The Meaning of The Miare Tradition:
From Condolences to The Symbolisation of The Corps in The Grave

Mualimin1*, Rofi’i2

1,2Institut Agama Islam Negeri Palangkaraya, Indonesia
mualimin@iain-palangkaraya.ac.id

Abstract
This article aims to analyse the meaning of Miare tradition for the community in Makrampai village, Sambas Regency. This study is a qualitative research with a phenomenological approach. Data were obtained by conducting in-depth interviews and participant observation. Data collection was conducted in Makrampai Village from April to September 2021. The data were then analysed using an interactive qualitative analysis model: data reduction, data display, and conclusion. This study found two essential meanings of the miare tradition for the Makrampai village community. First, the miare tradition manifests condolences and social solidarity towards members of the society who have suffered calamities, especially death. Second, the Miare tradition is a reminder and advice that every human being will definitely face death in the cycle of life.

Kata Kunci:
Miare Tradition; Makrampai Village; Condolences; Death

Abstrak
INTRODUCTION

As social beings, social interactions that happen between humans create culture in a society. In this context, culture is a human response to the reality and dynamics of the life they experience. Therefore, culture is dynamic in its journey and will continuously develop according to the times.

The miare tradition is among the cultures still preserved in the society. This tradition is part of a culture that has taken root in the lives of people in Makrampai village, especially those who are Muslims. Miare is a tradition carried out by the Makrampai society members during a death calamity. The purpose of this tradition is to pray for the person who has died so that his sins are forgiven and receive the protection of Allah SWT. This tradition is carried out by reading the Qur'an, tahlilan which then ends with praying together.

The miare tradition essentially has similarities with the death ceremony as is also carried out by other communities such as Java. The similarity is mainly related to the implementation time from the first day to the thousandth after the funeral. However, at the level of practice, there are some specific differences between the miare tradition and the death ceremony practiced by, for example, the Javanese community. Firstly, the implementation of the miare tradition is accompanied by the culture of Makan Besaprah, which can only be found in the Sambas Malay society (Hastiani and Hariko 2018; Mualimin 2020; Wahab 2017). At the same time, death ceremonies in other communities are not found in the Makan Besaprah culture. This difference shows that the miare tradition is strongly influenced by
the local wisdom of the Sambas Malay community. Secondly, in the miare tradition in Makrampai village, there is a practice of symbolising the condition of the corpse through the specialisation of food served on certain days. Referring to previous research on death ceremonies, no research results have been found that found the specialisation of food with a specific purpose in the tradition of death ceremonies.

Apart from this reality, examining the meaning of the miare tradition for the Makrampai village society is interesting. Moreover, previous studies related to the miare tradition are dominated by studies related to existence (Sunandar 2017; Wiryawan 2020), linguistic aspects (Feblia, Sulissusiawan, and Syahrani 2021; Mela, Muzammil, and Jupitasari 2021), and symbolisation of food specialisation in the miare tradition (Mualimin 2023). Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by focusing on the meaning of the miare tradition for the people of Makrampai village, especially in Sebindang hamlet.

This study is a qualitative research with a phenomenological approach. Data collection was conducted using in-depth interviews and participant observation. Data was collected for six months, from April to September 2021. The informants in this study totalled five people. The data obtained were then analysed using the Miles and Huberman interactive qualitative analysis model: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion (Miles and Huberman 2014).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
The Existence of Miare Tradition in Makrampai Village Society

The word Miare in Indonesian can be interpreted as maintaining. In Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, maintenance can be interpreted as an effort to keep something as well as possible (Pusat Bahasa Depdiknas 2005). For the Sambas Malay society, the miare tradition is a tradition carried out to pray for people who have passed away and the families who are abandoned.
According to Abdur (1994), the miare tradition is reading the Qur'an together from the first day after the body is buried until the seventh day, then continuing with reading tahlil and praying together on the 15th, 25th and 40th days (Mela, Muzammil, and Jupitasari 2021; Sunandar 2017). Thus, the miare tradition can be interpreted as commemorating death by reading tahlil and praying together for the safety of the spirit and the abandoned family.

The Makrampai village society still holds or carries out traditions that still exist today. The miare tradition is a legacy of ancient traditions and has become a habit. Miare in the Sambas Malay language can be interpreted as maintaining, keeping, or caring. The miare tradition by the Makrampai community is interpreted as praying for the dead so that their path to the grave will be blessed. The miare tradition also aims to strengthen friendship and for someone to condone the calamity obtained by their neighbors or family. This purpose is then similar to the death ceremony traditions in the archipelago.

The miare tradition is one of the traditions still maintained by the Makrampai society today. This tradition has been carried out for generations by the Makrampai village community. Regarding the history of the implementation of this tradition, until now no sources have been found that mention precisely when and who carried out the tradition for the first time in Makrampai village.

Interviews conducted with Makrampai village public figures did not mention exactly when and who first started this tradition, as stated by SO:

“yak mun nak kitte carek sape yang mulekan atau bille mullenye urang miare di Makrampai tok e yak memang dah seang dih yang tau. Cume setau kamek mun miare itok e dah turun temurun kena ajarkan dan dilakukan masyarakat Makrampai khususnye urang Melayu. (If we want to trace the person who initiated this tradition or the first time it was carried out, then I do not think anyone knows precisely. What is certain is that this
tradition is taught and carried out from generation to generation, especially for the Malay society).”

In line with this statement, ES also said the following:
“...yak payah mun nak dicarek sape yang mulekan atau bile dimulekan miare di Makrampai tok e. Tapi yang saye ketahuek tuntunan untuk pelaksanaan miare didapatkan dalam kitab perukunan. Termasok lah juak untuk wirid dan doanye (It is difficult to trace who and when the Miare tradition was first carried out in Makrampai. But what I know is that the guidance for the implementation of the Miare tradition is found in the Malay Perukunan book. Including also for wirid and prayers).”

The miare tradition is carried out from generation to generation. Therefore, this tradition is so rooted in the life of the Makrampai society that it is tough to eliminate. However, in its existence, this tradition has evolved. The Makrampai society's views on the miare tradition have evolved and become dynamic. About these dynamics, YM said that:
“.....mun gek dolok dari gek kaccik setiap urang meninggal pasti miare. Kamek yang kaccik-kaccik ikut ngalek kubor. Lakak iye malamnye ikut ngaji sampai nujoh ari. Jadi selama tujoh ari ramai tolen rumah urang yang dapat musibah iye. Sinullongan kitte sesame tetangga. Cume kinitok dah ade yang madahkan miare ye sean di zaman Nabi. Mun jinye die ye bid’ah, dan daan boleh dikerajjekan (since I was a child, the miare tradition would be held if someone died. Children would dig the grave in the afternoon, and then in the evening, we would read the Qur'an in the house of the bereaved family until the seventh day. For seven days, the bereaved family's house is always crowded because people help each other to provide assistance. However, in recent years some people have started to say that the miare tradition never existed at the time of the Prophet, so it falls into the category of bid'ah and should not be carried out).”
YM's statement was then supported by information from ES:

“...memang inyan ade yang maddahkan miare ye bid’ah sebingge memunculkan perbedaan pendapat masyarakat di sittok terkait boleh atau daan miare ye. Yak mun jikku daan masalah nak bide pendapat yak masing-masing ade dasarnye ye be, asal usah nak sampai saling sinyalan lalu ujungnye daan senaguran udek. Iye barok ayap. (It is true that there are people who say that the miare tradition is bid'ah, causing differences of opinion in the community regarding the permissibility of carrying out the miare tradition. For me, there is no problem with different opinions regarding the miare tradition because each of them also has its basic arguments. The most important thing is not to blame each other, as a result we can't talk to each other. That will cause new problems later).”

The explanations from these two informants show that the development of the miare tradition in Makrampai is related to the diversity of opinions in understanding this tradition. In the past, all villagers agreed on the permissibility of the miare tradition, but recently, there have been differences of opinion regarding its permissibility. This diversity leads to two opinions, one that allows and one that prohibits. Differences of opinion about the miare tradition would be dangerous if the two groups started against each other. This difference of opinion, if left unresolved, will undoubtedly disrupt the social stability of the community. Realising this, religious and community leaders in Makrampai village agreed to build tolerance in the community, as stated by SO:

“...jadi terkait khilafiah iye kamek sebagai tokoh masyarakat ngembalikan ke masing-masing agek. Mun nak ngerajekan silekan, mun nak daan pun silekan. Asalkan usah nak sinyalan dan sinjabatan (Regarding these differences of opinion, we as community leaders return to each individual. For those who want to implement it, they are
ES also expressed a similar view:

“...sebannarnye seann pakṣaann nak melaksanekan miare atau daan. Intinya tergantung pendapat, keyakinan, dan kemampuan masing-masing agek (basically there is no compulsion in carrying out the miare tradition. It all goes back to each person’s opinion, belief and ability to carry out this tradition).”

The miare tradition cannot be separated from the life of the Makrampai society. It is because the miare tradition has been carried out by the Makrampai society for generations. Makrampai society has become accustomed to carrying out this tradition. Often, if there is a family who is unable to carry out the miare tradition, the community will help the family carry out miare. Therefore, the miare tradition has been integrated into the social system of the society.

The data shows that the miare tradition has developed in the Makrampai community. The development is only limited to the way it is carried out. This development is a form of adjustment of the implementation of this tradition with the dynamics of the life of the Makrampai society. The development of the miare tradition that occurs in the Makrampai community is a community effort to maintain the existence of this tradition so that it remains an essential part of society. In that context, adjustment is one of the efforts to maintain the existence of local wisdom in the community. The adjustment in question is mainly at the technical level of implementation, without eliminating the substance of a culture (Sinaga, Winangsit, and Putra 2021; Nahak 2019).

Although the miare tradition has taken root in the lives of Makrampai society, there are no social sanctions for those who do not carry out the miare tradition. In this case, SO said:

“...sebannarnye seann juak pakṣaann untuk ngerajjekan miare. Kemampuan ekonomi tiap urang kan bede-bede. Jadi ndak boleh...”
juak kitte nak makse urang ngerajjekanny. Cume jarang di urang yang daan ngerajjekan miare ye. Yak biasenye disittok e urang sinulongan. Ade yang mbarek barras, duit, ayam, tallok, kayu api, dan mbantok tenage. Jadi paling indak barean urang ye cukup juak untuk sampai nujob ari (there is no compulsion in carrying out the miare tradition. This is because the economic ability of each community is different. So we cannot force people to carry out miare. However, rarely do people not carry out miare because of economic factors. Usually, people here help each other. Some donate rice, money, chickens, eggs, firewood, and labor. At least this is enough to carry out miare until the seventh day).”

Another development is related to symbolisation that has shifted. The shift is because some Makrampai people consider it inappropriate to symbolise the corpse's condition with cakes (food). The Makrampai society responds to this in various ways. First, people still uphold the symbolisation, so it is a must to serve food on certain days. Secondly, people who still serve the food according to the customs in the community. However, the food symbols are not connected to the corpse's condition but only remind them of the number of days in the miare tradition. For example, people serve Serabi cake on the fifteenth day just to remind them that it has been fifteen days since the corpse was buried. Third, people who no longer symbolise certain foods with the condition of the corpse and on certain days in the miare tradition. People do not symbolise food in this tradition because it is inappropriate to connect the corpse's condition with the food.

According to the observations, the miare tradition has similarities with the death ceremonies of several other ethnic communities in Indonesia. Some death ceremonies similar to the miare tradition are those of the Javanese and Nahdatul Ulama (Nahdiyyin/NU) communities. In Javanese society, death ceremonies are held on the third day (nelung dino), fortieth day
(patang puluh dino), seventh day (mitung dina), hundredth day (nyatus dino) and one thousand days (nyenu) (Suwardi 1998; Fadillah, Anwar, and Zainab 2020). Nahdatul Ulama recognises the existence of death ceremonies, the substance of this tradition is tahlilan and prayers for the dead. At the same time, the number of days of implementation is not too binding to adapt to the culture of the community that carries it out. The purpose is to condole and remember death (Fattah 2006).

Javanese traditions are closely related to cultural acculturation. This is due to the ingrained socio-cultural conditions spread across the island of Java. The Javanese people's pre-Islamic beliefs had been animism before the arrival of Hinduism in Java around 400 BC. Later, when Islam came to Java and was spread by the Wali Songo, Hinduism existed and was the people's belief. Later, the two religions coexisted despite their different beliefs. This happened because in the development of Islamic teachings carried out by scholars without coercion and violence, those who wanted to embrace Islam were welcome, and those who continued to follow Hinduism were also not disputed. Accordingly, the preaching carried out by Wali Songo spread Islam by incorporating the values of Islamic teachings into pre-Islamic culture so that Islam was accepted by the Javanese people (Karim 2007).

There are two views on the relationship between religion and local culture. First, the view that the relationship between religion and local culture is syncretic. The essence of this view states that there is a mix between Islam and local culture. For example, in the case of Javanese culture, there is a mixture of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and animism, which is often categorised as nominal Islam. In this syncretic style, the most dominant is the Javanese culture, while Islam is outside it, which in essence is Javanese culture. Experts who say that the relationship between Islam and local culture reveals syncretic Islam are Geertz, Manan, Beatty, and Mulder (Nasir and Syam 2004).
Second, the view that the relationship between Islam and local culture is essentially acculturative. The relationship between Islam and local culture is essentially acculturative, not a mixture of various elements but a process of receiving and giving each other, so it becomes a distinctive Islam, such as Islamic Java as well as Malaysian Islam, Pakistani Islam, and Indian Islam. These concepts then build a network of cultural Islam, which is Islam that is friendly and tolerant of various cultural variants, including Javanese culture. Many experts agree with this view. Experts who agree are mainly from modernist circles, including Hefner, Woodward, and Nakamura (Khairuddin 2015).

Islam is a religion of da’wah. The da’wah movement necessitates that Muslims convey and invite others to embrace and practice the teachings of Islam. At this point, da’wah often faces two sides that seem contradictory. On the one side, the practice of Islamic teachings is a necessity to be carried out by Muslims. On the other side, an area certainly has an established tradition before the entry of Islam (Suparjo 2008; Ferdiansyah 2019; Amala and Gafur 2020). Therefore, it requires a brilliant strategy from the ulama so that the teachings of Islam can be accepted by people who have established local traditions.

The theory of acculturation can be the basis for the theory of the origin of the miare tradition in Makrampai. Given that Makrampai was once part of the Sambas' kingdom. The Sambas Kingdom was previously a Hindu/Buddhist kingdom, so Hinduism/Buddhism also influenced the kingdom's culture and way of life and society. Then, when Islamic preaching entered the Sambas kingdom, this deeply rooted Hindu/Buddhist tradition was not necessarily eliminated but packaged the tradition with Islamic values, both the reading and the procedure to the purpose and intention. At this level, cultural acculturation occurs between local culture and Islamic values. Thus, the miare tradition is a product of the dakwah of previous scholars in Makrampai. Subsequently, this tradition has become strong and rooted in the life of the Makrampai community. Nowadays, this tradition has
become one of the intermediaries for people/families who are still alive to send prayers for their deceased family members.

**Miare Tradition as an Embodiment of Community Condolences**

Miare tradition is rooted in the lives of the people in Makrampai village. This tradition is not only a part of carrying out the obligations of Muslims towards the corpse, namely Fardhu Kifayah but also a manifestation of condolences and social solidarity of the Makrampai village society towards grieving society members. Observations conducted in this study found that the manifestation of this condolence was at least realised in three forms. First, conduct tahlilan and pray together for the blessings of the deceased. Secondly, helping the family of the deceased. The help includes supplying food and carrying out Fardu Kifayah obligations. Third, comforting, providing social support and advice on patience to families who have suffered a death.

The findings show that the miare tradition represents social solidarity in the society of Makrampai village. The form of social solidarity in the miare tradition can be seen from the people who participate in miare not only come to carry out Fardhu Kifayah, tahlilan, or recite surah Yaasin but the people who also aim to help ease the burden on the person who got the disaster. The assistance is in the form of material goods such as foodstuffs, clothing, and medicines. The assistance provided is also often in the form of moral support.

Solidarity emphasises the state of relationships between individuals and communities. This relationship then underlies mutual attachment in life supported by moral values and beliefs that live in society. The tangible manifestation of this shared relationship will then give birth to an emotional experience that will strengthen the relationship between fellow members of society. This solidarity will prevent society from conflict because the primary bond in solidarity is trust, ideals, and shared moral
commitment. This condition will then form a solid social integrity (Jhonson 1998).

Symbolisation of the Corpse's Condition in the Miare Tradition

The miare tradition is carried out on a certain number of days starting after the corpse's funeral. The count includes the first day (turun tanah), nigge ari (third day), nujoh ari (seventh day), the fifteenth day, twenty-five, one hundred (nyeratus), and the thousandth day. In the implementation, specialized foods will be served on certain days in the miare tradition. The special food is a symbolisation of specific meanings associated with the corpse.

Food symbolisation in the miare tradition has been hereditary. The food symbolised is connected to the condition of the corpse's body on a particular day after being buried. The specific food symbolisation in the miare tradition is shown in the following table:

Table 1. Food Symbolisation in Miare Tradition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food name</th>
<th>Time of day it was served</th>
<th>Symbolic meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bubur catoκ</td>
<td>First day (turun tanah)</td>
<td>The condition of the corpse soaked in water in the grave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasung</td>
<td>Sixth day</td>
<td>Sign that the reciting of the Qur'an together in the house of the deceased/almarhumah will end and will soon be recited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serambi</td>
<td>Fifteenth day</td>
<td>The condition of the corpse is considered to have begun to decompose, swell and begin to perforate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apam</td>
<td>Twenty-fifth day</td>
<td>The condition of the body is considered to have decayed, swollen and perforated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cincin</td>
<td>Fortieth day</td>
<td>The condition of the body of the corpse is considered to have been decomposed and almost has only bones.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Results of research interviews
The symbolisation is a form of community cultural wisdom. The symbolisation of the corpse's condition is the outcome of the society's life experience. The experience, for example, when symbolising catok porridge with the condition of the corpse soaking in the grave. The symbolisation of bubur catok is because the community knows that the land in Makrampai is relatively low-lying, so there may be many water springs in the ground.

The symbolisation of food in the miare tradition shows an attempt at interaction by humans in describing the condition of the corpse in the grave. Symbolisation is believed to be able to build interaction and then be understood by people who understand the meaning of the symbol. At this level, food is a symbol, while the corpse and its condition are objects symbolised in the interaction.

The symbolisation of food in the miare tradition shows that humans use language and symbols to interact (Liliweri 2003). Therefore, humans are also often referred to as homo symbolicus (Henderson 1971; Supriyadi 2012). The symbol is given meaning, leading to a response between interacting individuals. In this context, the symbols or signs used allow interaction to happen. A symbol is something that is used to refer to something else based on the agreement of a group of people. Symbols include words or verbal messages, non-verbal behavior, and objects with mutually agreeable meanings. In Mulyana's (2007) view, humans can use symbols in interaction. The ability of humans to use verbal symbols allows language development and handles relationships between humans and objects (both natural and abstract) without the presence of humans and objects.

The food served in the miare tradition is a symbol known by the people. The symbolic process influences humans to organise their environment by building relationships with each other. The relationship is through the exchange of information that strengthens the attitudes and behavior of others and tries to change those attitudes and behaviors. At this point, this symbolic
process can influence some of the Makrampai society. Those who still believe in this symbolisation believe that it will positively impact them. For this reason, people still believe in this symbolisation making food symbolisation in this tradition necessary.

Humans or individuals live in an environment filled with symbols. Each living individual will respond to existing symbols, like an individual's judgement responding to a stimulus of a physical nature. Individual understanding of symbols results from learning to interact with their environment by trying to understand the symbols around them, both verbally and non-verbally. In the end, learning and understanding the meaning behind the symbols becomes a unique feature for humans.

The miare tradition still exists in the Makrampai society. Likewise, the specialisation of food in the miare tradition in the Makrampai village community is not just a culture that has been hereditary but has specific values and meanings in people's lives. The existence of the miare tradition in the perspective of functionalism theory is reasonableness. In the functionalist perspective, a culture survives because it has specific functions and values for the community concerned. These functions and values have a significant role in the survival of the people who carry out the culture (Pringgawigdada 2010).

The specialisation of food in the miare tradition has been carried out by the Makrampai society for generations. Based on interviews with several informants, it was found that the miare tradition is highly meaningful and essential in the life order of the Makrampai society. From the functional theory perspective, it is stated that if a tradition is not helpful and contributes to society, it will not survive. Moreover, a tradition is considered helpful if a goal is to be achieved.

The data obtained shows that the meaning of food specialisation is divided into two major groups. First, the group that knows the essence of food specialisation in the miare tradition. This group tends to interpret food specialisation in the
aspect of religiosity, especially advice about death that everyone will experience. Second, groups of people do not know precisely the essence of food specialisation in the miare tradition. People in this group interpret food specialisation as an effort to respect the customs transmitted from generation to generation.

Differences in the meaning of food specialisation in the miare tradition show that an individual's experience of something has implications for how it is interpreted. At this point, the experience can be in the form of knowledge as well as daily interactions. This reality is in line with Hall's (2003) view that the meaning of reality is strongly influenced by the background knowledge and level of an individual's understanding of reality. This view is in line with Berger and Luckmann (1991), who state that the meaning of reality can be divided into two points of view: the lay perspective and the perspective based on knowledge of reality.

CONCLUSION

Miare tradition is part of the cultural wealth of the Makrampai society, especially in Sebindang hamlet. This tradition has been rooted so that it is almost always carried out whenever a community member dies. Analysis of the data obtained found two essential meanings of the miare tradition for the Makrampai village community. First, the miare tradition manifests condolences and social solidarity towards community members who experience calamities, especially death. Secondly, the miare tradition is an advice and reminder that every human being will definitely die in the cycle of life. This meaning is actualised through the symbolisation of food served on certain days in this tradition.
DAFTAR PUSTAKA


