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# Ritual *Arwah Nimaliling* of Taba People in Makian Island North Maluku (Between Blessings and Prestige)

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Generally ritual is the human form of religion stated to be confidence in the power of invisibility. One of them is the belief in ancestral spirits which is practiced by the Taba people on Makian Island through the *Arwah Nimaliling* Ritual. From the results of interviews and content analysis of the data, it shows that the *Arwah Nimaliling* is a collaboration of Islamic traditions and local traditions into local Islamic traditions. This can be seen from mosques, cemeteries and houses which are used as cultural fields. The Taba people overseas try to be present to celebrate the ritual because it is believed that all the successes obtained are the blessings of their ancestors, which are only obtained on the second day of the sixth month of Ramadhan. But presence in the ritual of *Arwah Nimaliling*, cannot now be separated from the influence of change. Using symbolic interpretative perspective, this paper presents the occurrence of a change of group orientation by Taba people who now makes *Arwah Nimaliling* as a venue for social prestige.

**Key words:** *Taba People, Arwah Nimaliling, Blessing, Social Prestige.*



## A. Introduction

Religious human beings always live between the belief in the profane world and the sacred world. The sacred in empirical expressions is in the form of ritual, both ritual worship of God, worship of world powers invisibly or against the spirits of ancestors (Haviland, 1988: p. 97). There is a general tendency that in a society the older generation is considered to have power and merit, especially services and assets left behind so that they are considered alive in terms of tastes, feelings, emotions and behaviour (Haviland, 1988: p. 198). Such is the case with the Arwah Nimaliling, which is the annual ritual of the Taba people in Makian Island. They seek to return to the village not only for celebration feast, but all means are taken in order to be in the village yard on the twentieth day of six Ramadhan to get barakat, that is a blessing from their ancestors.

Taba People on the island of Makian already adheres to Islam since the 13th century BC, and even is used as an official religion. Old belief does not necessarily disappear but occurs in dialectic between local beliefs and Islam, the collaborative believed and practiced in life every day. Arwah Nimaliling is celebrated on the twenty six day or night twenty seven months Ramadhan, it is a ritual centred on the mosque, tomb, house and village. The mosque is used as a ritual centre for following the traditions of Islam; while the grave because it is believed their ancestors were already died and will rise again at night Arwah Nimaliling so that should be welcome, while the house and the village is the place to stay and settlements who uninhabitable for ancestors blessings.

The study of associated relation of human with ancestral spirits in Indonesia has been done by several researchers, among others Abu Hamid (2005). He explains that people from Bugis Makassar community perform pilgrimage to ancestral graves because credited and serves control and gives safety of life. Syam (2005) stated the mystification of mosques, tombs and wells that do the Javanese coast because the made is think is a saint.

Rumahuru (2009) about the *cakalele* ritual in Haruku Maluku State which invites ancestral spirits to enter the ritual actors as a legitimate ethnic hegemony. In particular ethnic Taba researched by Alhadad (2009), Tradition *Hapolas* (pay debts) Taba People funerals as social solidarity of media. Anggariani and Sahar (2018) explain *Oppo* the ritual of death of the Taba people as a medium for separation, transition and integration of the spirit into its new realm, namely the afterlife. In contrast to this study show that reasons people group Taba enthusiastic attending Ritual *Arwah Nimaliling* to show social prestige.

This article to explain a) how the history of ritual *Arwah Nimaliling* a candle Taba People, b) how the mystification of the cultural field mosques, graves, houses and villages, c) what are the implications *Arwah Nimaliling* for Taba People.



## B. Literature Review: Ritual *Arwah Nimaliling* Perperspective Symbolic Interpretation

Victor Turner defines a symbol as something that is considered, with mutual consent, as something that gives natural characteristics or represents or reminds people by having the same quality, or imagining in reality or thoughts (Turner, 1982: 19). So in the Symbolic view, symbols with their social context provide meaning and interpretation for human actions and behavior (Saifuddin, 2005: 294. Turner points to three dimensions of symbolic meaning in terms of the interpreting actor, namely *exegetic*, the meaning of symbols, namely the scope of interpretation given by the informant. native to the researchers, that interpretation should be classified according to their social nature and qualification of informants. These two dimensions of *operational*, this dimension cannot include the interpretation of verbal, but what is shown to the observer and researcher, and a third, dimension *positional*, that the symbols that relate with other symbols, so the relationship with certain ritual symbols is emphasized, while at other times it is not emphasized at all (Winangan, 1990: 20).

Then Clifford Geertz developed a model of cultural studies, especially religion which emphasizes the form of symbols. That culture consists of two elements, namely culture as a cognitive system or knowledge system and culture as a value system or evaluative system. The cognitive system or knowledge system is a representation of the pattern or *model of*, while the value system or evaluative system is a representation of the pattern for or *the for model*. If the pattern of is a representation of reality as a real form of everyday human behavior, then the pattern of sharing is a representation of what becomes a guidance for humans to take action (Geertz, 1992: 7-10, Kleden, 2017: xiv, Syam, 2007: 91-92). The problem then is how to connect the *model of* and *model for*. Geertz then offered a symbol system. The symbol system becomes an intermediary for the relationship between knowledge and value, from the symbol that is the way that makes it possible to find the *meaning system*, namely the meaning system by means of interpretation (Geertz, 1999: 9). Thus, through the system of meaning as an intermediary, a symbol can translate knowledge into value and translate value into knowledge (Kleden, 2017: xv).

Symbolic culture theory and cultural interpretation are understood as a symbolic interpretive perspective. Interpretative symbolic in order to right unt u k understand ritual symbol *Requiem Nimaliling* that in maknai People Taba good for the interests that are spritual nor practical.

## C. Research Methods

### 1. Research Location.

The research location was conducted in Sangapati Village, Makian Island District, Halmahera South Regency, North Maluku Province. This location was chosen because first, there is religious education from kindergarten to high school. Secondly \, there are 31 head of



family forth from refugee families who post conflict after more than 20 know n and k etiga, ritual *Arwah Nimaliling* in the con man 's ten in this village.

## 2. Sources and Types of Data

The type of research used is descriptive qualitative. The data obtained is presented in a narrative form. This type of data consists of the data primer obtained through observation and interviews. Secondary data were obtained from books, journals, article as well as the source of online media.

## 3. Data collection techniques: Observation, Interview and Document Study

Observation was done by observing the rituals of *the Arwah Nimaliling* since the preparation, tool equipment, actors involved and the activities carried out while engaging part contents of chalky well participants ritual. Interviews were conducted with informants in the form of regular questions and answers, then continued with in-depth interviews, discussions and confirmation with the criminal actors. As keleng k apan data collection, observation and interviews documented.

## 4. Techniques for determining informants

Informant are deriberatly chosen based on their knowledge and participation in the ritual *Arwah Nimaliling* represented priest, educator, religious leaders, leaders of indigenous and community ordinary.

## 5. Research instruments.

The researcher, as the main instrument, is equipped with a mobile phone to record the results of interviews and take pictures.

## 6. Data Analysis Sorting, presentation and conclusion

The results of the research are arranged from the start of the research to the end by: First, categorizing the data according to the research question. Second, writing reports by narrating according to the data obtained, and thirdly making conclusions.

## D. Result

*Arwah Nimaliling isr* ghosts night is a local ritual that stem Taba People confidence in the relationship of the living premises n ancestral spirits. Ancestral spirits are believed to be protectors from various kinds of interference from evil spirits as well as givers of life salvation. Having accepted Islam as the official religion, ritual calenderical which



traditionalized called *prayer six*, namely 1 Muharram, the 10th of Muharram, 12 Rabiul Awal, 27 Radjab, 15 Shaban and 17 Ramdhan. The celebration of the great days of Islam which is done by praying together as an expression of gratitude to the spirits consisting of roh angels, spirits of the prophets and the spirit of the ancestors.

But in development six rituals d Natural year to be especially takes time, effort and cost so the longer simplified and reduction on the day twenty six nights or twenty-seven months ramdhan because it is believed as the night lowered Qur'an . The *Arwaha Nimaliling* as the peak of the ritual is carried out by the *bobato akhirat* ( adat institute) after dhohor prayers at each resident's house. Over time, the population increased and finally the ritual was unified and be centered in the mosque after the Ashar prayer , accompanied by lighting the torch at the grave, house and in the parade around the village which was intended as a form of connection with ancestral spirits.

The ritual of lighting the torch begins with burning resin which is taken in Bacan Island, because it is decreasing, it is replaced with a torch made from kerosene for three consecutive nights. The torch was stuck in the grave area before sunset, continued in front of the house and in a parade around the village. Although electrical service has been 24 hours, but the torch but lit even though the light is enclosed electric lights. Cell a i n a torch, in together already begun to appear candles d i turn Berba rengan with a torch in the grave, it thus because it was considered practical. After the torch was lit, the grave was continued in front of the house and paraded around the village.

Taba People in overseas tried such a way that could be present on the day for call coupled with the celebration of Eid A-Fitr. This can be seen from sea transportation which has increased by more than 100%, both the number of passengers and sea transportation . Orentation of value to be obtained is to get *barakat* , which is a blessing in life which includes sustenance, health and long lfe, all of it because the services either from ancestors them . As form of gratitude then realized in bilieve ritual *Arwah Nimaliling* that offer food and side dishes accompanied illuminate the grave, the house and the village with torches .

## **E. Discussion**

*Arwah Nimaliling* is the Ritual calenderical Taba People on the Makian Island is a reduction of six series of the celebration of the great days in Islam. Commemorating the big days of Islam and considering the sacredness of the public figure of I slamic the characteristic of Persian Islam. The Islam adhered to by the Taba People is also inseparable from Islam which has been adapted on the way from Persian to Indonesia. Which can be seen from the chanting of the *Arwah Nimalilingt* prayer praising the glory of the Prophet Muhammad and his family



such as Ali, Hasan and Husain and glorifying female figures in the Islamic struggle such as Khadijah and Fatimah.

*Arwah Nimaliling* believed to be the media obtained *barakat* or blessing of *lel uhur* already contributed to shade themselves family and village pages of various dangers that threaten the safety of body and soul. The services referred to are abundant harvests, adequate catch of fish, recovery from illness, passing examinations and being an employee. Ritual centered on the mosque with a series of *pe m* reading prayers *san g* at premises thick n Islamic tradition. After that, light the torch in the grave, house and be paraded around the village. The grave is believed because torch *lel spirit dhuhur* will come at the night so it needs to be cleaned and illuminated for can recognize on residence of spirit. Torch in the house so that the spirit that had visits can identify family members at home, As well with the procession through the village so that all communities and settlements recognized and enforced catty.

The local community feels benefited by the presence of relatives and family, because they not only gain ancestral blessings but also material blessings. Whereas for the nomads, the ritual *Arwah Nimaliling* is not only achieved by the blessing of their ancestors, but at the same time it is used as a medium for showing success. Among them are bringing in new vehicles, electronic goods, clothing and household appliances, flashy jewelry and excessive shopping.

#### F. Conclusion

- The *Ritual Arwah Nimaliling* Taba People *spiritual* ritual comes from the Persian Islamic tradition and the local tradition to become local Islam.
- Islamic dialectics and locality are reflected in the ritual *Arwah Nimaliling* which is centered in mosques, graves, houses and villages.
- *The Arwah Nimaliling* is now beginning to shift from the media to gain blessings into social prestige media.



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