

**Nyeruan: Traditional Medicine of the Sasak Tribe in the Perspective of Islam, Medicine and Legislation in Indonesia**

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**Abstract:** This research aims to understand the history of the emergence of the traditional *nyeruan* healing tradition, how the treatment procession is carried out, how this treatment is in the view of Islam and modern health science. This research lasted for six months using qualitative methods with a phenomenological approach. Determining informants in this study used snowball sampling. The data collection techniques use participant-observation techniques, interviews, documentation, and also triangulation. Data analysis in this research uses the Social Construction theory of Peter L. Berger and Tomas Luckman, and Herbert Blumer's Symbolic Interactionism theory. Based on the research results, it shows that the traditional healing tradition of *nyeruan* does not violate the laws and regulations in Indonesia, so the practice is still being preserved, especially among the Sasak community.

**Keywords:** Islam; Medicine; Nyeruan; Sasak tribe; Traditional medicine

**Introduction**

Lombok, as one of the islands in West Nusa Tenggara, has a wealth of traditions, including traditions of birth, marriage, death and medicine (Gria et al., 2018). The richness of this tradition is influenced by the values of beliefs and rituals which are still maintained by the Sasak people to this day as contributors to traditional wealth, including traditional medicine. Traditional Medicine is treatment or treatment carried out using traditional medicine and the treatment refers to experience where the skills are preserved from generation to generation (Che et al., 2024; Karim et al., 2022; Ozioma et al., 2019; Wahyuni, 2021).

The preservation of traditional medicine by a healer, *sandro*, shaman or *belian* (the name varies in each region in Indonesia) is provided through direct or indirect teaching which is generally believed by the community. This direct teaching means that a traditional medicine expert chooses for himself who he will pass on his medical knowledge to, whether from his lineage or family or other people who he thinks will be able to continue the healing tradition. Meanwhile, the direct method is the belief among the people that traditional healing knowledge can choose for itself who will be the owner, either through *laduni* knowledge or suddenly being owned by it as the chosen person. This was also expressed by Wulandari et al. (2021), that education and training are implemented in accordance with the norms that apply in society. Furthermore, traditional medicine also has its foundation through the Decree of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number 1076/MENKES/SK/VII/2003 concerning the implementation of traditional medicine.

The traditional medicine that is alive and ingrained in the Sasak tribe is very diverse, including treatment by visiting graves, *pertuq* or *per tus* (Zulkifli, 2021), *sembeg* (Andayani et al., 2021), *be pupuk pandiq*, *be kerem*, *nyeruan* and many others. Where in Sasak terms, people who carry out traditional healing are known as shaman, *belian* or *medo* artisans (Aptika et al., 2023; Sarisah, 2023). This traditional healing practice is a synergy between religious understanding or practice and the culture of the Sasak tribe, visible in the tools, materials and
methods and rituals used in it treatment (Aini et al., 2021).

The Sasak people believe that humans, one of whose media of creation is water, cannot live without water, thus water has become one of the main healing media in traditional medicine, including the nyeruan healing tradition. In Sasak terminology, it is defined as the process of spraying/delivering water that has been recited incantations or prayers to the patient's body from the tips of the hair even to the toes, this verb of exclamation also has an equivalent word among the Sasak people, for example nyemperu or semperu. Meanwhile, water as a healing medium is called aiq seruan, namely water that has been given a spell and prayed for to be sprayed on people who are sick (Zidni, 2017). In Islam, there are many explanations about water, starting from the process of human creation, the human need for water and water as part of the medium of purification in Islam (Ahmadi, 2021; Ramadhanti et al., 2023), even because of the importance of water for human life during the wars of the Prophet Muhammad SAW strictly prohibits monopoly, control or closure of wells or other water sources by one of the parties at war.

In this modern era, where science is increasingly developing, including knowledge in the fields of health, medicine and pharmacy, the development of medical treatment has touched almost all levels of society (Calundu, 2018). Medical treatment is increasingly supported by the development of science and technology (Purwitasari, 2019). Health facilities are increasingly widespread in every region, such as community health centers, clinics and hospitals, especially with the choice of free treatment, low-cost treatment, or independent fees which are of course more expensive for certain types of diseases or for the upper middle class (Aini et al., 2021). However, in the midst of this progress, chanting still exists as a type of traditional medicine that is timeless, still exists and lives among the Sasak people, especially throughout the city districts on the island of Lombok.

There are at least three things behind this research, first, what the history of the nyeruan tradition is, how Islam views the nyeruan tradition and how health science views the nyeruan tradition, both with regard to the treatment methods carried out and the media used.

Method

The method in this research is a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach (Mahmudin, 2021; Nasir et al., 2023; Novayani, 2019). The phenomenological approach helps to understand the structure of experience and awareness of the informants studied (Kuswarno, 2009; Sugiyono, 2018). In the context of this research, phenomenology is used to look at phenomena or events that occur in society, such as the Sasak tribe's belief in the nyeruan tradition as an alternative to traditional medicine.

This research was conducted for six months at several locations, namely the city of Mataram, Batuaj village, Central Lombok and Selebung, East Lombok. The samples in this research were several belian and individuals who lived in the environment where the research was conducted. The sampling technique uses a snowball sampling technique with the informant category, namely key informants consisting of several people and their families as the main informants, namely informants who have detailed information and as main actors who understand the history and process of treatment, as well as supporting informants who are people who can provides additional information to complement the analysis and discussion in qualitative research, such as the surrounding community and people who have used this chanting healing tradition in an effort to cure illnesses for themselves and their family members. The data collection techniques used in this research were participatory observation, in-depth interviews and documentation (Alwi, 2020; Rani et al., 2020; Supriono et al., 2019). Data analysis in this research uses the Social Construction theory of Peter L. Berger and Tomas Luckman, and Herbert Blumer's Symbolic Interactionism theory.

Result and Discussion

The 9th century is believed to be the century when Islam entered Indonesia and continues to exist and develop until now. The entry of Islam through peaceful means was inseparable from the influence of economic actors who came from Islamic regions who came to the archipelago and the influence of Islamic figures who touched various paths in preaching Islam.

The acceptance of Islam in the archipelago as a belief among society will certainly influence or give color to traditions that already exist and those that were born later. Several studies, one of which states that with the development of Islam in Indonesia, of course, gave birth to small traditions (Syahdan, 2017). Islam in Indonesia over time has contributed to the cultural diversity that exists in the archipelago, such as the Islamic colors of Aceh, Malay, Javanese, Sundanese, Sasak, Bugis, and others and among the cultures colored by Islamic traditions in Indonesia, namely the healing tradition (Anang et al., 2020; Ariadi, 2017; Dawing, 2017).

The results of the interviews show that this traditional healing practice is a synergy between religious understanding or practice and the culture of the Sasak people, regardless of the tools, materials, prayers and spells as well as the methods and rituals.
used in treatment. The Sasak people believe that humans, one of whose media of creation is water, cannot live without water, thus water has become one of the main healing media in traditional medicine, including the nyeruan healing tradition. Nyeruan in Sasak terminology is defined as the process of spraying or delivering water that has been read incantations and prayers to the patient's body from the tips of the hair even to the toes, this verb of shouting also has an equivalent word in the middle. Sasak people, for example nyemperu or semperu. While water as a medium for treatment is called aiq seruan namely water that has been given a spell or prayer to be sprayed on people who are sick. Although several sources also stated that not all patients were sprayed, some were only swabbed, especially babies.

The resource persons, numbering four people called Belian and two people called Sandro, said that the prayers that are read and become obligatory washilah (intercession) are reading tahlii (sentences of approval to Allah SWT), tahmiid (sentences of glorification of Allah SWT), shalawat (prayers for Rasulullah SAW., and his family and friends), the syifa' verses contained in the Koran (with various choices between belian and Sandro), and then reciting incantations originating from the Sasak language and/or the sound of the Mandar or Bajo language for Sandro is kept secret because it is believed that the spell can only be recited by those who are chosen to continue the treatment either through the line of descent or through the teacher's line.

However, one of the believers did not mind conveying the sound or pronunciation of the spell, on the grounds that if it were read by an ordinary person it would certainly be different from if it were read by someone who was chosen to provide treatment because according to him this was related to scientific and religious beliefs. The sound of the spell in question is: "... turun saking adam kedadian adam puteq emel bao maraq aiq." This mantra can be interpreted as saying that as one of the media of human creation (Adam As.) is water, hopefully it will bring coolness to the sick like the coolness of water.

The informants further stated that the patient's family's gift to the belian or Sandro, called andang-andang, can be in the form of staple foods such as rice, sugar or money. Where the andang-andang may not be intended as payment for the treatment provided, but merely intended as a gift or sodaqoh, this is believed to be more in line with Islamic teachings to bring blessings to both parties. Because the knowledge of Allah SWT, which is used in terms of helping each other, cannot be commercialized.

What was conveyed by this purchase was agreed upon by the patients, they stated it in different languages but with the same meaning, namely that even if we semperu our own child, recite the prayer ourselves but the results are not the same as when we seek treatment directly from the patient. The experts said that more or less, some of them even insisted that especially in the case of children with fevers, they preferred nyeruan treatment rather than force-feeding their young children, let alone babies, with medicines, and the gifts or sodaqoh given to Belian or Sandro were not burdensome because it is given as sincerely as possible.

Sequentially, this traditional treatment varies between belian, but in general the order of implementation is: (a) The patient is given a light massage, then the crown of the head is blown while prayers are read. (b) Belian/Sandro reads the prayers and spell into water that is in a container, whether in the form of an earthen container such as a jug, bowl, or bottled mineral water which is now considered more practical. (c) The water that has been prayed for and cast a spell is sprayed or rubbed over the patient's body the use of betel and others by using betel and then giving a red mark on the patient's forehead, neck and chest as part of the treatment stages.
the form of water, accompanied by a relaxation process in the form of blowing on the crown of the head or massage. The healing medium in the form of water is also treated with prayers and spells, all of which are centered on Allah the Almighty, because it is believed that everything comes from Him and runs according to His destiny and ends with Him. Next, the process of spraying or delivering the water to the patient's body is an effort to neutralize the patient's body temperature.

From the results of observations and interviews, it can be concluded that the strength of this tradition of chanting treatment persists in society to this day because the people of Lombok, the majority of whom are Muslim, strongly believe that this treatment has many benefits for healing because it is carried out based on belief in the prayers offered to Allah SWT brings calm and healing. So as long as Islam is still alive as the foundation of norms that exist in society, traditional medicine that involves religious traditions will not become extinct even amidst the onslaught of advances in modern medical technology.

Islamic Perspective

In Islam, there are many explanations about water, starting from the process of human creation, the human need for water, water as part of a purification medium in Islam, even because of the importance of water for human life, even in the event of war, the Prophet Muhammad saw. strictly prohibit monopoly, control or closure of wells or other water sources by one of the parties at war. In the Al-Qur'an QS. Al-Anbiya verse 30 Allah says which means: "And do those who disbelieve do not know that the heavens and the earth were both one piece, then we separated the two. And from water we make everything that lives. So why don't they believe?" This verse explains and emphasizes that all living things are composed of water, where water is an intermediary for the creation of living things, water contains minerals and substances that living things need. Without water, living things will die. This cannot be denied because humans or living creatures can survive for days without eating as long as they get something to drink. The position of water as a source of life is a fact that shows how important the existence of water is in nature (Afifah, 2022; Haddade, 2016; Lutfi et al., 2023).

In the Islamic faith, every Muslim believes that every disease comes from Allah SWT. and Allah has also prepared the medicine (Muhadi et al., 2012). This is confirmed in the statement expressed in the holy book Al-Qur'an that it can prevent or treat disease in a wise and correct way in the sense of not violating Islamic law (Ihsan, 2016).

Water is a well-known healing medium in Islam, this is referred to in history where Zam-Zam water is believed to have extraordinary properties, and even ordinary water, if recited al-Fatiyah three times and then rubbed on the sick part of the body, is believed to be a means of healing as taught by religious leaders. This is taught by the ulama' by referring to the Qur'an surah al-Furqan verses 48-49 which means: "He is the one who blows the wind as a bearer of good news close to the arrival of His mercy (rain) and we send down water from the sky that is very clear (48); that we may revive the dead land and that we may give drink to most of our creatures, livestock and many people (49)".

In terms of aqiliyah or reason, if one of the elements of human creation is water, life requires water. Therefore, it is certain that water can make humans healthy or can be a medium for healing. Especially diseases related to body temperature. So when the media used as medicine in the niyuran tradition is aq seriun, it is actually an implementation of the Muslim community's belief in the primacy of water as taught in Islam. However, is its implementation in treatment considered appropriate? This is a further study in this research. From several literatures we find that the Prophet Muhammad or his companions never carried out treatment by spraying water on sick people. Among the ulama, they are taught that the procedure for treating with water is to recite prayers and tayyibah sentences over the water and then drink it or stream it or wipe it on the affected area. This was also carried out by two of the six resource persons, meaning that in its implementation, not all of them carried out the ritual of spouting water on the patient, especially if the patient was a toddler, then it was more about rubbing him and praying on his head. This means that in general the implementation of traditional chanting treatment does not violate religious teachings as long as the spells used do not conflict with faith and the media used are not media that are prohibited by religion. In fact, the value of helping is very strong in this healing tradition, which can be seen in how gifts from the patient's family should not be intended as payment but merely as gifts or charity to bring blessings to all parties.

Medical Perspective

Water is the first object studied by scientists, and water is also the first thing they look for when they land on the planet Mars or other planets, because if water is found it means that on that planet humans can survive and food plants can live too. This is because part of the body of all living organisms consists of water, around 70 to 90% of organic matter consists of water (Gavrilcescu, 2021; Sawaluddin, 2018). Chemical reactions that support life in all plants and animals take place in the medium of water (Westall et al., 2018; Yang et al., 2021). Water not only provides a medium in which reactions that support life can occur, but water is also often an important product or reactant of these reactions.
So it is not surprising that in the world of modern medicine, water is one of the media that is widely used, for example, many medicines are found in liquid form. In the world of health or modern medicine, although water is important, its application and use must be in accordance with scientific principles or research results, namely how a medicine is made and how it is used.

The nyeruan done by spraying water is important to see from a health science perspective, whether it can be justified or not. In this case, researchers with scientific knowledge in the medical field do not recommend the technique of spraying water on patients, in order to prevent bacteria or other infectious diseases that can be transmitted through the mouth or saliva mixed with the water used when spraying. Therefore, it is necessary to educate buyers so that they understand this and also return to the approach to Islamic teachings where the Prophet Muhammad SAW or friends have never done such a thing. It is felt that this religious approach is more likely to be accepted by consumers than using a medical science approach.

Figure 3. Aiq mel-mel in the process of nyeruan (but currently bottled water is a more practical choice)

Figure 4. Education package and tali asih for resource persons

Legal Perspective in Indonesia

The government pays sufficient attention to the existence and development of traditional medicine that lives in society. Traditional medicine in Republic of Indonesia Law no. 36 of 2009 concerning Health Article 1 point 16 states that traditional health services are treatment and/or care using methods and medicines that refer to experience and skills passed down empirically which can be accounted for and applied in accordance with the norms applicable in society. In the National Health System in Indonesia, conventional health services have been recognized. A current challenge is traditional health services which are getting stronger with the recognition of traditional health workers as one of the health workers in accordance with Law Number 36 of 2014 concerning Health Workers and being incorporated into the Indonesian Health Workers Council (MTKI) along with other health workers outside of doctors and dentist. Apart from that, the scientification of herbal medicine has also been popularized in accordance with Minister of Health Regulation Number 3 of 20103 and the legalization of the Indonesian Traditional Health System scientific tree.

However, in terms of the nyeruan tradition, it is different from the traditional medicine referred to in the law, where nyeruan does not use traditional medicines such as concoctions of ingredients called herbal medicine, either in liquid or solid form. The only medium used in chanting is water that is given prayers and incantations, then sprayed or distributed over the sick and drunk. Meanwhile, betel leaves and others are just gifts or gifts given to the healer, and although there are those who use them as a medicinal medium, they are no more than external medicines that are applied to the patient's forehead or neck, known as "sembeg" (Andayani et al., 2022; Yuliatna et al., 2023). Thus, in nyeruan treatment, both the procedures and media used in the treatment do not violate the laws and regulations in Indonesia, so the practice in society still continues to this day.

The belief in the efficacy or efficacy of chanting as a way to cure diseases related to body temperature such as fever and other diseases that cause fever has become ingrained among the Sasak people and is difficult to replace with modern medicine, so that both traditional nyeruan medicine and modern medicine in the end, they cannot defeat each other but live side by side in society as an option for healing. Based on this phenomenon, nyeruan is a tradition that cannot be extinct, but in its implementation it does not have to be in conflict with modern health science, moreover the media used is not dangerous and does not violate the law. However, in its implementation, the treatment practitioners, in this case Belian or Sandro, can be educated in terms of treatment because it is believed to be more in line with what is exemplified in Islam.

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Conclusion

Based on the findings and analysis of data in this research, it shows that Islamic teachings were the initial foundation for the strength of this ngeruan healing tradition to live and survive amidst the Sasak community, the majority of whom follow the Islamic religion. Water as the main medium in treatment is due to the belief that one of the media for human creation is water, as a balance to the elements of earth, air and fire which are also part of human creation.

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