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## **The Tradition of Celebrating the Birthday of Prophet Muhammad Reception of Wetu Telu Adherents in Bayan Village, North Lombok Regency, Regarding Mah}abbah in Surah Ali Imran, Verse 31**

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### **Keywords**

*Bayan, WetuTelu, Practice, and  
Reception*

### **Abstract**

*Wetu Telu is a belief system and religious practice still observed by some Sasak Muslims in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. The purpose of this study is to identify the forms of practice and understanding related to the acceptance of mah}abbah among Wetu Telu adherents and to explore the arguments supporting this acceptance. The research questions addressed in this study include: What is the general meaning of mah}abbah in the Qur'an? How do Wetu Telu Muslims in Bayan Village celebrate the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (Prophet's Birthday)? What are the patterns of acceptance and the goals of Wetu Telu adherents in interpreting mah}abbah based on Surah Ali 'Imran, verse 31? This study employs a qualitative descriptive method. The qualitative approach involves gathering information in a natural setting using scientific methods. Meanwhile, the descriptive method seeks to describe a specific object or historical event, followed by an effort to draw general conclusions based on historical facts-one of which is conducted through interviews. The findings of this study indicate that the reception of mah}abbah among Wetu Telu adherents, as reflected in Surah Ali 'Imran verse 31, manifests in a different form of love compared to mainstream Muslims in its application. Wetu Telu adherents integrate local cultural traditions and perform rituals in their religious activities. In applying the theoretical framework of this study, the encoding process refers to Sunan Prapen, who introduced*

*the Qur'an to Wetu Telu followers through Sufi mystical teachings. As a result, cultural syncretism remains prevalent among its adherents today. Meanwhile, the decoding or reception pattern of mah}abbah varies: a small portion of adherents accept the meaning of the Qur'anic text in its entirety, known as hegemonic dominance, while the majority contextualise the text, a process referred to as negotiation.*

Kata Kunci	Abstrak
<p><i>Bayan, WetuTelu, Praktik, dan Resepsi</i></p>	<p><i>Wetu Telu adalah sistem kepercayaan dan praktik keagamaan yang masih dianut oleh beberapa Muslim Sasak di Lombok, Nusa Tenggara Barat. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi bentuk-bentuk praktik dan pemahaman tentang pola penerimaan mah}abbah yang terjadi di Lombok dan untuk mengeksplorasi argumen di balik penerimaan mah}abbah di kalangan penganut Wetu Telu. Pertanyaan penelitian dalam penelitian ini meliputi: Apa arti umum mah}abbah dalam Al-Qur'an, Bagaimana Muslim Wetu Telu di Desa Bayan merayakan hari lahir Nabi Muhammad (Maulid Nabi), dan Bagaimana pola penerimaan dan tujuan penganut Wetu Telu dalam menafsirkan mah}abbah berdasarkan Surah Ali 'Imran ayat 31? Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Pendekatan kualitatif melibatkan pengumpulan informasi dalam lingkungan alami menggunakan metode ilmiah. Sementara itu, metode deskriptif berupaya menggambarkan objek atau peristiwa sejarah tertentu, diikuti dengan upaya menarik kesimpulan umum berdasarkan fakta sejarah yang salah satunya dilakukan melalui wawancara. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa penerimaan mah}abbah di antara penganut Wetu Telu, seperti yang tercermin dalam Surah Ali 'Imran ayat 31, terwujud dalam bentuk cinta yang berbeda dibandingkan dengan Muslim arus utama dalam penerapannya. Penganut Wetu Telu mengintegrasikan tradisi budaya lokal dan melakukan ritual dalam kegiatan keagamaan mereka. Dalam menerapkan kerangka teoritis penelitian ini, proses pengkodean mengacu pada Sunan Prapen, yang memperkenalkan Al-Qur'an kepada pengikut Wetu Telu melalui ajaran mistik Sufi. Akibatnya,</i></p>

*sinkretisme budaya tetap lazim di antara para penganutnya saat ini. Sementara itu, pola decoding atau penerimaan mahjabbah bervariasi: sebagian kecil penganut menerima makna teks Al-Qur'an secara keseluruhan, yang dikenal sebagai dominasi hegemonik, sementara mayoritas mengkontekstualisasikan teks, sebuah proses yang disebut sebagai negosiasi.*

## Introduction

Wetu Telu, also known as IWT (Islam Wetu Telu), represents a form of local Islam that has maintained its authenticity and integrity since the arrival of Islam on the island of Lombok, along with the missionaries who taught the Qur'an and Hadith. The introduction of these teachings has not been without challenges, including obstacles, slurs, and accusations of heresy. There are also concerns about syncretism, which some view as incomplete or deviant. These issues are often associated with Islamic groups that consider themselves more orthodox or correct, commonly referred to as Islam Time Five.

<sup>1</sup> Although the IWT population, which identifies as the Sasak Muslim group, claims to be Muslim, they continue to worship ancestral spirits and various deities that they still believe in. This practice significantly differs from the worship conducted by the broader Muslim community. IWT adherents maintain a strong connection to their ancestral traditions, making it unsurprising that adat (customary law) plays a prominent and influential role in their daily lives. Furthermore, they incorporate adat into their religious rituals, resulting in a blurred distinction between adat, religion, and tradition in the application of Islamic teachings among the IWT population. The influence of animism and Hindu beliefs remains deeply ingrained, preventing them from fully comprehending the teachings of Islam.

Wetu Telu is a model that describes local elements in specific areas that are challenging to adapt to the broader Islamic framework. Within the teachings of Wetu Telu, there are Islamic nuances; however, their expression is more significant within the context of local customs. This blending of religious practices with local traditions creates a unique syncretism in Wetu Telu. Like the broader Muslim community, the Wetu Telu community in Bayan also observes Islamic holidays. The primary distinction between the two lies in the nature of the ceremonies and the timing of their observance. While Muslims generally adhere to the schedules set by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Wetu Telu community employs their own naptu (traditional calculations) to determine the appropriate dates for their commemorations. Some of their practices include celebrating holidays such as the Maulid of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Maleman Qunut, Maleman Likuran, Maleman Pitrah, Lebaran Tinggi, Lebaran Topat, and Lebaran Pendek.

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<sup>1</sup> Fawaizul Umam et al, *Building Resistance, Caring for Tradition: Social Capital of the Wetu Telu Community* (Mataram: Institute for the Study of Islam and Society, 2006), 5.

These activities are accompanied by specific rituals that reflect the teachings of their ancestors and are deeply intertwined with local customs.<sup>2</sup> The most memorable of these practices is the ritual observed during the Maulid of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). This has led to numerous conflicts, particularly in terms of ethical violations and breaches of customs, especially from an Islamic perspective.<sup>3</sup> Syukron, as an academic and cultural researcher, has consistently expressed the same viewpoint up to the present time.<sup>4</sup> The practices will be discussed in detail during the next discussion.<sup>5</sup>

The mindset held by Wetu Telu adherents suggests that they interpret Surah Al-Imran, verse 31, as evidence of their mah}abbah (love) for Allah SWT. This is demonstrated by their integration of cultural rituals into various activities. For example, the celebration of the Prophet's Maulid is regarded as a significant occasion that expresses gratitude, love, and obedience of Muslims towards the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), as mentioned by Allah SWT:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

"Say: "Obey God and His Apostle"; but if they turn back God loveth not those who reject Faith."<sup>6</sup>

Islam Wetu Telu (IWT) practices the teachings of Islam in a manner distinct from mainstream Muslims. However, they assert that this approach is a demonstration of their love (mah}abbah) for Allah and His Messenger, which is evident in their rituals, one of which is the celebration of the Prophet's Maulid.

<sup>7</sup>Similarly, as stated by the traditional leader, Raden Gedarif, this implementation is indeed different from usual because there are teachings from our ancestors that must be upheld at all times. <sup>8</sup>The implementation occurs in the month of Rabi'ul Awal, during which Muslim communities typically engage in recitation. However, the practices associated with the celebration of the Prophet's Maulid in Bayan Village differ from the various rituals mentioned above. This celebration takes place in the Karang Bajo Traditional House and the Bayan Ancient Mosque. The attire worn during this event also varies. Men are required to cover themselves from below the navel to the ankles with cloth and a sapuk (headband), while women must cover their chests down to their ankles.<sup>9</sup>

Individuals from various villages are invited to attend and witness the traditional Maulid ceremony of the Prophet, celebrated by the Sasak Tribe in Bayan Village. This event is open to the general public and participants are encouraged to wear traditional clothing crafted by the Bayan community. The ceremony lasts for two days. The adherents remain steadfast in their beliefs and

<sup>2</sup> Erni Budiwanti, *Sasak Islam: Wetu Telu Versus Waktu Lima* (Yogyakarta: Lkis, 2013) 156.

<sup>3</sup> Ustadz Najmuddin, Religious Leader, *Interview*, Bayan, 17 February 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Syukron, Academic and Researcher, *Interview*, Jerowaru, 17 February 2025.

<sup>5</sup> Muhammad Harfin Zuhdi, "Wetu Telu Islam in Bayan Lombok: The Dialectics of Islam and Local Culture," *Journal of Religia* 12, no. 1 (April 2009): 10.

<sup>6</sup> QS. Ali-Imran [3]: 31.

<sup>7</sup> Nikrana, Customary Councilor, *Interview*, Bayan, 31 October 2020 and 17 February 2025.

<sup>8</sup> Raden Gedarip, traditional leader, *Interview*, Bayan, 18 September 2024.

<sup>9</sup> Irman, *Wetu Telu* layperson, *Interview*, Bayan, 31 October 2020.

do not entertain opinions outside their community, as they value the ancestral connections and kinship among fellow believers. This commitment reflects their understanding of how to express their love for Allah and His Messenger.

They also continue to uphold the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah, as passed down by their ancestors.<sup>10</sup> From the explanation above, it is evident that the IWT community holds a deep respect and love (mah}abbah) for Allah (SWT). However, the expression of their love differs from that of mainstream Islam. This divergence arises from their adherence to the teachings of their ancestors, which have remained intertwined with their cultural heritage over generations. Consequently, Islamic Time Five observes the unique practices of the IWT community.

In applying the theory to this study, the encoding process occurred when Sunan Prapen taught the Qur'an to the Wetu Telu adherents using a mystical Sufi approach, resulting in a cultural blend that persists to this day. Meanwhile, the decoding process, or the pattern of reception of their mah}abbah, is divided into two groups: a small portion accepts the meaning of the Qur'anic text in its entirety, referred to as dominant hegemony, while the majority contextualizes the text, which is categorized as negotiation.<sup>11</sup>

## Method

This research employs descriptive qualitative methods. Qualitative methods involve the systematic collection of information about natural phenomena using scientific approaches. In contrast, the descriptive method is a technique that outlines specific historical objects or events, followed by an effort to draw universal conclusions based on these historical facts.<sup>12</sup>

The research method employed in this study is observation, which aims to systematically interview participants. This study focuses on interpreting the concept of mah}abbah in Surah Ali-Imran among the Wetu Telu adherents in Bayan Village, North Lombok Regency.

The data sources in this study are categorized into two types: primary data and secondary data.

- a. Primary data is the primary source of information required by the author when seeking field data. In this research, the primary data consists of interviews conducted with informants who are adherents of Wetu.
- b. Meanwhile, secondary data serves as an additional resource that supports the author's analysis in the thesis research. In this study, the secondary data consists of literature that discusses mah}abbah in both Islam and Sasak culture.

## What is the Meaning of Mah}abbah in General in the Qur'an

Etymologically, mah}abbah can be interpreted in the Qur'an as meaning The word is derived from the Arabic word ah}abba-yuh}ibbi-mah}abbatan, the meaning of which signifies

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<sup>10</sup> Umam et al., *Building Resistance, Caring for Tradition: Social Capital of the Wetu Telu Community*, 173.

<sup>11</sup> Muhammad Ahyar, Changes in Wetu Telu Islamic Society in West Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara (Yogyakarta: UGM, 1999), 49. Lalu Habiburrahman, "An Analysis of the Meaning of Islamic Education in the High Eid Customary Ritual of the Wetu Telu Customary Community in Bayan, North Lombok", *JISIP*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2022, 1-10.

<sup>12</sup> Hadari Nawawi and Mimi Martini, *Applied Research* (Yogyakarta: Gajah Mada University Press, 1994), 73.

love, deep affection, or profound love.<sup>13</sup> Shaliba has explained in *mu'jamal-Falsafi* that *mah}abbah* is the antonym of the word *al-Baghd* (hate).<sup>14</sup> *Mah}abbah* can also be interpreted as *al-wadud*, which means loving and compassionate.<sup>15</sup> Another opinion suggests that *mah}abbah* is a masdar (verbal noun in Arabic) derived from a word that encompasses three meanings simultaneously: a) the seed of something from which it originates, b) something that is essential and fixed, and c) the nature of limitations.<sup>16</sup>

The first meaning refers to the understanding that seeds are the foundation of life for plants. Plants thrive due to the care of their nurturers. This is analogous to how individuals must cultivate their love for God and engage in good deeds. The second meaning, when connected to love, suggests that familiarity with something fosters closeness, which serves as the starting point for love. The third meaning highlights that humans, as the agents of love, face limitations in attaining what they cherish, necessitating support and encouragement from the true source of love, Allah S.W.T.

*Mah}abbah* (love) is the inclination of the heart toward something pleasurable. As this inclination intensifies, *mah}abbah* evolves into *'isyq* (preoccupation). Al-Muhasibi explains that the complete inclination of the heart toward something, to the extent that one's focus on it surpasses that of wealth, soul, and self. Acceptance, both outwardly and inwardly, reflects the attitude of the self, encompassing its prohibitions and commands, as well as the self's perception of the inadequacy of the love it receives.

According to Al-Hujwairi, love (*mah}abbah*) is derived from the word *al-h}ibbah*, like a seed or seedling that falls into an ocean of sand. Love is likened to the essence of life, just as seeds are the origin of plants. Some Arabic linguists contend that *mah}abbah* is taken from the term *al-h}ubb*, which signifies a place filled with calm water, representing love that resides in the heart, where all thoughts revolve around the beloved. Ash-Shibli posits that thinks about is the person who is loved. Ash-Shibli argues that *mah}abbah* erases everything in the heart except for the beloved. Other linguists suggest that *mah}abbah* is derived from the word *al-h}abab*, meaning the bubbles that form when it rains. *Mah}abbah* is understood as the outpouring of a person's heart, who longs to be united with their beloved, reflecting the union of spirit and body. Love is the lifeblood of the heart, as a lover thrives in the presence of the beloved.<sup>17</sup>

Harun Nasution defines *mah}abbah* in three ways: 1) obeying God and refraining from associating partners with Him, 2) submitting oneself to the beloved, and 3) clearing the heart of all distractions except for the beloved, which is God.<sup>18</sup> Based on the perspectives of Harun Nasution and various linguists, it can be concluded that *mah}abbah* or love, involves fulfilling all that is commanded by Allah and refraining from all that is forbidden by Him. This is guided by the

<sup>13</sup> Mahmud Yunus, *Arabic-Indonesian Dictionary* (Jakarta: Hidakarya Agung, 1990), 96.

<sup>14</sup> Jamil Shaliba, *Mu'jam Al-Falsafi*, Volume II (Egypt: Dar Al-Kairo, 1978), 439.

<sup>15</sup> Shaliba, 439.

<sup>16</sup> Abi Husain Ahmad ibn Faris ibn Zakariya, *Mu'jam Al-Maqayis Al-Lughah* (Beirut: Dar Al-Fikr, 1991), 249.

<sup>17</sup> Abul Qasim Abdul Karim Hawazin al-Qusyairi An-Naisaburi, *Risalah Qusyairiyah: A Source for the Study of Tasawwuf*, ed: Umar Faruq (Jakarta: Pustaka Amani, 1998), 477-78.

<sup>18</sup> Harun Nasution, *Philosophy and Mysticism in Islam* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1983), 70.

teachings of the Rosulullah, with a full awareness that it represents a form of love for Allah, as referenced in Q.S. Ali Imran, verses 31-32:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ

31. Say: "If ye do love God follow me: God will love you and forgive you your sins for God is Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful."<sup>19</sup>

32. Say: "Obey God and His Apostle"; but if they turn back God loveth not those who reject Faith.<sup>20</sup>

The meaning of love is often debated. It may be that love can only be recognized through the psychological signs, traits, attitudes, and effects it produces in the individual experiencing it. Love serves as the foundation and guiding principle in the journey toward Allah. All the states and stages that the traveler encounters are manifestations of love for Him, and while all other states (maqam) may fade, love remains indestructible. It cannot vanish under any circumstances as long as its path toward Allah is consistently planned and directed.<sup>21</sup>

Love for anyone is multifaceted and varies greatly. There is a type of love that is instantaneous and intense, while the opposite can be slow and gradual. Additionally, there exists a love that is quick yet enduring, or conversely, one that is slow but profound. The most fulfilling love is one that is both rapid and lasting. Various levels of love can immerse the lover so deeply that they become mesmerized, often losing awareness of their surroundings, as all they perceive is their beloved. Conversely, some love is superficial and may wither under the pressure of seduction or other temptations. Love is often measured by the intertwining of two different interests. In such moments, the object of affection may shift depending on the interests at play and the choices made by the individuals involved. Reason: Improved vocabulary, clarity, and technical accuracy while maintaining the original meaning.<sup>22</sup>

Love for Allah and love for His Apostle cannot be compared to the love of the world and all its splendor. One can certainly obey Allah and love Him while simultaneously striving to attain as much worldly success as possible, as the desire for these things is a natural human instinct. The mufasssirun of the Qur'an and Sunnah explain that the love or mahjabbah of the Creator for His servant encompasses the essence of loving Allah as the bestower of His benevolence and grace. His grace is infinite; therefore, His bounty is also limitless.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>19</sup>Q.S. Ali 'Imran [3]: 31.

<sup>20</sup>Q.S. Ali 'Imran [3]: 32.

<sup>21</sup>M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah: Message, Impression, and Concordance of the Qur'an*, vol. 2 (Tangerang: Lentera Hati, 2005), 71.

<sup>22</sup> Shihab, 2:71.

<sup>23</sup>Shihab, 2:71-72.

In mu'jam al-mufahras by Muhammad Fuad Abdul Baqi, it is explained that there are 83 instances of the term which means love, including the following<sup>24</sup>

1. **أَحَبَّ** is Found in two verses, specifically Al-Qashash verse 56 and Shad verse 32.
2. **حَبَّ** is deepest in Surah al-Hujurat verse 7, namely:
3. **أَحَبَّ** is found in Surah al-An'am verse 76, namely:
4. **أَتَحَبَّوْا** is found in Surah al-Baqarah verse 216, namely:
5. **أَتَحَبَّوْنَ** there are 7 verses namely: Surah an-Nur verse 22, Al-'Imran verses 31, 92, 152, al-Qiyamah verse 20, al-A'raf verse 79, and al-fajr verse 20.
6. **أَتَحَبَّوْنَهَا** is found in Surah Ash-Shaff verse 13, namely:
7. **أَتَحَبَّوْنَهُمْ** is found in Surah Ali-'Imran verse 119, namely:
8. **يُحِبُّ** is found in 41, namely surah at-Taubah verses 4, 7, 108, surah al-Anfal verse 58, surah al-A'raf verses 31, 55, surah al-An'am verse 141, surah al-Ma'idah verses 13, 42, 64, 87, 93, surah an-Nisa' verses 36, 107, 148, surah ali-'Imran verses 32, 57, 76, 134, 140, 146, 148, 159, surah al-Baqarah verse 190, 195, 205, 222, 222, 76, surah ash-Shaf verse 4, surah al-Mumtahanah verse 8, surah al-Hadid verse 23, surah al-Hujurat verses 9, 12, surah ash-Shu'ara' verse 40, surah Luqman verse 18, surah ar-Rum verse 45, surah al-Qashash verses 76, 77, surah al-Haj verse 38, and surah an-Nahl verse 23.
9. **يُحِبُّكُمْ** is found in Surah Ali-'Imran verse 31.
10. **يُحِبُّهُمْ** is found in Surah al-Ma'idah verse 54.
11. **يُحِبُّوْنَ** there are 5 verses, namely in Surah al-Insan verse 27, Surah al-Hasyr verse 9, Surah an-Nur verse 19, Surah at-Taubah (9) verse 108, and Surah al-'Imran verse 188.
12. **يُحِبُّوْنَكُمْ** is found in Surah Ali-'Imran verse 119.
13. **يُحِبُّوْنَهُمْ** is found in Surah al-Baqarah verse 165.
14. **يُحِبُّوْنَهُ** is found in Surah al-Ma'idah verse 54.
15. **أَسْتَحَبُّوْا** is found in 3 verses, namely in Surah Fushilat verse 17, Surah an-Nahl verse 107, and Surah at-Taubah verse 23.
16. **يُسْتَحَبُّوْنَ** is found in Surah Ibrahim verse 3.
17. **حَبَّ** is found in 4 verses, namely in Surah al-'Adiyat verse 8, Surah Shad verse 32, Surah ali-'Imran verse 14, and Surah al-Baqarah verse 165.
18. **حَبَا** there are 3 verses, namely in Surah al-Fajr verse 20, Surah Yusuf verse 30, and Surah al-Baqarah verse 165.
19. **حَبَّهُ** is found in 2 verses, namely in Surah al-Insan verse 8 and Surah al-Baqarah verse 177.
20. **أَحَبَّ** is found in 3 verses, namely in Surah Yusuf verses 8, 33, and Surah at-Taubah verse 24.
21. **أَحْبَاؤُهُ** is found in Surah al-Ma'idah verse 18.
22. **مَحَبَّةٌ** is found in Surah Thaha verse 39.

### Adherents of Wetu Telu Islam in Bayan Village Organize the Prophet Muhammad's Maulid

Both the Waktu Lima and Wetu Telu groups in Bayan commemorate Maulid during the month of Rabi'ul Awal. However, each group focuses on different figures as the central subject of

<sup>24</sup>Muhammad Fuad Abdul Baqi, *Al Mu'jam Al Mufahras Li Al Faz Al Qur'an Al Karim Bi Hashiyah Al Mus'haf Al Sharif* (Beirut: Dar Al-Ma'rifat, Tt), 191-93.



their commemoration. The Waktu Lima group celebrates the Prophet's birthday to honor not only the birth and death of the Prophet Muhammad but also his prophethood and, most importantly, the messages and teachings he imparted to all of humanity. In this context, attending the Tuan Guru's lectures organized at the mosque has become a staple activity for the Waktu Lima group. These lectures are designed to reinforce the teachings of Islam.

Recognition as a follower of the Prophet Muhammad, according to the Time Five group, is the primary purpose of the commemoration. This understanding compels Muslims to act in accordance with his teachings, as outlined in the Qur'an and hadith, and to preserve and disseminate his teachings through da'wah. Therefore, the annual recitation during this occasion serves as an exercise of that duty.

Erni Budiwanti explains that the Waktu Lima migrants residing in various hamlets in Bayan organize their own celebrations at different times during the month of Rabi'ul Awal. This arrangement allows them to invite one another. Most of them utilize their local mosques and invite prominent religious figures (Tuan Guru) from their villages to lead recitations. For instance, Ustadz Najam invited TGH Safwan, the leader of Pesantren Nurul Hakim in Kediri, West Lombok, to give a recitation at the Babul Mujahidin Mosque in East Bayan, encouraging the Wetu Telu community to attend and listen to the authentic message of Islam.<sup>25</sup> In this instance, Raden Gedarip, as a traditional leader of the Wetu Telu people, was invited to participate in the general Prophet's Maulid activities at the large mosque in Bayan. Gedarip holds great appreciation and respect for the teachings delivered by the master teachers; however, this does not alter his commitment to following the traditional Maulid process.

He believes that the traditional Maulid procession is an integral part of his ancestral heritage and must be preserved.<sup>26</sup> Orthodox Muslim migrants residing in the hamlet of Lokok Aur typically invite TGH Helmi, the leader of the pesantren Maraqitta'imat Mamben in East Lombok.

In contrast to IWT, the Bayan people celebrate Maulid to commemorate the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), intertwining this observance with adat as a connection to their ancestors. By celebrating this union, the Bayan people signify the procreation and dispersal of humanity across the earth. The Praja Maulid procession to the ancient mosque serves as the central event of this ceremony. Two men, dressed in traditional wedding attire, represent the married couple Adam and Eve. While Maulid is celebrated in the ancient mosque, it also serves as a justification for excluding women. Women are not permitted to enter the ancient mosque due to the belief that their menstrual blood would pollute the sacred space.

The Bayan Wetu Telu people celebrate the Prophet's birthday in the ancient mosque and in each village. Women from the villages of Penghulu, East Bayan, West Bayan, Lebai, and Bale Ketip prepare food several days in advance of the celebration. Dressed in traditional attire, including

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<sup>25</sup> Ustadz Najmuddin, Religious Leader, *Interview*, Bayan, 17 February 2021.

<sup>26</sup> Raden Gedarip, traditional leader, *Interview*, Bayan, 18 September 2024.

kereng (sarong) and kemben, they pound sticky rice in long, narrow wooden mortars using bamboo pounders. The full ceremonial rice pounding takes place in Karang Bajo, where women don complete traditional dress, including jong (headdress), kereng (sarong), and kemben (a short batik sarong that covers the upper body from the chest to the waist). The women carry both rice and glutinous rice, while the leader (inan menik) sits by the mortar and offers a prayer before they begin pounding.

On ritual anniversaries, the Bayan people typically prefer to pound rice instead of grinding it in a milling machine. They make offerings using bulu rice (a local variety) rather than I.R. rice (the latest type introduced by the government). Paddy serves as the primary food, while sticky rice is used for preparing sweet dishes.

The day before the event, everyone in the gubug (village) participates in a ritual called mengosap, which involves cleaning the ancestral cemetery complex and placing offerings, such as lekesan and water vessels, overnight to be blessed by the ancestors. The kyai leads this ceremony with the assistance of guides from each gubug. On that day, some residents of Karang Bajo collected the gamelan (a traditional musical ensemble consisting of a gerantung, gamelan, and gong) from the men of West Bayan village, who were also waiting for the arrival of the Karang Bajo men. While waiting, they played the instruments. Upon their arrival in West Bayan village, a brief ceremony was held to officially hand over the gamelan to Karang Bajo. The men played the gamelan on their journey back to Karang Bajo.

Once there, they play the gamelan on the berugak, where the Pemangku Karang Bajo is waiting to bless the instruments by applying sembek. Afterwards, some of the men play the gamelan again to announce to the rest of the gubug that the Maulid ceremony has begun.

The climax of the event occurs the following day when each hut slaughters cows, goats, chickens, and poultry for the feast. Some villagers sacrifice these animals to fulfill their wishes. While the villagers from each gubug prepare the food (ancak and sampak), two men are dressed by the Bayan Chancellor as Adam and Eve. These men are from East Bayan but are made up in West Bayan village. A procession of men playing gamelan from Karang Bajo village marches to West Bayan to pick up Praja Maulid, who is escorted by this musical group before departing for the ancient mosque.

The musicians do not enter the mosque but escort Praja Maulid to the front of it. The traditional maulid celebration must be attended by both traditional and religious leaders and is held in the courtyard and inside the ancient mosque<sup>27</sup> The main event of the traditional maulid celebration occurs when the leaders enter the mosque and perform a series of special rituals. Participation in the ritual is restricted to those with permission, and it is not common knowledge.<sup>28</sup> Afterward, they return to Karang Bajo. The Praja Maulid group, after washing their faces, hands, and feet, enters the ancient mosque.

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<sup>27</sup> Nikrana, Customary Counselor, *Interview*, Bayan, 31 October 2020.

<sup>28</sup> Raden Gedarif, Traditional Leader, *Interview*, Bayan, 18 September 2024.

All the Kyais who had been waiting for his arrival welcomed the Praja Maulid.<sup>29</sup> Then the Penghulu recited a prayer of salvation in Arabic, which was met with an "amen" from all the kyai. Afterwards, everyone gathered for a communal meal. As is customary, the Pembekal Adat of East Bayan stated the purpose of the ceremony before the meal began. This ceremony is called Pariapan Ancak Ngangkat Syare'at Maulid, which literally translates to "eating ancak together to celebrate Maulid. The ritual dish, ancak, sent by each village, symbolizes a hut. The communal meal also takes place at Bayan Beleg, where the ceremony is referred to as Pariapan Praja Maulid, a gathering to welcome Praja Maulid. Erni explains in her book that only Kyai Kagungan, Pemangku, and Toaq Lokaq from West Bayan and Peggantal Bayan participate in this ritual meal. Following the ritual meal in West Bayan, the tradition continues in other locations.<sup>30</sup>

The Maulid celebration in Karang Bajo is characterized by the rituals of uttering wishes (sesangi) and fulfilling wishes (saur sesangi), both of which take place before the communal meal. During the ceremony, participants sit cross-legged on the berugak, while the Karang Bajo Stakeholder articulates the purpose of the event and announces the names of individuals who wish to convey or fulfill their sesangi. One by one, these individuals squat on the ground to express their wishes. A bamboo fence separates the participants seated on the berugak from those expressing or fulfilling their wishes. Once all wishes have been articulated, the communal meal on the berugak commences. Attendees of the ceremony, including Kyai Kagungan, several Kyai santri Pembekal, Toaq Lokaq, and Pemangku Karang Bajo, sit cross-legged in a rectangular formation facing one another. Sampak, the main dish of the ritual, is placed at the center of the group. The Penghulu prayer, recited before and after the meal, aims to ensure the safety of the entire community. After the ritual meal, a set of lekesan, placed in a small bamboo container, is circulated among the participants, marking the conclusion of the communal meal.

The application of menyembek, or sembek, to the foreheads of all participants in the celebration of the Prophet's birthday signifies the conclusion of the ceremonial activities. The Maulid celebration is further enlivened by an evening of gamelan music and rattan stick fighting (peresian) performed by young men from various backgrounds outside the ancient mosque. Spectators from outside Lombok also join in the peresean festivities. The exterior of the mosque is adorned with flags, while the interior is decorated with vibrant banners.

Although IWT Bayan and Waktu Lima both celebrate Maulid, they focus on different figures as the central theme of the celebration. For the first group, the veneration of Adam and Eve is at the heart of the observance, despite these figures being recognized as the first ancestors alongside others who passed away a century ago. Consequently, while the celebration coincides with the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, it is fundamentally an act of ancestor worship. In the perspective of Waktu Lima, this represents a distortion of the true religious significance of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Usually the *Maulid Praja* is a descendant of a prominent figure in the *Wetu Telu* faith.

<sup>30</sup> Budiwanti, *Sasak Islam: Wetu Telu Versus Waktu Lima*, 180.

<sup>31</sup> Nikrana, Customary Councilor, *Interview*, Bayan, 31 October 2020 and 18 September 2024

## Wetu Telu Adherents: Reception and Interpretation of the Concept of Mah}abbah from Surah Ali 'Imran, Verse 31

Verse Editorial

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

31. Say: "If ye do love God follow me: God will love you and forgive you your sins for God is Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful."<sup>32</sup>

Interpretation

It is reported that this verse was revealed in response to a Christian delegation from Najran, who stated that their veneration of 'Isa (peace be upon him) was a manifestation of their love for Allah. Another narration indicates that this verse was also revealed in response to Muslims who claimed to have affection for Allah.

great Prophet Muhammad, say to those who wish to love Allah, 'If you love Allah, follow me.' This means carrying out everything that Allah reveals through me, believing in Allah Almighty, and fearing Him. If you do this, you will have entered the gateway to achieving the love of Allah. Furthermore, if you maintain your obedience to Him and increase your practice of obligations by following the Sunnahs taught by the Prophet, 'of course, Allah will love you and forgive your sins.' This is because 'Allah is the Most Forgiving' to those who emulate the Messenger, and Allah is, indeed, 'The Most Merciful.'

Indeed, imitating the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) in all obligatory matters leads one to the gate of love, or mah}abbah, for Allah. Even if this imitation is minimal, it can still be considered a form of love, marking the first step toward deeper affection. It is narrated in a tradition from Imam Bukhari, through Abu Hurairah, that Allah (SWT) has said: is hostile to My wali, I have declared war on him. It is not for a servant to draw near to Me with anything more beloved to Me than fulfilling what I have enjoined. One who strives to draw near to Me through the practices of the Apostle, in conclusion, I love him. If I love him, I become his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his hand with which he acts, and his foot with which he walks. If he asks Me, I will grant him, and if he seeks protection, I will protect him" (HR Bukhari).

Following the example of the Prophet is essential. This includes adhering to obligatory practices, observing the sunnah muakkadah, and following other sunnahs, even if they are not classified as muakkadah. It also encompasses emulating his customs and daily habits, regardless of whether they are explicitly religious teachings. While the choice of footwear style and color may not be part of religious doctrine, if such choices are made out of love and a desire to emulate the Prophet, then Allah will not let those who love His Prophet go unfulfilled.

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<sup>32</sup> Q.S. Ali 'Imran [3]: 31.

A believer's love for Allah, peace and blessings be upon Him, is a quality that manifests through obedience, honor, and respect. This love elevates Allah above all else in the believer's life. When a believer fails to fulfill His will, they may feel restless and impatient, unable to find peace in the company of others. However, in moments of remembrance (dhikr), the believer focuses solely on Allah, reflecting on His greatness and beauty, which brings the highest form of pleasure.

Al-Qusyairi described man's love for Allah, or mah}abbah, as "giving preference to a beloved over a friend." In this context, prioritizing the pleasure of the beloved refers to Allah (SWT) rather than one's own ego interests, especially if those interests conflict with the requirements of Allah. you love Allah, then follow anything from me; surely Allah will love you" (QS. Al-'Imran, verse 31).

Man's love for Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, is a quality that manifests in the believer to the extent that he obeys Him, honours Him and respects Him, and in this way he gives importance to Him apart from Him. He becomes restless and impatient if he does not fulfil His will, he cannot be calm with others but when he is with Him, he does not mention others but remembers Him, and the peak of coveted pleasure is at the time of mention (dhikr) while looking at His greatness and beauty.

Al-Qusyairi described man's love for Allah, or mah}abbah, as "giving preference to a beloved over a friend." In this context, prioritizing the pleasure of the beloved refers to Allah (SWT) rather than one's own ego interests, especially if those interests conflict with the requirements of Allah. you love Allah, then follow anything from me; surely Allah will love you" (QS. Al-'Imran, verse 31).<sup>33</sup>

#### Verse Reception Pattern

Despite the numerous attributes assigned by Islam Waktu Lima to characterize the Wetu Telu religion, the Bayan people hold distinct views regarding their beliefs and practices. The Bayan natives perceive the world and their cosmology from a perspective that differs from that of Islam Waktu Lima.

#### Dominant Hegemony

There are several informants who provide a textualist interpretation of the reception of the Qur'an in Bayan. These informants revealed that the text is clear in its directive to always adhere to the teachings of Allah and His Messenger, without the need for a combination of cultural or social influences. This is because the teachings established in Islamic shari'a are absolute and cannot be altered for any reason.<sup>34</sup> To this day, the interviewees remain steadfast in their statements.<sup>35</sup> It is a very interesting finding that the Bayan community possesses a textualist understanding. The pattern of reception characterized by this tone is classified as part of the

<sup>33</sup> Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah: Message, Impression, and Harmony of the Qur'an*, 2:69–70.

<sup>34</sup> Yuli, Novi, Mrs Aminah, Fitriani, and Mrs Yuli, Commoners of Wetu Telu, *Interview*, Bayan, 12 February 2021.

<sup>35</sup> Yuli, Novi, Mrs Aminah, Fitriani, and Mrs Yuli, Commoners of Wetu Telu, 18 September 2024.

dominant hegemony pattern. This indicates that the readers of the Qur'anic text, or the informants, fully accept the narrative presented in the text.

#### Negotiatio

In the reception pattern of the verse mentioned above, which is observed among Wetu Telu adherents in Bayan, several informants have shared their insights. Nikrana, the spokesperson for the traditional suppliers representing the adherents, articulated the concept of mah}abbah, stating, "mah}abbah sak te means that we love Allah Ta'ala in accordance with the teachings of Islam. the culture and customs of our ancestors, allowing them to witness our past activities. He explained that te petelangan or telestarian that our mah}abbah aligns with the general teachings of Islam; however, it is essential to incorporate cultural elements into our activities and ancestral rituals. This integration ensures that we honor what we have today and preserve the lessons of previous generations.<sup>36</sup> The reception pattern observed among Wetu Telu adherents is characterized as a negotiation reception pattern. This means that they interpret the Qur'anic texts through the lens of their historical knowledge and their current cultural, social, and religious contexts.

For Wetu Telu adherents, the concept of mah}abbah, as understood from the Qur'anic text, represents their love for Allah, which is demonstrated through actions that align with the general teachings of Islam. This understanding is inseparable from the cultural teachings passed down by their ancestors. Consequently, they emphasize the influence of ancestral spirits to harmonize their lives with God, fostering a peaceful existence while preserving their traditional culture to prevent its erosion. This approach is evident in all their religious practices.

According to informants, this culture serves as a means for Wetu Telu adherents to express their love for God and receive His love in return. In addition to acknowledging mah}abbah (love) towards Allah, they also believe in Adam and Eve as the first humans, from whom all of humanity has descended.

According to them, every religious activity conducted by IWT is inseparable from the Qur'an and hadith.<sup>37</sup> This is certainly not contrary to Shari'a; it simply involves the addition of a customary ritual that cannot be separated under any circumstances from their ancestral traditions.<sup>38</sup> Even in 2024, there was no statement issued by the traditional leaders during the Maulid event that deviated from their usual practices.<sup>39</sup> Raden Gedarip also revealed that every religious activity conducted in Desan Bayan for Wetu Telu adherents is rooted in their love, or mah}abbah, for Allah and His Messenger, as well as their commitment to following His teachings.

Mah}abbah can be interpreted in the Qur'an as meaning love. The word has its roots in the Arabic verb ahabba-yuhibbi-mahabbatan, which encompasses various meanings, including fondness, deep affection, and profound love. Mah}abbah (love) represents the inclination of the

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<sup>36</sup> Nikrana, Customary Councilor, *Interview*, Bayan, 31 October 2020 and 18 September 2024.

<sup>37</sup> Raden Pala, Religious Leader, *Interview*, Bayan, 15 February 2021.

<sup>38</sup> Nikrana, Customary Counselor, *Interview*, Bayan, 31 October 2020.

<sup>39</sup> Raden Gedarip, Traditional Leader, *Interview*, Bayan, 18 September 2024.

heart toward something pleasurable. As this inclination intensifies, mah}abbah evolves into 'isyq (preoccupation). Mah}abbah signifies a complete devotion of the heart toward an object of affection, to the extent that one's attention to it surpasses that given to wealth, soul, and self. Acceptance, both outwardly and inwardly, reflects the attitude of the self, encompassing its prohibitions and commands, as well as the self's response to the lesser love bestowed upon Him (Allah and the Messenger).

In the interpretation of the Qur'an, mah}abbah for the Messenger is categorized into levels. The first level involves adhering to obligatory practices, followed by the muakkadah sunnah practices, and then other sunnahs, even those that are not muakkadah. Following the Messenger extends to his customs and daily routines, even if they do not constitute religious teachings. For instance, choosing the style and color of footwear may not be part of religious doctrine; however, if such choices are made out of love and emulation of him, then Allah will not allow someone who loves the Prophet to go unrequited. Reason: Improved clarity, vocabulary, and technical accuracy while maintaining the original meaning.

The Wetu Telu Muslims in Bayan Village celebrate Maulid Nabi by holding traditional ceremonies that incorporate various local customs. They perform communal prayers, engage in dhikr, and recite the life history of the Prophet Muhammad, accompanied by unique rituals such as preparing traditional dishes and participating in social activities that involve the entire community. This celebration also serves as an opportunity to strengthen social bonds among villagers and express their love for the birth of the Prophet Muhammad.

## Conclusion

Mah}abbah can be interpreted in the Qur'an as meaning love. The word has its roots in the Arabic verb ahabba-yuhibbi-mahabbatan, which encompasses various meanings, including fondness, deep affection, and profound love. Mah}abbah (love) represents the inclination of the heart toward something pleasurable. As this inclination intensifies, mah}abbah evolves into 'isyq (preoccupation). Mah}abbah signifies a complete devotion of the heart toward an object of affection, to the extent that one's attention to it surpasses that given to wealth, soul, and self. Acceptance, both outwardly and inwardly, reflects the attitude of the self, encompassing its prohibitions and commands, as well as the self's response to the lesser love bestowed upon Allah and the Messenger.

In the interpretation of the Qur'an, mah}abbah for the Messenger is categorized into levels. The first level involves adhering to obligatory practices, followed by the muakkadah sunnah practices, and then other sunnahs, even if they are not muakkadah. This devotion extends to imitating the customs and daily routines of the Prophet, even when they do not constitute religious teachings. For instance, choosing the style and color of footwear may not be part of religious doctrine; however, if such choices are made out of love and emulation of the Prophet, then Allah will not allow someone who loves the Prophet to go unreciprocated. Reason: Improved clarity, vocabulary, and technical accuracy while maintaining the original meaning.

The Wetu Telu Muslims in Bayan Village celebrate Maulid Nabi by holding traditional ceremonies that incorporate various local customs. They perform communal prayers, engage in dhikr, and recite the life history of the Prophet Muhammad, accompanied by unique rituals such as preparing traditional dishes and participating in social activities that involve the entire community. This celebration also serves as an opportunity to strengthen social bonds among villagers and express their love for the birth of the Prophet Muhammad.

Regarding the influence of prominent and well-known preachers on Wetu Telu adherents, Sunan Prapen and Lombok scholars have undertaken a process to alter the reception patterns adopted by the Wetu Telu community. They achieve this by interpreting the Qur'an and hadith through the lens of Sufi mysticism, a perspective that continues to resonate today among Wetu Telu adherents in Bayan, particularly in their understanding of the concept of mah}abbah as mentioned in Surah Ali 'Imran, verse 31.

Some members of this community align with a contextual interpretation, meaning they relate the verse to contemporary practices, acknowledging the strong cultural influences that permeate their religious observances. They interpret this as a reflection of their current understanding of mah}abbah. Conversely, there are those who believe that the mah}abbah described in the verse adheres strictly to Islamic law, devoid of any external influences. This divergence in interpretation illustrates the dominant hegemony of Bayan society over Wetu Telu adherents. Reason: Improved clarity, vocabulary, and technical accuracy while maintaining the original meaning.

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