



Traditions and Beliefs: The Form and Meaning of *Ruwatan Desa* Among The Muslim Community In Sukapura, Probolinggo Regency

Ulum Fasih,¹ Alif Rohmah Nur Habibah²

^{1,2}Universitas Islam Internasional Darullughah Wadda'wah Pasuruan, Indonesia
ulumfasih@uiidalwa.ac.id, ¹ alifrohmahnurhabibah@uiidalwa.ac.id²

Received: 07, 2025. Revised: 08, 2025. Accepted: 08, 2025. Published: 09, 2025

Abstrak:

This study explores the *Ruwatan Desa* tradition in Sukapura, Probolinggo Regency, as a manifestation of the dialectic between Javanese local wisdom and Islamic values. Unlike typical calendrical rituals, the *Ruwatan Desa* in this region emerged as a situational response to collective trauma following a local tragedy. Using a qualitative-descriptive approach, this research analyzes how ritual symbolism and the process of cultural hybridization function within the community. The results indicate that this tradition serves as a dynamic form of social resilience. Ritual elements, such as the use of all-black attire, are reinterpreted as symbols of spiritual concern (*prihatin*), while the integration of *Tahlil* prayers acts as the primary spiritual authority that purifies the ritual's intent toward *Tawhid* (oneness of God). Through a process of theological reinterpretation, the Sukapura community has successfully transformed practices once considered animistic into a medium for cultural proselytization (*dakwah*), where offerings (*sesaji*) are positioned as the visualization of prayers and alms. Functionally, *Ruwatan Desa* acts as an effective social healing instrument, providing a space for catharsis to release anxiety and negative stigma following criminal incidents. The mechanism of community during communal dining and prayer, effectively mends social fractures and restores village harmony. This study confirms that *Ruwatan Desa* is a sophisticated strategy for maintaining the balance between humans, nature, and the Creator.

Keywords: *Ruwatan Desa*, Cultural Hybridization, Islam Javanese, Social Resilience

Abstract:

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi tradisi *Ruwatan Desa* di Sukapura, Kabupaten Probolinggo, sebagai sebuah manifestasi dialektika antara kearifan lokal Jawa dan nilai-nilai Islam. Berbeda dengan ritual kalender pada umumnya, *Ruwatan Desa* di wilayah ini muncul sebagai respons situasional terhadap trauma kolektif pasca-peristiwa pembunuhan. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif-deskriptif, penelitian ini menganalisis bagaimana simbolisme ritual dan proses hibridasi budaya bekerja dalam masyarakat. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tradisi ini merupakan bentuk strategi ketahanan sosial (*social resilience*) yang dinamis. Unsur ritual seperti penggunaan pakaian serba hitam direinterpretasi sebagai simbol keprihatinan spiritual (*prihatin*), sementara integrasi doa *Tahlil* berfungsi sebagai otoritas spiritual yang memurnikan niat ritual menuju tauhid. Melalui proses reinterpretasi teologis, masyarakat Sukapura berhasil mengubah praktik yang semula dianggap animistik menjadi media dakwah kultural, di mana *sesaji* diposisikan sebagai visualisasi doa dan sedekah. Secara fungsional, *Ruwatan Desa* berperan sebagai instrumen *social healing* yang menyediakan ruang katarsis bagi warga untuk melepaskan kecemasan dan stigma negatif pasca-kriminalitas. Mekanisme komunitas dalam perjamuan makan bersama dan doa, terbukti efektif merekatkan kembali keretakan sosial dan memulihkan harmoni desa. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa *Ruwatan Desa* adalah strategi masyarakat dalam menjaga keseimbangan hubungan antara manusia, alam, dan Sang Pencipta di tengah tantangan zaman.

Kata Kunci: *Ruwatan Desa*, Hibridasi Budaya, Islam Jawa, Ketahanan Sosial.

INTRODUCTION

The *Ruwatan* tradition constitutes one of the most prominent socio-religious rites in Javanese society. Etymologically, *ruwat* or *luwat* denotes “liberation” or “release.” Within the Javanese cultural framework, individuals or environments may enter a state of *sukerta*, a condition of impurity or heightened susceptibility to misfortune.¹ Historically, *Ruwatan* has been linked to the Murwakala myth, in which humans must be delivered from becoming the prey of *Batara Kala* through specific ritual practices. With the spread of Islam in Java, however, the tradition has undergone a notable process of cultural acculturation, integrating pre-Islamic symbolic structures with Islamic norms and interpretations.²

In Javanese society, the *Ruwatan* tradition is understood as a practice with specific purposes. A study by Aris Andriyanto Nugroho argues that the *Ruwatan Desa* in Gondangmanis, Kudus, serves an important function as a means of strengthening values of tolerance among community members.³ Another study by Nisa’ul Arzaqiyah explains that the *Ruwatan* tradition practiced in Manggihan Hamlet, Pasuruan, aims to eliminate misfortune, illness, or problems believed to result from bad karma or violations of prevailing customs and social norms.⁴ Meanwhile, T. M. Hari Lelono notes that one area near Mount Bromo, namely Pusungmalang Village, performs the *Ruwatan* tradition once a year as part of disaster mitigation efforts.⁵ In her research, Afifatur Rodiyah states that *Ruwatan* is a ritual conducted with the aim of attaining success and being freed from life’s misfortunes.⁶

The *Ruwatan Desa* practiced in Sukapura Village, Probolinggo Regency, presents a distinctive local expression of this broader tradition. While many Javanese communities perform *Ruwatan* as an annual customary event or as part of a general cleansing ritual (*Bersih Desa*), in Sukapura the ceremony is initiated only in response to extraordinary events that disrupt the socio-religious order—particularly cases of homicide.⁷ The homicide occurred on Tuesday, 3 September 2025, and was perpetrated by M (54) and DCW (21), residents of Krajan Hamlet, Resongo Village, Kuripan District. The victim, DDF (27), was a resident of Nogosaren Village, Gading District. DDF died as a result of machete attacks carried out by the perpetrators using sickles.⁸

From a Javanese cosmological perspective, the spilling of blood within a territory is believed to defile the sacred quality of the land and generate cosmological disequilibrium.⁹ An unnatural death (*mati pendhem*) is understood to produce collective trauma which, if left

¹ Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 38.

² Simuh, *Mistik Islam Kejawen Raden Ngabehi Ranggawarsita: Suatu Studi Terhadap Serat Centhini* (Jakarta: UI Press, 1988), 125.

³ Aris Indriyanto et al., “Tradisi Ruwatan Kudus Di Desa Gondangmanis: Mewujudkan Toleransi Dalam Bingkai Budaya,” *Educatum : Jurnal Dunia Pendidikan* 2, no. 2 (2025): 167–76.

⁴ Moh. Edy Marzuky Nisa’ul Arzaqiyah, “Praktik Ruwatan Sebagai Identitas Budaya Dusun Manggihan,” *J M K N: Jurnal Media Dan Komunikasi Nusantara* 1, no. 1 (2024): 1–9.

⁵ T M Hari Lelono, “Tradisi Ruwatan: Bersih Bumi Kearifan Lokal Dalam Mitigasi Bencana,” *Jurnal Berkala Arkeologi* 35, no. 2 (2015): 145–62.

⁶ Afifatur Rodiyah et al., “Tradisi Ruwatan Pada Prespektif Islam Masyarakat Demak Jawa Tengah,” *At-Tuhfah: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 13, no. 1 (2024): 1–15.

⁷ Denza Kurniawati Perdana, “Sadisnya Pembunuhan Pria Probolinggo Di Kios BBM Oleh Eks Mertua Istri,” *DetikJatim*, September 3, 2025.

⁸ Humas Polres, “Polres Probolinggo Amankan Ayah Dan Anak Tersangka Pembunuhan Maut Di Sukapura,” *Polres Pasuruan Kota.Com*, September 9, 2025.

⁹ Koentjaraningrat, *Kebudayaan Jawa* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1984).

unaddressed, may invite further misfortune upon the community. In a small rural setting such as Sukapura, murder is perceived not merely as a violation of criminal law but also as an act that contaminates the moral and spiritual integrity of communal space. Land that becomes the site of violence is thought to experience an energetic degradation capable of disturbing the psychological and spiritual well-being of its inhabitants. Accordingly, the *Ruwatan Desa* emerges as a collective purification effort aimed at restoring cosmic balance and cleansing the community from the defilement associated with the event. Without such ritual intervention, residents fear persistent anxiety and potential retributive forces from the surrounding natural or metaphysical environment.

The community's response to such incidents therefore gives rise to *Ruwatan Desa* as a mechanism of social healing. According to Turner, rituals serve as liminal processes that reintegrate the community in the aftermath of social fragmentation or crisis.¹⁰ The continuation of this ritual within a predominantly Muslim society reflects an enduring psychological and spiritual need for purification—one that cannot be satisfied solely through formal legal processes but requires culturally grounded practices to achieve communal restoration. The collective participation of villagers is thus critical, functioning as a shared therapeutic process for managing and overcoming communal trauma. In its implementation, the *Ruwatan Desa* tradition is carried out by customary leaders, religious figures, cultural and historical practitioners, and local residents, all of whom wear all-black attire. The core of the ceremony consists of the recitation of prayers for protection and well-being, which is subsequently concluded with a communal meal.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs an ethnographic method to explore the phenomenon of the *Ruwatan Desa* tradition in Sukapura in a comprehensive manner. In this context, the researcher seeks to capture the essence of the post-homicide ritual, which involves the symbolism of black attire and the integration of *Tahlil* prayers as a form of cultural syncretism. The research site was purposively selected in Sukapura Village, Probolinggo Regency, based on the unique characteristics of the local Muslim community, which continues to uphold situational *tolak bala* (misfortune-warding) traditions. Research informants were identified through snowball sampling, consisting of customary leaders, religious figures (*kyai*), village officials, and local residents. The involvement of these multiple elements aims to ensure that the data collected encompass both theological and cultural perspectives in a holistic manner.

Data were gathered through three primary techniques: participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Through participant observation, the researcher was directly involved in the ritual procession to observe its symbolic attributes and social interactions in order to understand the activities of the subjects within their natural settings).¹¹ In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted to elicit informants' subjective interpretations of

¹⁰ V W Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (London: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969).

¹¹ Barbara B Kawulich, "Participant Observation as a Data Collection Method," *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research* Vol 6 (December 30, 2005): and-Reuse, <https://doi.org/10.17169/FQS-6.2.466>.

ritual symbols.¹² Additionally, documentary studies-including village archives and local historical records were used to strengthen the data, particularly regarding events that triggered the performance of the *Ruwatan*.

Table 1: Informant profiles

No.	Name	Age	Role Related to the Research Topic	Position in the Community
1.	Ngatuno	60	Leader of the <i>Ruwatan Desa</i> ritual and custodian of local traditions	Customary leader / traditional elder
2.	Sailin	58	Provided religious interpretations of the ritual and its Islamic elements	Religious leader (<i>kiyai</i>)
3.	R. Hadi Brojo Sestro	45	Member of the organizing committee of the <i>Ruwatan Desa</i>	Community figure

To ensure data validity, the researcher employed triangulation techniques as recommended by Moleong (2014).¹³ Source triangulation was conducted by comparing the statements of customary leaders with those of religious figures, while methodological triangulation was carried out by cross-verifying data from interviews and field observations. The data were then analyzed using an interactive model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.¹⁴ Data reduction focused on information relevant to the forms, meanings, and functions of the *Ruwatan*, which were subsequently presented in a descriptive-analytical narrative. Through rigorous analysis, this study provides a comprehensive discussion of the *Ruwatan Desa* tradition.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Description of the *Ruwatan Desa* Procession in Sukapura

The *Ruwatan Desa* procession in Sukapura, Probolinggo, constitutes a collective ritual act performed with deep solemnity. Based on field observations, the procession is not merely ceremonial but consists of symbolically structured stages. The sequence of the ritual can be divided into four main phases: preparation and consolidation, *tahlilan* (the core ritual), symbolic cleansing (*kendi*), and the communal feast. The stages of the *Ruwatan Desa* ritual have remained remarkably consistent since the local community's conversion to Islam.¹⁵ Unlike coastal societies, which are often characterized by dynamic cultural transformation and adaptive change,¹⁶ highland communities such as those inhabiting the Sukapura region on the slopes of the Bromo-Tengger massif demonstrate a comparatively strong resistance to cultural alteration. Cultural change within Tengger society tends to occur primarily in response to shifts in the physical environment and broader socio-cultural pressures, particularly those associated with population growth and the adoption of new agricultural technologies.¹⁷

¹² N K Denzin and Y S Lincoln, *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Sage Publications (New York: Sage Publications, 2011), 393.

¹³ Lexy J Meleong, *Metologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 1989), 330.

¹⁴ Matthew B Miles, A Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, Edition 3 (Singapore: Sage, 2014), 31.

¹⁵ Ngatuno, "Interview," September 22, 2025.

¹⁶ Ulum Fasih, "Innovation and Advancement in Fishing Gear Technology by Coastal Islamic Communities in Lamongan BT - Proceedings of International Conference of Islamic Studies (ICONIS 2025)" (Atlantis Press, 2025), 231–45, https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-464-8_16.

¹⁷ Yayuk Yuliati, *Perubahan Ekologis Dan Strategi Adaptasi Masyarakat Di Wilayah Pegunungan Tengger* (Malang: Universitas Brawijaya Press, 2011).

Preparation and Social Consolidation

The initial stage begins with the gathering of village stakeholders at the Sukapura Village Hall. Those present include village elders, who serve as custodians of collective memory, community leaders, who act as formal representatives, and cultural and historical practitioners, who ensure the authenticity of the ritual. The presence of these diverse elements reflects a form of *collective consciousness*, as articulated by Durkheim (1912) through which the community unites to restore solidarity disrupted by the tragic event of the homicide.¹⁸

At this stage, ritual instruments are prepared with great care. The primary focus of the preparation involves the arrangement of *sesajen* (ritual offerings) and their accompanying symbolic items. Within the worldview of the Sukapura community, *sesajen* are no longer regarded as offerings to deities or spirits but function instead as expressions of respect for the cosmos and as visualized forms of prayer.¹⁹ This arrangement is placed at the central point of the Village Hall, symbolizing the spiritual coordination center of the community.²⁰



Source: Researcher's personal collection

Figure 1: The Arrangement of Ritual Offerings during the *Ruwatan Desa*, 22 September 2025, 3:00 p.m.



Source: Researcher's personal collection

Figure 2: The structuring of ritual materials in the *Ruwatan Desa*, 22 September 2025, 3:00 p.m.

Tahlil as The Core of the Ritual

After the physical preparations are completed, the ceremony proceeds to its central phase, namely the recitation of *Tahlil*. The use of *Tahlil* in this *Ruwatan* represents a transformation of ritual value—from “*mantra*” to “prayers of monotheism.” Amidst the silence and the all-black attire worn by the participants, the chanting of *kalimat thayyibah* creates a profoundly religious atmosphere. Within this context, *Tahlil* functions as a theological bridge

¹⁸ Émile Durkheim and Karen E Fields, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 201.

¹⁹ Suwardi Endraswara, *Mistik kejawan: sinkretisme, simbolisme, dan sufisme dalam budaya spiritual Jawa*, Cet. 2 (Yogyakarta: Narasi, 2003), 67.

²⁰ Sailin, “Interview,” September 22, 2025.

that legitimizes local tradition under the umbrella of Islam. According to Woodward (1989) the integration of Islamic prayers into Javanese rites serves to neutralize elements considered incompatible with Islamic law, thereby rendering the ritual a form of “prayer offering” (*sedekah doa*) for the protection and well-being of the village.²¹



Source: Researcher's personal collection

Figure 3: The ritual leader recites incantations and prayers, 22 September 2025, 4:00 p.m.



Source: Researcher's personal collection

Figure 4: The ritual leader recites the *Tahlil* prayer, 22 September 2025, 4:00 p.m.

Purification Ritual: The Breaking of *Kendi* and Closing Prayers

The culmination of the *Ruwatan* procession is marked by the symbolic act of breaking a *kendi* filled with water and seven types of flowers. Semiotically, the breaking of *kendi* signifies the dissolution of social stagnation and the cleansing of the “impurities” or post-homicide traumatized that has haunted the village. The water and the seven-flower mixture (*kembang setaman*) symbolize the community's hope for the restoration of fragrance-representing honor and purity for Sukapura Village.

Koentjaraningrat (1984) explains that the element of water in Javanese ritual is consistently associated with the concept of purification.²² The shattering of *kendi* thus becomes a psychological turning point for the villagers, as all *balak* (misfortune or malevolent forces) are believed to dissipate along with the breaking of the vessel and the spilling of its contents onto the earth. The procession then concludes with a final prayer led by a religious leader, invoking divine protection from Allah SWT so that similar tragedies will not recur.

²¹ Mark Rhey Woodward, *Islam in Java: Normative Piety and Mysticism in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta*, *The Association for Asian Studies Monograph CN* (Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1989), 162.

²² Koentjaraningrat, *Kebudayaan Jawa*, 345.



Source: Researcher's personal collection

Figure 5: The ritual leader breaks a *Kendi* filled with water and flowers, 22 September 2025, 4:30 p.m.



Source: Researcher's personal collection

Figure 6: The ritual leader recites the closing prayer, 22 September 2025, 4:30 p.m.

Communal Feast: Restoration of Harmony

As the final stage of the ritual sequence, a communal meal or *kenduri* is held. The food prepared for the ceremony is distributed and shared among all participants. This stage constitutes a crucial social function of the *Ruwatan*. The act of eating together symbolizes the restoration of harmony and fraternity among the villagers.²³ In anthropological terms, such a feast represents commensality, a practice that strengthens social bonds and dissolves emotional barriers following a crisis. With the conclusion of the communal meal, the people of Sukapura symbolically declare their readiness to move forward and leave behind the darkness associated with the traumatic event.²⁴



Source: Researcher's personal collection

Figure 7: Food prepared for the communal feast, 22 September 2025, 5:00 p.m.

²³ Ngatuno, "Interview."

²⁴ R. Hadi Brojo Sestro, "Interview," September 22, 2025.

Symbolic Meaning Analysis: Inner Narrative and Theological Transformation

“Interpreting the symbols embedded in the *Ruwatan Desa* of Sukapura requires a deep understanding of Javanese-Islamic cosmology. Symbols function as ‘vehicles’ of meaning that mediate between physical reality and spiritual aspiration.²⁵ Within this ritual, every material element present carries a communicative function aimed at neutralizing the traumatized of the post-killing event.”

Black Clothing: A Symbol of Affliction and Collective Resolve

The use of all-black attire by participants constitutes one of the most prominent symbolic elements. Universally, black is often associated with mourning, however, in the context of Sukapura, its meaning extends further as an expression of *prihatin* or social asceticism. Black signifies *Nafsu Lawwamah* in Javanese Sufism, referring to the state of self-reproach and awareness of one’s own moral shortcomings.²⁶

The choice of this color reflects the emotional atmosphere of a community “in mourning” for the loss of life that has occurred on their land. Sociologically, the uniformity of black garments produces a form of mechanical solidarity,²⁷ in which social distinctions among villagers are dissolved into a single collective identity seeking divine protection. Black is also understood as an absorber of negative energies, by wearing it, the community expresses a conscious effort to empty themselves of arrogance and humbly seek forgiveness from Allah.

Sesaji of Rice and Whole Chicken (*Ingkung*): A Symbol of Sincerity and Total Submission

The presence of rice accompanied by a whole chicken, or *ingkung*, carries a deeply rooted philosophical significance. The term *ingkung* is often derived from the Javanese words *jinakung* or *manekung*, which denote the act of offering prayers with full concentration or prostrating in humility.²⁸ The whole chicken served in a crouching position symbolizes the human posture of total submission before the Divine.

Within the Javanese-Islamic worldview, the whole chicken represents sacrifice and almsgiving. The use of a chicken-typically a rooster-signifies the effort to subdue the “animalistic” impulses or the *nafsu amarah* (wrathful passions) that may give rise to violence, including acts such as murder. By offering *ingkung* in this ritual, the people of Sukapura symbolically ask to be protected from cruelty and destructive impulses, while seeking divine blessing for a livelihood that is both lawful and pure (*halal* and *thoyyib*).

The Bunga Tujuh Rupa: Purification and the Fragrance of Prayer

The *bunga tujuh rupa*, or mixed ceremonial flowers (*kembang setaman*-typically roses, jasmine, *kantil*, *kenanga*, and others) placed in a water-filled *kendi*, function as a medium of purification. The number seven (*pitu*) in Javanese philosophy is closely associated with *pitulungan*, meaning divine assistance. The community believes that through this ritual mediation, Allah will bestow seven forms of protection to cleanse the village from the “bloody stain” and traumatic residue of the murder that occurred.

The flowers also symbolize the restoration of the village’s “fragrance”-its good name-

²⁵ Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, 126.

²⁶ Woodward, *Islam in Java: Normative Piety and Mysticism in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta*, 216.

²⁷ Durkheim and Fields, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 348.

²⁸ Endraswara, *Mistik kejawan: sinkretisme, simbolisme, dan sufisme dalam budaya spiritual Jawa*, 112.

which had been tarnished by the violent event. As explained by Koentjaraningrat (1984), flower-infused water in Javanese rituals is not merely an inert object but a symbol of sacred life.²⁹ Sprinkling or shattering this flower water signifies the dissolution of all *sukerta* (impurities or misfortunes) within the community, enabling the village to regain a state of serenity and harmony (*ayem tentrem*).

Traditional *Jajanan*: Symbols of Diversity and Gratitude

The presence of various traditional snacks (*jajan pasar*) symbolizes the social diversity within the Sukapura community. The assortment of snacks-with their differing forms and flavors-represents the idea that although villagers come from diverse backgrounds, they share a unified purpose: the safety and welfare of the village. These traditional snacks also reflect agricultural abundance and express gratitude for the continuous movement of the local economy.

Theologically, the inclusion of *jajan pasar* in the offerings embodies the Qur'anic injunction to express gratitude for God's blessings (Qur'an 14:7). The community no longer regards these snacks as offerings to supernatural beings, instead, they view them as a collective expression of gratitude, which will later be consumed together as a symbol of shared blessing.³⁰ This illustrates that the *Ruwatan* tradition in Sukapura has undergone a process of Islamic value crystallization, wherein cultural symbols are preserved while the essence of devotion remains directed solely toward the One Almighty God.

Functional Analysis: *Ruwatan* as an Instrument of Social Healing

The murder incident in Sukapura generated psychological wounds and social fractures within the community. In this context, the *Ruwatan Desa* serves a crucial function as an instrument of social healing. Sociologically, an act of violence occurring in the village's public sphere produces a sense of insecurity and mutual suspicion among residents. The ritual operates as a means to restore the "soul" of the village-perceived as being in a state of illness-through mechanisms of collective purification.

Collective Catharsis and the Release of Traumatized

The ritual of breaking the earthen jug and the use of black attire function as mediums of collective catharsis. As Turner (1969) argues, ritual enables a community to externalize negative emotions-fear, grief, and anger-within a structured and sacred framework.³¹ By gathering and performing synchronized ritual actions, the people of Sukapura are, perhaps unconsciously, engaging in a form of group therapy. The visual trauma left by the murder is gradually replaced by a calming spiritual experience through the recitation of *Tahlil*.

Restoration of Social Solidarity (*Communitas*)

Following a criminal incident, social structures typically experience heightened tension. The *Ruwatan* compels all segments of the community-from village officials to ordinary residents-to sit together in an egalitarian position, forming a state of community. The communal meal that follows the ritual becomes a moment of reconciliation. From a Durkheimian functionalist perspective,³² ritual works to reinforce the community's

²⁹ Koentjaraningrat, *Kebudayaan Jawa*, 348.

³⁰ Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern "Ulamā" in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, Asian Studies Association of Australia (Crows Nest Honolulu: Allen & Unwin University of Hawai press, 2004), 92.

³¹ Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, 126.

³² Durkheim and Fields, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 347.

mechanical solidarity. By sharing food from the same dishes, the people of Sukapura symbolically renew their commitment to mutual protection and to ending the conflict or trauma that had occurred.

Social Control and Future Prevention

Beyond its healing function, the *Ruwatan* also operates as a form of moral reminder an instrument of social control. The ritual conveys a powerful message to villagers that acts of violence carry profound spiritual and social consequences for the entire community. The *Ruwatan* thus becomes a collective “alarm” for safeguarding communal harmony. As noted by Soekanto (2012) rituals in traditional societies often serve to reinforce normative values that have been violated.³³ In Sukapura, the *Ruwatan* ultimately transforms the tragedy into an opportunity for strengthening faith and communal unity through a nexus of religiously infused local wisdom.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that the *Ruwatan Desa* tradition in Sukapura, Probolinggo, represents a unique manifestation of the dialectical relationship between Javanese local wisdom and Islamic values. This tradition does not emerge as a routine calendrical ceremony but rather as a situational response to collective traumatized following a murder incident. The homicide occurred on 3 September 2025; therefore, the *Ruwatan Desa* ritual was held on 22 September 2025.

Its distinctive ritual features—marked by the wearing of all-black attire, the arrangement of symbolically laden offerings, and the integration of *Tahlil* prayers—demonstrate a highly developed process of cultural hybridization. Black clothing functions not merely as a symbol of mourning but as an expression of spiritual austerity (*prihatin*) and the community’s earnest supplication for divine protection. The value transformation occurring in Sukapura shows that local traditions can continue to exist without conflicting with Islamic doctrine through a process of theological reinterpretation. The community successfully shifts the ritual’s essence from practices once associated with animism to a form of cultural *dakwah*. In this context, offerings are positioned as “visualized prayers” and acts of charity, while *Tahlil* serves as the primary spiritual authority that purifies the ritual’s intention toward *tauhid*. This process allows the community to preserve its cultural identity while simultaneously strengthening its position as a devout Muslim society.

Functionally, the *Ruwatan Desa* has proven to be an effective instrument of social healing. The ritual provides a space for catharsis, enabling residents to release anxieties and negative stigma that emerged in the aftermath of the violent event. Through mechanisms of community in the communal meal and collective prayer, social fractures are repaired and village harmony restored. The findings of this study affirm that the *Ruwatan Desa* of Sukapura is not merely a relic of the past, but a dynamic form of social resilience that maintains balance between human relations, the natural world, and the Divine.

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