's cemetery, visitors can take a break from their daily routine by watching the beauty of Limboto Lake and breathing in the fresh mountain air. In addition, by visiting the cemeteries, one can gain enlightenment that life is only temporary, and everything will be left behind when death comes.

As a tourist spot, it has an impact on the economy of the local community by opening small shops to meet the needs of visitors. Not to mention the small children who run around welcoming visitors to get alms.

Second, as a place of prayer;

Some interviewers (who asked not to be named) stated that the cemetery is synonymous with prayer. However, according to him, it does not mean shirk, because the prayer in question is not asking the deceased but praying for the deceased. As for personal prayers, they are still held in the mosque.

There is an assumption among pilgrims that Ju Panggola's cemetery is a sacred cemetery and the soil around the cemetery always spreads a fragrant smell. Every visitor who makes a pilgrimage to the cemetery takes a handful of soil to be used as an amulet. They believe that the soil can cure various diseases or facilitate sustenance. Miraculously, although thousands of visitors have taken the soil around the cemetery, the soil remains intact. In fact, the excavated soil does not leave the slightest trace of a hole. Inside the cemetery complex is a mosque called Ju Panggola Mosque. It is said that if someone prays at the mosque, his request will be granted. So do not be surprised, if many visitors take the time to pray and pray to ask for healing from various diseases, facilitate sustenance and so forth.

Taking white soil at the Ilato Ju Panggola cemetery is indeed possible because a spoon has been provided above the cemetery. And this is also confirmed by Umar (prayer leader) that sometimes there are people who take the soil from the cemetery because they think

that the soil brings blessings. In addition, there is a tradition of placing babies in the cemeteries of saints.

To NU Online, Imam Ali Abu Bakar, one of the imams, a local religious leader said, this tradition is not a necessity, but many people consider it important to send their babies to the saints. The purpose of the baby's pilgrimage is to introduce the baby to the saints as early as possible. By asking for prayers from religious leaders at the cemeteries of the saints, the baby's parents hope that their child will grow up to be a virtuous person and always have a love for the clerics and saints. (Amin, 2015)

The existence of beliefs related to the benefits of soil from the cemetery of Ilato Ju Panggola, the practice of divinizing babies, getting the blessing of life, and others of course, is not shirked. It is all an effort to get closer to people who are close to Allah during their lifetime.

The provision of spoons at Ju Panggola's cemetery indicates a justification that the cemetery soil is beneficial for visitors, so the tradition of taking cemetery soil continues until now. Although their recognition is only limited to "blessings", it does not rule out the possibility of slipping the intention of the benefits and purpose of the cemetery soil by its users.

Third, it is a place to receive blessings from Allah by praying for the deceased.

According to the visitors to the cemetery, one of the reasons they come to the cemetery is to get blessings from Allah by praying for the deceased. They believe that by praying for people who are close to Allah, they will also get the blessing of life.

This was confirmed by Umar Abu Bakar (prayer leader at Ilato Ju Panggola's meal) who stated that everyone who comes to Ilato Ju Panggola's cemetery has different intentions and purposes. From ordinary safety prayers to asking for the blessing of life (Interview with Umar Abu Bakar, July 19, 2015).

Similarly, visitors to the cemeteries of Sultan Amai and Sheikh Syarif bin Abdul Aziz believe that visiting and praying for the dead can bring blessings to their lives.

Receiving blessings from Allah by praying for the deceased can lead to justifying the notion that the deceased influences the living. This can lead them to believe that it is the deceased who makes their prayers accepted. However, according to their claims, the cemetery is still only a *wasilah*, and the cemetery of a saint as a *wasilah* is still a matter of debate among clerics.

Fourth, as a place to commemorate the services of heroes and carriers of Islam

The establishment of the Hunto mosque as a cultural heritage is a special attraction for the community, including officials. Their arrival at the Hunto mosque is also used to make a pilgrimage to the cemeteries of Sultan Amai and Sheikh Syarif bin Abdul Aziz as carriers and developers of Islam in Gorontalo. This was confirmed by Syamsuri Kaluku who stated that, in addition to students, there are also groups of officials from outside the region who visit Gorontalo while visiting mosques and historical cemeteries (Interview, July 22, 2015).

Fifth, as a place to learn both history and *ladunni* science

Arman (student/pilgrim) stated that he came to the cemetery of Sultan Amai and Sheikh Syarif to explore the history of Sultan Amai who was one of the carriers of Islam in Gorontalo. For him, Gorontalo people must be able to get to know more closely their figures who have contributed to the development of religion, nation, and state. The same opinion was also expressed by several students from IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo who had visited the cemetery.

According to Syamsuri, several times a group of students from the History department came to explore the history of Sultan Amai. Furthermore, the mosque is used as a place of *i'tikaf* for pilgrims. According to him, there was one pilgrim from Batam who stayed for one month in the mosque for *i'tikaf*. In the end, according to his confession, he received *ladunni* knowledge from the two figures during his *i'tikaf* in the mosque (Interview, July 22, 2015). Syamsuri Kaluku explained in more detail:

The meaning of cemetery pilgrimage is very varied. The cemetery or cemetery itself is interpreted as the final resting place of a saint. Some interpret it as a place of *mustajab* or answered prayer. Meanwhile, the

meaning of cemetery pilgrimage depends on the beliefs of each person who comes. Several times a group of students majoring in History came to explore the history of Sultan Amai. In addition to students, there are also groups of officials from outside the region who visit Gorontalo while visiting mosques and historical cemeteries.

People also respond to the pilgrimage to the cemeteries of the saints Sheikh Syarif bin Abdul Aziz and Sultan Amai in different ways. On the one hand, there are those who allow it, but on the other hand, there are also those who prohibit it. According to Syamsuri, when the existence of the two cemeteries was confirmed, there was a group of people who refused to pray at the mosque on the grounds that it was not permissible to pray in front of the cemetery even though it was the cemetery of a saint. This is considered heresy that will plunge into hellfire. For him, the presence of the cemetery in front of the mihrab does not mean praying at the cemetery because there is a barrier between the cemetery and the mosque. In addition, if it is based on the reality of the Prophet's cemetery, which is also in the mosque area, then it should not be something that Muslims should dispute.

People's perceptions of cemeteries are strongly influenced by a very Sufistic religious style and their belief that by visiting and praying for people who are close to Allah, their lives will also be blessed by Allah. They believe that such religious behavior does not contradict the Sharia because they believe that all prayers are answered by Allah, not the deceased. Visiting the cemeteries of kings or saints will have a positive influence on one's spirituality and all humans will eventually return to Allah.

Pilgrimage Implementation Process

According to Syamsuri, the implementation of the pilgrimage to the cemeteries of the saints of Sheikh Syarif bin Abdul Aziz and Sultan Amai is quite varied. But in general, it goes through several stages: (1.) Tahiyatul Masjid circumcision prayer; (2.) Repentance prayer; (3.) Pilgrimage at the cemetery of the saint, and (4.) Pilgrimage at the old well beside the mosque.

The existence of the old well, which is now used as a water source for ablution, has a mystical story associated with Sheikh Syarif bin Abdul Aziz. According to its history, once upon a time, there was a drought in Gorontalo, the worshipers who wanted to pray at the Sultan Amai mosque were confused to find water. So, they called Sheikh Sharif to pray in front of the well located next to the mosque. Sheikh Sharif

raising his hands while praying and followed by the congregation, finally, water came out of the well until it overflowed to the front of the mosque. Finally, the worshipers called back Sheikh Sharif to pray that the water would stop flowing. After Sheikh Sharif prayed, the water finally stopped flowing. Until now the well has been used for ablution, and since then the water has never dried up despite the drought in Gorontalo.

Apart from being a source of water for ablution for worshipers, the well also has an attraction for pilgrims, because some of them believe that the water in the well is efficacious in terms of curing diseases. This was conveyed by pilgrims that after they bathed and drank the water, their illnesses disappeared as a result. Prayers are generally led by the Imam of the mosque, but it is also permissible to pray individually, while still giving advice not to ask the cemetery but only to Allah. Such is the case at the Ilato Ju Panggola cemetery, every pilgrim who comes can perform the prayers first, because the cemetery is in the mosque environment. Furthermore, for the prayer, they can pray alone and can also be assisted by a prayer leader.

There is a phenomenon around prayer where people bring bottled water to be placed in front of the meal when praying. After praying the water is taken home and considered to have a blessing. But there are also those who do not bring anything. Another phenomenon is the presence of a group of children, mothers, and fathers waiting for alms from pilgrims. Their presence adds to the bustle of the cemetery every day.

The Wisdom Behind Performing Cemetery Pilgrimage

Based on the results of interviews with various sources/pilgrims, the lessons that can be learned from the implementation of the pilgrimage to the cemeteries of kings and saints are:

First, to get to know more closely the saints and kings as people who contributed to the development of Islam in Gorontalo. This can have a psychological impact on Muslims to continue the struggle of the saints in developing Islam in Gorontalo. It is also expected to be able to transfer his characteristics in the context of social life, where he was very tolerant and friendly to local culture with the slogan *syara'a hulo'lulo'a*

to *adati* (sharia based on adat), which was later developed into adat based on shariah, shariah based on Kitabullah. The introduction is done since the child is still a baby. So that later they do not forget and are able to emulate these figures.

Second, visiting cemeteries aims to remember death. Thus, the wisdom that can be learned is to be grateful for the blessings of life by utilizing it in ways that are approved by Allah. Thus, the cemetery pilgrimage can be interpreted as getting closer to Allah.

Third, humans must pray and the place to pray can be done in a place where prayers are accepted, one of which is the mosque. While praying at the cemetery is to pray for the deceased who was a person who was close to Allah during his lifetime. It is hoped that praying for them will be blessed. As for taking water or white soil, it is only a medium to hope that Allah will give His grace through these objects, but it does not have to be interpreted as a form of polytheism.

Based on the wisdom of cemetery pilgrimage according to the pilgrims, it can be concluded that the public perception of the cemetery is limited to a medium to get closer to Allah.

Closing

The procession of the cemetery pilgrimage is carried out by praying alone or praying by the priest. The accompanying ritual at the cemetery of Sultan Amai is taking well water while at the Ju Panggola cemetery, there is bottled water placed in front of the cemetery and prayed for by the priest to get blessings; also taking cemetery soil as a blessing. The wisdom for pilgrims is to get the blessing of life by praying for the king and the saints of Allah, appreciating the services of the developers of Islam and the heroes; and making it a life lesson that humans will die and return to Allah. For pilgrims, the pilgrimage procession to the cemeteries of the saints and kings of Gorontalo is something that does not contradict Islamic law and does not include shirk, but of course, the results will be different if the approach used in research is not a phenomenological approach to religion. This is because one of the things that may be disputed by some people is taking cemetery soil which is considered to have blessings. For this reason, this paper can be a reference for further research.

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