

Continuity and change process to sanctify the holy month of Muharram in the Suroan tradition

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ABSTRACT

Sacralizing the holy month of Muharram in Java or Suroan tradition (because Muharram is called Suro in the Islamic Javanese Calendar) is unique. However, the historical process of sanctification of Muharram and its rituals have not been studied in depth. This library research focused on the historical process of continuity and change in the Suroan. It used relevant references to make a historical explanation through the theory of continuity and change that confirms the dynamic power of Islam in dealing with various situations. It is also guided by the perspective of Miles and Huberman in data selection, data presentation, and conclusion. Finally, this paper revealed that the unchanging religious aspect in the Suroan is represented by the religious spirit of sanctifying Muharram, which has not changed from the pre-Islamic period to the present. The changing aspect is demonstrated by specific rituals commemorating the month of Muharram, manifested in its obligations and prohibitions to gain salvation and avoid bad luck. It began on 8 July 1633 AD (1 Muharram 1043 AH) with converting of the Hinduistic Saka Calendar into the Islamic Javanese Calendar by the King of Islamic Mataram, Sultan Agung, after integrating it with the Islamic Hijri Calendar. This paper asserts that the continuity and change process in the Suroan occurred through the acculturation of Islam and Javanese culture because of the openness of Islamic teachings and the adaptability of Javanese culture to external elements.

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1. Introduction

Islam has a Hijri Lunar Calendar of twelve months, namely Muharram, Safar, Rabi'ul Awwal, Rabi'ul Akhir, Jumadal Ula, Jumadal Akhirah, Rajab, Sha'ban, Ramadan, Shawwal, Dzulqad'ah, and Dzulhijjah. According to the guidance of Islamic teachings, the month of Muharram is a glorious month, as explained by Allah Almighty in the Qur'an, al-Taubah [9], verse 36. The hadith of the Prophet, narrated by Imam al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim, where the Prophet on Hajj Wada' said that the times had swirled as they were on the day when Allah created the heavens and the earth, in a year there are twelve months, of which there are four *haram* (forbidden/sacred) months, three of which are Dzulqad'ah, Dzulhijjah, and Muharram. Rajab is the month of Mudhar found between Jumadal Akhirah and Sha'ban (Al-Ahsani, 2019; Bearman et al., 2023).

The Arabs had honored the month of Muharram before the arrival of Islamic teachings through the Prophet Muhammad. They held poetry competitions in various *Aswaq al-Arab* (markets of the Arabs), such as the 'Ukazh, the Majinnah, and the Dzulmajaz. The poetry festival was held in the sacred months, namely Dzulqad'ah, Dzulhijjah, Muharram, and Rajab, which coincided with the pilgrimage and trade activities. The Arabs avoided bloodshed or wars during these holy months. However, tribal conflicts and

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wars still occurred due to their excessive tribal fanaticism, such as wars called *Ayyam al-Fijar*, namely wars in the holy months between the Kinanah Tribe and the Hawazin Tribe, the Quraysh Tribe and the Hawazin Tribe, the Kinanah Tribe and the Hawazin Tribe, as well as the Quraysh Tribe and the Kinanah Tribe against the Hawazin Tribe (Al-Ahsani, 2019; Bearman et al., 2023).

The Prophet strongly encouraged his devotees to observe the *sunnah* (prescribed) fasting on the 10th of Muharram because the reward of fasting could wash away sins for one year. The Prophet said, 'The foremost fasting after the month of Ramadan is fasting in the month of Allah, which is Muharram, and the foremost prayer after the compulsory prayer is the evening prayer'. It is mentioned in another hadith that the Messenger of Allah was asked about the virtues of fasting Ashura on the 10th of Muharram. Then the Messenger of Allah said that the fasting Ashura could wash away past year's sins (Al-Ahsani, 2019; Usmani, 2000). The month of Muharram is the beginning of the Islamic Hijri Calendar. Muslims around the world have always held Islamic New Year commemorations. The establishment of the Hijri Calendar as the calendar of Muslims was the policy of Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khatthab based on an important event in Islamic history, namely the hijra of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina, which coincided with the year 622 AD. At that time, it is mentioned that the Prophet arrived in Medina on the 12th of Rabi'ul Awwal in the year 1 AH on 27 September 622 AD (Al-Mubarakfuri, 2007) or 24 September 622 AD in another opinion (Hitti & Thomas, 1938; Skinner, 1938; Watt, 1988).

As a religion of da'wah, Islam is a religion that commands all its adherents (Muslims) to spread the revelation of God to all humankind. Many verses of the Qur'an and the Prophet hadiths affirm the importance of Islamic da'wah. Then, the Islamic religion was followed by Muslims in various parts of the world and became one of the religions with large numbers of adherents alongside Jews and Christians. Islam was spread in Indonesia through several channels, such as trade, marriage, mysticism, art, and education (Hasymi, 1993; Hureri & Rehman, 2022; Muyasaroh et al., 2020; Poesponegoro, 1992; Saleh et al., 2022; Yani et al., 2022). Trade activities of the VII century AD to XVI AD played a significant role in Islamization because Muslims did not separate trade activities and the obligation to indict the teachings of Islam (Azra, 1994; Michalopoulos et al., 2018; Suryanegara, 2009). In addition, there was also a process of Islamization through the delivery of military aid, as happened in the Islamization of the Banjar Kingdom (Daliman, 2012; Miranti & Ayundasari, 2021).

The spread of Islam in Southeast Asia was generally pursued peacefully so that the religiosity of the majority of Indonesian Muslims was moderate (Azra, 1994). Nusantara (or Indonesia) is a Southeast Asian region influenced by Islam, including the Javanese people. Some authors have researched the influence of Islam on various aspects of Javanese life. The process of penetrating the influence of Islam into Javanese society became stronger after gaining the full support of the Muslim rulers in Java with political policies that encouraged the spread of Islam and also protected adherents of Islam, as was done by Sultan Agung Hanyakrakusuma, the ruler of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom from 1613 to 1645, who achieved the glory of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom (de Graaf, 1958; Maharsi, 2016; Ricklefs, 1998). Muslims in Java have distinctive characteristics as a manifestation of a combination of Islamic normative teachings and their Javanese local culture, such as the sacralization of Muharram on Java Island. However, there is no in-depth research on the historical process of continuity and change in the religious rituals practiced by the Javanese people to sanctify Muharram.

2. Literature review

Previous studies tended to discuss the holiness of Muharram generally (Al-Ahsani, 2019; Bekbabayi & Bařar, 2020; Dogra, 2019; Hassibi & Sayadabdi, 2019; Zarifpooya et al., 2021) or analyze the events of Ashura (Blanco & Cuadros, 2021; Deeb, 2005; Hamdar, 2021; Norton, 2005; Parkes, 2021), and describe Karbala tragedy related to the murder of Husain ibn 'Ali, grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (Hejazi, 2022; McMurray, 2021; Mousavi, 2022; Rolston, 2020; Szanto, 2013) along with its religious traditions in various regions of the world, including in Indonesia (Emha et al., 2019; Japarudin, 2017; Lubis et al., 2023; Miswar et al., 2022; Nurbaeti & Samsuddin, 2023; Rini, 2010; Rochmiatun, 2014; Sufyan & Amin, 2021).

The month of Muharram in Javanese tradition has a unique name, i.e. the month of Suro, because it is associated with religious events on the 10th of Muharram or Ashura (Aryanti, 2020; Geertz, 1990; Musonnif, 2017). The discussion of the holy Suro has always been associated with Javanese religious problems and the Islamic Mataram Kingdom, which have been studied in various researches according to their focuses. Syamsul Bakri wrote *Islam Kejawen: Agama dalam Kesejarahan Kultur Lokal*. According to him, *Islam Kejawen* belongs to the Javanese sub-culture. The term 'Javanese' usually refers to the culture and traditions of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom in Surakarta and Yogyakarta, which includes the Kasunanan, the Mangkunegaran, the Kesultanan, and the Pakualaman (Bakri, 2014).

Muhammad Adlin Sila wrote *Memahami Spektrum Islam di Jawa* in his review of a book entitled *Islamic Spectrum in Java*, written by Timothy Daniels in 2009. According to him, Javanese Islamic studies were greatly helped by the work of Clifford Geertz entitled *Religion of Java* in 1960, which explained the socio-religious categories of Javanese Islam into *Santri*, *Priyayi*, and *Abangan*. Geertz's opinion later became a reference for many writers who discussed the development of the Islamic religion in Indonesia. However, in 1989 Mark Woodward criticized Geertz in his work entitled *Islam in Java*. He said that De Graff and Ricklefs had explained the situation of Java in the XVI and XVII centuries AD. Javanese Islam is not a deviation from orthodox religious Islam. Javanese Islam is a variant of Islam with its uniqueness that absorbs aspects of pre-Islamic culture and religion from Hindu-Buddhist heritage (Geertz, 1990; Ricklefs, 2006; Sila, 2011; Woodward, 1989).

Then Maharsi discussed the Kingdom of Mataram during the reign of Sultan Agung in his article entitled *Sultan Agung Simbol Kejayaan Kasultanan Islam Jawa in Jurnal Riset Daerah*. According to him, Sultan Agung succeeded in making the Kingdom of Mataram the largest Islamic kingdom in Java by trying to implement Islamic teachings harmonized with the Javanese customs and culture, as done by Sunan Kalijaga. Sultan Agung established the Penghulu institution to regulate the religious life in the Mataram region, such as implementing prayers, religious ceremonies, etc. Sultan Agung provided religious and social guidance through his works in *Kitab Surya Alam* and *Kitab Sastra Gending*. In addition, Sultan Agung established the conversion of the Hinduistic Saka Calendar to the Islamic Javanese Calendar through the integration of the Saka Calendar with the Hijri Calendar system in 1555 Saka, 1043 AH, or 1633 AD (Maharsi, 2016).

Agus Susilo and Yeni Asmara wrote *Sultan Agung Hanyakrakusuma dan Eksistensi Kesultanan Mataram*. According to them, Sultan Agung wanted to unify Javanese society under the rule of the Kingdom of Mataram so that East Java, Central Java, and parts of West Java could be controlled by the king of Islamic Mataram entitled Sultan Agung Hanyakrakusuma. Expansion continued when Sultan Agung tried to subdue the Kingdom of Banten and control Batavia. Although his expansion was unsuccessful, the leadership of Sultan Agung was recognized as the glorious period of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom (Susilo, 2020). In connection with implementing the Javanese Islamic Calendar, there is an article entitled *Genealogi Kalender Islam Jawa menurut Ronggowarsito* written by Ahmad Musonnif. According to him, *Serat Widya Pradhana* by Ronggowarsito presents historical information that the pioneer of the Javanese Islamic Calendar was not Sultan Agung of the Mataram Kingdom in 1555 Saka (1633 AD) because the Javanese Islamic Calendar has existed since Sunan Giri II in 1443 Saka (1450 AD) in the era of the Demak Kingdom. The political conflict between the Islamic Mataram Kingdom and Giri Kedaton also colored the conversion of the calendar. Therefore, it can be stated that the history of the Javanese Islamic Calendar had cultural and religious nuances that also related to political conflicts among fellow Islamic kingdoms (Musonnif, 2017).

Historical studies indicated several changes to sanctify the month of Muharram among Muslims, including the uniqueness of the sacralization of Muharram in Javanese Muslims. However, the historical process of sanctification of Muharram and its modified rituals made to Javanese religious ceremonies have not been well studied. This research aims to explain the Suroan tradition within the Islamic Mataram Kingdom, which consists of the two cities of Yogyakarta and Surakarta. This research is beneficial for studying the dialectic relation between Islamic normative teachings and local Javanese culture in Indonesia. This research fills the gap in the academic studies related to the phenomenon of continuity and change in the sanctification of Muharram through the historical explanation of the chronological process of continuity and change to analyze what aspects of Islamic religion continue to exist and what aspects have changed in the Javanese Suroan tradition.

3. Methods

This research focused on the historical continuity and change process in Javanese Suroan rituals to sanctify the month of Muharram (or the month of Suro in the Islamic Javanese Calendar). This study used the historical method to reconstruct past events related to the main problem (Gottschalk, 1985) by selecting a research topic, collecting historical sources (heuristics), interpreting results, and writing a conclusion (Kuntowijoyo, 1997) to make an objective, scientific, and accountable historiography (Wilmoth, 1982). This qualitative research used relevant references based on searching literature data to make historical explanations through critical analysis using continuity and change theory. The historical periodization is arranged according to the focus of the problem as a basis for data collection and research references, namely the Pre-Islamic period, the period of the Prophet and four Caliphs, the period after the tragedy of Karbala, and the period of Sultan Agung to the present. The author used *the Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Bearman et al., 2023), *al-Mufashshal fi Tarikh al-'Arab qabla al-Islam* (Ali, 1993), and other references (Al-Ahsani, 2019; Gibb, 1962; Northedge, 2008; Syalabi, 1984) to examine the sacralization of the holy Muharram.

However, due to limited access to Javanese primary sources as well as Dutch government records contemporaneous with the research theme, this research shifted its reference to secondary sources written by historical experts who have referred to primary sources of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom era, for example, the works of Hermanus Johannes de Graaf and Theodoor Gautier Thomas Pigeaud (de Graaf, 2020; de Graaf & Pigeaud, 1976). In addition, the references are specifically related to the history and rituals of the Javanese Suroan tradition, especially among the people of Yogyakarta and Surakarta, as a representation of the center of Javanese Islamic culture (Rini, 2010).

This qualitative research analysis is guided by the perspective of Miles and Huberman, which includes data selection, data presentation, and conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Then, this library research provided a historical explanation (Rofiq, 2023; Sjamsuddin, 2007) in the research focus outlining historical aspects of the continuity and change process. Indeed, acculturation and integration between Islam and local culture are beneficial for universal Islamic values to continue and accommodate elements of local culture based on the perspective of continuity and change theory. This phenomenon confirms the dynamic power of Islam in dealing with the diversity of various situations and conditions that accompany the history of Islam and Muslims from time to time (Ishom, 2023; Voll, 2019).

4. Results

4.1. Conversion of Hinduistic Saka Calendar to Islamic Javanese Calendar

Islam allegedly began to enter Java Island before the XIII century AD. The oldest centers of Islam included Gresik, as evidenced by old Islamic tombs, such as the tombs of Fatimah binti Maimun (a Muslim woman who died in 1082 AD) and Maulana Malik Ibrahim (a Muslim saint who died in 1419 AD). Similarly, Surabaya, with the existence of the empress of Brawijaya (King of Majapahit), named Darawati, a Muslim Princess of Campa, died in 1448 AD. Darawati had a nephew named Raden Rahmat, who later became Sunan Ampel and spread Islam in Ampel Denta (Surabaya). The northern coastal areas of Java Island, such as Gresik, Tuban, and Jepara, were ports crowded with foreign traders. Furthermore, the spread of Islam accelerated with the establishment of the Demak Kingdom led by Raden Fattah (son of Brawijaya, King of Majapahit) and the expertise of preachers known as Walisongo (nine saints of Islam) so that the Islamization movement expanded to various islands in Indonesia (Saksono, 1995; Sunyoto, 2016).

The Walisongo Council, which consisted of nine Islamic preachers, had an orderly division of duties in the struggle for Islamic proselytizing. The number nine represented the number of wind directions (north, northeast, east, southeast, south, southwest, west, northwest) and the center of the wind direction. The Walisongo implemented a thoughtful and persuasive proselytizing strategy in the Nusantara archipelago (Anita, 2014; Saksono, 1995; Sunyoto, 2016). Then, Javanese society was socially religiously classified into the *Santri* and *Abangan* groups. Most of the Javanese people did convert to Islam, but there was a diversity in the practice of Islamic teachings (Muchtarm, 1975). The religious practices of *Abangan* group

tended to be colored by the integration of animistic, Hinduistic, and Islamic elements so that they were syncretic. The religious practice of the *Santri* group was more prominent in its level of discipline in implementing the guidance of the Islamic religion than the *Abangan* group. A third group was called *Priyayi*, with a bureaucratically high position and Hindu-Buddhist religious practices (Geertz, 1990; Ricklefs, 2007; Zubair, 2015). Some people still maintained the tradition of Buddhism and Hinduism, while others were puritanical Muslims (*Santri*). Thus, the division of Javanese society generally was *Priyayi-Abangan* and *Santri-Putih* (Effendy, 2003; Moser, 2006; Ricklefs, 1998, 2014).

The *Santri* group were pious Muslims who embraced Islam earnestly and meticulously carried out the commandments of the Islamic religion and cleansed their creeds from deeds of *shirk* to God or polytheism. Meanwhile, the *Abangan* group was pinned on Muslims who paid little attention to Islamic religious orders and lacked discipline in fulfilling Islamic religious obligations. Their names used Muslim names, but Javanese pre-Islamic traditions still widely controlled their way of life. These traditions focused on mixing Islamic, Buddhist, Hinduistic, and Javanese elements as Javanese syncretism so that it was often referred to as the religion of Java (or *Kejawen*). Contrary to the *Abangan* group, the *Santri* group was also called the white group. This group was called *Putihan* (whiteness) because they wore all-white clothes and white *kopyah* (hat). Even in Surakarta, there was Keputihan Village or Mutihan Village, where most residents were religiously observant (Geertz, 1990; Muchtarom, 1975; Wertheim & Geertz, 1963). The *Putihan* and *Abangan* groups both glorified the month of Muharram. This sacralization was fully supported by the Islamic Mataram government so that the Javanese people greatly glorified the holy Muharram, evidenced by unique traditions that combined Islamic culture and religious teachings. The history of Islam in Java proved the role of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom led by Sultan Agung in strengthening the sacred tradition of Muharram.

The Mataram Kingdom was established independently after the end of the Demak Kingdom and the Pajang Kingdom. Raden Fattah founded the Demak Kingdom in 1475. He demolished the Hindu-Javanese Kingdom of Majapahit in 1478 without destroying its capital. He appointed Dyah Ranawijaya Girindrawardhana as regent of Majapahit, a subordinate of Demak until 1527. Then, Demak destroyed Majapahit because Majapahit cooperated with the Portuguese invaders, enemies of Demak. The influence of Islam changed various aspects of society. Apotheosis to the king disappeared, the making of temples of worship was stopped, the art of sculptural ornamentation was limited only to the image of vegetation, and the stratification of the caste system was abolished. However, some people still declared their Islam while maintaining the Hinduistic teachings they inherited from their ancestors and giving rise to *Kejawen* Islam. Adipati Unus (son of Raden Fattah), who had been in power since 1518, had attempted to attack the Portuguese in Malacca but failed and died in 1521. Then Adipati Unus was succeeded by Sultan Trenggana, his brother. The conflict occurred when Sultan Trenggana died in 1546. During the reign of Trenggana, the Demak Kingdom achieved the advancement of the political power territory through its expansion and the spread of Islam in the Nusantara (de Graaf & Pigeaud, 1976; Muljana, 2005).

Sunan Prawata (son of Trenggana), who killed Prince Seda Ing Lepen (brother of Sultan Trenggana), succeeded Trenggana in 1546. Then, Arya Penangsang (son of Prince Seda Ing Lepen), who became the Duke of Jipang, demanded revenge for his father's death. He attacked Demak and killed Sunan Prawata in 1549. Furthermore, the battle occurred between Arya Penangsang and Jaka Tingkir (son-in-law of Sultan Trenggana), who became the Duke of Pajang. Jaka Tingkir, whose genealogy also connected to Brawijaya, the King of Majapahit, was finally able to defeat Arya Penangsang with the help of Ki Ageng Pemanahan, Sutawijaya, and Ki Juru Martani who received prizes for the Mataram region and Ki Ageng Panjawi who received prizes for the region of Pati (de Graaf & Pigeaud, 1976). Then, the Pajang Kingdom was established and led by Jaka Tingkir, with the title Sultan Adiwijaya or Hadiwijaya in 1549. At that time, Jaka Tingkir did not declare himself the ruler of the Demak Kingdom. He continued his rule in Pajang as the center of his political power. He expanded his political influence on Java Island, replacing the Demak Kingdom, which had collapsed and became his vassal territory. In 1581, Jaka Tingkir gained recognition from other Muslim rulers in the East Java region after the approval of Sunan Giri II (Purwanto, 2017).

Ki Ageng Pemanahan headed Mataram and was exceedingly loyal to Sultan Adiwijaya. However, after the death of Ki Ageng Pemanahan in 1575, Sutawijaya succeeded his father and prepared Mataram for release from the Pajang government, despite being warned by Ki Juru Martani. In 1582, on his way to

attack Mataram, Sultan Adiwijaya suffered from illness, and the troops of Pajang stopped at Prambanan. They returned to Pajang. It was at this time that Sultan Adiwijaya died. Prince Banawa (Duke of Jipang and son of Sultan Adiwijaya by his concubine wife) then defeated Duke of Demak (son-in-law of Sultan Adiwijaya) with the help of Sutawijaya. The Pajang Kingdom eventually collapsed because Sutawijaya declared the Mataram Kingdom in 1586 and made Pajang his vassal territory. Sutawijaya (whose title was Panembahan Senapati Ing Alaga, Sayyidin Panatagama) immediately expanded his territory by attempting to conquer other areas in Java until he died in 1601. The next government was held by Panembahan Seda Ing Krapyak (son of Senapati Ing Alaga), who ruled until he died in 1613. The glory of the Mataram government culminated in the leadership of Sultan Agung. This third king continued territorial expansion, as did the two predecessor kings. His outstanding achievement was obtained after conquering the Kingdom of Surabaya in 1625, although his attempts in 1628 and 1629 to conquer Batavia or Jakarta (occupied by Dutch colonizers) were unsuccessful (de Graaf, 1958).

Then, on Friday, 8 July 1633, after making a pilgrimage to the Tomb of Tembayat, Sultan Agung changed the Hinduistic Saka Calendar to the Islamic Javanese Calendar. This religious and political policy was an Islamic awareness (de Graaf, 2020; Musonnif, 2017; Nisa', 2021; Ricklefs, 1998, 2019). The Saka Calendar was a solar calendar based on the circulation of the sun whose calculations began on 15 March 78 AD (Azhari & Ibrahim, 2008). The Hijri Calendar was a lunar calendar based on the moon movement established during the reign of Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khaththab based on the hijra of the Prophet Muhammad and Muslims from Mecca to Medina in 622 AD. The Islamic Javanese Calendar was an officially established calendar of Sultan Agung in the Mataram Kingdom. However, it was said that the Islamic Javanese calendar started with Sunan Giri II in 931 Hijri or 1443 Saka (1450 AD) during the Demak Kingdom. The Islamic Javanese Calendar was calculated as the lunar Hijri Calendar, but the order of the years continued the Saka Calendar and was divided into every eight years, called Sewindu. The following is the order of the months in the Saka Calendar, Islamic Hijri Calendar, and Islamic Javanese Calendar (Azhari & Ibrahim, 2008; Fauzan, 2016; Masruhan, 2017; Nisa', 2021; Rosalina, 2013).

Figure 1 shows the conversion of the Hinduistic Saka Calendar to the Javanese Islamic Calendar after gaining the influence of the Islamic Hijri Calendar with the specificity of its modification.

Figure 2 shows that the traditions of the pre-Islamic period were passed on by the Islamic religion brought by the Prophet Muhammad. In the pre-Islamic period, several *Hunafa'* (followers of true monotheistic religion) defended the teachings of Prophet Abraham. The pilgrimage to Mecca has been a religious ritual since Prophet Abraham. This Hajj was always carried out until now. Besides, commemorating the holy Muharram with the prohibition of warfare in the month of Muharram aimed to provide security in implementing the pilgrimage to the holy land. During the period of the Prophet Muhammad (570–632 AD) and the reign of al-Khulafa'ur Rashidun (632–661 AD), the Muslim people always continued the religious tradition. The holiness of the month of Muharram was shown in the guidance of the Qur'an and hadith (Al-Ahsani, 2019; Ali, 1993; Bearman et al., 2023; Syalabi, 1984). But after the killing of Husain ibn 'Ali at Karbala on the 10th of Muharram 61 AH (10 October 680 AD) in a battle with the Umayyad army,

No	Hinduistic Saka Calendar	Islamic Hijri Calendar	Islamic Javanese Calendar
1	Chaitra	Muharram	Suro
2	Vaisakha	Safar	Sapar
3	Jyaishtha	Rabi'ul Awwal	Mulud
4	Ashadha	Rabi'ul Akhir	Bakdomulud
5	Srawana	Jumadil Awwal	Jumadil Awal
6	Bhadra	Jumadil Akhir	Jumadil Akir
7	Ashvina/Asuji	Rajab	Rejeb
8	Kartika	Sya'ban	Ruwah
9	Margasirsa/Agrahayana	Ramadhan	Poso
10	Pausha	Syawwal	Sawal
11	Magha	Dzulqa'dah	Selo
12	Phalgun	Dzulhijjah	Besar

Figure 1. Hinduistic Saka Calendar, Islamic Hijri Calendar, and Islamic Javanese Calendar.

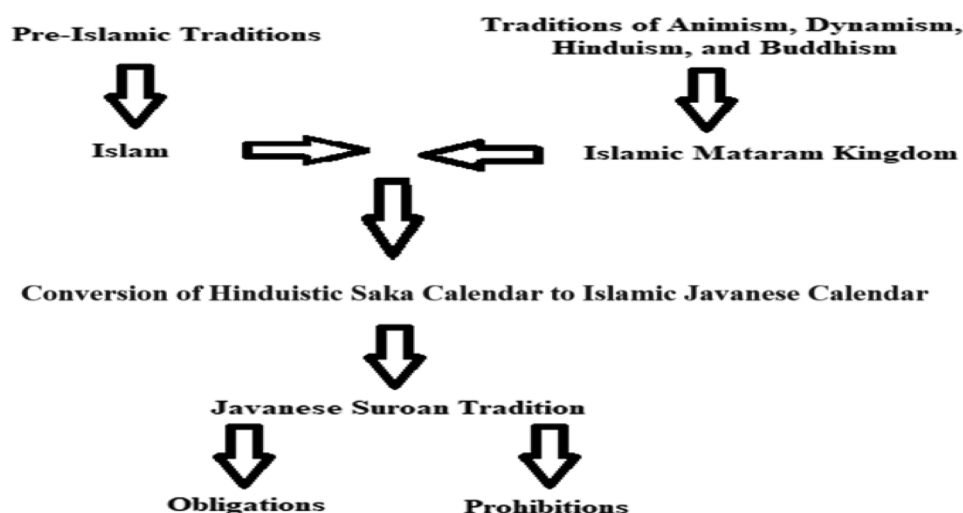


Figure 2. Process of continuity and change in sanctification of Muharram.

the murder of the Prophet's grandson was always commemorated by Shiite Muslims, which Ashura was called the day of sorrow (Hejazi, 2022; Mousavi, 2022; Norton, 2005; Parkes, 2021; Rizvi, 1990). On the other hand, Sunnite Muslims commemorated Ashura as a day of happiness because of past events when God glorified ten prophets, namely Moses survived the pursuit of Pharaoh and his army who drowned in the Red Sea, Noah survived the great flood, Jonah survived out of the whale, Adam received his repentance, Joseph safely came out of the well, Jesus was born and survived from assassination, David received his repentance, Abraham was born, Jacob was healed of blindness, and Muhammad was given the assurance of a paradise residence (Al-Ahsani, 2019; Bearman et al., 2023).

During the reign of Sultan Agung in the Islamic Mataram Kingdom, Islam was embraced by most Javanese people who were religiously divided into the *Santri* and *Abangan* groups. As the king of an Islamic kingdom and a *Kejawen* and *Abangan* Muslim, he always tried to unite all Muslims in his territory, so he issued a decree converting the Hinduistic Saka Calendar into the Islamic Javanese Calendar on Friday, 8 July 1633 (Muchtarom, 2002; Nisa', 2021; Ricklefs, 2006). Unfortunately, the Dutch colonialist politically defeated the Islamic Mataram Kingdom and fragmented it into several minor territories. After Sultan Agung died in 1645, the government of Mataram was held by Amangkurat I since 1645, who was very subservient to the Dutch and even massacred the clerics in 1670. In 1755, the Dutch divided Mataram into Surakarta and Yogyakarta. Then, the Dutch divided Surakarta into the Paku Buwono and Mangkunegara regions in 1757. The British colonialist divided Yogyakarta into Sultan Hamengku Buwono and Paku Alam territories in 1813, and the British ceded Indonesian colonialism to the Dutch in 1816 (Darmawijaya, 2010; de Graaf, 2020; Ricklefs, 2019). Although Mataram's political power declined, Mataram maintained Javanese culture mixed with Islamic teachings. The application of the Islamic Javanese Calendar during the reign of Sultan Agung had a significant effect on the religious activities of the Islamic community in Java, for example, the way of sanctification to the holy Muharram, which was manifested in the Javanese Suroan tradition with various ritual activities and specific prohibitions.

4.2. Rituals in the Javanese Suroan tradition to sanctify Muharram

The attitude of the Javanese people towards the sanctity of Muharram is manifested in the commemoration on the eve of Suro (because the month of Muharram in the Islamic Javanese Calendar is usually called by the month of Suro). The first night of Suro is an extraordinary night for the people of Yogyakarta and Solo. They performed various rituals in honor of holy Suro and the New Year of the Islamic Javanese Calendar. In the Javanese Suroan tradition, the following rituals consist of eleven obligations and two prohibitions.

First, *Tirakatan* (deeds to reduce pleasure), meditation, and fasting. Javanese people generally spent the first night of Suro with *tirakatan* to get closer to God Almighty. In addition to *semadi* (meditation),

tirakatan was also done by fasting, such as fasting *Mutih* (by eating nothing but white rice), fasting *Ngebleng* (by being alone in a particular room), and fasting *Patigeni* (by not turning on the lights in a dark room).

Second, *Mubeng Beteng* ritual (circumference of the palace) with *Topo Mbisu* (not saying anything). On the eve of the Javanese New Year or the first day of Suro, *Mubeng Beteng* was carried out at the Yogyakarta Hadiningrat Palace and the Pura Pakualaman Palace with *Topo Mbisu*. The participants were dispatched at midnight by GBPH Joyokusumo, the younger brother of Sultan Hamengku Buwono X, from Ponconiti Ward, Yogyakarta Palace. The front row consisted of courtiers who wore Javanese clothes without carrying daggers and footwear. They carried red and white flags and palace banners. The following lineup consisted of various general publics. After encircling the palace together, the residents thronged the palace square and prayed for safety and avoidance of all disasters. Especially at the Surakarta Palace, *Mubeng Beteng* was also followed by several buffaloes (*Kebo Bule*) belonging to the palace, including Kebo Kyai Slamet (Rini, 2010).

Third, *Wilujengan Hageng*, or the erection of the first *Pathok* (pole) at the Night Market of Sekaten Tahun Dal in the North Square of the palace after commemorating the first night of Suro. A wooden pole with a length of 75 cm, a diameter of 10 cm, and a red pointed tip was carried from the Keraton Subdistrict office to the North Square accompanied by Javanese *shalawat* (divine prayer for the Prophet Muhammad). After installing the *pathok*, the residents ate *tumpeng* (a cone-shaped rice dish with side dishes of vegetables and meat), various foods, and fruits.

Fourth, performing *Wayang Kulit* (shadow puppet) all night. Shadow puppet performance was held on the South Coast. Parangtritis Beach area, especially Parangkusumo, had a panoramic attraction. *Wayang Kulit* and *Nyekar* (sowing flowers) performances at Cepuri Parangkusumo were the main activities that were in demand by many people. *Wayang Kulit* performance was also held at Pura Pakualaman and attended by many residents.

Fifth, bathing and soaking in various springs or rivers. The favorite place to take a bath or soak was the *Tempuran Sungai*, where two rivers met because they were believed to have mighty supernatural powers and energy. After bathing or soaking, people usually continued with *tirakatan* on the outskirts of the river until the morning (Rini, 2010).

Sixth, *Jamasan* (cleaning the palace's heirlooms or objects used as weapons in wars) included the palace chariots led by the Sultan and his courtiers. Before the heirloom *jamasan* procession, there were *sesajen* (offerings) consisting of several porridges of various colors, fruits, roosters, and others. The uniqueness of heirloom flushing was the belief of some people regarding the efficacy of water used by heirloom water to heal the sick, fertilize the soil, and protect rice fields or plants from pest disturbances. They were trying to get the water used by the heirloom to take home. The same thing was done at the Surakarta Palace. Then, those cleaned weapons and heirlooms (including Kebo Kyai Slamet) surrounded the palace as disaster repellents so that the palace and the people could be safe and avoid danger (Rini, 2010).

Seventh, cleaning of *enceh* (water place) in the Imogiri Tomb. On the day of Jum'at Kliwon, the courtiers cleaned four *encehs* of the Imogiri Tomb in the Tomb of Sultan Agung courtyard after the ritual of salvation and its offerings. The four *encehs* named Nyai Siyem, Nyai Mendhung, Kyai Danumoyo, and Kyai Danumurti were drained and cleaned. The residents watched the cleansing procession and then brought home the water from the Imogiri *enceh* to be used for various needs, such as to cure diseases, protect the fields from pests, and fertilize the farmland.

Eighth, cooking of white Suran porridge served with fried black soybeans, sliced chicken egg omelet, coconut shavings, and a drink with young coconut with Javanese sugar. The white pulp symbolized the sanctity of the human way of life. The fried black soybeans symbolized a faithful attitude to do good and obey the ancestors' teachings based on the guidance of God. Thinly sliced chicken eggs symbolized continuous life everywhere, even though human origins were the same. Coconut shavings and young coconuts were symbolic instructions for humans to follow the philosophy of coconut trees with many benefits for humans so that humans were obliged to live diligently and vigorously.

Ninth, installing yellow *janur* (young coconut leaf) above the house entrance. *Janur* was an acronym for *Sejatinya Nur* (*Nur Sejati* or the ultimate light), which in Javanese spirituality always directs humans

to realize a faithful life that must be close to *Gusti* (God). The yellow *janur* was a symbol of life that benefits all creatures in this universe (Rini, 2010).

Tenth, giving of alms to Mount Merapi, which was believed to be the palace of ethereal beings commanded by Empu Rama and Empu Permadi. In addition to meditation on Mount Merapi, the Javanese people performed the alms ceremony of Mount Merapi by burying the head of a buffalo at the summit of Mount Merapi under the direction of the Caretaker of Merapi appointed by the Sultanate of Yogyakarta to ensure that the people of Yogyakarta would have abundant harvests and protection from disasters.

Eleventh, *Larungan* (drifting) almsgiving at the South Sea Beach (Parangkusumo Beach and Parangtritis Beach). This Saptosari Sea Alms was offered to Kanjeng Ratu Kidul (Queen of the South Sea Beach) in the hopes that she would grant fishermen safety and a plentiful supply of fish. The procession began with the recitation of prayers of salvation by the Caretaker and brought offering equipment accompanied by the music of Gending Kebogiro. The offerings consisted of roosters (symbolizing the courage of fishermen to sail in the ocean), boat-shaped mountains of food (symbolizing fishermen's livelihood), red porridge (symbolizing mothers), white porridge (symbolizing fathers), sugarcane plants (symbolizing community worship), goat side dishes (symbolizing sacrifices for Ratu Kidul), purple silk cloth (symbolizing the clothes of Kanjeng Ratu Kidul so that she would not disturb fishermen), and fruits (given to the South Coast jinns (spirits) so that they would not disturb the fishermen. After *Larungan* offerings in the ocean were washed by the waves ashore again, the spectators who attended the event usually scrambled to get them because they were believed to bring good luck (Rini, 2010).

In addition to these obligations to honor and sanctify the month of Suro, the Javanese people also believed that there were prohibitions that should not be carried out during the month of Suro. They were forbidden to perform marriages, build new houses, remove houses, and do other activities of worldly joy. The month of Suro was a time to show sorrow, so they were commanded to be close to God Almighty and cleanse themselves physically and mentally. The danger and disaster would befall people who violated these prohibitions and did not obey the rules because Javanese people believed that many evil creatures appeared and would disturb humans on the first night of Suro (Rini, 2010).

Figure 3 shows the Javanese commandments to glorify the month of Suro and the prohibitions that must not be violated during the month of Suro to avoid disaster.

5. Discussion

The religion of Islam has spread to various parts of the world, and there has always been an acculturation between Islamic teachings and local cultures. Religion and culture are inseparable, although the two entities can be distinguished. Islam is a religion derived from the revelation of Allah Almighty, namely the Qur'an. Meanwhile, culture is anthropologically the result of human creation, will, and works. Cultural creation usually involves people's belief in a religion. Religious teachings are understood by society and give rise to forming mutually agreed mindsets and traditions. However, it should be noted that the religion of Islam is not a cultural product. Islamic teachings affect various aspects of culture. Islam needs a medium to transform universal Islamic values into a life of praxis and create a variety of Islamic cultures due to differences in interpretations of Islamic religious guidance. The revelation of the Qur'an cannot be separated from the cultural context of the Arab people at that time. Therefore, an adequate understanding of the revelation of the Qur'an and its historical process in the attempt to Islamize Arab societies and their cultures is a foothold to analyze the acculturation of Islam and local cultures (Sodiqin, 2009).

The spread of Islam in the Nusantara archipelago (Indonesia) did not cause much discord in various aspects of Indonesian people's lives. However, at that time, local cultures derived from animism and dynamism beliefs, as well as Hinduism and Buddhism. Fortunately, Islamic proselytizing in the Nusantara was carried out peacefully and tolerantly. The acculturative approach of the spreaders of Islam in the Nusantara encouraged harmonious interaction between Islamic teachings and local cultures, resulting in a beautiful blend of Nusantara cultures and Islamic religious values. Islamic proselytizing was successful

Obligations	
1	<i>Tirakatan</i> (deeds to reduce pleasure), <i>Semadi</i> (meditation), and fasting
2	<i>Mubeng Beteng</i> (walking together around Beteng Keraton Yogyakarta Hadiningrat and Beteng Pura Pakualaman) with <i>Topo Mbisu</i> (not saying anything)
3	<i>Wilujengan Hageng</i> (erection of <i>Pathok</i> or first pole)
4	Staging <i>Wayang Kulit</i> (shadow puppet) overnight
5	Bathing and soaking in springs or rivers
6	<i>Jamasan</i> (flushing to clean palace heirlooms or objects that have been used as weapons in warfare)
7	Cleaning of <i>enceh</i> (water places) at the Imogiri Tomb
8	Cooking of white porridge
9	Installing of yellow <i>janur</i> above the entrance of the house
10	Almsgiving at the Mount Merapi
11	<i>Larangan</i> (drifting) almsgiving at the South Sea Beach (Parangkusumo Beach and Parangtritis Beach) to Kanjeng Ratu Kidul
Prohibitions	
1	Holding weddings
2	Building new houses or moving houses

Figure 3. Obligations and prohibitions in the Javanese Suroan tradition.

due to people's openness in the Nusantara, who tended to be moderate and prioritize harmony in life (Sodiqin, 2009).

In the context of the Javanese Suroan Tradition, the process of Islamization in Java Island (followed by the conversion of the Hinduistic Saka Calendar to the Islamic Javanese Calendar) clearly shows the continuity and change of religious rituals to consecrate the month of Muharram. Since the pre-Islamic period, all Muslims have continually sanctified the month of Muharram because of the particular holiness of this month wherever and whenever they are. The orthodox Islamic religious perspective asserts that the Javanese Suroan tradition contains elements that deviate from the pure teachings of Islam because the ritual was never performed by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. According to the guidance of Islamic law, the Prophet only commanded Muslims to observe the fasting on the tenth of Muharram (called the Ashura fasting). Some hadiths even mentioned that fasting on the first ten days or all days of Muharram is suggested if they wish (Al-Ahsani, 2019; Usmani, 2000).

The establishment of the prohibition on celebrations, a ban on weddings, and the construction of houses are not the same as the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad. Islam does not prohibit weddings in the month of Muharram because all times are good and there are no unlucky days (Al-Ahsani, 2019; Mardiantari et al., 2022; Nurbaeti & Samsuddin, 2023; Romli & Habibullah, 2018). The wedding prohibition in Suro is reminiscent of Hindu religious traditions prohibiting weddings at certain times. A week before Galungan Day until 35 days after Galungan, Balinese people had a particular time for abstinence from holding ceremonies, such as *nganten* or marriage (Jagra, 2013; Sukrawati, 2019).

The Suroan marriage prohibition during Muharram is also similar to Shiite Muslim tradition because the 10th of Muharram is the day of mourning for the massacre at Karbala, and it is religiously not recommended to have a marriage ceremony (Rizvi, 1990). The history of Shiite Muslims in Indonesia and their religious traditions during the Islamic kingdoms in Java, including Mataram, is still not detailed. However, it was mentioned that Shiite Muslims had inhabited the Nusantara since the arrival of the first Islam. The first Islamic kingdom in Indonesia was the Perlak Sultanate, which was

established by the Shiite community in 840 AD under the leadership of Sultan Ala'uddin Sayyid Mawlana Abdul Aziz Shah (son of 'Ali ibn Muhammad Ja'far Shiddiq). Then, Shia continued to spread to various parts of the Nusantara, including Java Island, and subsequently influenced local cultural traditions in Indonesia (Hasymi, 1993; Putra, 2022; Syahnan & Mukhsin, 2022). There is information that some Javanese people usually hold *selametan* (religious prayer and feast) on the 10th of Muharram to commemorate the tragedy of Karbala (Geertz, 1990) and dare not hold a wedding (Mardiantari et al., 2022). Although the conversion of the calendar was encouraged by political and religious motives (Musonnif, 2017; Nisa', 2021) and the decree of converting the Saka Calendar into the Islamic Javanese Calendar by Sultan Agung was also followed by Sultan Abul Mafakhir Mahmud Abdul Kadir who ruled from 1596 to 1651 from Banten Kingdom (Masruhan, 2017). However, it is necessary to examine further the response of Islamic clerics to the rules of Sultan Agung that contradicted the Qur'an and hadith at that time.

Based on the theory of continuity and change in socio-religious phenomena (Voll, 2019), it can be summed up as follows. The unchanging religious aspect in the Javanese Suroan tradition is represented by the sacralization and sanctification of Muharram, which has not changed from the pre-Islamic period to the present day (Al-Ahsani, 2019; Usmani, 2000). In contrast, the changing aspect is demonstrated by Javanese Muslims with their specific rituals, including obligations and prohibitions to commemorate and glorify the month of Muharram after being influenced by Javanese culture. The Javanese Suroan tradition anthropologically asserts that Islam accepts the peculiarities of local cultures in the society. Such acceptance occurs during the process of acculturation and alignment. Therefore, harmony between Islam and local cultures enriches treasures of Islamic civilization, generally in Indonesia and especially on Java Island (Hudayana, 2022; Muadi & Sofwani, 2018; Rubaidi, 2019; Saksono, 1995; Sumbulah, 2012). Javanese people in Indonesia tend to apply the principle of harmony to maintain a harmonious, calm, and peaceful situation to help each other. The ideal life maintained in social interaction is considered a harmonious social appearance. The Javanese society practices mutual aid and deliberation activities to avoid unrest and social conflicts. They have social mechanisms to integrate various interests to make common welfare and prioritize harmony in social interaction (Suseno, 2001).

6. Conclusion

The Javanese moderation attitude encouraged the formation of the Islamic Javanese Calendar and the rituals of the Javanese Suroan tradition. Besides, the history of the establishment of the Islamic Javanese Calendar by Sultan Agung showed that the religious policies of government have a significant influence and broad implications for its citizens. The Islamic teachings can be harmonized with Javanese customs that people have inherited since the pre-Islamic period. An anthropological approach to religious traditions is needed to understand the local wisdom found in the socio-religious traditions of Indonesian society with its various local traditions and plural cultures. Islamic preachers need to have adequate cultural insight and correct religious knowledge to maintain and strengthen the image of Islam as a religion of peace (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*), as pioneered by the Walisongo with their accomplishment on spreading Islam in Indonesia peacefully and moderately.

This research is based on relevant works and has revealed the historical process of continuity and change in the sanctification of Muharram in the Javanese Suroan tradition, which was influenced by local Javanese culture. However, due to financial limitations, this study is only guided by library research and essential publications. In addition, the author has not found any primary sources or manuscripts that describe a detailed explanation of the Javanese Suroan ritual. The author encourages other researchers to conduct further research to obtain data through interviews with Suroan tradition practitioners and participatory observations by directly following the rituals of the Suroan tradition, as well as to undertake a more in-depth analysis based on more extensive data.

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