

**SEMA’AN OF THE QUR’AN REBO WEKASAN IN JAVA: A STUDY OF THE LIVING QUR’AN**

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**Abstract:** The Rebo Wekasan celebration for the Indonesian Muslim community begins with information from parents from generation to generation, teachers to students, and elders to younger generations without mentioning a special event. This culture continues to be sustainable, especially in Javanese society, and Wonoayu Sidoajo is no exception in East Java. This celebration is carried out because of deep concern from the belief that Allah has sent down 320,000 disasters on the last Wednesday of the month of Safar in the Hijri year, called Rebo Wekasan. The ancient Jahiliyyah community, including the Arabs, often said the month of Safar was the month of Tasa’um or bad luck. Some
Muslims still believe this assumption today, including some Indonesians, especially the Javanese people. Based on this phenomenon, how can this tradition be preserved and commemorated, especially in Wonoayu? This question is the focus of attention in this research. This research is a living Qur’an study using a phenomenological and library research approach based on social phenomena in Wonoayu District, Sidoarjo. The results of this study indicate that in the Rebo Wekasan tradition, there is a living Qur’an phenomenon in the form of a practice carried out by carrying out the Sema’an of the Qur’an and reading surah Yasin 3 times with the hope that because of the blessings the community is safe from all kinds of diseases.

**Keywords:** Living Qur’an; Rebo Wekasan; Wonoayu

**Introduction**

The phenomenon of interaction or the model of “reading” of the Muslim community towards the Qur’an in social space is very dynamic and varied. As a form of sociocultural reception, the appreciation and response of Muslims towards the Qur’an is indeed very much influenced by their way of thinking, social cognition, and the context surrounding their lives. Various forms and models of community reception and response practices in treating and interacting with the Qur’an are called the living Qur’an (Qur’an that lives) amid people’s lives (Mustaqim, 2014). Moreover, one of the phenomena that need to be studied based on the theory of the living Qur’an is the tradition of Sema’an of the Qur’an on Rebo Wekasan night in Wonoayu sub-district, Sidoarjo district, East Java, Indonesia.

The term “Rebo Wekasan” in language comes from the words Rebo and Wekasan. The word Rebo signifies Wednesday, and Wekasan comes from pungkasan or pamungkas, which means “last”. So Rebo Wekasan is the Last Wednesday. However, as a standard term, it means the last Wednesday of the month of Safar, which is the 2nd of the 12th month of the Hijri calendar. Because of that, this tradition is very thick in Islam. Rebo Wekasan is a
tradition carried out as a form of gratitude to God while simultaneously asking God to be kept away from all disasters. The ancient Jahiliyah community, including the Arabs, often said that the month of Šafar was unlucky because it was believed that Allah sent down many calamities in the month of Šafar (Rohmah, 2014).

In this regard, because the month of Šafar is associated with the disaster, the Islamic community in Indonesia often associates this with mystical matters and catastrophes. That way, the Indonesian people finally held a custom or tradition from their ancestors when they arrived in the month of Šafar; the Javanese Muslims held various Islamic events to ward off disaster with Islamic activities such as Sema’an of the Qur’an every night of the month of Šafar starting from after Maghrib prayer. With the Sema’an of the Qur’an event, the community, especially the elders in villages throughout the Wonoayu Sub-District, believe they can drive away disaster in their village so that these activities occur from generation to generation. Their children and grandchildren passed down this tradition. Of course, each of us Javanese Muslims will welcome the month of Šafar differently from each other. Maybe some have the Yasinan tradition on Wekasan Wednesday; some hold prayers to reject reinforcements’, there are those who give alms, and there are also those who pray to Allah, and there are still those who carry out social activities reading the Qur’an together with each other’s Sema’ between each other. How does the Rebo Wekasan tradition in Wonoayu Sidorjo work, and how does it relate to the study of the living Qur’an? This research will focus on and specifically highlight the Rebo Wekasan tradition, which is filled by the Wonoayu people filled with the Sema’an of the Qur’an program (Husna et al., 2021; Miskiyah, 2022).

This research is library research using a qualitative-phenomenological method to study the Wonoayu people’s life experiences or how the Wonoayu people subjectively experience and give meaning to the phenomenon of Sema’an of the Qur’an at
the moment of Rebo Wekasan. The data sources used are from interviews, documentation, and data in the form of written materials published in journals, articles, dissertations, theses, books, magazines, and newspapers to website pages that are considered supportive and representative (Romziana & Sholeha, 2021). The location of this research was conducted in Wonoayu District, Sidoarjo, East Java, Indonesia, which is a location where the villagers carry out many religious activities.

Research on Rebo Wekasan is not the first time researchers have done it. Long before this research was conducted, researchers had found a similar theme; it is just that the unique value of this research is that the Rebo Wekasan tradition in Wonoayu, apart from the reception of the community, cannot be the same as that of outsiders. The content of its implementation is different from previous studies.

Previous research can be seen as researched by Umi Nuriyatur Rohmah, which was published in the Al-Bayan journal with the title “Penggunaan Ayat-Ayat Al-Qur’an dalam Ritual Rebo Wekasan Studi Living Qur’an di Desa Sukoreno Kec. Kalisat Kab. Jember”. The location of this research is in Jember and is filled by writing verses of the Qur’an on a white porcelain plate, then dipping it in water and drinking it, which is efficacious as a deterrent from the disasters that descend on that day. The local people believe that the water written with verses from the Qur’an can keep them away from all dangers.

Umi Masruroh also conducted similar research titled “Tradisi Rebo Wekasan Dalam Kajian Living Qur’an Di Desa Pakuncen Kecamatan Selomerto Kabupaten Wonosobo”. The research, which was later published in the journal Qaf: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur’an dan Tafsir, is located in Wonosobo. The ritual of its implementation is filled with using the letters of the Qur’an and writing snippets of its verses in the form of a tattoo or wifiq, which is believed to save them from disaster and ugliness that is not expected.
In addition to the two studies above, there is also research conducted by Ina Rinata. The research in the form of a thesis in 2022 is entitled “Living Qur’an Pada Tradisi Rebo Wekasan Di Pondok Pesantren Miftahuttholibin Paleben Desa Timbang Kecamatan Cigandamekar Kabupaten Kuningan.” The location of this research is Kuningan, and the implementation ritual is filled by carrying out prayers and praying together. Also, write down the verses of Salamun-salamun, which contain verses of the Qur’an that begin with the word Al-Salam, to be an intermediary to avoid all kinds of distress because it begins with the word Al-Salam, the author hopes for safety and welfare from Allah, so that his life will always be given help and blessings.

From some of the research above, it is evident that this research has a different location and content of its implementation. Of course, the reception of the community is also different from others.

**Tradition Terminology**

Traditions are customs passed down from generation to generation, which is still preserved in society today and continue to be passed down from generation to generation through acculturation and socialization processes (Priyatna, 2014). According to Wikipedia, Tradition or custom is a form of action that is done repeatedly in the same way. This repeated habit is carried out continuously because it is considered beneficial for a group of people so that a group of people preserves it (Wikipedia, 2022). K. Coomans argues that tradition is a description of the behavior or attitudes of society over a very long period carried out from generation to generation, starting from their ancestors. And traditions that have been entrenched will become a source of character and virtuous behavior (Laelasari, 2020; Musolli et al., 2021).
According to Piotr Sztompka, tradition includes (customs, habits, beliefs, teachings, and so on) passed down from generation to generation from the past to the present and is still inherent in life. However, in its journey, this tradition is not pure, meaning it has changed from time to time because not all traditions bring progress; sometimes, certain traditions bring setbacks. For example, traditions that are forced and binding (Syam et al., 2016).

Meanwhile, according to Hasan Hanafi, as quoted by Muhammad Nur Hakim, tradition is defined as all forms of heritage from the past until it reaches the present era and becomes part of the culture that is currently in effect. From Hasan’s point of view, that tradition is not only in the form of historical heritage but also at the same time an issue of this era with its various levels (Hakim, 2003). Tradition then, in its development, begins to perceive it with customary words which, in the view of the general public, are then understood as the same concept.

In this case, the word tradition comes from the Arabic adat (plural form of ‘adab), which means habit and is considered to have the same meaning as ‘urf, which is known or accepted globally (AG, 2001). The tradition continues to experience changes in big and small forms. Tradition becomes an object inherited from upstream to downstream generations, not gradually, but through review aimed at deconstructing it, which is then instilled in the community. So that the treasures of thought in understanding give rise to diversity according to the context of the unique characteristics of each region; in the end, traditions that have strong cultural roots in a particular area will become a reference for people to have good morals and manners, even though they previously had their behaviour format (Arifin, 1984).

In tradition, it cannot be separated from rituals. Ritual is an essential component for the community to continue to preserve the traditions of their ancestors. A tradition that is an ancestral heritage of hundred years old is still almost intact. There may be minor changes in how the ceremony is carried out to adapt to
circumstances and for practical reasons, but the meaning and purpose are the same. Traditional rituals are held to maintain or obtain safety and a good life for people, such as family, villagers, country residents, etc. And safety and blessings for a place, such as a house, house of worship, village, country, and so on (Dzofir, 2017).

From this understanding, tradition is a system of cultural inheritance from the past which is still maintained and maintained by today’s society.

**Inhibiting Factors and Benefits of Tradition for Society**

There are several inhibiting factors from a tradition, including 1) Environment; a society can be said to be static or moving slowly if no changes are found. In moving a tradition, of course, a dynamic environment is needed in which the inhabitants are not only silent but also move their eyes and heart to see the environment, customs and habits around them so that the area’s remoteness cannot hinder their limited thinking. The dynamics of staticity of a tradition can also be determined by environmental factors, whether the tradition continues to be supported or its sustainability is hindered; 2) Philosophy of Life, in society, there is a principle that still applies, “oneness in diversity and diversity in oneness” (Bawani, 1997). Changes considered positive according to common sense considerations will emerge when the community adheres to a creative, innovative, dynamic and open-minded philosophy of life. Thus, people can adapt to modern life, so they do not feel reluctant to abandon traditions or actions that can hinder the wheels of progress. Therefore, a philosophy of life can also be one of the factors that will hinder or support the preservation of a tradition; 3) The Development of Science, as stated by Imam Bawani, that the tendency to maintain traditions generally occurs among people who do not understand the tradition itself due to their lack of information and knowledge.
related to this tradition, or it may be said that they lack knowledge (Bawani, 1997; Miskiyah, 2022). Unlike the case with circles who have experienced the rapid flow of knowledge and information, thus supporting their thinking to be more advanced and rational, they will be more tolerant, wise, and easy to accept changes in some things that should have changed.

The benefits of tradition for society are; 1) Unifying Tool; in essence, humans are interrelated social beings, and no human being can fulfil their needs individually. They try to form group bonds so that they are more robust and their sustainability is maintained. A tradition is a unifying tool for groups because, naturally, each group is moved to be proud of what belongs to them, especially in front of other groups. This kind of thing has been stated in the Qur’an surah al-Mu’mun (23): 53:

فَتَقَطَّعُوۡۡۤا اَمۡرَهُمۡ بَيۡنَهُمۡ زُب ُرًا كُلَّ حِزۡبٍ بَِِا لَدَيۡهِمۡ فَرِحُ وۡنَ

“But they (mankind) have broken their religion among them into sects, each group rejoicing in its tenets”.

2) A vessel for Community Expression, Religion influences one way of thinking and human growth in that human diversity is at the same time always accompanied by the identity of each tradition. In addition, in a society that is classified as “ordinary” in terms of religion, it is often impossible to distinguish which are actually religious teachings and which are just traditions. In their view, the life pattern in their tradition is tantamount to practising religious teachings. On the other hand, if they can and are used to carrying out religious teachings solely, this must be separate from the routine traditions of life. Various kinds of traditions always emerge to accompany the dynamics of religious teachings. The presence of certain traditions has become a frame or pattern for the implementation of religious teachings after going through quite a long journey from time to time. Many changes will be found in implementing religious teachings as a consequence of the
immaturity of tradition (Fitri, 2019). One’s religious expression is influenced by the cultural environment, which can be found in practical and concrete matters. The arrival of Islam brought about a reform of the social order or the transfer of social forms to a better direction. Islam can preserve whatever was good and right in the past. In a tradition, good things are maintained and followed (Madjid, 2008).

**Tradition and Socio-Cultural of Javanese Society**

The term “Rebo Wekasan” when viewed from Arabic, “Arba’a” means “Wednesday” and “Hasanun”, which means “Good”, meaning that Wednesday should be used to do good things. Meanwhile, in terms of the Javanese language, it means “Rebo Pungkasan”, or the last Wednesday in every month of Šafar; this influence in Javanese calculations also has the meaning of the word Rebo Wekasan in Javanese since the ancestors used to have ritual events during the heyday of Sunan Giri (Murtadho, 2021).

Historically, Nurozi’s research states that the “Rebo Wekasan” tradition is based on the opinion of Abdul Hamid Quds in the book *Kanzun Najah wa Sururfi Fadhail al-Azminah wa-Shubur*. In that book, every year, on the last Wednesday of the month of Šafar, Allah sends down 320,000 reinforcements or disasters on Earth (Ibda, 2020).

The month of Šafar is the second month in the Islamic Hijri calendar. Like any other month, it is the month of Allah’s month which has no will and goes according to what Allah created for it. The ancient Jahiliyah community, including the Arabs, often said that the month of Šafar was unlucky. This *tasa’um* (unlucky assumption) has been well known to the Jahiliyah community, and its remnants are still present among Muslims today. Abu Hurairah said, Rasulullah said:
لا عدوٍ ولا طيّرة، ولا هامة ولا صقر، ففر من الممجرد كما تفر من الأسد

“There is no plague (which spreads by itself without Allah's will), bad luck, owls, or bad luck in the month of Safar. Flee from leprosy as you avoid a lion” (HR Imam al-Bukhari dan Muslim).

The saying of the hadith “lā ‘adwā’” or “no disease transmission”, was meant to rectify the beliefs of the Jahiliyah group because, at that time, they believed that the disease could spread by itself without relying on the provisions of God’s destiny. Sick or healthy, disaster or safety, all return to God’s will.

In this regard, many scholars say that in the month of Safar, Allah sends down more than 500 kinds of diseases, so in anticipation of avoiding this disaster, many scholars do tirakatan, namely worshipping before Allah while praying to be kept away from calamity, especially on Wednesdays last month of Safar. Moreover, until now, the Rebo Wekasan tradition is still being carried out. Even among millennials, many have participated in participating in enlivening the Rebo Wekasan tradition (Murtadho, 2021).

According to the community, the history of the Rebo Wekasan ceremony dates back to the time of Kanjeng Sunan Giri (Raden Paku), also known as Prabu Satmata or Sultan Abdul Fakih. He is the son of Maulana Ishak from Blambangan (East Java), who was taken as an adopted son by a wealthy woman, Nyai Gedha Maloka, who was sent to school at Sunan Ampel. Sunan Giri’s mother’s name, according to the Babad Tanah Jawi, is Dewi Sekardadu; in Serat Walisana, her name is Retno Sabodi. Likewise, the name of Sunan Giri’s grandfather from the mother’s side in the Chronicle of Tanah Jawi is called Prabu Menak Sembuyu; in Serat Walisana it is called Prabu Sadmuddha (Basid, 2020).
Sunan Giri is a king and holy teacher (pandhit queen) who has a vital role in the development of Islamic da’wah in the archipelago. The history of Islamic da’wah in the archipelago records traces of the da’wah of Sunan Giri and his descendants not only reaching Banjar in South Kalimantan, Kutai in East Kalimantan, and Gowa in South Sulawesi but also reaching Nusa Tenggara and the Maluku islands (Sunyoto, 2019). While attending school at Sunan Ampel, Raden Paku met Maulana Maqdum Ibrahim, son of Sunan Ampel, who later had the title Sunan Bonang, then together with Maulana Maqdum Ibrahim, Raden Paku was ordered by Sunan Ampel to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land of Mecca to deepen his knowledge. However, before they arrived at the holy land of Mecca, they stopped first at Pasai (Pasai) to study with the scholars there. After the two finished studying, they returned to Java. Raden Paku managed to get “knowledge”, so his teacher gave him the name “Ainul Yaqin”.

While studying at Ampel Denta, Raden Paku became close friends with Raden Mahdum Ibrahim, the son of his teacher, who later became Sunan Bonang. In the Babad Tanah Jawi, it is said that Raden Paku and Raden Maqdum Ibrahim intended to go to Mecca to study knowledge and perform the pilgrimage. However, the two of them only arrived in Malacca and met Maulana Ishak, Raden Paku's biological father. Both were given lessons on various kinds of Islamic knowledge, including the science of Sufism. In a source recorded in the genealogy of the first Gresik Regent named Kiai Tumenggung Pusponegoro, there is a lineage of the Syathariyah Order which mentions Syeikh Maulana Ishak and Raden Paku Sunan Giri as teachers of the Syathariyah Order, which indicates that the school of Sufism taught by Maulana Ishak and Raden Paku is the Syathariyah Order (Sunyoto, 2019).

Upon his return to the Land of Java, Raden Paku taught Islam in a gathering place or Islamic boarding school in Giri, where his students consisted of ordinary people (commoners). In
addition to spreading Islam on the island of Java, Sunan Giri also succeeded in sending Islamic preachers to Nusa Tenggara, Ternate and Maluku and even tried to make Giri a major religious centre. Besides sending envoys out of Java, Sunan Giri also sent envoys to spread Islam around Giri (Hamka, 1981).

According to the stories of the saints, Sheikh Sulaiman was one of the students sent to spread Islam in the Giri area, especially in the Suci village. This is based on the existence of a tomb behind the Jamik mosque, which bears the name of Sheikh Sulaiman.

The Rebo Wekasan Tradition in Wonoayu

The archipelago is rich in tradition; Rebo Wekasan is an example of a unique archipelago Islamic tradition that is still sustainable. Implementing the Rebo Wekasan tradition is part of the Javanese people’s life activities, which are deeply ingrained in everyday life. This tradition is carried out on the last Wednesday of the month of Safar, the 2nd of the 12th month of the Hijri calendar. Because of that, this tradition is very thick in Islam. There are different ways to commemorate it. In Tasikmalaya, it is commemorated with congregational prayers at the end of Wednesday at the Musala or mosque and praying together. In the Gresik area, some commemorate it by sharing Harisa porridge, mutton porridge, with people from the same village. In Probolinggo, they visited Islamic religious leaders in groups and brought water to pray for safety from logs. Rebo Wekasan is a ritual with religious and cultural overtones that have been going on for years. In Wonoayu, by saying Sema’an of the Qur’an.

Wonoayu is a sub-district in Sidoarjo district, East Java Province, Indonesia. Wonoayu comes from the Javanese language, which means Wono means forest, and Ayu means beautiful, which means beautiful forest. This sub-district is in the Sidoarjo Regency area. Located in a strategic area between Krian District and Sidoarjo District. Wonoayu is located 40 km southwest of the city of Surabaya. In Wonoayu District, it is divided into twenty-three

In Wonoayu, the Rebo Wekasan activity has been going on for a long time and is a local tradition. This tradition is carried out on the last Wednesday of the month of Safar. The activity they did that day was Sema’an of the Qur’an from early morning until noon until the evening before Isha’. They also invited several hafiz Al-Qur’an and many residents who took turns participating in Sema’an activities, from parents to teenagers. Places of activity are not only carried out in one place but rotate from one village to another.

Rebo Wekasan is not only a matter of culture but also a requirement for religious values and a form of getting closer to Allah to avoid disasters. Because God is fair who always maintains the balance of nature. If the servant is good, then the realm is stable. Otherwise, there must be many disasters.

This is clearly illustrated in Q.S. Al-Rum (30): 41:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِِ الْبَرِ وَالْبَحْرِ بَِِا كَسَبَتْ اَيْدِى النَّاسِ لِيُذِي ْقَهُمْ

“Corruption doth appear on land and sea because of (the evil) which men’s hands have done, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, in order that they may return”.

That, all the damage on land and at sea is the work of humans themselves. While in paragraph 42 it is mentioned:

قُلْ سِيَُْوَا فِِ الاَْرْضِ فَانْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قِبْلِكُمْ

كانَ أَكْثَرُهُمُ مُشْرِكِينَ
“Say (O Muhammad, to the disbelievers): Travel in the land, and see the nature of the consequence for those who were before you! Most of them were idolaters”.

Specifically mandates for all humans to preserve nature and look after it. Rebo Wekasan is part of an effort to maintain the balance of nature (Ibda, 2020). Some of the practices carried out by many residents of the Wonoayu sub-district during the Rebo Wekasan are: 1) prayer bajat li daf ’al-balā’, 2) Reading Surah Yāsin 3 times, 3) Praying with special prayers recommended by the Scholars, 4) Drink water that is given a prayer reading as stated in the book “Nihāyah al-Zain”, and 5) Good practices such as giving alms, friendship, and so on which in Islamic shari’a are indeed used for daf ’i al-balā’.

The tradition of carrying out this practice is known to have been going on for a long time from generation to generation among the Muslim community in Java, and Wonoayu is no exception. The law of implementing Rebo Wekasan sunnah is based on a collection of several hadiths. First, Sahih Hadith narrated by Muslim فإن في السنة ليلة (في رواية يوم) ينزل فيه وباء (Verily, in a year there are nights (other narrations, days) in which plague descends). Second, Sahih hadith, according to Shaykh Al-Albani, “Truly Leprosy does not appear except on Wednesday night or Wednesday.” Third, the words of Ibn Rajab Al-Hambali that Rasulullah saw. ordered when frightening causes of celestial torments, such as eclipses occur, to do good deeds such as praying, praying, and giving alms (Romziana & Sholeha, 2021).

The scholar of Ibn Rajab’s book says that the words of the Prophet spoken by Ibn Rajab are in the hadiths about eclipses in the books of Sahih Bukhari and Muslims. Likewise, following the opinion of the Hanafi School of Jurisprudence Jurisprudence, it is sunnah to pray when panicked and scared, like a strong wind or pitch dark.
Conclusion

From the study of the living Qur’an about the Rebo Wekasan tradition in the Wonoayu sub-district, it can be concluded that the Rebo Wekasan Tradition is a tradition that occurs on the last Wednesday of the month of Şafar which was carried out by our ancestors long ago and until now this tradition is still running. Scholars say that in the month of Şafar, Allah sends down more than 500 kinds of diseases, so in anticipation of avoiding this disaster, many scholars do tirakatan, namely worshipping before Allah while praying to be kept away from calamity, especially on the last Wednesday in the month of Şafar. In the Rebo Wekasan tradition in Wonoayu, there is a living Qur’an phenomenon in the form of a practice carried out by carrying out the Sema’an of the Qur’an and reciting the Yāsīn surah three times with the hope that because of the blessings the community is safe from all kinds of diseases.

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