

Chapter 4: The Ritual Practice: Ibadat

PROLOGUE TO THE ANALYSIS OF CIREBONESE RITUAL

Any attempt to identify precisely the activity belonging to ritual in the Cirebonese context encounters semantic problems. There is no such word in the local language which precisely translates the English word “ritual”. In Cirebon, ritual activities, religious or otherwise, are singled out by their names; each name corresponds to the nature and purpose of the ritual concerned.

The lexical meaning of ritual is defined as “a prescribed form or method for the performance of a religious or solemn ceremony, or, any body of rites and ceremonies.”¹ This basic meaning implies that, on the one hand, ritual activity differs from ordinary activity, by the presence or absence of a religious or a solemn character. Ritual activity, on the other hand, differs from technical activity by the presence or absence of a ceremonial character. Anthropologists, however, have different opinions about what constitutes ritual and thus what ritual really is. Some argue for narrow definitions, some others argue for broad ones. After showing the diversity of opinions and definitions set forth by anthropologists, Seymour-Smith proposes that perhaps it is ultimately unnecessary to define ritual, or to delimit it from ceremony on the one hand and from instrumental or practical action on the other.² Seymour-Smith thus, takes a position much closer to Leach than to Gluckman. Gluckman (1962) defines ceremony as any complex organisation of human activity which is not specifically technical or recreational but that involves the use of modes of behaviour which are expressive of social relationships. Ritual, on the other hand, according to Gluckman, is a more limited category of ceremony but symbolically more complex because, in ritual, deeper social and psychological concerns are involved. Moreover, ritual is characterised by its reference to a mystical or religious nature and purpose.³

Leach, in contrast, asserts ritual to be any behaviour that “serves to express the individual's status as a social person in the structural system in which he [*the person concerned*] finds himself for the time being.”⁴ Following this same line of thinking Lessa and Vogt suggest that ritual may comprise all symbolic actions, profane or sacred, technical or aesthetic, simple or elaborate. It may range from the etiquette of daily greetings such as saying ‘How are you?’ to the solemn

¹ Funk & Wagnalls (1984), *Standard Desk Dictionary*, Cambridge: Harper and Row.

² Seymour-Smith, C. (1990), *Macmillan Dictionary of Anthropology*, London: MacMillan.

³ Seymour-Smith, C. (1990), p.248

⁴ Leach, E.R. (1964), *Political Systems of Highland Burma: A Study of Kachin Social Structure*, London: The Athlon Press, p. 10

utterance of a magical spell or any form of dignified ceremony.⁵ Leach considers that the great majority of human actions fall into place on a continuous scale. He suggests that at one extreme actions are entirely profane, entirely functional, or purely technical and simple; at another extreme, actions are entirely sacred, strictly aesthetic, technically non functional and elaborate. He argues that most social actions fit between the two extremes, being partly of the one sphere, and partly of the other, and that the distinction among phenomena are therefore arbitrary and not always neatly classifiable.⁶ In contrast with some other scholars, Leach regards ritual not as a category of behaviour but as an aspect of behaviour. He writes:

“... technique and ritual, profane and sacred do not denote types of action but aspects of almost any kind of action. Technique has economic material consequences which are measurable and predictable; ritual on the other hand is a symbolic statement which ‘says’ something about the individual involved in the action.”⁷

In other words, Leach maintains that any behaviour may have both ritual and non-ritual aspects. The degree to which a particular behaviour bears within it ritual and non-ritual aspects depends on the extent to which the individual concerned expresses in his action, both his status or symbolic value and his practical objectives and utilities. Leach therefore departs from conventional Durkheimian perspectives which categorise human actions in terms of the sacred-profane dichotomy, avoids putting rigidly religious rites in the sacred domain and technical acts in the profane, and disregards those who use the word ritual only to describe the social actions occurring in sacred situations.⁸

For a different purpose and in a different manner I want to make use of Leach's perspectives to explain the ritual behaviour in the traditions of Islam in Cirebon.

⁵ Lessa, W.A. and Vogt, E.Z., ed (1979), *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, 4th ed, New York: Harper and Row, p.220.

⁶ Leach, E. (1964), pp. 11–13

⁷ Leach, E. (1964), p.13.

⁸ Leach goes further when he treats ritual in relation to the symbolisation of time. With special reference to Greek mythology, “Cronus and Chronos” he sets out the standard notion of time both in terms of repetition and irreversible natural phenomena. He suggests that we tend to think of time in terms of repetition in that, certain phenomena of nature repeat themselves; at the same time we also think that life changes—to be born, grow and die—is an irreversible process. Based on this recognition of repetition and aging, Leach then resolves the puzzle of why men all over the world mark out their calendars by means of festivals. He suggests that as people satisfy themselves in festivals through formality, masquerade or role reversal, festivals have a variety of functions. Among these he includes the ordering of time, where between the two successive festivals of the same type there will be a period, usually a named period such as “week” or “year”. Without the festivals, according to Leach, such periods would not exist and all order would go out of social life. See: Leach, E.R., 1961), “Two Essays Concerning The Symbolic Representation of Time”, in Lessa, W.A. and Vogt, E.Z., ed (1979), pp. 221–229.

IBADAT: AN AMBIGUOUS CONCEPT OF RITUAL IN ISLAM

To some writers, Islam provides a clear enunciation of ritual. They simply equate ritual (in Islam) with '*ibadat*, and '*ibadat* with the five pillars. The Arabic word '*ibadat* (sing. '*ibada*) which literally means to enslave oneself (to God), when it is used as a religious term, refers to the ordinances of divine worship.⁹ For example, Bousquet prefers to define '*ibadat* as:

submissive obedience to a master, and therefore, religious practice, corresponds, together with its synonyms *ta'a*, in the works of *fikh*, approximately to the ritual of Muslim law ..., as opposed to the *mu'amala* ...¹⁰

Bousquet's definition of '*ibadat* to denote ritual in Islam is strongly '*fiqh*' (Islamic jurisprudence) orientated. He even warns us not to translate '*ibadat* as 'cult' if we are to follow credible theoretical understanding. He urges:

If we translate '*ibadat* with 'cult' we are committing something of theoretical error ... for it has quite correctly been said that, strictly speaking, Islam knows no more of a cult, properly speaking, than ... it does of law; nor, we should add, of ethics. *Fikh* is, in fact, a deontology (the statement of the whole corpus of duties, of acts whether obligatory, forbidden or recommended, etc.) which is imposed upon man.¹¹

At the point at which the *fiqh* is concerned, it is clear indeed, as all Muslims unanimously agree that the enactment of the five pillars is undeniably and undoubtedly '*ibadat*. Nevertheless, Islam cannot be reduced to *fiqh* and thus, *ibadat* is more than the enactment of the five pillars. There are many other activities which are not set down in *fiqh*. The equation of ritual in Islam with '*ibadat* and then '*ibadat* with the five pillars to some extent is warranted but should not be overemphasised because seen in a different context it could be misleading. As far as Islam is concerned the concept of '*ibadat* entails some different connotations. I would argue that, with special reference to Cirebon, '*ibadat* is an ambiguous concept. Therefore, especially in dealing with the ritual practice of traditional Islam, a strict equation of '*ibadat* with the five pillars deserves further scrutiny.

Owing to Bousquet's definition it is not surprising that Rippin (1990) asserts that ritual in Islam centres on the five pillars. Rippin considers the notion of the five pillars represents the epitome of the revealed law as enacted through ritual activity. The five actions embedded in the five pillars —the witness to faith (*syahadat*), prayer (*salat*), charity (*zakat*), fasting (*sawm*), and pilgrimage (*hajj*)—

⁹ See: 'Ibadat' in *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*. Further use of the word '*ibadat*' represents its use in Cirebon which refers to either singular or plural forms.

¹⁰ See: 'Ibadat' in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, new edition.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

being an integral part of the belief system and a part of the explication of theological statements of belief, are duties for which each individual is responsible, separate from general ethics and rules of interpersonal relationship.¹² At this stage Rippin implies that what he meant with his statement that ritual in Islam 'centres' on the five pillars refers to what is found in the treatises of *fiqh*. In *fiqh* books '*ibadat*' is discussed separately from other subjects such as *mu'amalat* (rules of economic contract), *munakahat* (rules of marriage), *jinayat* (rules of expiation), *hudud* (rules of punishment), *faraidl* (rules of inheritance) and *jihad* (rules of warfare).

Another writer also adopts a similar perspective. Denny (1985:69) points out that the most 'basic' term for ritual in Islam is '*ibadat*', meaning worship or service of inferiors toward their superior, their Lord. Denny clearly uses the term '*ibadat*' to refer to the same activities noted by Rippin. Denny says that all of the official duties of Islam are subsumed under '*ibadat*', the five Pillars. *Ibadat*, Denny claims, constitutes the 'main' categories of Islamic ritual and 'lesser' activities are arranged under the five pillars in orderly fashion. Examples given by Denny for Islamic ritual under the 'lesser' category of the five pillars are such activities as '*Id* of Sacrifice ('*Id al-adha*) which is inextricably rooted in Hajj, the festival of fast-breaking ('*Id al-fitr*) which serves to punctuate the ending of *Ramadan* fast, and the special *Salat* for earth-quake or eclipse which are 'variations' of the standard form, as is the *Salat* at the graveside.¹³

Actually, Rippin and Denny are not unaware of Bosquet's over-statement on the issue. Rippin's words that *ibadat* is the 'centre' and Denny's use of the word 'basic' or 'main' in referring to *ibadat*, in the context of ritual in Islam, indicate their awareness of the existence of other *ibadat* which do not belong to this 'central', 'basic' or 'main' category. Rippin's position becomes clearer when he also states that to the extent to which Muslim identity is expressed, ritual is not limited to the five pillars although the prominence of the grouping is obviously high. He notes that the *mawlid* festival celebrating the birth of the prophet Muhammad, various informal *du'a* prayer (invocations), and visits to tombs are 'additional' ritual-type activities which are considered by many Muslims to be significant for the expression of their faith.¹⁴ It is true that many Muslims deny that these 'additional' practices which go beyond the enactment of the five pillars belong to '*ibadat*' or Islamic ritual.¹⁵ They even denounce these activities as sinful innovations and condemn their observants for committing sin.

¹² Rippin, A. (1990), *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, Vol.1, London: Rutledge.

¹³ Denny, F.M. (1985), 'Islamic Ritual: Perspectives and Theories' in Martin, R.C., ed (1985), *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*, Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.

¹⁴ Rippin, A. (1990), p.98.

¹⁵ Throughout his work, Rippin uses only the term 'ritual', but it is quite clear that what he means with ritual refers to '*ibadat*', which specifically refers to the enactment of the five pillars.

There are many others, including most people in Cirebon, who think otherwise and justify these 'additional' activities as essentially *ibadat*. Pak Soleh (44 years), a thoughtful trader said:

It is true that such work as *reciting the Qur'an, tahlil, tahmid*, visits to tombs and the like are not *ibadat* in the narrower sense, but from the broader perspectives of Islam it is essentially *ibadat*, depending on our intention, whether we do it for Allah, for others or only for fun.¹⁶

It is clear that the Cirebonese see *'ibadat* from two different perspectives, specific (*khusus*) or narrow and general (*umum*) or broad, and thus bring the concept of *ibadat* into ambiguity. The Cirebonese, however, have a complex enunciation of how this ambiguity is clarified and understood, at least for themselves.

IBADAT DEFINED: CLARIFYING THE AMBIGUITY

Islam, in its ideal form does not distinguish the sacred from the profane. Nasr claims that within the unitary perspectives of Islam, all aspects of life, as well as degrees of cosmic manifestation, are governed by a single principle and are unified by a common centre. Everything is essentially sacred and nothing profane because everything bears within itself the fragrance of the Divine.¹⁷ Nasr seems to justify a contention that Islam looks at the individual as a whole and requires the individual to submit himself completely to God, as is witnessed in the fact that every Muslim utters in his *salat*: my prayer, my sacrifice, my life and my death belong to Allah; He has no partner and I am ordered to be among those who submit (Muslim).¹⁸ A true Muslim thus should always be thinking, saying and acting solely for the pleasure of God, as his life and death have been submitted to Him. This contention presupposes the conception of worship or *ibadat* in Islam to be comprehensive, to include almost everything of any individual's activity. Worship is an all inclusive term for all that God loves of external and internal sayings and actions of a person. It includes rituals as well as beliefs, social activities, and personal contributions to the welfare of fellow human beings.

Nasr and the other commentators are, of course, speaking about norms or ideals. In reality perhaps, not many Muslims, can achieve this condition or maintain continuously for twenty-four hours this spirit of worship. Actually, as Denny says, Islam defines itself not only based on norms, but also by its acts, that is,

¹⁶ Indepth interview, 3-5-1992. Its original Javanese expression is: "Pancen bener yen pegawean kaya done maca Qur'an, tahlil, tahmid, ziarah kubur karo sejen-sejene iku dudu ibadah munggu pengertian kang khusus. Tapi munggu pengertian Agama Islam kang umum, kabeh iku ya ibadah, tergantung niyate apa krana Allah apa mung kanggo plangguran bae, atawa krana sejene."

¹⁷ Nasr, S.H. (1981), *Islamic Life and Thought*, Boston: George Allen & Unwin, p.7.

¹⁸ This utterance can be found in most *fiqh* books.

Muslims define Islam in its various forms without even being conscious of doing so.¹⁹

The Kaula-Gusti Relationship

The popular argument over the broader and narrower meaning of *ibadat* incorporates both semantic and verbal considerations. The local term *ibadat* or *ibadah*, is a direct borrowing from Arabic 'ibada. It means, according to Pak Sholeh, "to enslave oneself to God (*ngaula ning Gusti Allah*)."²⁰ Semantically (*munggu logat*), the notion of *ngaula* (to enslave) entails at least two implications. The first is affirmation of the existing bond between man and God in a slave-Master (*kaula-Gusti*) relationship where man is the slave or servant (*kaula*) and God is the Master (*Gusti*); the second is an affirmation that man, the servant (*kaula*), has the task of obeying the Master (*Gusti*), both by doing continuously what the Master orders and by avoiding what the Master forbids. However, acknowledging that the God is the Master who, despite His absolute power and omnipotence, is exceedingly beneficent and merciful, giving the servants life and invaluable nourishment, has a third implication; that is, that the servant has a moral obligation to express thankfulness, to do his utmost in his service, and to be generous in his obedience. The semantic implications of *ngaula* match properly the three principles on which the religion of Islam is founded. The first is 'to have faith' (*iman*), from which the Decree of Faith comes and later becomes the subject of elaborate discussion in theology (*ilmu tauhid* or *kalam*). The second principle is 'total obedience' (*islam*), the outward manifestation of faith which is subsumed under the Five Pillars and from which emerged the Divine Law (*hukum syara'* or *syari'ah*) set down by the scholars (*ulama*) into Islamic Jurisprudence (*pekih* or *fiqh*). To ensure and verify this outward manifestation of obedience comes the third principle, 'deference' (*ihsan*), from which *tasawuf* (cleansing the heart), which incorporates both Islamic ethic (*akhlaq*) and Sufism, derive. *Tasawuf* and *hukum syara'*, stand in a mode of complementary validation to each other. Pak Sholeh concluded that *ibadat*, in the broader sense, brings into practice the three founding principles of Islamic religion by way of *ngaula*; whereas, in the narrower sense, *ibadat* refers to the observance of required duties, subsumed under the five pillars; that is, the formal outward manifestation of faith.²⁰

The second argument about the broader and narrower meaning of *ibadat* reflects a somewhat operational argument. It starts from the belief that one's faith is in constant oscillation between maximum and minimum, from high to low and vice-versa. For this, again Pak Sholeh said:

¹⁹ Denny, F.M. (1985), 'Islamic Ritual', p 77.

²⁰ Field notes.

... man's faith is of course unstable, on one occasion it is thick, on another it is thin. When it is thick, one's awareness of God is intact, and thus a person keeps remembering God while thinking, saying and working. But when a person's faith is thin he forgets God, not only while working but also while doing nothing.²¹

The corollary is that one's devotion to God may alternate between being full and being partial. When the faith is at its height, one will be fully aware of one's status as a slave of God (*kaulane Gusti Allah*) and submit oneself, one's life, and one's death, solely to God. The person eventually devotes what he thinks, says and does solely for the sake of God, thence everything becomes '*ibadat*' in the broader sense. Indication of this kind of devotion, and at the same time its minimum requirement, is the presence of awareness which manifests itself as intention (*niyat*). According to Pak Sholeh, it is enough to have intention in one's heart but it is much better to pronounce it vocally. In Islam, the role of intention is crucial without which one's work will not be an *ibadat*.²² It is in the presence of intention that everything, irrespective whether it is a worldly or afterlife activity (*bli perduli apa urusan dunya atawa urusan akherat*), is religious and thus, in Nasr words, 'everything is essentially sacred and nothing is profane because everything bears within itself the fragrance of the Divine.' Therefore, *ibadat*, in this sense, may range from expressing daily courtesies to such things as the formal and solemn invocation both in and outside of formal prescribed prayers, and other forms of worship. It embraces a wide spectrum of actions and is akin to, and sometimes used interchangeably with, *amal* ('*aml*'), meaning work, another word which points to the same thing referred to by *ibadat*. Thus, the distinction between *amal* and *ibadat* becomes elusive. Both *ibadat* and *amal* require *niyat* (intention) which becomes the stamp that the work is for God. Another way to ensure intention is by uttering or murmuring *Basmalah* (a phrase, saying 'In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful'). Thus, doing any (good) thing, a religious or worldly matter, becomes *ibadat*, by merely preceding it with *Basmalah*.

Usually an activity referred to by *amal* is technical and focussed on social action such as helping others and giving charity. In *ibadat*, on the other hand, the activity is usually of individual concern yet not necessarily related to the five pillars of Islam, such as reciting the Qur'an, *du'a* (invocation) and exalting God. As the difference is elusive, it cannot be precisely explained. People, for example, often say that *du'a* is undeniably *ibadat*, feeding an orphan is *amal* but, other ordinary technical and mundane acts such as going to work, going to school and

²¹ Indepth interview, 5-5-1992. Its Javanese expression is: "... imane wong iku ya bli tetep, ana kalane kandel ana kalane tipis. Lamun imane lagi kandel ya elinge ning Gusti Allah bli ucul, awit krentege ati, metune pengucap, sampe pragat menggawe tetep kelingen ning Gusti Allah. Tapi ari imane lagi tipis, aja maning lagi menggawe, lagi meneng bae gan ya klalen."

²² See Chapter One.

participation in social gatherings, are also said to be *ibadat* because doing these things, from the broader perspective, is essentially a religious duty; hence, not doing these things is a neglect and thus, can be sinful. Moreover, *amal* and *ibadat* are frequently combined to become a compound word, *amal-ibadat*, used either with an emphasis on or in reference to a more general notion covering both.

The notion of *amal* and *ibadat* attached to one's action diminishes, even disappears, when, at other times, a person's faith lessens, and the person concerned is no longer aware of his faith. This is the situation about which God warned through His testimony of time: "By the time, Verily man is in loss, Except such as have Faith"²³ This warning, according to Pak Sholeh, implies God's mercifulness. Acknowledging man's faith is in constant alternation (from high to low), He is always willing to save man from loss. The enforcement of (formal) '*ibadat*', especially the prescribed prayer five times a day, and other worships of the five pillars, helps man to remember Him periodically so that what he thinks, says and does has spiritual value and becomes *amal* and *ibadat*.²⁴

When one officially becomes a member of the community of believers (*ummat Islam*),²⁵ his membership card is the pronouncement of *syahadat*, the first pillar of Islam; the standing rule is the *syari'ah* (canon law in Islam); and the prescribed duty is observance of the other four pillars, the *ibadat* in the narrower sense. It is narrow in the strictest sense because it is the prerequisite, the minimum requirement for being a true Muslim. In addition, if one would like to be generous and obtain more merit than he can obtain from the prescribed duties, one is welcome to do so by performing the 'religiously recommended (*sunna*) activities.'

A recommended activity may not necessarily derive from the *fiqh* books; it may find its roots in *tasawuf*. The *ulama tasawuf* (tasawuf scholars, mostly enunciators of Sufism) who attempted to get close to God, according to the Cirebonese belief, have set forth various meritorious activities that are supposed to enable a person to establish a better relationship with God (*hablum minallah* or **habl min Allah**) as well as with his fellow human beings (*hablumminan nas* or **habl min al-nas**), dead or alive. Reciting the Qur'an outside the prescribed prayer, for example, is not set down in *fiqh* but it is encouraged by *tasawuf*; so too is helping other people. Pak Sholeh said that according to the principle of *tasawuf*, reciting the Qur'an, even without knowing the meaning, reflects sympathy and relish for God's words; uttering *kalimah tayibah* (good phrases), such as exalting and praising God, shows a sort of courtesy to Him; so also is reciting *salawat* in reverence for His messengers. All these things are considered as attempts to

²³ QS 103:1–3.

²⁴ Field notes.

²⁵ One informant in Kalitengah compared the community of believers to a club (*perkumpulan*). The most familiar *perkumpulan* for him was a cooperative (*koopersi*), especially Batik Cooperative, in which membership is the key to access to rights to communal property.

establish a better relationship with God. Visiting the tombs of pious figures, praying at grave sides for the welfare of the deceased involve establishing good relations with the dead; whereas, teaching, helping others by such means as giving material support, showing sympathy, giving advice and showing courtesy, all belong to attempts to establish good relations with the living. God will never be jealous if a person has good relations with his fellows, dead or alive; on the contrary, He will be pleased because establishing good relations with others is part of His order, and reward is provided for those who do so. Moreover, doing those things can even be used as a means to seek His pleasure and thence it is part of *ibadat* in the broader sense. In Cirebon, these types of activities are said to belong to the recommended activities and thereby are *ibadat* in the broader sense.

Following Pak Sholeh, the Cirebonese seem to conceive human actions as having a complex configuration. Diagram 4.1 shows how the configuration may seem to be. In the first place, actions may either be *ibadat* or non-*ibadat*, depending on whether or not they are based on faith. Further, faith-based actions (*ibadat*) fall into two categories: the formal submission (*islam*) and showing deference (*ihsan*). The formal submission (*islam*) transforms into *syari'ah* and is set down in *fiqh*. The *fiqh* enunciates both the laws and rules of 'formal duties or worship' (*ibadat* in the narrower sense), subsumed in the five pillars, and rules of interpersonal contracts (*mu'amalat*) such as those regarding marriage and inheritance. Showing deference, on the other hand, transforms into *tasawuf* which encourages good relations either with God in the form of additional *ibadat*, or with other creatures, human or non human, dead or alive, in the form of, among other things, ethics and *amal saleh*. As *islam* and *ihsan* are inseparable, both explicate the faith (*iman*), so too do formal obedience and showing deference, the *fiqh* and the *tasawuf*.²⁶

²⁶ Ki Dulah gave a long illustration to explain the relationship between *ibadat* usually set forth in *fiqh* ('*ibadat syare'at* or formal *ibadat*') and *ibadat* developed in *tasawuf* ('*ibadat sufiyah*'). He said among other things that the 'formal' nature of the former and the 'informal' or 'courteous' nature in the latter. Two parties, for example, may have a deal straightforwardly to the points they are dealing with. But such a relationship is arid because it touches only the rational or physical aspect of human nature, without taking into account the emotional or spiritual aspects. To make a relationship lively and sensuous, courtesies are needed. Thus, a pre-prayer *puji-pujian*, for example, is a kind of courtesy, before formal 'meeting' with the Lord (*madep ning Pengeran*) proceeds. In fact, according to Ki Dulah, Islam involves both ratio and emotion of man. (See further sections).

Figure 4.1: Scope of Ibadat in Cirebonese popular conception.



Fiqh and Tasawuf: Dual aspects of ibadat

Following the above explanation, activities belonging to *ibadat* (in the narrower sense) can be divided into two kinds, one derived from jurisprudence (*fiqh*), the other from *tasawuf*. Each is dialectically related to the other in a mode of complementary validation. In fact, *fiqh* is a prerequisite and thus it comes first before *tasawuf*, but enactment of *fiqh* without *tasawuf* is incomplete. Similarly, enactment of *tasawuf* without *fiqh* is invalid. *Fiqh* and *tasawuf* are thus like two sides of the same coin. K.H. Abdullah Abbas (affectionately known as Ki Dulah) of Pesantren Buntet, quoted Al-Ghazali's words in Aabic and then the translation in Cirebonese:

One who observes only those things set down in *fiqh* without observing *tasawuf*, (still) commits sins. And one who observes only *tasawuf* without observing those things set down in *fiqh*, commits heresies.²⁷

In addition, *ibadat* or worship, according to Ki Dulah, is working with God (Allah). The *fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence) which explicates the Divine Law (*syari'ah*) identifies what is obligatory (*wajib*), recommended (*sunna*), licit (*mubah*), illicit (*makruh*), and forbidden (*haram*). Bound up in these legal constraints, man usually tends to fulfil only the obligatory, unwilling to do the recommended, and desires the illicit or the forbidden. Man, however, is probably safe enough if he can fulfil the obligatory and do only the licit, but the temptation for doing the illicit and forbidden is so great that, without special effort, man is quite unlikely to be able to avoid the illicit and the forbidden completely because those things are present everywhere, in and outside the body. *Tasawuf* provides ways to counterbalance this tendency with encouragement and training to do the obligatory work properly and earnestly, and separate man from what is illicit and forbidden.

The obligatory duty required in *fiqh*, Ki Dulah said, accounts for only a small portion of man's life. Strict fulfilment of what is required is like working part time, while *tasawuf* makes it full time. The prescribed prayer (*salat*) is the most pressing duty one may think of because it must be observed five times a day. But, the time to do it takes only less than five minutes. The total time required for it is thus, less than 25 minutes a day, or about 1.7 per cent of the 24 hour period. The second hardest is fasting, once a year for 29 or 30 days, each day takes about 13 or 14 hours. The approximate time taken for fasting is therefore 360 hours or less, or about 4.0 per cent of the total hours of a year. *Zakat*, amount to just 2.5 per cent a year, taken from the surplus one keeps; whereas the hajj is required only once during a life time, and only for those who can afford it. Thus, even if we do the prescribed duties perfectly, according to Ki Dulah, we

²⁷ Indepth interview, 11-8-1992. Its Javanese expression is: "Sapa wonge kang nglakoni amalan feqih bae bli karo nglakoni amalan tasawuf, wongiku faseq. Lan sapa wonge kang nglakoni tasawuf bae bli karo nglakoni amalan feqih wongiku zindiq."

can count that the proportion of our life-time intentionally directed to God is very minimal, while outside that proportion, Iblis and *setan* are working restlessly to lead man astray. Indeed the greatest proportion of man's worldly life is unsecured. The danger of falling astray is clearly evident. Greed, snobbery, arrogance, unguided lusts and passions, according to Ki Dulah, penetrate quite easily into the heart of everyone at anytime and at any place. God's testimony in 'Surat Wal'asri,' saying that man is in constant loss unless he has faith, does righteous deeds, joins together in the mutual enjoining of truth, patience and constancy, shows its relevance in this context; and, it is here the *tasawuf* beneficially comes.²⁸

Speaking about *tasawuf*, Ki Dulah said, does not necessarily mean speaking about being an ascetic or following the advanced mystical path, the **tharlqa** (*tarekat*) developed by certain Sufi orders, although certainly following this path is one of the significant outward indications of a commitment to *tasawuf*. In its broader sense, *tasawuf* is to cleanse the heart from contaminations occurring in daily life. From the perspective of *tasawuf*, the expression of *ibadat* may take various forms ranging from the earnest belief in the Oneness of God to the removing of even the smallest obstacles from people's way. Doing good to people and to nature with generosity for the sake of God (*lillahi ta'ala*) is already doing *tasawuf*. Earnest and generous submission of a wife to her husband and a husband to his wife in a harmonious relationship is also *tasawuf*. So is eating with an awareness that by means of eating one can maintain energetic work and thereby a person can support his family.

In addition, within *ibadat* of either the broader or narrower sense, there is not only a burden, but a joy. Most *ibadat* bears an atmosphere of cheer and festivity. An earnest person, after doing certain *ibadat*, would feel some sort of release from tension. The joy of fasting and the excitement of the *haji* are claimed by many people. Thus, Ki Dulah remarked, there is no ground to think that *ibadat* is burdensome. On the contrary, for some, especially those who have been accustomed, *ibadat*, both from the perspective of *syari'ah* and from *tasawuf* is a pleasant undertaking, simple and easy to do. It might be a burden for some, who prefer thinking rather than doing, but *ibadat* is to be done, not (only) to be thought.

In short, when one is willing to observe the required duties earnestly, the person is performing *syari'ah* and *tasawuf* at the same time. In addition, anyone can make everything religiously meritorious by simply adding an intention, even if it is only in the heart, that what one does is for the sake of God. It is in this way that any action can become *ibadat*. In other words, if doing something is preceded by an intention to please God, that is *ibadat*. Indeed intention brings

²⁸ Surat Wal'asri refers to QS 103: 1–3 (Al-'Asr).

the worldly life into the religious; it needs nothing but a remembrance of God and earnestness. *Tasawuf* is, primarily, maintaining this awareness to achieve earnestness of obedience.²⁹

THE PRACTICE OF IBADAT: SALAT

Sukardi (46 years), a shop owner in Plered said: “ISLAM stands for (I)-sa, (S)-ubuh, (L)-uhur, (A)-sar, (M)-agrib”; that is, the prescribed daily prayers five times a day for every Muslim who supposes himself to be devout. *Isya* (**Isha**) is the duty of undertaking night prayer, *Subuh* (**Subh**) morning prayer, *Luhur* (**Dhuhr**) noon prayer, *Asar* (**Asr**) afternoon prayer and *Magrib* (**Maghrib**) sunset prayer. I asked Sukardi whether he was serious in saying so, and he was not. He urged me not to take his words seriously because what he had just said was only a frivolous tautology (*kirata, dikira-[kira] nya-[ta]*), which he had heard from his friends. He insisted that what he had said did not have any sort of textual basis: “it is not available in books” (*langka ning kitabe*).

Sukardi's remark is a manipulation of five Roman letters: ‘I’, ‘S’, ‘L’, ‘A’ and ‘M’, forming the word “ISLAM”; each individual letter is said to represent the initial—in local language—the time and the name of the five daily prayers. This would make the five prayers a summation of the meaning of Islam. I realised later that in fact, such a joke is not strange and is already known by local people. Knowing that Islam was born in Arabia they are quite aware that Islam has no relation with the Roman letters. This fabrication is, however, interesting in that it reflects a genuine intelligible folk explanation of the position of the prescribed daily prayers in Islam.

The prescribed daily prayers (**salat**<phrase role="bold-ital">), which Watt (1979:185) prefers to call “public worship” rather than “prayer” is really the heart of Islamic worship.³⁰ Watt's preference to use “public” is understandable given that the Muslims speak of two distinct sets of acts for worship, referred to in English by the word “prayer”. One is the so called *du'a* (in Cirebon: *donga*),

²⁹ In this context, “ritual” is a very interesting subject for scholarship. Anthropology has contributed much to unpacking its intricacy. Studies on this issue have been considerable but the more it is studied the more intricate it seems to be. The very notion of ritual as a particular kind of social action poses crucial questions revolving around the value of dichotomisation, whether sacred or profane, collective or individual, static or dynamic, action or thought, structure or antistructure (Bell, C. 1992). Seymour-Smith's suggestion cited earlier that perhaps ultimately it is unnecessary to define ritual, or to delimit it from ceremony on the one hand or from instrumental or practical action on the other because of the extreme difficulty of doing so, does not seem to resolve the problems of ritual automatically. This is more apparent, I think, when the subject is related to Islam, more specifically, traditional Islam in Cirebon where people consider any action intended to please God to be *ibadat* (worship including ritual). The boundary between activities which are religiously valid and those which invalid, is only one of an intention. Without intention, an activity, even the most ritualised and formalised one, becomes profane in Durkheimian sense. Similarly, even the most profane or technical action becomes sacred merely because of the intention. It is the intention which brings the profane into the sacred, and the sacred becomes profane when intention is absent.

³⁰ Watt, W.M. (1979), *What is Islam?*, 2nd ed, London: Longman.

an expression of thought, hopes or needs directed to God either in Arabic or in any other language, by heart or by tongue. This is usually done when the performer is either sitting, reclining, standing, walking or any other position, and can occur at any time; whereas *Salat* (in Cirebon: *sembayang* or *solat*), consists of various coordinated actions, such as standing, bowing and prostration, accompanied by appropriate exclamations of praise and recitations from the Qur'an, and performed only at the prescribed time. Owing to its important position to the Muslims, I shall focus the discussion concerning the practice of worship (*ibadat*), mainly on prayer. Other forms of *ibadat* are discussed in conjunction with this prayer. In addition, without disregarding Watt's suggestion, the use of the word "prayer" to mean *salat*, is widely used.³¹ For practical reasons, I will use both *salat* and prayer interchangeably.

Based on people's commitment to the prescribed prayer, there is a wide prevalence in Cirebon to categorise people roughly and yet arbitrarily into *wong sembayang* (those who observe the prayer) and *wong bli sembayang* (those who do not observe the prayer). This categorisation has nothing to do with structuring people into particular positions, neither has it any effect on any form of personal rights, although one who observes is considered better from the religious point of view than a non-observer. This categorisation is quite arbitrary in the sense that a non-observer, even without other people's notice, can become observer at will and at any time. Sooner or later, other people will notice. In the same way, an observer can become a non-observer.

There is no written record about the number of people who move from being non-observers to being observers or vice-versa. However, the tendency of people moving from being non-observers to observers is much greater than the reverse, especially when they find themselves getting older. In addition, most of those who may be considered as non-observers go at least once or twice a year to the 'Id prayer (*sembayang raya*), the congregation prayer at the end of Ramadan and the tenth of Dzu'l-Hijjah. This suggests that the categorisation between observer and non-observer can better be regarded as involving a continuous process rather than a discrete dichotomy. Its practical implication is behavioural rather than social in that, it indicates the crucial position of prayer relative to other forms of *ibadat* in determining one's religiosity. It makes prayer into a kind of public acceptance which is distinct from, for example, alms-giving. This is true because, unlike with other worship activities, people consider prayer as everyone's duty without exception, be that person healthy or sick, rich or poor. This formal acceptance does not necessarily mean actual commitment. Yet, it is quite common, in Cirebon, to hear gossip about someone's commitment to prayer. In contrast, there is no question of whether or not someone has pronounced

³¹ It is also used for example, by Juynboll (See: "Prayer", in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, pp. 196–199).

syahadat, (testimony) although *syahadat* is the foundation of all other worship activities and the key to being a Muslim. Probably, it is taken for granted that everyone born to a Muslim family is automatically a Muslim. Considering that *salat* is a matter of public concern, Watt's preference of referring to *salat* as a "public worship" rather than as "prayer" is actually quite sensible.

The daily life in Cirebon, as in other societies, consists mainly of sleeping, working and leisure. There is, of course, a great diversity between individuals as well as between groups regarding the time and duration of each activity. The normal situation dictates that sleeping is at night, working occurs during day time, and leisure in between. Some exceptions occur among those who work as village security, fishermen and sometimes among those who are traders.

A snapshot which illustrates a segment of the daily life of the Cirebonese village in the morning, wherein *ibadat* becomes a part, may be useful. Here, I want to refer to the case of Pak Shofie's and the surrounding households with whom I had become a part:

Pak Shofie and his wife Nafsiyah usually wake up around four o'clock in the morning. They wake up their five sons and two daughters who sleep in their separate rooms or in other parts of the house wherever they like. Sometimes Pak Shofie uses a stick for a light beating to awake his sons. He and his wife take a bath immediately, make ritual ablution (*banyu wulu*), and get dressed. Pak Shofie wears a *sarung*, usually the same *sarung* he has already worn for sleeping, a shirt and a *topong* (black velvet cap). His sons follow what Pak Shofie does. His wife and daughters, on the other hand, wear a *tapi* (garment) or *sarung*, usually of batik, and a blouse with a *mukena* to wrap the head, showing only the face while the lower part of the *mukena* rests around the shoulders; the *mukena* hangs in front of the body and covers the chest and abdomen. While their sons and daughters are taking a bath and getting dressed Pak Shofie and his wife undertake *sembayang sunnah* (recommended prayer) in the private praying niche in the house.³²

This is the way they prepare for morning-prayer (*sembayang subuh*), the earliest daily activity done by Pak Shofie's family and many others. The most important of these activities is making the ceremonial ablution (*banyu wulu*), which is a prerequisite before offering any prayer. The formal function of ablution is self-purification (*nyuceni awak dewek*) which is particularly required for everyone who does holy work, such as undertaking the prescribed prayer. As the nature of prayer is to have communion and communication with God, the Holiest and Purest Being, praying requires the performer to be in a state of purity.

³² Field notes.

Ablution is a kind of ceremonial bathing that involves washing parts of the body generally exposed to dirt, dust or smog. Officially, it consists of the declaration of intention, the washing of face and hands, the wetting of a part of the head and the washing of legs; all are done in successive order. Usually, however, it is performed as follows: (1) utter the *Basmalah*: "In the name of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful" (2) wash the hands up to the wrists (3) rinse out the mouth with water three times (4) cleanse the nostrils of the nose by sniffing water into them three times (5) declare an intention that the act is for the purpose of worship and purity (6) wash the whole face three times with both hands from the top of the forehead to the bottom of the chin and from ear to ear (7) wash the right and the left arms up to the far end of the elbow, three times each (8) wipe the whole head or any part of it with a wet hand (9) wipe the inner sides of the ears with the wet forefingers and the outer sides with the wet thumbs (10) wash the two feet, three times each, first the right and then the left, up to the ankles. When all these things are completed, one is ready to offer prayer unless the purification is nullified by things such as vomiting, falling asleep and natural discharges: urine, stools, gas.

This ablution actually exceeds formal ablution requirements (*fardlu*). There are only six of these, comprising: intention, washing the face, washing the hands up to the elbows, rubbing the head with a wet hand, washing the feet up to the ankles and keeping these activities in the proper order. The additional practices belong to the *sunnah*. Pak Shofie teaches his students about ablution through a chant which he claimed as his father's creation. The chant is as follows:

*Ferdune wudlu iku nenem kabehe
Wong wis baleg kudu weruh sekabehe
Siji niat iku ana ning atine
Loro mbasuh rahining barengane*

*Telu mbasuh tangan teka ning sikute
Papat mbasuh sirah ning enggon rambute
Lima mbasuh sikil teka ning kiyonge
Nenem kudu karo tartib nglakonane.*

*The obligations in ablution are six in number
All the grown up people should know these obligations
The first is intention which resides in the heart
The second is washing the face accompanying the intention*

*The third is washing the hands up to the elbows
The fourth is wetting the head where the hair grows
The fifth is washing the feet up to the ankles
The sixth is putting those things in the proper order*

Along with its formal functions, some informants insist on the symbolic meaning of ablution as a sort of self-reminder (*ngelingaken*), introspection (*ngrumangsani*) and, at the same time, expression of repentance (*tobat*), expecting God to nullify any bad effects coming from improper activity by the misuse of those organs. Washing the mouth signifies an expectation for nullifying any disgrace from improper or unlawful saying and eating; washing the face is to nullify improper seeing, facing and directing of any activity; washing the hands is to nullify improper holding and doing; washing the head is to nullify improper thinking; washing the ears is to nullify improper hearing; washing the legs is to nullify improper places that the legs have taken the body. Some other informants emphasise an even wider meaning. Any action involving the ablution of those organs is a symbol of the basic tenet of Islamic ethics. It is not only to nullify what is already done but more importantly, ablution is a refreshing instrument which reminds everyone to be careful in using those organs and thence avoid any probable misuse for having or doing illicit and forbidden actions. Ablution is therefore, interpreted by some as an encompassing framework which, ideally, guides an individual as well as a social activity for the preservation of a safe and peaceful life.

Early in the morning, people's activities throughout the hamlet centre mainly around the wells located outside the house. Since not every household has their own bathroom and source of water supply, the well becomes a place of rendezvous for a number of households. The well is usually owned by one household but it becomes public, used by the others, for bathing and washing either clothes or dishes. Ablution is taken from the *padasan* (a jar propped on a pillar, usually stone or brick, at knee height with a small water outlet near the bottom). Upon their return they take with them a bucket or two of water for cooking and other necessities. In the meantime the religious atmosphere accompanying the early morning in a village is approximately as follows:

Since early in the morning, the sounds faintly heard from the prayer house in far hamlets begin to reverberate with the recital of the Qur'an, *salawat* (reverence to the Prophet) or *puji-pujian*. In no time, sounds from another prayer house follows, also reverberating with the same sounds, vocally or from records. Later, more and more sounds come, including the one from some nearby hamlet. The climax happens at about 4.30 a.m when the time for morning-prayer (*subuh*) is marked by the rhythmical beating of the *kentong*, followed by the call to prayer (*adzan*).³³ The sounds of *kentong* and *adzan* are heard one after another, and some

³³ The *kentong* is a cut of log, about 1.5 metres long with a long resonance hole in the centre. It is hung vertically in most prayer houses and mosques to be beaten rhythmically with a certain tempo, softly and strongly to signal to the surrounding people the prayer time.

are even heard about the same time as if orchestrating a religious symphony, which has already started in the previous hour.³⁴

Some argue that all sounds heard in the morning are an offence to private individuals concern, causing only a nuisance rather than convenience, obstructing the nicest sleeping time. Such an issue, Pak Nasuha (52 years) said, was raised sometimes in the 1960s by PKI (Indonesian Communist Party) members. The argument finally stopped without causing any more problems, after the PKI was banned in 1966. According to Pak Nasuha, the “nuisance”, for those who think so, is now intensified by the wide-spread use of sound systems in many *tajug*, even the small ones like Pak Shofie's. Some, particularly among the modernists in Kalitengah, besides claiming that it is an innovation (*bid'ah*), call the contents and usefulness of the sounds into question, asking whether it has any educative value for the people given that the sound is almost totally Arabic and thus, not understandable. While denouncing this practice they claim that only the *adzan* is acceptable. Most people however, think about it differently. For example, I asked Bi Rukila (52 years), a woman snack peddler from the neighbouring house to Pak Shofie, if she knows the meaning of the sound coming from the prayer houses and, how she feels about it. Her comment was as follows:

... I do not know anything about the meaning and, I think, very few people know it. For me, in particular, it is not the meaning which is important though. The tone, the rhythm and the lyrics which, by local taste, penetrate into the heart and exuberantly invoke an atmosphere of religiosity is much more meaningful than any words can say. Also, its aim is not to tell people something, but to help them awaken, to get up early, and it will be better for those who are willing, to come to God by doing prayer early in the morning. Our elders said that getting up early in the morning is good; it may brings fortune closer (*gampang oli rejeki*), and enlighten the mind (*njembaraken pikiran*)...³⁵

Pak Shofie's prayer house also contributes to the creation of the morning's religious atmosphere. This starts when someone strikes the *kentong* hanging in the verandah of the *tajug* adjacent to Pak Shofie's house. It instantly wakes any young boys sleeping in it. There are four or more boys from nearby households who often use the *tajug* to sleep in. Usually, there are two or three of Pak Shofie's neighbours who come to the *tajug* quite early and strike the *kentong*. Then if there is a man among them he turns on the *tajug*'s sound systems and sounds the *adzan*. If there are no men present, a woman beats the *kentong*, and the *adzan* is not immediately sounded. Pak Shofie's sons will understand the situation and

³⁴ Field notes.

³⁵ Field notes from a set of informal talks.

one of them will suspend bathing, take only ablution, and go off to the *tajug* to sound the *adzan*. After *adzan*, the congregation (*jama'ah*) in the *tajug* chants *puji-pujian* in chorus, while more and more people come to join the chorus and the group grows bigger and bigger. Some do pre-morning prayer in the midst of the chorus. The most frequent chant sounded in this *tajug* is the "Cry of Adam and Eve for Repentance". It was said that Adam uttered it soon after being thrown from paradise. According to Pak Shofie, it teaches us to be a *kesatriya* (an open-minded individual) in that, when something goes wrong, the first thing to do is to reflect and to look for one's own fault rather than blaming others, and then generously confess that it is really one's own fault not the fault of others. The chant is in Arabic and translates as follows:

Rabbana ya rabbana
Rabbana dzalamna anfusana
Wa in lam taghfirlana
Lanakunanna min al-khasirin

Our Lord, oh our Lord.
We have oppressed ourselves.
If thou forgive us not,
We certainly belong to the disadvantaged.

After doing pre-morning prayer at home, Pak Shofie goes to the *tajug*; a person of the group, usually the one who sounded the *adzan*, stands up again to sound the *iqamat*, a shorter form of *adzan*, commanding the group into prayer. All people stand, the women loosen the lower part of the *mukena*, so that it covers all parts of the body; only the face and palms of the hands are visible. Pak Shofie enters, walks across to the 1.5 square metre niche (*pengimaman* or *mihrab*), located at the centre of west-wall inside the *tajug* cube, and stands there facing Mecca.

Just before the morning prayer begins Pak Shofie, who is about to start to lead the prayer, first turns to the group and reminds them to stand properly and form straight lines. They stand behind him, shoulder to shoulder and foot to foot to form straight lines. Usually, there are four to seven lines in the congregation, each line consists of five or six people. Men and women are separated by the line. The front lines consist only of men and boys, behind them are lines consisting only of women and girls.

The prayer starts when Pak Shofie, who leads the prayer (*imam*), pronounces *takbir*, saying "Allah the Greatest" ("*Allahu Akbar*"), with his hands open on each side of the face and with his palms facing the front, very near, almost or even touching the lobes of the ears. This act is followed by the others. But before the *takbir*, everyone, including the leader, concentrates his/her mind individually and utters an intention (*niat*) in Arabic softly in a whispered tone: "I intend to

undertake morning prayer two *raka'at* (unit of prayer) facing the *Qiblat* (in Mecca) for the sake of Allah alone." After *takbir*, the hands are folded, the right palm is put over the left, against the front of the body; this position is kept while standing. A set of opening words (**Iftitah**) is recited softly which translates:

I turn my face, to the Creator of the heavens and earth. And I am not of the polytheists. Surely, my prayer, my devotion, my life and my death, belong (solely) to Allah, master of the whole universe. None is companion to Him, and for that I am ordered, and I (certainly) belong to the Muslims.

Following the *iftitah*, the *Imam* recites the first Surah of the Holy Qur'an (Fatihah) audibly, while the others listen or follow it by heart. When the Fatihah ends, everyone responds in chorus: "Amen." After the Fatihah comes recital of a short *surah*, or few verses of the Qur'an. After that the further practice is as follows: (1) Bowing down from the hips (*ruku*), with the head and back parallel to the ground; the hands hold the knees and a phrase is softly uttered three times: "Glory to my God the Great". (2) Straightening up after bowing, returning to the upright position, saying: "Allah hears those who praise Him" followed by "Our God, to thee be the praise." (3) Sliding to the knees and doing the first prostration with the knees, forehead and nose touch the ground, saying: "Glory to my God, the Highest", also three times. (4) First sitting on the heels with one foot up and the other flat; the head is raised from the first prostration, the back is erect and the hands rest on the knees, saying: "God, please forgive me and give me thy mercy" (5) Repeating the prostration, again with saying: "Glory to my God, the Highest," three times and then coming back to a standing position. After that the Fatihah and short verses are again recited. The observances from Fatihah to the second prostration constitutes a unit (*raka'at* or **raka'at**). The morning prayer proceeds in two units concluded by the utterance of reverence (*Tahiyat*) or witness-bearing (*Tasyahud*). At the upright position, after straightening up from *ruku* of the second unit, a *qunut* is read.³⁶ The *Tahiyat* or *Tasyahud* consists of two parts; each translates as follows:

(1) All reverence, all blessing, all sanctity are due to God. Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and the mercy of God and His Blessings. Peace be upon us all and on the righteous servants of God. I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Messenger.

(2) Oh, God! Exalt our Master Muhammad and the people of our Master Muhammad, as Thou didst exalt our master Abraham and the people of our Master Abraham. And bless our Master Muhammad and the people of our Master Muhammad, as Thou didst bless our Master Abraham and

³⁶ *Qunut* invocation is normally read only at morning prescribed prayer and *witr*, the recommended night prayer of the 16th day onward of the Fasting month (*Ramadan*). Along with the soft verbal utterance of the intention (*niyat*), *qunut* is strongly recommended by the traditionalists but has been abandoned by the modernists.

the people of our Master Abraham. Verily, in the worlds, Thou art the praiseworthy, and glorious.

It appears that within the *tahiyat* there is a pronouncement of *syahadat* (from which the name *tasyahud* is derived). When it is pronounced, the person praying raises his index finger as if he is pointing to the west, although, according to one informant, it is not pointing to the West but gesturing and affirming the oneness of God as pronounced in the *syahadat*. At the end of *tahiyat* everyone turns their faces right and then left, each turn being accompanied by a greeting (*salam*), saying: "Peace be upon you, so be (upon you) God's grace and His blessing" This greeting marks the completion of the prayer. At this moment young boys and girls instantly stand up and go out of the prayer house, whereas most adults and some youngsters sit there still to attend *wiridan* or simply, *wirid* (litany or a set of after-prayer invocations). Pak Shofie, the *Imam*, turns around to face the group and starts leading the *wirid*. Unlike the prayer which is solemn and formal, *wirid* is more relaxed. Basically *wirid* is a prayer formulae comprising a set of invocations; its essence is to glorify God (*tasbih*) 33 times, praise God (*tahmid*) 33 times and exalt God (*takbir*) 33 times, concluding with an invocation. Sometimes, *tahlil* (negation of any deity but Allah) 21, 41 or 100 times is also included before the conclusion. The invocation or *du'a* (*donga*) to conclude the *wirid* is recited by the *Imam*, begging God for everyone's beneficial and safe life in this world and in the hereafter. Everyone raises up the palms in front of their faces, responding to the leader repeatedly, with "Amen", in chorus. At the end of the *du'a* everyone rubs their palms against their faces, then everyone gets up to shake each other's hands; the congregation breaks up at about five o'clock a.m., which indicates that the whole process lasts about a half hour. While shaking hands, a fare-well chant is uttered. The most frequent chant for this occasion is "The Cry of Prophet Ayyub" in local Arabic pronunciation and translates as follows:

*Ilahi lastu li 'l-firdawsī ahla
Wa lal aqwa 'alan-naril-jahimī
Fahabli tawbata waghfir dzunubi
Fa innaka ghafirudzdzanbi 'l-'adzimi.*

*My God, I am not (eligible to be) an occupant of paradise,
But I (certainly) can not bear against the fire of Jahim.
So, give me repentance, and forgive all my sins,
Surely, Thou art the forgiver of sin (even) a great one.*

Pak Shofie's prayer house is small (4.5×6 square metres) compared with the other 11 prayer houses in the *desa*, but what usually goes on at other prayer houses follows the same pattern. The same practices are also carried out at other prayer houses in the villages outside the *desa*, in the *desa* mosques, around the shrines

(*kramat*), and in *pesantren*. It is a common pattern followed by traditionalists in Cirebon and elsewhere in Java. This pattern may extend to what happens at other prayer times as well. The difference between this and other prayer times is (as *Fiqh* dictates), the number of units (*raka'at*). The morning prayer, proceeds in two units; noon, afternoon and night prayers respectively, four units and two *tahiyat*, one *tahiyat* comes after the first two units and another one after the fourth. Sunset prayer proceeds in three units and two *tahiyat*. The first *tahiyat* follows the first two units and the second after the third, the last unit. Another difference is in the recital of *Fatihah* and other *surah* of the Qur'an which is audible in the morning, and at the first two units of sunset as well as night prayers, but it is spoken softly at noon and afternoon prayers.

Not all people do their prayer at a prayer house and in congregation (*jama'ah*). Most of them do it at their homes, individually or in a group with their family members; there are even some who do not do it at all. Whether or not people observe the duty, the religious atmosphere undoubtedly dominates the early morning of village life. This atmosphere is further enriched by religious programmes (public lectures or *pengajian*) from several radio stations and, more recently, from the regional TV broadcast transmitted from Bandung.

Among Pak Shofie's family only his wife and Yazid, (26 years), his oldest son, a recent graduate of a state university in Solo (Central Java), stay at the *tajug* to attend the *wirid* until the end. The others return home earlier, read the Qur'an for a while and do some house work. Yayuk, the older daughter, younger sister of Yazid, works in the kitchen to prepare morning tea or coffee, clean the dishes or do her washing. Her sister, Titiek (8 years), is too young to be able to join in her work. After reciting the Qur'an she goes to her bedroom to listen to the radio. Didin and Fadlan the two sons clean the floor. After having some tea and snacks, they kiss their father's and mother's right hands for permission to go to school for morning class at 7.00 a.m., Imran goes to the market to open Pak Shofie's kiosk, preceding another boy of the neighbouring household who will join him a bit later to work as an assistant in the kiosk.

It is after the break up of the morning prayer that people begin to engage in the daily business. In the village daily routine, the first thing to do is household work, and then they do work for a living. School children go to schools, adults go to the markets, to the offices, to the factories and workshops, to the agricultural lands. Aside from the few who are involved in formal official jobs, working hours are quite flexible. Normally, for most people however, work stretches from sunrise to around 5.00 p.m, with two intervals, one for meal around 9.00–10.00 a.m and for a snack (*njabur*), usually a big one, and one for prayer, between 12.00 noon and 1.30 p.m.³⁷ For those who do not rely on a

³⁷ Normally, meal in Cirebon is of two kinds, *mangan* (to have meal) and *njabur* (to have snack). *Mangan* is to have or to eat rice with dishes, twice a day, in the morning and in the afternoon (between 9.00–10.00

clock, noon is signified by the sound of *bedug*, and *adzan* from the mosques, informing people that the prayer time has come.³⁸ Only noon and Thursday afternoon prayer-time is signified by *bedug*; other times are indicated by the sound of *kentong* from the mosques as well as from other prayer houses.

Among the prescribed daily prayers held in congregation, sunset prayer attracts the largest numbers. The second largest attendance is at night prayer and then after these comes the morning prayer time. These congregations are not compulsory, although they are recommended. From the break up of night prayer until late, a class for learning to read the Qur'an (*ngaji*) for boys, girls and children, is held, either at the prayer house or at the teacher's house. At his prayer house Pak Shofie also teaches some grown up boys to read *Kitab*, the *Safinah* and *Sulam Taufiq*.³⁹ Bed-time begins soon after the children have come back from *ngaji*, but because of the presence of television, bed-time has become more flexible, often it is suspended until eleven or even twelve midnight. The class for learning to read the Qur'an usually ceases during, and for a few days after, the Fasting month.

Formal congregation, which is compulsory for Muslims, is held once a week at noon on Friday in the mosque. It is compulsory only for men; women are allowed to go but are not compelled. This congregation is a substitute for noon prayer but consists only of two units instead of four, and the recitation of the *Fatihah* and other verses of the Qur'an by the leader (*imam*) is made out loud. A sermon (*khutbah*) given by a *khatib* (who may be the same person as the *imam*) should precede the prayer, and the congregation should not be less than forty people, including the *imam*. This is the basic pattern of Friday prayer in Islam. There are some who say that four people is enough to make up a Friday congregation, but this never happens in Cirebon.

In Cirebon, the religious atmosphere in the village is most apparent on Friday. According to local belief, Friday is the master of the days (*sayidul ayyam* or *sayid al-ayyam*). It is the most gracious day for religious service. On Thursday, the day before, the time for afternoon prayer is signalled by the *bedug*, implying that after sunset of that day, it will be Friday. By sunset on Thursday, some people buy flowers to be scattered on their beds and some burn incense (*ukup-ukup*). The real purpose of burning incense is not known except there are

a.m and 4.00–5.00 p.m). *Njabur* which means to have or to eat *jaburan* (any foods other than rice and dishes), also twice a day, in the morning and at noon (between 6.30–7.30 a.m and 12.00 at noon - 1.30 p.m). *Njabur* is usually with tea, coffee or other drinks. Bread, toast, biscuits, various cakes and snacks belong to *jaburan*. Casual buying of *jaburan* to be eaten instantly is called *jajan*. Eating dishes (meat, fish, soup, etc) without rice is called *njambal* or *njambal iwak*.

³⁸ The *bedug* is a huge drum, made of a cut of huge log about 1.5 - 2 metres long and about 1.25 metres diameter covered with cow or buffalo leather on both sides. It is hung in the mosques to be beaten at certain times, particularly at noon and on certain occasions.

³⁹ *Safinah* refers to *Safinatun Najah* (*Safina al-Najah*), an elementary *Fiqh* book, whereas *Sulam Taufiq* (*Al Sullam al-Taufiq*) is an elementary *Tasawuf*, both written in Arabic by Nawawi of Banten.

some who say that it is to drive *setan* away; some others say that they only follow their elders; still other say that it is to signal (*tenggeran*, literally, the sign) that it is Friday. While the burning of incense is mostly done inside the house its fragrance carries some distance.

On Friday some visit their elders' graves to pray for God's mercy and forgiveness on them. After sunset prayers, they read the Holy Qur'an, especially *Yasin* (QS 36), *Waqi'ah* (QS 56) and *Tabarok* (*Al-Mulk*, QS 67). By reading these Surah they expect God's forgiveness, a safe life and merit in the world and the hereafter. After night (*Isya*) prayer there are gatherings for a *Marhaba chant* (poetry reading taken from *Barzanji* to revere the Prophet Muhammad); some others hold *Hadiwan* or *Manaqib* (special invocations by reference to *wali*).⁴⁰ At the end of either *Marhaba* or *Hadiwan*, usually around 10.00 p.m., foods are served and the people eat together.

Every Friday around ten o'clock in the morning the *bedug* in the mosque is beaten in a way which is different from the ordinary beating at noon. This beating, called *penatag* (reminder), is aimed to remind people that it is Friday, and that there might be some who need to make necessary arrangements for Friday congregation. Older people are probably those who are mostly concerned as it is they who usually go to the mosque early around 11.00 o'clock a.m. The popular belief prevails that the earlier one goes to Friday congregation the better, and hence more, the reward that can be expected. Metaphorically it is explained that the relative merit of coming to congregation early, coming just on time, or coming late is like getting a cow compared to a chicken, or compared to an egg.

The activity of those who come early centres on uttering invocations, reading the Qur'an, *salawat* or just sitting calmly. As soon as anyone arrives at the mosque, they do a voluntary two unit prayer individually in reverence of the mosque (*tahiyatul masjid*). About fifteen minutes before noon, *salawat* is chanted repeatedly saying: "Oh Allah, assuage our mentor Muhammad and give thy grace to our mentor Muhammad."⁴¹ The chanting is brought to a high pitch when the *bedug* is beaten signalling the prayer time. The beating of *bedug* takes two or three minutes ending simultaneously with the termination of the chanting. One who is in charge as *muadzin* (one who sound the *adzan*) or *bilal*, stands up to sound *adzan*.⁴² After the *adzan* he urges, in Arabic, those attending the congregation to do a two unit voluntary prayer, the pre-congregational prayer (*qabliyah Jum'ah*). After having finished doing the prayer, the second *muadzin* (who may also be the same person as the first) stands up, takes a walking stick or a spear from the pulpit beside the *mihrab* and, keeping it in his hand, turns

⁴⁰ For further elaboration of burning incense, *Marhaba*, *Hadiwan* and *Manaqib*, see Chapter Six.

⁴¹ In local Arabic it says: "Allahumma salli wa sallim 'ala sayyidina Muhammad."

⁴² In the Great Mosque of *Kraton Kesepuhan*, where a sound system is not used, this *adzan* is done by seven people in chorus.

around facing the congregation telling them (in Arabic) that within a few seconds the sermon will be spoken. He is the second *muadzin*, one who sounds the (second) *adzan*. He urges the audience to follow the sermon solemnly by reciting a *Hadith* narrated by Bukhari and Muslim which states that speaking or talking while the sermon is spoken is disdain. In the meantime someone sitting among the congregation stands up and walks towards the *muadzin*, takes the walking stick or spear and goes to the podium. He is the *khatib*, who is in charge of giving the sermon. When the *khatib* reaches the podium he does not immediately turn to face the congregation but stand still for few seconds as the *muadzin* utters a *du'a* (invocation) for the safety of all Muslims and believers, men and women, alive and dead. Everyone raises their hands, puts the palms of their hands in front of their faces responding "Amen" in chorus repeatedly and rubs their palms against their faces when the *du'a* is finished. The *khatib* turns around to stand on the podium, facing the congregation with the greeting: "Peace be upon you, so be the mercy of Allah and His Blessing" (*Assalamu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarokatuh* or **al-salam 'alaykum wa rahmah Allah wa barakatuh**) then he sits down on the podium seat. When he is sitting the *muadzin* sounds the (second) *adzan*. After sounding the *adzan* the *muadzin* sits down and the sermon starts.

A sermon consists of two parts. Each part starts with praising God and praying to God to bless the Prophet Muhammad. In the first part, a Qur'anic passage is recited and explained for the purpose of exhortation and admonition. A call to devotion and piety is the main theme of every sermon, calling upon all Muslims to follow the true path, do good things, and avoid sins. News of the current situation in the Muslim world and its relevance for the local community is also offered. At the end of the first part of the sermon the *khatib* takes a short rest by sitting on the podium seat, then stands up again to give the second sermon. Although general affairs may be discussed in either one or both parts of most sermons, in several mosques I attended, the *khatib* used only the first part for such a purpose. At the end of the second part, which is usually entirely in Arabic, the *khatib* prays for the general welfare of all Muslims. Since mid-1992 many *khatib* in Cirebon explicitly expressed, in their invocations, the hope for the safety and welfare of the Bosnian people who were in chaos. This substantiates the sense of Muslim brotherhood within the community of believers transcending the geographic, national, ethnic and racial boundaries. Throughout the praying the audience responds repeatedly with "Amen."

After the sermon is concluded, the *iqamat* is made and the two units of obligatory prayer are led by the *imam*. The *Fatihah* and the Qur'anic passage are, on this occasion, read in an audible voice. All procedures used for this prayer follow the ordinary prayer pattern.

At some *desa* mosques, including that in Kalitengah, the sermon is delivered in a local language, whereas in the city and some urban areas outside the city of Cirebon, it is mostly given in Bahasa Indonesia. There are some *desa* mosques where the *khutbah* is fully spoken in Arabic but preceding the formal *khutbah*, before prayer-time comes, the public speech (*pengajian*) is usually made in the local language by local *kyai* or *ustadz*. There are also mosques, including the Great Mosque of *Kraton Kesepuhan*, the mosque within Pesantren Buntet, Kramat Astana Gunung Jati, Cirebon Girang, Kalijaga and many others, where the sermon is fully spoken in Arabic without any public speech preceding it. These certainly represent the most conservative line. The reasons behind this conservativeness varies from one place to another. Some informants gave one or more of the following reasons: (a) an anxiety to conserve an original or antique form of the prayer began by the early propagators of Islam and thus maintain the solemn nature of the prayer (b) to keep the congregation's activities to a short time so that everyone can get back to work without losing too much time or feeling constrained by attending Friday congregation (c) to enhance the spiritual atmosphere of the Friday congregation (d) to avoid any probable conflict arising from misunderstanding or misuse of the *khutbah* by certain individuals, who might take advantage of the prayers to enunciate their own views in the guise of religious truth.⁴³

THE PRACTICE OF IBADAT: FASTING

The intensity of the religious atmosphere of the weekly cycle, which culminates on Friday, finds its match in the yearly cycle which culminates on the Fasting Month (*Ulan Puasa* or **Ramadan**). The Fasting Month, being the zenith for the annual pulse of religious life, falls on the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. During the month all Muslims abstain from food, drink, cigarettes and sexual intercourse from dawn until sunset, for the period of 29 or 30 days each year depending on the moon's position. Exempted from fasting are women in menstruation or with (child-birth) bleeding, any person on a sick bed or on a journey, men and women who are too old and children under the age of puberty.

In Cirebon, the popular tradition for the beginning of Fasting month is signalled by the sound of *peteter*, a distinct melodic style in the beating of the *bedug* in the mosque. *Peteter* is sounded at 4.00 or 8.00 p.m. at the end of *Ruwah* (or **Sya'ban**) the month that precedes the Fasting. *Peteter* sounds at 4.00 p.m. on the 30th day of *Ruwah*, but when the *Ruwah* is 29 days (*brandangan*) the sound of *peteter* is suspended until 8.00 p.m. after the National Team for visual observation

⁴³ Some may use the sermon as a media to enunciate certain primordial or political views or interest in the guise of religion, resulting in tensions between opposing and supporting groups. This happened for example, in Kalitengah, when traditionalists and modernists (*Muhammadiyah*) were competing to gain control over the mosque. In Kaliwadas, tensions occurred concerning the correct direction of *Kiblat* of the mosque.

(*ru'yat*) from the Ministry of Religious Affairs announces its judgement. When *peteter* is sounded children throughout the village go running eagerly to the mosque to see how the *peteter* is sounded. In Indonesia, however, the beginning and the ending of the Fasting Month is officially announced by the Minister of Religious Affairs via evening radio and TV broadcasts, followed by a speech about the merit of the Fasting month that urges everyone to do his utmost, to do good and avoid evil.

The daily period of observance starts before the break of the dawn (*imsak*) and ends immediately after sunset. Currently, there are many calendars which give the exact time of each day and this is also included with daily information from newspapers, radio and TV broadcasts. Prior to fasting, early in the morning before dawn, people anticipate their fast by having an early morning meal (*sahur*). After *sahur* they go to the mosque or prayer house for morning prayer. On their return from morning prayer, most youngsters do not immediately go back home; they spend the morning walking to and fro, making the mornings throughout the month exceedingly exciting.

During the day time the situation is not much different from other days, except that most coffee shops, canteens and restaurants are closed. Some, however, are secretly open to cater to those who cannot fast for a variety of reasons, such as those who are doing hard physical work. *Becak* drivers and porters are examples among those who usually do not fast. The appearance of weakness and exhaustion is felt by workers at the *batik* factory, shoe making and cane craft workshops. Around 10.00–11.00 a.m., Marnisah (19 years), a young woman working at a cane workshop, said that she is nervous on the first day of fasting; she suffers from exhaustion around 10.00 a.m. but it soon passes without causing any problem. Other informants talk about the same thing and tell of the great excitement at having a bite to eat at break time. Among the clerical workers exhaustion appears at lunch time, around 12.00 at noon when, after doing noon prayer, they lie weakly on the mat at *mushalla* (prayer room) of their offices, some are even falling asleep and go back to work at 1.30 p.m.

The time to break the fast at sunset, is signified by the sound of *bedug*, *kentong*, and *adzan* from the prayer houses, radio and TV broadcasts. People take *ta'jil* (a quick small bite of something to break the fast), usually dates or sweets, but most commonly *kolak* (foods, usually fruits, cooked with sweetened thick liquid or coconut milk). A full meal is served after sunset prayer.

From the first evening of the fasting month, people swarm to prayer houses (*tajug* and mosques) for evening prayer and *traweh* (**tarawlh**), a set of prayers which are not compulsory but strongly recommended (*sunnah muakkad*) to be done throughout the fasting month. Included in the notion of *traweh* is *witr* (**witr**), another recommended prayer done at night with an uneven number, mostly three, of units (*raka'at*). At *Ramadan*, *witr* is performed following *traweh*.

People who go to *traweh* therefore, are usually involved in the observance of three consecutive prayers: the prescribed evening prayer (*'Isya*) performed in four *raka'at*; the *traweh* itself which is mostly performed in 20 *raka'at* (10×2) or, especially among the modernists, eight *raka'at* (4×2 or 2×4) and *witr* three *raka'at*. *Traweh* (with *witr*), therefore, may be either 23 or 11 *raka'at*. The 23 *traweh*, which is predominant in Cirebon, represent the hallmark of proper practice among the traditionalists, whereas the 11 *traweh* represents the practice of the modernists. For those who practice 23 *traweh*, beginning from the sixteenth day onward, the *qunut*, an invocation uttered at morning prayer, is also uttered at the last *raka'at* of *witr*.

In the practice of *traweh* the traditionalists and the modernists exhibit their differences quite publicly, although at present, unlike in the last two decades, the differences do not cause any conflict. The traditionalists regard *traweh* as *sunna* (recommended, not compulsory) which, according to (their) *syari'ah*, may be observed in either 8, 20 or 36 *raka'at*, plus *witr*. Not doing *traweh* at all is not counted as a sin, but if someone would like to do it, the more the better. Doing *traweh* 8 units, plus *witr*, is essentially good and lawful but it is only a minimum and therefore, implies laziness; doing 20 is better than 8, while doing 36 is the best but too exhausting. Thus, according to their view, 20 is the most reasonable practice (*paling maslahat*).

The local modernists, in contrast, while agreeing that *traweh* is *sunnah*, regard only the 8 *raka'at* as prescribed by law. Practicing *traweh* 20 or 36 units is, according to their view, an innovation and therefore, sinful. Even if it is lawful, the work is useless because, unlike their practice which is done slowly and well, the 20 *traweh* are usually done badly by hurrying every portion recited in the prayer.⁴⁴

Along with practicing 20 *raka'at*, the traditionalists have more elaborate procedures. Following each of their two units, the *bilal* shouts glorification of God and/or praises the prophet Muhammad, to which the others respond in chorus. Moreover, after completing the *traweh*, the *imam* leads his congregation to utter the intention (*niyat*) for their fasting. He utters the *niyat*, portion by portion in responsible lengths, first in Arabic, followed by the congregation in chorus, and then in Javanese also followed by the others in chorus. The *niyat* translates as follow:

I intend to do fasting tomorrow, for the fulfilment of the duty during the fasting month this year, to obey the order from God, the One.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ I found however, actions and movements of prayer in some *tajug* and *pesantren* even slower and in much better Arabic utterance than at *Muhammadiyah* mosque in Kalitengah.

⁴⁵ Its Javanese is: "*Niyat isun puasa ing dina besuk iki, saking anekani fardune ulan Ramdhan ing taun iki, krana miturut prentahe Gusti Allah ta'ala.*"

They do this to prevent someone in the congregation from missing his *niyat*, because *niyat* in any worship, according to them, is very important for the validity of the worship, in this case, fasting. After speaking the *niyat* in chorus, the *traweh* congregation breaks up, accompanied by chanting *puji-pujian*. All these practices are considered to be additional work which, if God will accept them (and they hope He will), can gain merit for them. To the local modernists, however, all these things are nothing but sinful innovations.

The elaborate *traweh* done in prayer houses, which takes approximately 45 minutes, is still followed by another activity. The next activity is *darusan* or *tadarus* where a group of around six people sit around facing each other on mats for *nderes* (a reading exercise), with their legs folded (*sila*). Each person has a small bench in the front of him on which the Qur'an is placed. One of the group reads the Qur'an while the others follow him by memory and correct any misread verse or wrong utterance. When reading pauses between consecutive verses the others yell: "Allah", or "Allah ya rasul Allah." When a reader feels tired he stops reading and someone else in the group takes a turn; the former reader becomes a corrector. When someone becomes tired after reading and correcting, he may quit the group and another may enter.

Darusan may proceed until late in the evening or until early morning. This depends very much on the number and desire of those attending. When the whole Qur'an is read, a special invocation (*do'a*) called *khataman* (completion), is recited and rice mounts (*tumpang*) with other dishes are served. The service comes from a volunteering household(s) that wants to serve it. Some snacks (*jaburan*) are even served everyday at the mosques for *ta'jil*, and for supper after *darusan*. More abundant food is served at *maleman*, the uneven night of the twentieth (21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th and 29th). On these nights villages are lit up by *damar malem* (a sort of candlelight especially lit on this occasion).

The frequency of completion of the reading of the Qur'an varies from one group to another; in some, it is targeted, in another it is not. Sometimes, completions are achieved through alternate and concurrent reading. This is what is normally done; yet during the later stages, some groups are eager to make more frequent completions and then, instead of reading the Qur'an alternately in the regular way, they take the 30 divisions (*juz*) of the Qur'an, then divide them by the number of the group. This results in each member having a certain number of *juz* to read. This procedure is usually adopted when the fasting month has almost reached its end.

Along with *darusan* more devout individuals attempt to complete reading the Qur'an individually at home, at least once during the Fasting month. Reading the Qur'an in the Fasting month is considered very meritorious. A visit to the mosque (*i'tikaf*), even just for a short stop, also has merit, much more so when combined with praying or reading the Qur'an.

CHARITY AND OTHER PRACTICES OF IBADAT

The glory of Fasting reaches its climax on *Riaya*, the first day of *Syawal* (*Shawwal*), the tenth month of the Islamic calendar. It marks the end of *Puasa*, where requirement of abstinence from eating, drinking, smoking and sexual intercourse during the day time is removed. At *riaya* every single household has a feast. Preparation for this, of such things as new clothing, nice food and special dishes are made a few days earlier. Funding for this is anticipated for several months. Since everyone does the same thing, from the middle of Fasting month onward, market activities increase considerably (*mremaan*) and culminate a few days before *riaya*. Their peak is two days before *riaya* on what is called *mrema cilik* and one day before on what is called *mrema gede*. The village environment is cleansed; houses and fences are painted. Of particular importance is *tipar* (cleansing the cemeteries from weeds and grass). Every household has a share in cleaning the graves of relatives and elders to make the visit on *riaya* comfortable. Like the beginning of *Puasa*, *riaya* is signified by the sound of *peteter* from the mosque but unlike *Puasa* where the sound of *peteter* takes only about ten to fifteen minutes, at *Riaya* *peteter* is sounded continuously on three periods, from 4.00 p.m. of the last day of *Ramadan* until sunset, from the break after evening prayer (*'Isya*) to twelve midnight, and from the break after *'Id* prayer in the morning until noon of *riaya*. In the evening, accompanying the incessant sound of *peteter*, a group of people gather at mosques and prayer houses for *takbiran* (to chant a long version of *takbir*, exalting God in Arabic). The verse of the *takbir* follows the tradition of other parts of the Muslim world although the chanting melody must be peculiarly local. The verse of the *takbir* translates as follows:

*God is the Greatest (three times),
There is no god but (the true) God.
God is the Greatest, God is the Greatest,
and His is the praise.*

*Surely God is the Greatest.
His is the abundant praise,
Glory to Him, day and night,
There is no god but God, the One true God,
He fulfilled His promise, supported His servant,
granted His soldiers a manifest victory,
and inflicted decisive defeat on the allied enemies,
There is no god but God,
and we worship none but Him, with sincere devotion,
even though the disbelievers may resent it.*

*O God! Exalt and have blessings on our Master Muhammad,
And on the people of our Master Muhammad,*

*And on the supporters of our Master Muhammad,
And on the wives of our Master Muhammad,
And on the descendants of our Master Muhammad,
All salute all of them with much peace.*⁴⁶

Takbiran is also performed by groups of people who march around throughout the village with candlelight and fire-sparkles; some others use trucks, large and small, equipped with sound systems, by which they go around forming mobile groups of *takbiran* (*takbir keliling*). The sound of *takbiran* ceases at dawn when the call to morning prayer is sounded. It starts again after morning prayer through the commencement of 'Id prayer, and from the break up of 'Id prayer until noon.

Meanwhile, since the first beat of *peteter*, exchanges of foods occur between households. Women and girls do almost all the work in the preparation for exchanging food; an example of the short courtesies which occur in the exchange of food is as follows:

... a girl from a neighbouring house comes to Man Pingi's house with a large tray on her left shoulder. Her left hand supports the tray from below and her right hand crosses her chest holding the tray at the edge. She is bringing food for Man Pingi (a Qur'anic teacher). She stops at the door saying: "kula nuwun" ("may I enter"); then Bu Pingi (Man Pingi's wife), the hostess, answers in a smiling welcome: "mangga" ("please"), and she asks the girl to come in. The girl puts the tray down on the table and waits until the food is taken from the tray. While emptying the food onto her plates and bowls Bu Pingi smiles and says: "Girl, is it *riaya*? Where are you going for a picnic in *riaya*?" The girl answers: "I really don't know, Mum, that is what people say and I have not decided yet where to go." Then she asks for permission to leave the house and brings the empty dishes back with her. Bu Pingi answers with thanks and accompanies her up to the door. Man Pingi's family gets various kinds of food from others; in return his wife (Bu Pingi) also sends her own to neighbouring households.⁴⁷

Along with the exchange of foods, *riaya* in the village is marked by the crisscrossing of people who go and return from paying *zakat*. *Zakat*, which is either staple food (*zakat fitrah*) or wealth (*zakat pekaya* or **mal**) constitutes the third pillar of Islam. *Zakat fitrah* is a must and a duty imposed on all Muslim household heads who possess the amount of *zakat* after providing food for himself and those whom he feeds for a day and a night, together with the expenditure which he incurs for his dependants such as wife and children. It is

⁴⁶ Abdalati, H. (1991), *Islam in Focus*, Singapore: The Muslim Converts' Association, p 77.

⁴⁷ Field notes.

paid in staple food (3.5 litres of rice per person) as purification for the one who fasts from vain things, and as a help and sustenance to the poor. *Zakat pekaya* is imposed by Islam for those who have a surplus. It comes from the assumption that within the abundance we get, there is a certain amount which is not really ours. Roughly, *zakat pekaya* amounts to 2.5 per cent of the surplus one keeps throughout the year, excluding non commercial things such as private abode, personal clothing, furniture, means of transport and equipment. Unlike *zakat pekaya* which by and large is paid in money and usually handled by adults or parents a few days before *riaya*, *zakat fitrah* is handed from parents and taken by boys and girls directly to the individual recipient whom the parents have already ascertained. Sometimes it is sent indirectly via an *amil* at the evening of *riaya* until dawn in the morning before going to 'Id prayer (*sembayang riaya*).⁴⁸

As soon as they have finished morning prayer, men, women, boys and girls, in their finest clothes and perfume (including those who usually known as non-observers) go to the *desa* mosques, prayer houses and public squares where the congregation for 'Id prayer is held. In Kalitengah, some prayer houses also hold a congregation but the largest, attended by more than 1,500 people, is at the *desa* mosque. In Kalitengah, *Muhammadiyah* holds its own congregation at the public square and this is attended by around 200 followers, including the members from the neighbouring *desa*. The prayer starts at 7.30 a.m., two *raka'at*, led by an *Imam*. The prayer is no different from ordinary prayers except that at the beginning of the first and second *raka'at*, *takbir* is uttered nine and seven times respectively in an audible voice, instead of only once as at the ordinary prayer. The prayer is followed by a sermon which stresses the meaning and merits of *zakat*, more specifically the *fitrah*.⁴⁹ Concluded by *du'a* the sermon ends and everyone gets up to return home. While standing they shake each other's hands and thus, almost instantly, the congregation turns into a mass of people shaking hands. The act of shaking hands, called *pangapuraan* (pardoning each other) does not stop here but continues thereafter, everywhere and anywhere they meet each other. Returning from congregation, older people stay at home, whereas teenagers form groups, large and small. The members of each group are usually peers who are acquainted with each other. They go around the hamlets cheerfully, from door to door to see everyone they know, particularly elders, shake their hands and ask their pardon, saying: "*Nyuwun pangapunten*

⁴⁸ *Amil* is a person or a group of persons who, on ad hoc basis, collect and distribute the *zakat*. In Kalitengah, there were two *amil*, each was formed by both *Muhammadiyah* and NU. Each distributed money and rice to about 140 recipients who were local poor residents. Some received only from *Muhammadiyah*, some only from NU but mostly received from both. *Muhammadiyah* distributed Rp 12,500.00 and around a kilo and a half of rice per recipient. NU which had slightly more recipients than *Muhammadiyah* distributed Rp.12,000.00 and one kilo of rice per recipient. In fact, most recipients were NU members or sympathisers.

⁴⁹ The same process is repeated about two months later on the occasion of 'Id al-Adha but instead of *zakat* and *fitrah*, the sermon focuses its discussion on the nature, history and merits of sacrifice and its relevance to the current situation faced by the Muslims.

kula Man/Bi/Ki/Nyi..." ("I beg your pardon Mr/Mrs..."). If the person being visited is someone with whom they are well acquainted or another group of about the same age the phrase is less formal: "*Njaluk pangapura isun ya Man/Bi or ...*" (I ask for your pardon Mr/Mrs or ... name); the person being visited or met answers in courtesies: "*Sewangsule ya cung, nok, ... ayo njagong dingin, njabur.*" ("So do I, boy, girl, ... please sit down and have a bite). In return the visitors reply: "*Kesuhun, mungkin malih mawon, kulae ajeng mrika krihin.*" ("Thank you but we have to visit others first, we shall come again later"). In some households where they are well known, however, they drop in for some time, to be served with food and drinks while talking, chatting, joking and teasing, sharing happiness and cheer with each other.

While teenagers are going around the hamlets rushing from house to house to ask for pardon and forgiveness from the occupants, adult married men and some older people, sometimes with their grown up male children, visit the graves of their deceased relatives and elders to *ngembang* or *nyekar* (to put flowers on the graves). They pray for the deceased's well being and for the mercy of God, concluding by putting *kembang selasih* on the graves, between the grave stones.⁵⁰ After *ngembang*, they go around with their family members, especially wife and children, visiting their living elders and relatives on both the husband's and the wife's sides. For those who have many relatives the visits by family members may take a few days. To miss visiting a particular family especially an elder on *riaya* (or the subsequent days) without reason is considered contemptuous and something that everyone should avoid. Sending cards by mail is not enough and this is common only between friends and relatives living at different localities. It is even considered an insult to send a card to a father or mother in-law. An ordinary handwritten letter, not a card, however, is acceptable for those who live in the *tanah sebrang* (outside Java) or in Java but have difficulties that make a visit impossible. Along with its religious sacredness, *Riaya* or *Lebaran* or *Iedul Fitri* ('*Id al Fitr*) is thus used by Cirebonese as an occasion by which solidarity and kinship ties, which may have loosened over the previous months, are reaffirmed.

Muslims everywhere, including the Cirebonese have in fact, two main Holidays known throughout Java as *Riaya* or *Lebaran*; one is '*Id al-Fitr*, the festival at the end of the Fast and the other is '*Id al-Adha*, the Festival for Sacrifice. In Cirebon they are called *R(i)aya Kecil* and *R(i)aya Agung*.⁵¹ *Riaya Kecil* refers to the celebration at the end of the Fast, whereas *Riaya Agung*, which falls on the 10th day of *Raya Agung*. (*Dzu'l-Hijjah*), the twelfth month of either Javanese

⁵⁰ *Kembang selasih* is a special species of flower, used only for this purpose and at this special occasion (*riaya*); it is not used on visits on other occasions. This flower is used, probably because of its name *sel(asih)*, as a symbolic expression of *asih* (love).

⁵¹ In Bahasa Indonesia the *riaya* are respectively, known as *Idul* or *Iedul Fitri* and *Lebaran* and *Idul* or *Iedul Adha* or *Lebaran Haji*

or Islamic calendar, follows on the completion of the course of pilgrimage to Mecca (*Haji*). People do the same things and observe the same traditions on both *Riaya Kecil* and *Riaya Agung* but unlike *Riaya Kecil* which is marked by *zakat*, *Riaya Agung* is marked by sacrificing cattle (goats, sheeps, buffaloes and oxen). The animals for sacrifice must be male, healthy and in perfect condition with reasonable weight. They can be obtained quite easily everywhere because for the 'Id occasion, many people take the opportunity to become casual retailers. The price of cattle generally increases by more than double; a good sheep for sacrifice, which usually costs Rp 160,000.00 becomes Rp 350.000.00 two days before *Riaya Agung*.

The slaughtering which occurs on three consecutive days from the break up of 'Id prayer is done individually or in mass, organised mainly by the mosques and prayer houses.

In Kalitengah, at the time when the 'Id prayer was performed, I saw seven sheep and one water buffalo slaughtered in the yard of *desa* mosque. Whereas Pak Shofie had only one sheep of his own to be slaughtered individually at his prayer house. He invited his neighbours to witness the slaughtering, help him skin the animal, have *satay* (barbecue) and distribute the meat. Except for a few seconds at the moment of slaughtering, when the knife is applied to the animal's neck, at which time *Basmalah* and *Salawat* are uttered in a murmur by the slaughterer preceding the flow of the animal's blood, everything seems to be very technical; neither a solemn nor a sacred expression is exhibited by those who attend. Unless one knows that it has a transcendental basis (God's order, rooted in the story of Abraham and Ismael, and coinciding with other Muslims who are doing pilgrimage in Mecca) the sacrifice, at the first glance, is no more than a process of butchery and distribution of meat. So is *zakat*, both *zakat pekaya* and *zakat fitrah*, no more than the collection and distribution of money and rice. To the people nevertheless, these rituals are both *ibadat* and *adat* at the same time.

Plate 8: Attending sermon at 'Id prayer.



Plate 9: Pak Shofie (third from left) and his sons pray at Pak Shofie's mother's tomb after 'Id prayer (at left is the researcher).

