



**SANGKĒP:**

*Jurnal Kajian Sosial Keagamaan*

DOI: 10.20414/sangkep.v2i2.

p-ISSN: [2654-6612](#) e-ISSN: [2656-0798](#)

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*Jurnal Kajian Sosial Keagamaan*

# A STUDY OF NORMATIVE AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO THE BARZANJI TRADITION IN CHILD BIRTH CEREMONIES

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## Keywords:

*Normative, Anthropology,  
Akikah, Barzanji*

## Abstract

Islamic studies covers a variety of different meanings, divisions and aspects. However, the main focus of this study is on Islamic teachings which originate from the Koran and Hadith authentically. Therefore, it is necessary to use the right approach in understanding Islam. In this research, the author used two approach methods. Namely Normative and Anthropological. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary, tradition is a tradition or custom passed down from generation to generation that was passed down by ancestors and is still preserved by the community. One of the community traditions that is still highly preserved is the ceremony to welcome the birth of a child or often called akikah. One of the Islamic traditions carried out to welcome the birth of a child is Barzanji. This tradition originates from Arab countries and is generally spread through trade and marriage. The aim of the Barzanji tradition is to bring closer relations with Allah, increase faith and love for the Messenger of Allah, as a symbol of the Islamic religion and remind the history of the life of the Prophet SAW so that he becomes a role model, strengthen Islamic brotherhood among the community and maintain Islamic culture in the face of non-Islamic culture. who enter society.

Vol. 7, No. 01, 2024

 [10.20414/sangkep.v2i2](https://doi.org/10.20414/sangkep.v2i2).

ubmitted: January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Accepted: June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024



## A. INTRODUCTION

In understanding Islam, it is important to use a scientific approach, one of which is through Islamic studies. At this time, Islamic studies have made a significant contribution in enriching people's understanding of the Islamic religion itself. Islamic studies covers a variety of different meanings, divisions and aspects. However, the main focus of this study is on Islamic teachings which originate from the Koran and Hadith authentically. Therefore, it is necessary to use the right approach in understanding Islam. Through this approach, understanding of the Islamic religion can be felt and applied functionally by Muslims. On the other hand, without an understanding of this approach, religion can appear difficult for society to understand and implement. This can cause people to look for solutions outside religion, which should be avoided. (Hawani & Ilham, 2023)

In this case, the author uses two approaches, namely normative and anthropological. The normative approach in Islamic studies is a person's perception in discovering, understanding and explaining Islamic knowledge. This understanding of Islam provides an assessment of something based on textual norms (verses of the Koran and hadith) that have not had any human intervention (Fauzil'Adzim & Vrikati, 2020). According to Abuddin, the study of Islam with a normative approach is an approach that views religion in terms of its basic and original teachings from God in which there is no human reasoning. (Akbar, 2023). The normative approach is an approach to Islamic studies that is legal-formal in nature which originates from the syar'i postulates which are ushul ad-din (Najib, 2023). In principle, this normative approach always emphasizes the standardization of values and the sanctity of texts. The consequence is that Islamic studies feels like it is right and wrong and rigid. From there, Islam seems monotonous and authoritarian. This then often gives rise to contradictions in the problems of humanity which are always developing (Adib, 2022). Meanwhile, the approach of making a religious figure who is on an empirical plane will allow you to see the details and the background of why the religious teachings emerged and were formulated.

Dedy Mahyudi said that anthropology seeks to see the relationship between religion and various social institutions that occur in society (Huda, 2016). The

term anthropology itself comes from Greek from the words *anthropos* meaning human, and *logos* meaning science, so literally anthropology means the science of humans. Anthropologists (anthropologists) often state that anthropology is the study of humanity which seeks to formulate useful generalizations about humans and their behavior, and to obtain a complete understanding or understanding of human diversity. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), anthropology is referred to as the science of humans, especially about origins, various colors, physical forms, customs and beliefs in the past (Potabuga, 2020). The main task of anthropology, the study of humans, is to enable us to understand ourselves by understanding other cultures.

Anthropology makes us aware of the essential unity of humans, and therefore makes us respect each other (Ismail et al., 2023). Anthropological studies in religious phenomena are found in five things 1) Scripture or manuscripts or sources of religious teachings and symbols. 2) Adherents or leaders or religious leaders, namely the attitudes, behavior and appreciation of their adherents. 3) Rites, institutions and worship, such as prayer, pilgrimage, fasting, marriage and inheritance. 4) Tools such as mosques, churches, bells, *peci* and the like. 5) Religious organizations where religious adherents gather and play a role.

In the Big Indonesian Dictionary, tradition is a custom or habit handed down from generation to generation which is passed down by ancestors and is still preserved by society, assuming and assessing that existing habits are the correct and best. The artistic aspect is one of the living cultures of society. Sound art is a branch of art in Islam. Sound art can be used as a medium for preaching. Among the sound arts in Islamic art are the arts of *barzanji* and *marhaban*. *Barzanji* itself is a poem containing praise for the prophet. *Barzanji* in Indonesia is used on important days such as the Prophet's birthday and welcoming a new born baby.

In Islam, there are several etiquettes for welcoming a newborn baby, including *aqiqah* and shaving the baby's hair. The time for *aqiqah* and shaving a baby's hair is around 7 days after birth and the law is *sunnah*. The tradition of shaving a baby's hair is usually accompanied by the recitation of the *Al-Qur'an*.

Barzanji itself, as mentioned by the author, is a poem containing praise for the Prophet Muhammad SAW. In the past, barzanji and marhaban functioned as a medium for preaching. Which explains the personality and struggles of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. which of course society must emulate. The benefits that can be obtained by the community are the realization of a spirit of brotherhood and strengthening friendship if they attend the barzanji and marhaban assemblies together (Samat et al., 2015).

Even though there is a general understanding regarding the existence of ceremonies to welcome the birth of a child, there has not been much research that specifically identifies and analyzes this tradition as a whole that can be used as a source of knowledge for the lay public. Therefore, an in-depth study of the ceremonial tradition of welcoming the birth of a child is needed which is relevant to the context of education and learning, and so that understanding this tradition can be used as motivation for the community.

This research will focus on the barzanji tradition as an Islamic tradition in welcoming the birth of a child. The selection of this tradition is based on its relevance to the religious context of the aqiqah ceremony. In addition, this research will be limited to Muslim communities only, so the results cannot be directly applied to a comprehensive traditional context.

This research aims to: 1) outline an explanation regarding the meaning of child birth ceremony traditions, 2) analyze the history of aqiqah in Indonesia and its relationship to the Islamic religion, and 3) understand the purpose of child birth ceremony traditions for the community environment.

## **B. METHODS**

The method used in this research is qualitative method. The qualitative method itself is a research method that emphasizes the analysis and description of data. The main technique used by the author in this research is Literature Study. Because the data sources collected in this research were quoted from scientific journals and books which are of course related to the ceremonial tradition of welcoming the birth of a child. Through library data collection methods, reading, taking notes and processing research materials to produce accurate data.

## C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Historical Study of the Book of Barzanji and Its Meaning

The Book of al Barzanji is a work of Sufism that has been widely known throughout the world for a long time. This book has its own uniqueness because it contains religious educational values. The meaning of Sufism and its origins have been debated among linguists (Rangkuti et al., 2021). Some argue that the word "Sufism" comes from the word "Syifa" which means pure or clean as glass, while other opinions state that the word "Sufism" comes from the word "Suf" which means animal hair, because followers of Sufism often wear clothes made from animal fur and rejecting the beautiful clothes of the world. There are also those who argue that the word "Sufism" comes from the word "sufana" which refers to a type of tree that grows in the Arabian desert. However, there is also an opinion that the word "Sufi" does not come from Arabic, but from ancient Greek, namely "theosophy" which means divine knowledge, which was then adopted and pronounced in Arabic as "sufism".

Historically, Barzanji is a book known as "Al-Barzanji" written by Sayyid Ja'far Ibn Husain Ibn Abdul Karim Ibn Muhammad Ibn Rasul AL-Barzanji. He was a prominent scholar who was known for his knowledge, piety and extraordinary practices. The book Al-Barzanji was compiled with the aim of fostering love for the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Apart from that, the book contains the genealogy or lineage of the Prophet Muhammad SAW.(Dahlan, 2001).

The text or book of Al-Barzanji was compiled by Ja'far Al-Barzanji Ibn Hasan Ibn' Abdul Karim Ibn Muhammad Ibn Abdul Rasul. Even though it has a different original title, namely 'Iqd Al-Jawâhir (jewel necklace), the naming of Al-Barzanji in the title of the work emphasizes the author's name, namely Barzanji. This name is taken from the place of origin of his descendants, namely the Barzanj region, a village in the Syahrazur region of Iraq.(Fattah & Ayundasari, 2021)

Barzanji was not born by himself, but by Sultan Salahuddin Yusuf Al-Ayyubi, an Islamic warlord in the 12th century. Salahuddin was aware of the

global situation where Islamic dominance in Europe was decreasing, one of which was as a result of the destruction of Islamic power in Granada (Spain)..(Fattah & Ayundasari, 2021)

When Islamic power declined, Salahuddin considered ways to maintain the spirit of Muslims and at the same time promote Islam throughout the world. Therefore, Salahuddin Al-Ayyubi proposed that Muslims throughout the world celebrate together and in congregation the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, which previously often passed without special celebrations. (Aminuddin, 1988). This was the warlord's way at that time to inspire and raise enthusiasm for the Prophet Muhammad SAW. In 1184, Salahuddin held a competition to write praise or history about the Prophet Muhammad SAW in the form of the most beautiful words.(Fattah & Ayundasari, 2021)

The Book of Barzanji consists of seventy-six pages written in prose and verse style. The second tells the life of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, including his childhood, adolescence and youth until he was appointed an apostle (Qasimi, 2013). Apart from that, the work tells the various noble qualities of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, as well as various events to serve as role models for humans. Reading it can increase your faith and love for the Prophet Muhammad SAW and provide many benefits.

From here, Ja'far Al-Barzanji became the first winner of all the scholars and writers who took part in this birthday writing competition. Barzanji's work is presented very well and uses very beautiful words. This is proof of love and respect for the Prophet Muhammad SAW which is manifested in the form of literary works that are always remembered in Islamic history. This literary work, which was based on respect for the Prophet, became known as the *al-madaih al-nabawiyah* type of literature (Negara, 2017).

## **2. Barzanji at the Birth Ceremony of a Child: Normative and Anthropological**

Humans in their lives cannot be separated from tradition and culture. Traditions are practices that local residents repeat over and over again as a legacy from their ancestors. In the KBBI (Big Indonesian Dictionary) tradition or habit is a form of activity that is carried out repeatedly in the same way which shows

that the action is considered beneficial for a group of people, so that the activity is preserved (Bahasa, 2016). Meanwhile, according to Alvin and Teguh, traditions are customs that are inherited from generation to generation and still apply in a particular society. (Ekanasari et al., 2021). In this way, another word for tradition is inherited habits. On the other hand, as cultural creatures, humans are also social creatures who need each other. This tradition influences human behavior in society (Husen, 2019). Tradition (Latin: *Traditio*, meaning continued) according to the meaning of language is a habit that develops in society, whether it becomes a custom or is assimilated by traditional and religious rituals or in another sense, something that has been done for a long time and has become part of from the life of a group of people, a country, culture, time or the same religious customs. Usually this tradition has been passed down from generation to generation, either through written information in the form of ancient books or also contained in inscriptions. Tradition is an issue, and the important thing is how the tradition is formed. Muhaimin further said that tradition is sometimes equated with traditional words which in the view of ordinary people are understood as the same structure. In this case, it actually comes from the Arabic *adat* (plural of *aadah*) which means habit and is considered synonymous with *Urf*, something that is known or generally accepted. (Ridwan, 2016). The Islamic tradition developed through a dynamic process that regulates the daily lives of its adherents. This tradition tends to have flexible rules and does not force its adherents.

On the other hand, local traditions that were initially unrelated to Islam experienced assimilation into that religion over time. There are 9 Islamic teachings which include elements of faith, sharia and morals. Meanwhile, culture or tradition includes elements of ideas, activities and work results. Local culture also has these three elements, which in certain aspects can be assimilated, acculturated, adapted, and integrated with Islamic teachings. - Assimilation is the process in which local cultural traits are adapted and incorporated into Islamic teachings. Acculturation is when local culture and Islamic teachings influence and mix each other. Adaptation is when local culture adapts to Islamic teachings. Integration is the merging of local culture with Islamic teachings to form a harmonious unity.

In this connection, Barth, as quoted by Muhaimin, said, how do you know whether a particular tradition or element of tradition originates from or is connected to an Islamic spirit? Barth's thinking allows us to assume that a tradition or element of tradition is Islamic when the perpetrator intends or claims that his own behavior has an Islamic spirit. (Ridwan, 2016). Barth's statement above is quite an interesting question for our minds regarding existing traditions that have an Islamic spirit. Many traditions do not originate from Islam, but the traditions that have developed are substantially in line with the essence of Islamic teachings and of course there must always be updates regarding traditions that are good and do not violate the Shari'a. The majority of people continue to maintain existing traditions because they assume that there is nothing at all that conflicts with existing norms and if this is realized with Islam then it will always be preserved as a form of creative human thought.

According to M Dahlan, the arrival of Islam in a place always results in *tajdid* (renewal) in society towards a better direction, but at the same time Islam does not have to be disruptive, that is, it has the character of cutting a society from its past alone, but can also participate in preserving whatever is good and true from the past and can be maintained in the universal teachings of Islam called '*urf*' (Harahap, 2020). But from an Islamic perspective, traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation or become habits can be used as a legal benchmark because habits in legal terms are often referred to as '*urf*' or custom. The history of Islamic law, custom in Arabic is synonymous with the word '*urf*', has an interesting semantic history.

One of the Islamic traditions that entered Indonesia is *barzanji*. *Barzanji* is one of the many books that carries Islamic values, with the aim of preaching through art and information contained in the *Barzanji* books (Hidayatullah, 2020). According to Aziz Dahlan, the aim of compiling the book *Al-Barzanji* is to create love for the Prophet Muhammad SAW and the book *Al-Barzanji* contains the genealogy of the lineage or descendants of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. As previously explained, the contents of the *barzanji* do not only contain the biography of the Prophet Muhammad. There is also a prayer that is often recited at the end of the *barzanji* reading. Indonesian people understand that *Barzanji* contains prayers, so one of the goals of people reading *Barzanji* in every wish is so



that people come to attend, more people pray because more people pray, prayers will be faster by Allah SWT., especially if accompanied by prayers together (Ma'arif & Rugaiya, 2023).

The development of the Al-Barzanji text in Indonesia, its presence is closely related to the implementation of religious ceremonies that apply to the local Muslim community. In general, the text of Al-Barzanji is usually read and sung on various occasions, not only on the anniversary of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, but at special moments related to the human life cycle, such as the birth of a child, the text of Al-Barzanji is also read. During the event, the text of Al-Barzanji was sung (sung) with various songs, such as (1) the Rekby song: read slowly, (2) the Hijas song: increasing the sound pressure of the rekby song, (3) the Ras song: raise a higher voice than the Hijas song, with a variety of rhythms, (4) song 16 Sikka: read it with a calm voice, (5) Nakhawan song: read it with a high voice with the same rhythm as the Ras song, (6) Masyri song: sings it with a soft voice and is accompanied by deep feelings.

In the reading system, there are those who read it in groups of up to seven groups that respond to each other and there are also those who are not in groups, but read it in turns one by one from beginning to end. All members of this art are Muslim. For the community and Muslims, reading Barzanji or the Book of Barzanji is considered good and even rewarding, because the contents of this book contain the journey, life, deeds and examples of the Prophet. Barzanji is a collection of songs that have a semi-religious feel with influences from the Middle East. Islamic/Persian/Arabic influences were slowly digested along with Pre-Islamic elements in Malay society from the 15th century until today. The word "Barzanji" in the Big Indonesian Dictionary is defined as the content of reading praise containing the story of the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

Birth ceremonies have become a tradition passed down from generation to generation before Indonesian people embraced Islam. In Indonesia, the general name for a child's birth ceremony is akikah. Akikah is a ritual in the Islamic religion that is carried out to celebrate the birth of a child (Gatrad & Sheikh, 2021). Usually, the akikah is carried out on the 7th day after the birth of the child. During akikah, parents sacrifice animals such as goats or sheep, and the meat is distributed to family, neighbors and people in need. The history of the

implementation of the aqiqah dates back to the time of the Prophet Abraham in Islam. In this story, the Prophet Ibrahim was ordered by Allah to sacrifice his son, Ismail, as a form of sacrifice and loyalty to Allah. However, when Prophet Ibrahim prepared to sacrifice Ismail, Allah replaced him with a lamb as a substitute for the sacrifice.

From this story, the tradition of aqiqah then developed as a form of respect for this event. Akikah is a symbol of sacrifice and gratitude to Allah for the birth of a child. In its implementation, sacrificial animals are sacrificed and the meat is distributed to family, neighbors and people in need. Although akikah has its roots in the Islamic religion, this practice is also found in the culture and traditions of Muslim communities in various countries. Each region may have variations in the implementation and interpretation of the aqiqah, but the aim remains the same, namely celebrating the birth of a child and expressing gratitude to Allah. The purpose of aqiqah is to express gratitude to Allah for the birth of a child, as well as a form of sacrifice and concern for others. Apart from that, aqiqah also involves giving a name to a child which is usually done by the parents or adoptive parents.

Apart from religious value, aqiqah also has an important meaning in the culture and traditions of Muslim society. This is an opportunity for family and friends to gather, celebrate the birth of a child, and share happiness together. Although the naming differs from one region to another. In the Soppeng area, for example, it is called mappano lolo, in the Bone area it is called Makkulawi, in the Bulukumba area it is known as Cimpolo buhung, in the Wajo area it is called Mappenre tojang, in the Pinrang and Sidrap areas it is called Maccera ana, and so on. After the arrival of Islam, these names gradually shifted and were replaced with the word Akikah, although some members of community groups still use the term. (IRFANDI, 2022).

In Islam itself, there are several etiquettes for welcoming a newborn baby, including aqiqah and shaving the baby's hair. The time for aqiqah and shaving a baby's hair is around 7 days after birth and the law is sunnah. The tradition of shaving a baby's hair is usually accompanied by the recitation of the Al-Qur'an. Why does every aqiqah event have barzanji readings? Because in barzanji, the life story of the Prophet Muhammad SAW is described in beautiful language both in

poetry and prose (narration) and the qasidah really attracts the attention of readers/listeners, especially those who understand its aims and objectives. Barzanji's reading contains several narratives. Rawi is the separator for each barzanji poem with a different story. This is why every aqiqah is always recited barzanji. The content of the Barzanji book itself is praise for the Prophet (Ma'arif & Rugaiya, 2023). Meanwhile, to commemorate the birth of a child, the poetry contains hopes that in the future the child will be useful for the religion, homeland and nation.

During the aqiqah ceremony and giving names to newborn babies, parents often bring the baby in front of invited guests who are reading Barzanji. This tradition follows the practice of the companions who quickly brought their babies before the Prophet Muhammad after their birth. One of the Prophet's companions, Abu Talhah, when blessed with a son, immediately took the baby to the Prophet Muhammad. The baby was placed in the Prophet's lap and he asked Abu Talha to give him one date. The Prophet Muhammad chewed the dates until smooth, then gave them to babies who looked hungry. The Prophet Muhammad then gave the baby the name Abdullah.

The Barzanji reading ceremony is a religious rite, and is intended for worship, namely 'taqarrub ilallah' (seeking a close relationship with Allah). Therefore, it is best that before a barzanji or manakib reading ceremony is held, the place and the participants (inwardly and physically) must be in a holy state. This ritual has objectives, including: (1) increasing faith and love for the Prophet; (2) broadcasting the Islamic religion and reminding the history of the life of the Prophet SAW, to become uswah hasanah (role model) (3) strengthening Islamic brotherhood among community members; (4) maintaining Islamic culture in the face of non-Islamic culture entering society (Ta'rifin, 2010).

The tradition of reading the book Barzanji is not an obligation for Muslims or a ritual that must be carried out every day of the Prophet's birth. The aim of this tradition is to gain wisdom and increase people's love for the Prophet Muhammad as a role model in everyday life. In Indonesia, the Barzanji tradition has become something common among people. The Barzanji tradition is also found in several regions in Indonesia, including Riau. The openness of the Malay people to external influences is due to their trading activities with various nations

in the world. Islam is so strong that it has entered the traditional spaces of local communities. One influence that was very big and then seeped into the field of religion was the Arab-Islamic influence, which seemed to erase the previous Hindu and Buddhist cultures, leaving only decoration in Malay culture. (Harahap, 2020).

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

A habit that develops in society, whether it becomes a custom or is assimilated by traditional and religious rituals or in another sense, something that has been done for a long time and has become part of the life of a community group, a country, culture, time or habit. the same religion. Barzanji is one of many books that promote Islamic values, with the aim of preaching through art and the information contained therein. In the normative approach, Barzanji itself is a book that contains praises about the life journey of the Prophet from childhood to adulthood. The anthropological aspect states that forms of acculturation in the tradition of child birth ceremonies can be seen when hair is cut. Before the baby's hair is cut, the head is smeared with oil. Before Islam came, babies' heads were smeared with the blood of slaughtered animals, but when Islam came, this tradition was changed. The baby's hair is cut while standing while being stroked and saying prayers. This shows that Islam exists not to oppose or erase tradition, but rather to use tradition as a medium for preaching to introduce its religious teachings.

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