

Islam and Local Wisdom of Malay Society in Maintaining the Harmony Between Religious and Cultural Plurality (a Case Study of Batubara's Malay Society)

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Abstract-Islam came to the earth to bring the missions of the divinity (*ilahiyyah*) and the humanity (*insaniyyah*). The universal values in Islam are very important to be implanted as a view of life in order to summon human values in social life. Therefore, the foundation of ethics such as the concept of *al-'adalah* (*justice*), *al-hurriyyah* (independence), *as-shura* (democracy), *al-musawah* (equality), *al-ukhuwwah* (brotherhood), and *at-tasamuh* (tolerance), are very important to be more appreciated widely. By an approach to perfect the morals of mankind, without eliminating the previous tradition and even able to accommodate local culture, that's the value which the Prophet had as his view of life when developing the precepts of humanity and mankind in Arab society at that time. Therefore, the researchers concluded that the research about the local wisdom of Batubara's Malay culture in Tanjung Tiram district is a miniature that can be applied in other communities, because Batubara's Malay can accommodate the Prophet's view. This study has revealed how the implementation of cultural values can coexist with Islamic values '*rahmatan lil alamin*' and integrate Islamic values in the local wisdom of the inhabitant's culture by using descriptive qualitative method in which the researchers were involved actively in meeting the participants, environments and institutions related to the research in natural situations. The researchers also conducted interviews with informen in order to reveal the application of Islamic values in the culture of the Malay community in maintaining harmony between religious and cultural plurality. The local wisdom such as the value of tolerance in rhymes, justice, freedom, democracy, and tolerance on the leadership of lima laras kingdom, the value of respect on the traditional Malay dances, the value of patience, precision, beauty in the weaving process of Batubara's traditional cloth (*songket*) are capable of being a symbol of harmony between religious and cultural plurality in Tanjung Tiram district, Batubara Regency.

Keywords : Islam , local wisdom , Malay culture Batubara, harmony

A. Introduction

The horizontal conflicts tragedy that hit various regions in Indonesia has stamped our consciousness that the progress of modern science and technology does not necessarily solve the problem of life, even has raised an irony and tragedy of history that gave birth to anxiety and pessimism about the future of Indonesian civilization. This fact must also be used as an agenda of thought concerning the philosophy and direction of Indonesian civilization. Differences in ethnicity, race, and religion often become the cause of conflict between families, villages and among regions.

To anticipate conflicts in the future, the society must be encouraged to adapt and appreciate the values contained in religious and cultural bases. The approach is cultural approach because conflict resolution needs to be specific not by violent way. Religious and cultural approach is done by absorbing and understanding the culture essence of community containing values they believe, maintain and conserve, including the most basic need. Therefore, no single religion that teaches to antagonize each other and kill each other despite having differences in terms of beliefs, culture, or skin color.

Therefore the background is trying to find miniature of culture becoming a model for maintaining religious harmony in the society and culture. Some literature studying Malay community states that Malay community is friendly tribe to new comers and avoids conflict. This is relevant to the value of local wisdom. In North Sumatra, there is a Malay culture that is possibly used as a model for integrating religious values into local wisdom to achieve harmony between the pluralities. It is located in Batu Bara Regency, specifically in the district of Tanjung Tiram, this is due to the

characteristics of Batu Bara community is pluralistic society composed of various races and religions, but in the community last a harmony since long time ago. This is interesting point to make it as a prototype of religious and cultural plurality.

B. Local Wisdom of Malay Batu Bara Culture

Local Wisdom is the human effort in using cognition to act and behave to something, object or event happens in certain dimension. Type of local wisdom covering governance, traditional values, and the ordinances and procedures, including the use of space (communal land).

According to the Central Statistics Agency of Batu Bara (2012), Malays is the majority ethnic in the regency especially in the district of Tanjung Tiram the number reached 46,107 out of a population of about 61,290. As a majority ethnic that is considered capable of maintaining harmony between cultural and religious diversity in the region, then this needs to be explained in terms of local wisdom which is a pillar of the local wisdom of Malay Batubara Culture based on Islamic values.

Forms of local wisdom can be categorized into two aspects, namely tangible local wisdom and are intangible local wisdom.

1. Tangible Local Wisdom

Form of tangible local wisdom includes the following aspects:

a) Textual Local Wisdom

From the aspect of textual wisdom, Malay Batu Bara communities have local wisdom such kinds of value systems, procedures, special provisions are poured into the form of written records such as those encountered in the Poem Book and couplets (culture written on the sheet of palm leaves) Here are several categories of rhyme in customs of the Malay community in Batu Bara.

1) *Pantun* (rhyme poem)

Form of local wisdom inherent in Malay community literature is *pantun*. Originally, *Pantun* is the poem contains advice that has been passed down to children and grandchildren community of Malay. Then, the poem is also included in a customary part of engagement, wedding, and inauguration (developed in a formal ceremony of Batubara regency). The followings are some excerpts rhymes on several occasions and events.

Pantun in the event of *Merisik* (proposing) and *meminang* (engaging)

Normally, *merisik* use *pantun* to explain the purpose indirectly or in metaphoric language. Here is the indication that Malay has refinement, not to say rude and impolite.

Yang kurik gundi
Yang merah saga
Yang baik budi
Yang indah bahasa

Poem in Traditional Marriage

In traditional Malay wedding, *Telangkai* (a man who deliver *pantun*) of groom must compete with *Telangkai* of bride as listed below:

Cantik kembang bunga melati
Tumbuh sebatang ditepi kota
Apa hajat tuan datang kesini
Bolehkah kami untuk bertanya
Asalamualaikum kami ucapkan
Kepada semua yang hadir disini
Didepan pintu kami rombongan
Bolehkah kami masuk lihat permaisuri
Dari siak hendak kepekan
Tiba dipekan jeruk dibeli

*Kalau syarat sudah dipenuhi
Bolehlah lihat permainsuri*

Pantun in Formal Official Event

Batu Bara regency in the retention of local wisdom tucking *pantun* in a formal event such in following stanzas:

*Batubara tanah sejahtera berjaya
Pemimpin dan Masya/rakatnya beriman dan patuh
Sambutlah salam pembuka dari saya
Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabbarakatuh
Mencari timba si anak dara,
Di bawah sarang burung tempua;
Salam sembah pembuka bicara,
Selamat datang untuk semua.*

b) Local Wisdom Building / Architectural

Malay society in Tanjung Tiram has a cultural symbol still stands firmly, that is Niat Limalaras Palace. The palace for the ruler as well as the center of political power, social, economic. It was built by Datuk Muhammad Yuda. He was the throne in 1883 - 1919. He was the eleventh king of the Limalaras Kingdom. Although the Limalaras kingdom has ended in Tanjung Tiram Batu Bara long time ago but the palace is supposed as milestone and a mute witness to the history of how the kingdom of Limalaras receive immigrants from other ethnic groups with open arms. Ethnic Toba Batak, Aceh, Chinese, and Indian communities were able to assimilate with the native although they were needed not to take the clan name at that time.

c) Local Wisdom of Cultural Objects (Art Work)

Objects of cultural heritage is the pride of Malay Batu Bara community is well-known as *Songket* Batu Bara. *Songket* Batu Bara has a sacred meaning in the social and cultural values on Malay Batu Bara community life. Complicated manufacturing process and make the inherited products having high value. Some center locations of handicrafts can be found in the village of Ujung Kubu Tanjung Tiram and Kampung Panjang Talawi.

2. Intangible Local Wisdom

Intangible local wisdoms are adage (*petuah*), rites (*tata upacara*), and traditional dances. The following will be presented adage, ordinances, and traditional dance that characterizes Malay Batu Bara community.

a. Adage (*Petuah*)

Petuah is any kind of guidance, advice, trustworthy, teaching, and role models that are beneficial to human life in the high sense. For Malays, *Petuah* must contain the noble values of Islam and also in accordance with the cultural and social norms adopted by society. *Petuah* can be categorized in several values that implicitly and explicitly keep values. The values are used as reference of life and not leaving the main reference, namely Qur'an and Hadith. Here are some content value: 1) devotion to God, 2) Parents obedience, 3) Adherence to the leadership, 4) Unity, mutual cooperation, and tolerance, 5) Justice and truth, 6) Glory demanding science, 7) Sincere and willing to sacrifice, and 8) Commitment (*Amanah*)

b. Procedures of Marriage

Conceptually, marriage and various ceremonies surrounding a part of the theory of evolution in the formation of the family. Stages in the process of family formation, namely, from promiscuity to the marital exogamy and endogamy. In the activities of marriage itself, can certainly be preceded by ceremonies that can be categorized as part of the human life cycle ceremony that is part of local wisdom. They are 1) *Merisik* (proposing) and *Meminang* (engaging), 2) Wedding Procession, 3)

Hanging (mengantung-gantung) 4) *Malam* berinai (pedicure and manicure), 5) *berandam* (facial and hair treatment), 6) *Khatam* Quran (The end of learning Quran from ustadz), 7) Marriage expense delivery (*hantaran Belanja*), 8) Marriage settlement (*akad nikah*), 9) parents blessing beg, 10) *Tepung tawar* (giving bless from family) 11) Parading bridegroom, 12) *bersanding* (sit in state)

c. Traditional Dances

Malay Batu Bara has the same dance with Malay dance in other areas of the region such as Deli, Serdang Bedagai, Tanjung Balai, Riau even some areas in Kalimantan, which has a relationship with Malays. Here are some types of dances are preserved by the Malay Batu Bara community. 1). Welcoming/ Tribute Dance (*Tari Persembahan*), 2). *Serampang dua belas* dance, 3). *Zapin* dance, 4). *Lenggok Mak Inang* dance, 5). *Lenggang Patah Sembilan* Dance Thus, Malay dances always symbolizes joy, friendship, brotherhood and togetherness.

C. Local Wisdom in Malay Batu Bara for Inter-Religious Harmony

Universal values of Islam as a cultural mouthpiece really appreciate the local wisdom as a form of respect for the cultural right. For instance, in a plurality aspect diverse local society life of local people have formed a very diverse friendliness pattern of the surroundings, regardless of race, religion and gender. It can be seen from the tradition of the Malay community in the district of Tanjung Tiram. So minority aspect is a very important part to be a lesson in protecting and upholding the rights of minorities.

Religiosity aspect of local community is very simple and logical, even the diversity does not stop on the ritual and formalistic aspects, but they better appreciate every second of life as part of closeness aspect to the creator and the universe. With the foundation of the local wisdom, it needs to cultivate a universal Islamic view that has a strong commitment to the local culture, so the process of societal transformation is not uprooted. It is very important in order to explore the local wisdom that has been covered by other cultures.

People in Malay Batu Bara really appreciate leaders like sultans, kings, prime ministers, ministers, chief, prince, head of tribe, and others. Malay needs to have a leader who is fair, wise, mandate. The followings the writer describes local wisdom findings of Malay Batubara either explicitly or implicitly that can be adhesive for inter-religious harmony.

a. Courtesy culture in *Petuah* and *Pantun*

Malay people politeness reflected from his speech that describes a sense of tolerance, mutual respect seen from the verses of *pantun*. Therefore, many immigrants want to make a living in the land of Batu Bara because the community receives them warmly.

Then, *petuah* (adage) and *pantun* (rhyme poem) which is a means to convey something indirectly mean for example when anger, hate, etc. are able to maintain the atmosphere of the community conduciveness because feelings are not delivered with the rude way but through refinement touching. It is drawn from some poem composed by the poet does not wither with the aim of arbitrarily hurt other people's feelings. Therefore, migrants from outside the area feel comfortable and appreciated by Malay Batu Bara community.

Although the interaction between ethnic communities in the district of Tanjung Tanjung very intense because Tanjung Tiram is one of the trade centers in which almost all traders in all districts of Batu Bara even in other areas meet in the market, but the newcomers were well received. This tolerance character (*Tasamuh*) is suitable to be modeled by other communities.

b. Limalaras Palace as a Symbol Acceptance for Various Ethnic

Batu Bara stores many sites of historical buildings such as Limalaras Palace. This palace keeps artistry as well as becoming silent evidence on the existence of royal history. Then, progenitor of the ruling at the time was able to protect the public so that the palace serves as the system of structural and cultural. The story also notes that the progenitor welcomed migrants even they are different in term of tribe, ethnic or religions as told by the descendants of Limalaras, Datuk Azmansyah.

The ruler of the kingdom provided concrete examples to the people to be able to accept interaction with other ethnic regardless of their origin while the newcomers come with heart and good intentions to complement and build civil society. This example keeps awake until today with the growing role of Tanjung Tiram as one of the centers of economic transactions in Batu Bara Regency.

c. Traditional Dance as a symbol of respect for the guests

Malay society has some kind of dances that are passed down from generation to generation by ancestor. Beside becoming a means of entertainment, traditional Malay dances like *Persembahan*, *Serampang duabelas*, *Zapin* dances also maintain the courtesy and polite culture. Every movement symbolizes respect for the guests described by the motions of bowing, orderly swaying, the swing indicates the softness and smoothness of steps. Therefore, the value can be applied in social life is the respect for the new comers, maintaining each other, positive thinking of strangers and avoid physical contact.

d. *Tenun Songket* Batu Bara as a Symbol of Sanctity, Perseverance and Patience

Tenun Songket Batubara contains values that can be used as a reference in social life. The values are sanctity, beauty, diligence, thoroughness and patience. Sanctity value is reflected on the usage that usually imposed on events and special occasions such as weddings, welcoming guest ceremonies and so forth. The beauty value is reflected on decorative motifs made with high taste that exudes aesthetic value. Meanwhile, the persistence, thoroughness and patience are reflected on the manufacturing process that requires diligent attitude, meticulous and patience. It is certainly without the above values, it is impossible to materialize *Tenun Songket* Batubara as meaningful handicraft. Therefore, when the making process value of *Tenun Songket* is associated with Malay Batu Bara character so the sacred values, perseverance, beauty and rigor embedded in the social life of the community.

D. Closing

From the previous examples, local wisdom of Malay Batu Bara is illustrated clearly that values are codified in Malay custom. The concepts of Malay Batu Bara contain indigenous values to shape the nation character. These values include: leadership system, social relationships, living in groups, the importance of sharing materials and experiences to others, learning from nature, mutual cooperation, how to deal with change and globalization, aware to creatures ranging from small, adult, to death.

Therefore, the appreciation of the local culture as a form of religious acculturation and culture need to be fostered and nurtured, that diversity is not only shaped by revelation and text, but is formed by the culture in order to realize the local wisdom. This is to show harmony in diversity, particularly ensuring basic rights of the Malay community. The commitment of Malay Batu Bara guided that Islam comes to earth on a mission to divinity (*ilahiyyah*) and humanity (*insaniyyah*). the universal values in Islam is very important to be implanted as a way of life in order to explore human attitude in social life. Therefore, the foundation of ethics such as the concept of *al-'adalah* (justice), *al-hurriyyah* (independence), *as-shura* (democracy), *al-musawah* (equation), *al-ukhuwwah* (brotherhood), and *at-Tasamuh* (tolerance) is very important to be appreciated widely.

So Malay culture is based on Islamic value, or Malay Culture is oriented to Islamic teachings. This directly or indirectly influence the behavior of religious practice, including the fostering harmony among religious people and between people of different religion. Malay society in the past and even today is a society that is accommodating, friendly, warm to the immigrants who came to bring a new culture and religion, both from domestic or overseas. For example migrants from India with the Hindu religion, China with Buddhism, Europe with Christianity, as well as other immigrants of diverse ethnic groups in the Indonesian islands. *Pepatah* Malay says, "*Dimana bumi dipijak disitu langit dijunjung*" (The land we inhabit, there we respect each other) seems to be accepted and followed by the newcomers.

This perspective is particularly relevant to the context of modern life. As stated in Declaration of Human Rights which upholds humanitarian values, justice, equality and politic. it is a real

correlation between the teachings of Islam and humanity that respects the basic rights of human beings, regardless of background, ethnic, religious, racial, and gender. Therefore, the understanding of Islam as the nature of life that can accept and appreciate the diversity and equal rights, it is important to be able to learn back of prophetic history of Muhammad the messenger. He had translated values of diversity in the realities of life mankind, that is the basis of the ethics of human life (*insaniyyah*) is universal.

Subject enhance this character, implied that the prophet would appreciate the values of the local culture that has existed sporadically. Therefore, Islam teaching brings to this earth is not to deny the teachings of earlier, but it complements the teachings and traditions that have been there before.

Islamic universalism is able to appreciate and be wise to the local tradition, it is important to underline the fikh paradigm of *al-hams dlaruriyat*, that there are five basic universal human rights that must be met, namely: 1) Right to life or life assurance (*hifdz al-nafs*). 2) Security of religion or belief (*hifdz al-din*), 3) Security or freedom of thought (*hifdz al-aql*). 4) Right to get food, clothing, and shelter (*hifdz al-maal*). 5) Right of descent (*hifdz al-nasb*).

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