

## **SYMBOLIC AND MEANING OF LOCAL WISDOM AT THE *EXORCISM RITUAL IN MADE VILLAGE SURABAYA***

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### **Abstract**

The local wisdom of the village's exorcism ritual culture is an ancestral heritage that needs to be developed and maintained well. The exorcism ritual has glorious values and moral messages conveyed through the ritual in the form of symbols and meanings contained therein can be well preserved for generations by the local community. The exorcism ritual is a ritual tradition with the aim of eliminating and avoiding disasters that occur in the village community. Exorcism ritual is taken in Made village. This research used data collection techniques through observation, interviews, skilled involvement, and documentation as a form of supporting data to answer the problems in this research. The problem is to know the symbols and meaning for the exorcism ritual. The Researcher also collected data by being directly involved in exorcism rituals in Made village. In this research, the researcher used symbolic theory written by Winfried. In this symbolic theory, the researcher divides three symbols. The first, the symbols are as conventional signs. The second, the symbols are as iconic signs, and the last, the symbols are as connotation signs. In this research, the researcher used descriptive methods with skillful involvement techniques. The object in this research was taken in Made Village. Made Village is one of the villages in West Surabaya which still used exorcism rituals. The purpose of exorcism ritual or ngeruwat (Java language: to purify) is a purification ritual that it is still carried out by most Javanese people, especially the people in Made village. The tradition village exorcism ritual used several or equipment, one example is bucet (kind of worship rice is as similar to a mountain), fruits, incense, and a statue that resembles a tiger. From this research, the researcher wanted to find the symbolic and meaning in which used by people in exorcism ritual.

**Keywords** – *exorcism, ritual, tradition, and meanings*

### **Introduction**

The exorcism ritual is a community tradition in which done by people in Java since thousand years ago. The exorcism ritual has a very sacred meaning and must be carried out by the local community, so that people in the village believed that the ritual can be safe and have abundant harvests. The exorcism ritual is also one of the cultural values of the community which is still well maintained so far in Java. Because the exorcism ritual is believed to have magical value for the people in Made village who still believe in it. The exorcism ritual is considered a form of local wisdom that it was needed to be maintained continuously so that culture and traditions are remain and it does not become extinct.

The concept of the exorcism ritual is part of the traditions and habits of the community so that they always get safety and avoid disaster. The exorcism ritual has been trusted and carried out by the people of Made village for hundreds of years. This traditional of ritual is carried out with the aim of achieving safety and avoiding danger. The village community carries out this ritual as part of their annual routine. The exorcism ritual has good

moral values for the people who carry out the exorcism ritual. This phenomenon is considered a noble value for the local community because they respect and maintain the traditions of their ancestors. The implementation of the exorcism ritual is found in the city of Surabaya, especially the exorcism ritual for the community in Made village. Therefore, the researcher carried out research in Made village. Made village is one of the names of villages in West Surabaya. The origin of the name Made village is taken from the word *Macan Gede* (Java language: big tiger). From the word *Macan Gede*, the name of village Made is used till now.

The people in Made village conduct the exorcism ritual every year. The ritual was attended by village residents and attended by all surrounding residents. This ceremonial activity is generally held in the dry season or usually between August and December. The community in the village believe that the ritual is carried out based on a community meeting before the exorcism ritual is held. Basically, the implementation of the exorcism ritual is a ritual to cleanse the village or village from danger and to avoid disaster and harm that will be experienced by the village community. This phenomenon and concepts are trusted by the local community as a medium to properly maintain and preserve ancestral cultures and traditions. The other aim of carrying out the exorcism ritual is generally to obtain safety and protection from God.

The exorcism ritual is a tradition brought by village ancestors and it is still carried out until now. This habit such as exorcism ritual is a good culture in maintaining and preserving local wisdom and also as the rich traditions in Made Village, Surabaya. Exorcism ritual is part of culture and tradition in which has moral values for people in Made village. People in this place understand about the ancestor cultures. The culture has a very close relationship with traditional ceremonies, especially the village exorcism in Made. Both are related to each other, because traditions or traditional ceremonies or exorcism is one part of the culture that exists within them. It has seen in Made village.

Exorcism culture and ceremonies are the ancestral heritage of the village community which must be maintained and preserved properly. Because in the understanding of society in general, culture is born from the habits of a group of people who have been in one place for a long time and these customs are naturally passed down from generation to generation to their descendants. Based on the concept of exorcism ritual above that it can be said that the event of this ritual is a form of physical manifestation of a culture that has existed and developed as a local culture for the people of Made village since hundreds of years ago. They had been living in Made village for hundreds year. And this tradition is carried out in this village. It has still maintenance well. They reasoned that exorcism is carried out to protect and remove bad disasters from the village or in the Javanese term to remove *mala* (Javanese language: badness).

According to Koentjaraningrat, stated that the culture is the totality of human behavior and the results that must be obtained by learning and all of these are structured in the life of society. Community behavior that is planned and structured within the exorcism ritual. It is part of the traditions embodied by culture. Based on the statement above, exorcism can be said that all community behavior has become a habit since ancient times and is still carried out until now as a concept meaning of culture where culture is an element that embodies a traditional ritual, including village community traditions such as the village exorcism ritual which embodies the results people's thoughts, especially ancestral traditions that it has existed for a long time.

The object of research for this exorcism ritual was located in Made village. Geographically, Made village is the border between Surabaya City and Gresik Regency. In

general, the local community's live hood is still to maintain and carry out their ancestral traditions and customs well, namely the exorcism ritual. The life of the people in Made village has a mono-ethnic population, namely there are two ethnic groups, Javanese and Madurese. The communities in general are of Javanese ethnic descents, but a small part of the community is also of Madurese ethnicity, especially in the East Made and South Made parts. This phenomenon can be seen from daily activity from communication life. Some of them use Madura language. People use Madurese as a language of daily communication.

The exorcism ritual in Made village is a tradition carried out as an effort to get rid of bad luck or something bad for the community. The exorcism ritual has sacred value for the local community. The exorcism ritual has a connection with culture. The culture is the result thinking from their ancestors, especially in Made village. The inner meaning in culture included knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and habits. People in village are acquired by members of society, especially traditional ceremony in the form of village exorcism.

The exorcism ritual is also a routine habit of local people who still believe in local culture as a noble ancestral heritage. The exorcism is supposed having high moral values for their descendants. So that the implementation of the exorcism ritual has historical symbols and meaning for the village community as a result of community knowledge and thoughts in the form of the exorcism ritual tradition which has been carried out as part of the wealth and local wisdom of the Made village community for generations. The finding of symbols and meaning of exorcism ritual are as the aim of the research. This research focused on the symbols and meanings only that found in exorcism ritual in Made village. In this research was not discussed about the process of rituals, but only discussed about symbols and meaning in that ritual.

In this research uses two literature reviews as study material as reference material which are related to the village exorcism ritual. According to Hafid stated that the symbolic meaning of the *massorong lopi-lopi* ritual tradition (2019:33-44). That research was done in West Sulawesi. In that research had correlation with this research. That research found that there were repelling reinforcements and establishing friendship between villages in *Topangu* and those overseas. The research method used a descriptive qualitative method. It was used to know reinforcements of the establishing. The data in this research was collected by several steps. The first was observations and the second was done by interviews. Meanwhile, the results of the research show that the meaning of *lopi-lopi* was used as the ritual tool. It had meaning as offerings in which serving to ward off evil and disease outbreaks so that people hope for a prosperous, safe and secure place. Meanwhile, this research discusses the symbols and meanings of the types of offerings made during exorcism ritual in Made village.

This research discusses the symbols and meaning of the village community's exorcism ritual. The people of Made village have carried out the exorcism ritual for generations since their ancestors. This can be known from the existence of a *punden* (a old house as a place where the ancestors asceticism). Exactly when this incident occurred, no one in the local community knows clearly. The village exorcism ritual is a local wisdom ritual of the local community.

In the second reference, the writer used Misnawati's research (2022). In her research, with the title "the symbolic meaning of the traditional ritual of the Rama Almsgiving tradition in *Kertayu* Village, Sungai *Keruh* District, Musi Banyuasin Regency". This research used Mead's symbol interaction theory using the main principles of mind, self and society. Meanwhile, the results of his research show that the tradition of giving hemp alms is a manifestation of the gratitude of the people of *Kertayu* village to God. Meanwhile, this

research discusses the symbols and meaning of the village exorcism ritual as a means of preserving the culture and traditions that have been passed down by the village's ancestors. The literature review is used both of them because they are related to each other, especially concern to symbolic and meanings of ritual. However, the concepts and objects studied are different. Based on concepts and philosophies regarding culture and traditional ceremonies, they certainly have a very close relationship internally with their ancestors. These values can be in the form of concepts understanding culture. Regarding understanding concepts in the form of ideas including truths, religious beliefs, myths, legends, literature, superstitions, statements about basic principles or formulations of truth (*aphaeisan*), proverbs or sayings that have been passed down until now, as well as - folklore. Meanwhile, the concept of norms includes: law, articles of association, statutes, regulations, and customs.

The people in Made village still preserve their culture and traditional ceremonies in the form of the exorcism ritual. The exorcism traditional ritual is a part of culture that they must be well guarded and preserved so that society, especially the younger generation in Made village. They can recognize and preserve ancestral wealth well so that traditions in the form of customs do not become extinct. The culture consists of three components, namely ideas, norms, and cultural objects (things). However, this research only focuses on the symbolic and meaning of the village exorcism ritual in Made Surabaya. So it does not discuss the essence as a whole regarding culture. The purpose of carrying out this exorcism is to cleanse all the dangers in the local community from danger, whether the danger is direct or visible danger.

The village exorcism ritual is carried out using offerings made in the *punden* (place for ancestors did worships). The *Punden* is a place where the ancestors of village had carried out austerities or secluded themselves to gain peace of mind and soul. To complete these offerings, the community offered several offerings *bucet*, *golong* rice (the rice in round forms), grilled chicken, taker, *bucet* base, incense, harvest products and several offerings from the Made village community. These forms of offerings are part of the community's thanksgiving to God. The community carries out the exorcism ritual once every year in the village of *punden*. These forms of offerings are considered symbolic and have historical meaning for the Made people.

All worships were given by people in that ritual. They had beliefs about that exorcism ritual in their villages. There were supposing to have manifestation for people in Made. According to Fisher stated that meaning is created as a result of human interactions modified through an interpretive process (1986). Generally, people do not found out clearly about the essence of exorcism ritual, because of the influence of stimuli both intrinsically and extrinsically, but they were creatures that awarding of themselves. They stayed and developed based on the activities from the ancestors. The fact that, the human relations in the community are influenced by sociocultural processes and social structures manifested through social interaction. In addition, the meaning of symbols, which includes conditions and symbols, Blumer defines this level as non-symbolic and symbolic interaction (Fisher, 1986). So in this research, the researcher focused the symbols and meaning of exorcism ritual.

## Methods

In this research, the researcher used qualitative research. It was used because qualitative research could help this research about finding the symbolic and meaning. So this research had the main data. The main data source was derived from the natural setting. The researcher was



not the key instrument, but also as taking in this process event of ritual exorcism in Made village. This ritual is commonly done three day from Friday till Sunday. But in this research, is focused on Sunday morning untill afternoon in the *punden* or the holly house for the ancestors. This process was done during exorcism ritual. This study used phenomenological study approach in which help the researcher in doing reserach. Phenomenology is a study of something that appearing or what appears or a phenomenon (Moleong, 2002).

The data collection was done by the observation, interview, take part in the event of ritual, and taking documentation. The data analysis was used a qualitative naturalistic analysis technique. Qualitative data analysis attempted to collect data, map data, classify them into manageable units, synthesize, search, critique, find patterns, find the focus of the study and what was learned, and decide which results have been found. In this reserach had aim to know the symbol and meaning of exorcism ritual or ritual in Made village. The research is not the original citizen of Made but the researcher came from other village. The researcher was interest in doing research about ritual. From this research accepted to get the intending of information. This case includes adaptation by living with research subjects and participating in the activities within dealing with the object and the things in which used for ritual of exorcism. This research focussed on symbolic and meaning of the exorcism ritual in Made Village Surabaya.

### **Finding and Discussion**

The concepts of the exorcism ritual were as a community purification ritual is still carried out by the majority of Javanese people, especially in Surabaya. Exorcism in Javanese means 'released' or 'freed'. Therefore, the exorcism ritual was a ritual that has the aim of freeing someone from evil so that those who experience a curse must be exorcism to avoid the curse of the gods. The majority of local people still believe in this belief to this day regarding the exorcism tradition which is considered to bring goodness. The exorcism ritual is a tradition that has been carried out for generations by the Made community in Surabaya.

This research focused on the symbols and meaning of the village exorcism ritual in Made village. The majority of the people in Made village are farmers and employees. The location of Made village is to the west of Surabaya. This village is also the border between the city of Surabaya and Gresik Regency. The exorcism ritual of Made Surabaya village is still carried out and well preserved by the local community. Meanwhile, the implementation of the village exorcism ritual was an annual community ritual. It is as the one of the riches of local wisdom that must be maintained continuously.

The implementation of the exorcism ritual is one of the traditions that is still preserved and maintained by the community, which is carried out by the community in a *punden* or ancestral hermitage of the village community. The village community carries out this exorcism ritual with the assumption that people's lives are always protected by their ancestors and God. Community life is always experiencing changes in life patterns following modern times. The development of modern knowledge has the impact of broadening local people's understanding to think critically and use their reasoning to understand phenomena that occur around them, especially objects or offerings used in the exorcism ritual, one of which is *bucet* or tumpeng accompanied by grilled chicken. Therefore, to complete the ritual, the community has prepared everything they need, including offerings (incense, *minyan*, *taker*, etc.) and other equipment for the village exorcism ritual.

The public's understanding of the implementation of the exorcism ritual sometimes has an impact on the local community as a form of knowledge that has very high moral value towards the ancestors and local wisdom to better protect and preserve this culture. The culture of the people of Made Village had very important role in the lives of the people now and in the

future because they still carried out traditions and ceremonies. They were the legacy of their ancestors.

The ritual is carried out by the community as a whole to carry out the exorcism ritual. However, they are not all exorcism ceremonies carried out by everyone in Made village. People who still believe that their ancestors believe that traditional ceremonies were as cultural heritage, of course they still carry them out even though there is a slight shift in the types of offerings used during the ceremonies. This research only discussed about the symbols and meaning of the exorcism ritual only. People carry out this ritual as an offering to God and their ancestors.

Based on the phenomenon of carrying out these ceremonies, of course the community did not want to experience disaster if they did not carry out the ritual, because the ritual was a cultural heritage of the local community. So the community and the younger generation in particular must continue to maintain and implement well. Even though, some people think it was an ancient tradition that was no longer modern. However, some people were starting to be apathetic towards the ancestral traditions and culture that having existed for a long time since their ancestors.

The ancestral traditions of the local community were cultural heritage of the community needs to be maintained and preserved throughout time, because not all regions or villages have the same traditions and continue to carry out ancestral culture and traditions to this day. So there needs to be a sense of having this tradition as priceless wealth. Such an understanding concept is able to change people's mindset to be critical and have an attitude of belonging to these traditions, especially the village exorcism ritual so that the tradition is handed down by the community's ancestors are still well maintained.

Basically, the Exorcism ritual for the community is one of the ancestral ceremonial traditions that has high moral values. This teaches people to always be grateful to their ancestors and God who had given them prosperity and safety while living in Made village. They offered various offerings that they had. These offerings were made in the hope of freeing or releasing someone from a punishment or curse that has brought bad luck or endangered society.

This habitual was an effort or step to get rid of the curse or burden that had been experienced by the community. So that they could be gain goodness and harmony in living better life. The offerings were used as media in village exorcism ceremonies. Types of offerings and media in carrying out the exorcism ritual in Made village, such as: The offerings or offerings used, *bucet*, bananas, flowers, *punden*, incense, tiger statues, water, roast chicken, order, witness, and *pertolo* jug.

**Table 1. Lexicon Exorcism Ritual**

Data	Symbols	meanings
<i>bucet</i>	mountain	lord
banana	togetherness/wholeness	prosperous
flower	human life	development of thinking
<i>punden</i> or old house	founder of village	asceticism place
incense	beginning	connecting human thinking
tiger statues	strong	protector/guard
water	resources of changing	purified/cleaner
chicken roasted	leaders	harmonious
betel vine	look for knowledge	beginning of life
deponent (money)	appreciation ancestors	resources of life
Jug	place	benefit for human life

The exorcism ritual in Made village uses various types of offerings as a medium to express gratitude to God and express gratitude to the ancestors who have passed on the Exorcism tradition to the younger generation who are their descendants. This exorcism tradition in this village cannot be separated from the local wisdom of the local community who always maintains and implements it every year. Generally, the ceremonies are part of culture that need to be well maintained and preserved. It happened because every offering given during the exorcism ritual has a high symbol and meaning for humans, especially the Made Surabaya community. In this study, researcher discussed and focusses for the symbols and meanings used by village communities during the exorcism ritual.

In this ritual of exorcism, all villagers bring many workshops or offering in a *punden*. *Punden* is the holy place in Made village. *Punden* is not always found in every village. Commonly, in the past time every village has *punden* as the holly place and used for workshop offerings to the ancestors. But part of village had broken their *punden* at that time. In this reseach, discusses about symbols and meaning in exorcism rituals. It does not talk about the process of broken *punden* in around Made village. In this research discusses about offerings in which used in the event of exorcism ritual. One of offering is *bucet*. It is forms of rice as a mountain. It is as the one of offering in Made village.

*Bucet*, which is generally better known as *tumpeng*. *Tumpeng* is the form of rice in which is formed as a mountain. It is used as one of the offerings in exorcism ritual. Every traditional ritual on the island of Java certainly cannot be separated from offerings and offerings in the form of *tumpeng*. *Tumpeng* is usually the main offering in ceremonial activities. The *tumpeng* offerings were as the symbols of mountain. Mountain is the highest places on earth. The high level in Javanese belief is refer to the God. So the human being may not forget the God. From this symbol, humans are required to remember what is higher, namely God. Humans should not feel arrogant and arrogant so that they can live happily by always remembering God. Meanwhile, the meaning of the *bucet* lexicon is that the highest thing in the universe is the Almighty Creator, God. So the meaning of the mountain lexicon according to Javanese tradition, especially in the village exorcism ritual in Made, is God.

*Bananas*, every Javanese traditional ritual always uses banana as one of the main media in traditional ceremonies, especially the exorcism ritual. Bananas are one of the fruits in Java. It is used as the offering in exorcism ritual. This banana tree symbol has a special meaning, because every human being in social life must always live in harmony and always be united with one another. So the banana in this village exorcism ritual is a symbol of togetherness and integrity of the community so that they always protect and preserve the life that has been passed down by their ancestors. Meanwhile, the meaning of the banana has the

meaning of prosperity. The goal of humans living in the world is to achieve happiness and prosperity so that the people in Made Village always live in harmony and prosperity.

Flowers are one of the offerings in the exorcism ritual in Made Village. The exorcism ritual basically has a high philosophical meaning and is local wisdom that must be maintained and preserved. The offerings in the form of flowers in the exorcism ritual have a symbol of life. Flowers have a fragrant smell. This smell can certainly attract the attention of people nearby. Fact, the symbols of flowers are as the ritual in sign of human life in the universe. Meanwhile, the meaning of flowers is that humans have the mind and memory for business so that they must have benefits for society and always develop throughout their lives.

*Punden*, or *petilasan* was a place used by ancestors or those who were the first to build a village or *babat alas* (Javanese language: the first time in building house) so that from these ancestors humans were born and developed until they became the society now. This existing society is a group of communities that originate from ancestors. These ancestors are the origins of the people in Made village. Made village is originally taken from the word *Macan Gede* (big tiger). So the people named the village they had lived in for hundreds of years after *Macan Gede*. Meanwhile, the meaning of *punden* is as a place of remembrance or meditation for ancestors in ancient times. *Petilasan* or *pundeng* is a location for prayer or meditation when building or establishing a village.

### Conclusions

Based on the findings obtained by the researcher, the offerings in the village exorcism ritual were a local tradition and ancestral wealth in which the local tradition and ancestral must be protected and preserved forever. Of the types of offerings found in the lexicon as data for this research, such as: *bucet*, *banana*, flower, *punden*, incense, tiger statue, water, roast chicken, order, witness, and jug. From some of these lexicons have symbols related to the life processes of society in the universe. Human being lives in one village with many multicultural and ethnic. So people stay where they want must obey to the rule in village.

People in Made village cannot be separated from human relationships with ancestors and God. This relationship means that after humans die, they still have a relationship with their ancestors and also with their descendants. From the symbols explained briefly, the exorcism ritual has meaning as a traditional community effort to obtain safety, happiness, increase harvest yields and avoid danger or misfortune while carrying out social life, especially in Made Village, Surabaya.

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