

The Reception of Qur'anic Gratitude in the Kupatan Tradition: A Living Qur'an Perspective

Avif Alfiyah

Institut Agama Islam Tarbiyatut Tholabah, Lamongan, Indonesia

E-mail: avifalfiyah@iai-tabah.ac.id

Intan Pratiwi

Institut Agama Islam Tarbiyatut Tholabah, Lamongan, Indonesia

E-mail: intanpratiwi22mei@gmail.com

Abstract

Although Living Qur'an studies have significantly expanded discussions on how Qur'anic values are enacted in Muslim ritual life, the field remains largely dominated by descriptive accounts that treat local traditions primarily as symbolic representations. Such approaches tend to overlook how Qur'anic meanings are actively negotiated, reconfigured, and sustained within communities undergoing social and institutional transformation. Addressing this limitation, the present study examines the reception of Qur'anic gratitude (*shukr*) in the *Kupatan Mungghah Gunung Menjuluk* tradition as a dynamic and socially embedded religious practice in contemporary Javanese Islam. This study mobilizes the Living Qur'an framework as an analytical tool rather than a descriptive label by integrating it with Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge. Through Mannheim's tripartite model of meaning—objective, expressive, and documentary—the research investigates how gratitude operates simultaneously as a theological principle, a communal ethic, and a carrier of cultural memory. Drawing on ethnographic methods, including participant observation, in-depth interviews, and symbolic–narrative analysis, the study demonstrates that Qur'anic gratitude is not merely reproduced textually but is selectively articulated through culturally mediated ritual practices. The findings reveal that the *Kupatan Mungghah Gunung Menjuluk* ritual functions as a site of negotiation between Qur'anic authority and local cultural logic, particularly as the practice becomes institutionalized through processes of festivalization. In this context, gratitude is rearticulated in ways that prioritize social cohesion, moral education, and collective identity, while simultaneously reshaping the religious meanings attached to the ritual. Theoretically, this study advances Living Qur'an scholarship by moving beyond ritual description toward an analysis of religious meaning production, and contributes to broader debates in Islamic studies and the anthropology of religion by demonstrating how Qur'anic values operate as living moral resources that are continuously negotiated and reconstituted within culturally mediated religious practices in contemporary Muslim societies.

Keywords: Living Qur'an, Qur'anic Gratitude, Ritual Reception, Festivalization, Javanese Islam.

Abstrak

Kajian Living Qur'an telah berkembang pesat dalam menjelaskan bagaimana nilai-nilai Al-Qur'an dihayati dalam praktik keagamaan umat Islam, namun masih didominasi oleh pendekatan deskriptif yang menempatkan ritual lokal sebagai objek representasi simbolik semata. Akibatnya, proses bagaimana nilai Qur'ani dinegosiasikan, direkonstruksi, dan



dimaknai ulang dalam konteks perubahan sosial kontemporer belum memperoleh perhatian analitis yang memadai. Berangkat dari persoalan tersebut, penelitian ini mengkaji resepsi syukur Qur'ani dalam tradisi *Kupatan Mungghah Gunung Menjuluk* sebagai praktik keagamaan yang hidup dan dinamis dalam komunitas Muslim Jawa. Studi ini memosisikan pendekatan Living Qur'an secara aktif dengan mengintegrasikannya ke dalam kerangka sosiologi pengetahuan Karl Mannheim untuk menganalisis produksi makna syukur pada tiga level: objektif (struktur ritual dan konteks sosial), ekspresif (intensi dan pengalaman religius pelaku), dan dokumenter (memori budaya dan transmisi nilai). Melalui metode etnografis yang meliputi observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam, dan analisis simbolik-naratif, penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa syukur tidak diresepsi sebagai ajaran normatif-teologis semata, melainkan berfungsi sebagai etika komunal yang menopang kohesi sosial, legitimasi kultural, dan keberlanjutan tradisi. Temuan analitis mengungkap bahwa praktik *Kupatan Mungghah Gunung Menjuluk* merepresentasikan proses negosiasi antara otoritas teks Qur'ani dan logika budaya lokal, terutama ketika ritual ini mengalami institusionalisasi melalui festivalisasi. Dalam konteks ini, syukur Qur'ani direartikulasikan bukan melalui reproduksi literal teks, tetapi melalui praktik ritual yang selektif, simbolik, dan berorientasi pada kebutuhan sosial komunitas. Secara teoretis, penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan kajian Living Qur'an dengan melampaui deskripsi ritual menuju analisis produksi makna religius, serta memperkaya diskursus sosiologi agama Islam dengan menunjukkan bagaimana nilai Qur'ani beroperasi sebagai sumber moral yang hidup, dinegosiasikan, dan direkonstruksi dalam praktik keagamaan yang dimediasi secara kultural dalam masyarakat Muslim Indonesia kontemporer.

Kata kunci: Living Qur'an, Syukur Qur'ani, Resepsi Ritual, Festivalisasi, Islam Jawa.

Introduction

Although the Qur'an consistently frames gratitude (*shukr*) as a foundational ethical obligation and a marker of true faith, its lived manifestations in contemporary Muslim societies often diverge from its normative scriptural articulation. Gratitude is no longer expressed solely as an inward moral discipline rooted in individual piety and communal responsibility, but is increasingly materialized through collective rituals, public celebrations, and institutionalized religious events. This shift reflects a broader transformation in Qur'anic engagement, in which the Qur'an operates not only as a theological reference but as a social practice that actively shapes moral behavior, ethical discipline, and communal relations. Empirical studies demonstrate that Qur'anic teachings continue to cultivate social virtues such as collective responsibility, trust, and epistemic ethics within Muslim societies (Alshboul & Fawaris, 2023), while engagement with Qur'anic recitation and memorization fosters behavioral discipline and moral character formation (Mousi, 2021). Yet, a critical question remains: how are Qur'anic ethical values—particularly gratitude—preserved, reconfigured, or transformed when they are embedded within ritualized and festivalized forms of religious expression?

Qur'anic values are not confined to the realm of individual devotion but are institutionalized through collective practices and socio-religious programs. Qur'an-based

literacy and memorization initiatives strengthen spiritual attachment to the sacred text while simultaneously reinforcing social cohesion and discipline within communities (Mukhtar et al., 2023). Likewise, the integration of Qur'anic verses into educational curricula demonstrates how scriptural ethics are translated into lived moral orientations that guide everyday conduct and social interaction (Kadir et al., 2024). At a broader societal level, the Qur'an provides what Sardar (2022) conceptualizes as a "moral grammar" for constructing humane, just, and interdependent societies, where religious values are inseparable from social responsibility and collective well-being. While these studies affirm the socially formative power of the Qur'an, they also raise important questions regarding how Qur'anic values are mediated, institutionalized, and transformed when enacted through collective ritual frameworks.

Within contemporary Islamic scholarship, the Living Qur'an approach has emerged as a key analytical lens for examining how Qur'anic values are received, enacted, and reinterpreted in concrete social contexts. Studies in Indonesia, in particular, document diverse forms of lived Qur'anic reception, including ritualized recitation practices such as *Ngetaih Qira'ah* (Mandala et al., 2025), the integration of Qur'anic ethics into customary ceremonies like *Mappanre adek* among Bugis–Makassar communities (Basri et al., 2025), and negotiations between Islamic doctrine and cultural production among Muslim sculptors in Magelang (Mustofa, 2025). Collectively, these studies demonstrate that the Qur'an "lives" through processes of localization, cultural mediation, and ethical adaptation, shaping religious meaning beyond formal interpretation.

Despite this growing body of scholarship, Living Qur'an studies have largely prioritized descriptive documentation of ritual forms and symbolic meanings, often treating Qur'anic values as static ethical references rather than as dynamic social constructs. As a result, the processes through which Qur'anic values are produced, negotiated, and sustained amid social transformation remain analytically underexplored. Recent ethnographic research suggests that Qur'anic reception also involves materiality, social agency, and symbolic power that actively shape religious authority and meaning-making within communities (Sobirin, 2025). This insight calls for a critical reorientation of Living Qur'an studies—from cataloguing practices toward analyzing how meaning, power, and knowledge are socially constructed in lived religious experience.

This analytical gap becomes particularly salient in the context of the festivalization of religious rituals. Festivalization refers to the transformation of religious practices into organized public events that intersect with economic interests, cultural heritage agendas, and tourism. Such processes reconfigure rituals into arenas of negotiation among religious actors, state

institutions, and market forces, thereby reshaping religious representation and meaning (Hackett, 2022). Studies on ritual and modernity further demonstrate that religious traditions are continually reconstructed in response to globalization, migration, and socio-economic change, producing hybrid forms situated between piety, cultural identity, and symbolic economy (Ersal, 2024; Su, 2019). Yet, the implications of these transformations for the reception of Qur'anic ethical values remain insufficiently examined.

In Javanese Muslim society, collective expressions of gratitude are prominently embodied in the *kupatan* tradition, a post-ʿĪd al-Fiṭr ritual that combines food symbolism, social reconciliation, and religious celebration. Historically, *kupatan* has functioned as a medium of communal gratitude and social integration within Javanese Islam (Fatimah et al., 2025). In Sedayulawas Village, Lamongan, this tradition has evolved into *Kupatan Mungghah Gunung Menjuluk*, a communal ritual involving collective pilgrimage, shared feasting, and public expressions of gratitude. In recent years, this practice has been further institutionalized through the organization of the *Festival Kupat Lepet*, embedding the ritual within frameworks of village development, cultural heritage, and local tourism (Dwi Septian, 2023).

While previous studies have approached *kupatan* primarily as a cultural tradition and a mechanism of social harmony, explicit analyses that connect this practice to Qur'anic ethical values—particularly gratitude (*shukr*)—remain limited. Moreover, little attention has been given to how Qur'anic gratitude is rearticulated when ritual practices undergo festivalization and become embedded within institutional and socio-economic structures. This limitation underscores the need to enrich Living Qur'an scholarship with sociological perspectives capable of capturing the dynamic relationship between sacred texts, ritual practice, and structural change.

Addressing this gap, the present study examines the reception of Qur'anic gratitude (*shukr*) within the *Kupatan Mungghah Gunung Menjuluk* tradition in Sedayulawas Village through a Living Qur'an perspective informed by Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge. This study advances the hypothesis that Qur'anic gratitude within the *kupatan* tradition is not merely reproduced as a normative ethical doctrine but is actively reconstructed through ritual performance, cultural memory, and institutional mediation—particularly under conditions of festivalization. Rather than preserving gratitude solely as an inward moral obligation, the *kupatan* tradition reconfigures *shukr* into a collective, performative, and socially negotiated practice that reflects broader transformations in contemporary Indonesian Islam. Accordingly, this article aims to interrogate how Qur'anic gratitude is redefined and sustained within a ritual

tradition that simultaneously operates as a religious practice, a cultural heritage event, and a site of socio-economic negotiation.

Methodology

This study examines the reception of Qur'anic gratitude (*shukr*) as a lived religious value manifested in the *Kupatan Mungghah Gunung Menjuluk* tradition practiced in Sedayulawas Village, Lamongan, East Java. The primary unit of analysis is not the ritual event per se, but the process through which Qur'anic gratitude is interpreted, enacted, and rearticulated within a communal ritual context. Analytically, the study focuses on how *shukr* operates across ritual structures, participants' religious experiences, and symbolic representations that collectively sustain the tradition amid social and institutional change.

This research employs a qualitative ethnographic design. A qualitative approach is chosen because the study seeks to understand meaning-making processes, religious interpretation, and social negotiation rather than to measure variables or test statistical relationships. Ethnography is particularly appropriate for investigating lived Qur'anic reception, as it enables close engagement with ritual practices, embodied religious expressions, and the socio-cultural contexts in which Qur'anic values are reconstructed. The research is grounded in the Living Qur'an approach and theoretically informed by Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, allowing the analysis to move beyond descriptive accounts toward an examination of how religious meanings are socially produced.

The data for this study are drawn from multiple qualitative sources. Primary data consist of narratives and reflections obtained from key ritual actors, including religious leaders, village elders, ritual organizers, and community members who regularly participate in the *Kupatan Mungghah Gunung Menjuluk* tradition. These informants were selected purposively based on their roles, authority, and experiential knowledge of the ritual. Additional data were obtained from direct observations of ritual performances and festival activities, as well as from cultural artifacts and symbolic materials such as ritual food (*ketupat* and *lepet*), procession routes, ceremonial speeches, and locally circulated narratives. Secondary data include village documents, archival records, and media reports that document the institutionalization and festivalization of the tradition.

Data collection was conducted through participant observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and documentation of symbolic and narrative elements. Participant observation enabled the researcher to directly engage with ritual activities, observe patterns of participation, and capture embodied expressions of gratitude enacted during the ritual. In-depth

interviews were conducted to explore participants' understandings of *shukr*, their motivations for engaging in the ritual, and their perceptions of the tradition's transformation through festivalization and institutional mediation. Interviews were conducted in culturally appropriate settings and languages to ensure interpretive accuracy. In addition, symbolic elements such as food practices, ritual sequences, and commemorative narratives were documented to trace how gratitude is publicly expressed and culturally transmitted.

Data analysis followed an interpretive qualitative procedure guided by Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, particularly his distinction between objective, expressive, and documentary meanings. At the objective level, the analysis examined the structural organization of the ritual, its spatial-temporal arrangement, and its institutional context within village governance and cultural heritage initiatives. At the expressive level, interview data were analyzed to identify participants' intentions, emotions, and subjective religious interpretations of Qur'anic gratitude. At the documentary level, recurring symbols, narratives, and ritual repetitions were interpreted as expressions of collective memory and shared moral orientation. Through this multi-layered analytical strategy, the study elucidates how *shukr* is not merely derived from Qur'anic text but is actively reconstructed as a lived ethical practice shaped by social interaction, cultural mediation, and structural change.

Results and Discussion

A. Empirical Findings on the Reception of Qur'anic Gratitude

The empirical findings reveal a consistent pattern in the reception of Qur'anic gratitude (*shukr*) among the Muslim community of Sedayulawas Village. Gratitude is not understood merely as an individual theological disposition but as a shared moral value enacted through collective social practices. This pattern indicates that Qur'anic values tend to be more effectively internalized and sustained when embedded within communal traditions that are repetitive, participatory, and socially binding. Consequently, gratitude functions less as a private act of devotion and more as a collectively cultivated social ethic.

Structurally, the reception of gratitude within the Kupatan Mungguh Gunung Menjuluk tradition is articulated through an organized sequence of ritual activities. These include collective travel to Mount Menjuluk, communal consumption of ketupat and lepet, and reciprocal acts of forgiveness among villagers. Although these practices are grounded in Qur'anic teachings on gratitude, they are not accompanied by explicit recitation or citation of Qur'anic verses. Instead, the ritual structure itself operates as the primary medium through which Qur'anic gratitude is internalized, embodied, and reproduced within communal life.



Figure 1. Communal procession during the Munggah Gunung Menjuluk ritual.

Field data further demonstrate the presence of a relatively stable system of symbolic classification within the *kupatan* ritual. *Ketupat* is commonly interpreted as symbolizing human fallibility and moral imperfection, while its rice filling represents inner purity attained after the observance of Ramadan. The collective consumption of these foods—particularly at the summit of Mount Menjuluk—is understood as a symbolic enactment of self-purification, social reconciliation, and collective gratitude. These symbolic meanings are transmitted primarily through oral tradition and reinforced through the ritual's annual repetition, ensuring their continuity across generations.



Figure 2. Villagers participating in the kupatan ritual and communal meal.

At the ideological level, gratitude is received as a form of social ethics that integrates vertical devotion to God with horizontal relationships among community members. Gratitude is not confined to expressions of thankfulness toward the divine but is also perceived as a moral

obligation to maintain social harmony through generosity, mutual respect, and forgiveness. In this context, the *kupatan* ritual functions as a mechanism for normalizing Qur'anic ethical values within everyday social life, thereby reinforcing communal cohesion and collective moral responsibility.

A significant finding of this study is the presence of an omissive pattern in the reception of the Qur'anic text. This pattern is characterized by the absence of explicit Qur'anic citation or recitation during the ritual. Rather than being conveyed through sermons or formal exegetical instruction, the value of gratitude is communicated through symbols, embodied actions, and patterns of social interaction. This suggests that Qur'anic authority has been deeply internalized and operates implicitly, allowing scriptural values to be enacted without overt textual representation in the ritual setting.

The findings also reveal a structural transformation of the ritual through a process of festivalization, particularly marked by the organization of the *Kupat Lepet Festival*. Festivalization has increased the public visibility of the ritual, expanded participation beyond the immediate village community, and generated new economic opportunities for local residents. The involvement of village authorities, religious institutions, and youth organizations reflects a shift from a relatively private communal ritual toward a more public, institutionalized, and multifunctional cultural event.



Figure 3. The *Kupatan Munggah Gunung Menjuluk Festival* as a public cultural event.

Comparative observations indicate differences in emphasis among actors involved in the ritual. Activities led by senior community members and religious figures tend to foreground the spiritual dimension and religious meaning of gratitude. In contrast, activities organized by festival committees and youth groups place greater emphasis on cultural performance, public presentation, and audience engagement. This comparison highlights the coexistence of multiple

orientations—spiritual, cultural, and economic—within the same ritual framework, without necessarily negating its underlying religious significance.

In addition, the *kupatan* ritual functions as a medium for moral education and intergenerational transmission of values. Parents and community leaders intentionally use the ritual context to instill values of gratitude, humility, and social solidarity in younger generations. Visual documentation of ritual processes and social interaction among participants supports the finding that gratitude is received as a lived social value, practiced through everyday communal relations rather than understood solely as an abstract theological concept.

Overall, these results demonstrate that the reception of Qur'anic gratitude in the *Kupatan Mungghah Gunung Menjuluk* tradition operates across multiple dimensions—structural, symbolic, ideological, and practical. Gratitude is not reproduced as a purely textual doctrine but is reconstructed as a living communal ethic that adapts to social change, particularly under conditions of festivalization. These findings provide a strong empirical foundation and serve as a critical bridge to the subsequent discussion on how Qur'anic values function as dynamic moral resources within contemporary Muslim society.

B. Embodied Qur'anic Gratitude in Collective Ritual Practice

Qur'anic Gratitude (*shukr*) in the *Kupatan Mungghah Gunung Menjuluk* Tradition is primarily received and enacted through collective ritual practices rather than through explicit engagement with the textuality of the Qur'an. Activities such as communal pilgrimage to Mount Menjuluk, the shared consumption of *ketupat* and *lepet*, and mutual forgiveness among villagers serve as the main modes through which gratitude is expressed and internalized. These practices are carried out without formal recitation or citation of Qur'anic verses, yet participants understand them as legitimate expressions of Islamic teachings and acts of worship. This pattern is stable and recurrent in the annual ritual, demonstrating a model of Qur'anic reception that prioritizes collective praxis and social engagement over textual articulation.

Theologically, this community understanding aligns with the Qur'an's emphasis on gratitude as a core religious value. The Qur'an presents gratitude not merely as verbal expression but as devotion manifested in concrete actions and moral orientation. For instance, QS. Saba': 13 affirms that gratitude is part of servitude to Allah (Shihab, 2003), while QS. Al-Nahl: 78 emphasizes that divine blessings require reflective response and ethical praxis in human life (Al-Thabari, 2001). In the context of Sedayulawas, these theological imperatives are not received through textual instruction or formal exegesis but are enacted collectively, understood as concrete representations of Qur'anic teachings on thankfulness, reconciliation,

and acknowledgment of divine blessings. The kupatan ritual is thus not merely a cultural tradition but a living expression of Islamic values rooted in the Qur'an.

The dominance of collective ritual practices indicates that the internalization of Qur'anic gratitude does not primarily rely on textual literacy or explicit scriptural articulation. Instead, gratitude is shaped through social engagement, shared experience, and the repetition of institutionalized practices. In this context, the ritual functions as a medium for social cohesion, communal solidarity, and the affirmation of collective religious identity. As emphasized in ritual theory, repetitive and participatory practices possess strong efficacy in shaping moral dispositions and stabilizing shared values within a community (Bell, 1991). Through the kupatan ritual, gratitude transforms from a theological concept into a living ethical orientation, learned through direct involvement in social practice.

From the perspective of Living Qur'an studies, these findings affirm that the Qur'an operates as a living social practice, not merely as a normative text. Qur'anic values do not always appear in literal quotation but are "made alive" through symbolic action, social relations, and patterns of collective interaction. This aligns with Living Qur'an scholarship emphasizing that Qur'anic authority is often mediated through social reception and performative religious praxis, particularly within local traditions (Mustaqim, 2017). In the Kupatan Mungghah Gunung Menjuluk ritual, Qur'anic gratitude functions implicitly, shaping ritual structures and moral expectations without the need for explicit textual representation, consistent with Gade's (2010) concept of the Qur'an as an embodied presence in Muslim life.

Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge provides a relevant analytical framework for understanding this reception pattern. At the level of objective meaning, gratitude is embedded in the ritual structure itself—including collective journeys, communal meals, and institutionalized acts of forgiveness—which form a relatively stable social framework for enacting Qur'anic ethics. At the level of expressive meaning, participants' religious orientation is reflected in their subjective intention to express gratitude to God, maintain social harmony, and reinforce communal bonds. These levels demonstrate that Qur'anic meaning is not solely derived from the text but is produced and stabilized through repeated social practice (Mannheim, 1961).

It is important to note that the absence of explicit Qur'anic verse citation in the ritual should not be interpreted as a weakening of Qur'anic authority. Rather, it indicates a form of authority deeply internalized and operating implicitly through collective practice. This finding aligns with Talal Asad's (1993) argument that religious authority is formed through disciplinary practices and social formations, not solely through textual reference. In other words, Qur'anic

legitimacy in the kupatan ritual does not depend on explicit textual fidelity but on the capacity of Qur'anic values to sustain social cohesion, maintain communal harmony, and provide meaningful moral orientation for collective life.

Thus, the case of Kupatan Mungah Gunung Menjuluk demonstrates that the authority of the Qur'an can be effectively maintained and experienced without reliance on explicit textual articulation, as long as Qur'anic values are institutionalized in sustained collective praxis. Gratitude, as received in this tradition, is not merely an individual devotional sentiment but a communal ethic continuously reproduced through ritual participation. These findings challenge text-centric assumptions in Qur'anic studies and underscore the importance of the Living Qur'an approach in understanding how Qur'anic teachings function as a source of ethical life enacted in the daily social practices of Muslim communities.

C. Symbolic Mediation and Cultural Memory of Gratitude

Ketupat and *lepet* serve as central symbols in the Kupatan ritual, with meanings that are relatively stable and collectively recognized by the community of Sedayulawas. These symbols are not understood arbitrarily but are interpreted as representations of human moral conditions and processes of self-purification following Ramadan. The *ketupat*, with its intricate woven pattern, is widely interpreted as a symbol of human error and limitation, while the rice filling represents the inner purity cultivated through fasting. *Lepet*, consumed together with *ketupat*, complements this meaning as a symbol of togetherness and social cohesion. The stability of these symbolic meanings demonstrates that the Kupatan ritual operates through an institutionalized system of symbols that has been reproduced and transmitted across generations.

The use of cultural symbols in this ritual allows the integration of Islamic values within the framework of local tradition without creating normative tension. Rather than being perceived as practices contradictory to Islam, ritual symbols function as effective media for facilitating the internalization of Qur'anic ethics in the local cultural context. Through these symbols, gratitude is not conveyed as abstract doctrine but is experienced concretely through acts such as communal eating, sharing, and social reconciliation. This pattern illustrates how ritual symbols serve as effective instruments for transmitting the meaning of gratitude across generations via collective memory and repeated practice, as emphasized in recent studies on lived religion and value transmission through ritual (Ammerman, 2020; McGuire, 2008).

Within Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge framework, the ritual symbols of Kupatan primarily operate at the level of documentary meaning. At this level, meanings are not

always consciously reflected upon by participants but are “archived” in repeated cultural practices that are accepted as natural. Ketupat and lepet, as ritual symbols, record and preserve Qur’anic values of gratitude, self-purification, and social reconciliation in the form of cultural practices passed down through generations. Thus, Qur’anic values are present not only as expressive meaning of individual intentions but also as documentary meaning shaping collective moral orientation and communal identity (Mannheim, 1961).

The Living Qur’an approach provides an important analytical lens for understanding this process of symbolic mediation. From this perspective, sacred texts are not always reproduced literally in religious practice but are mediated through symbols, rituals, and living traditions within the community. Recent scholarship demonstrates that such symbolic mediation is often the primary mechanism through which Qur’anic values persist and adapt in culturally plural Muslim societies (Nasir, 2019). In the Kupatan ritual, the Qur’an is “present” not as a recited text but as a source of meaning articulated through cultural symbols accessible to all community members, including those without formal religious literacy.

Furthermore, these ritual symbols function as vehicles for the formation and maintenance of cultural memory. Through the annual repetition of the ritual, meanings of gratitude, human error, purification, and reconciliation are instilled as part of the community’s collective memory. This cultural memory not only connects the present generation with the past but also provides an interpretive framework for future generations to understand the relationship between Islam and local tradition. Contemporary anthropological studies of religion emphasize that symbol-mediated cultural memory is a key element in the sustainability of local religious practices amid social change (Assmann, 2011).

Therefore, the research findings indicate that local cultural symbols can serve as legitimate and effective media for the internalization of Qur’anic ethics in culturally plural Muslim communities. Ketupat and lepet do not merely represent Javanese cultural identity or post-Ramadan tradition; they function as instruments for transmitting Qur’anic values that operate at the level of praxis and collective memory. The case of Kupatan Mungguh Gunung Menjuluk demonstrates that the continuity of Islamic values within society does not always depend on textual reproduction but on the capacity of cultural symbols to mediate, preserve, and transmit Qur’anic ethics in everyday social life.

D. Festivalization and the Negotiation of Qur’anic Ethics

The Kupatan ritual in Sedayulawas has undergone significant transformation through the process of festivalization, manifested in the formal organization of the Kupat Lepet Festival.

This process involves new actors, such as village authorities, youth organizations, local religious institutions, and creative economy actors. Their involvement shifts the ritual from a relatively private communal practice to a scheduled public event, promoted and aimed not only at local villagers but also at a wider audience. This shift marks a change in the social structure of the ritual, moving from the internal space of the community to a more open and institutionalized public arena.

Festivalization creates a complex space for negotiating spiritual values, cultural identity, and economic interests. On one hand, institutionalizing the ritual in festival format increases the visibility of the tradition, broadens social participation, and opens economic opportunities as well as cultural sustainability for the local community (Dwi Septian, 2023). The Kupatan ritual not only persists but acquires a new form of continuity through administrative support, funding, and cultural promotion. On the other hand, some ritual participants express concern that the meaning of gratitude may shift from reflective religious ethics toward performative representations that emphasize spectacle, aesthetics, and public appeal (Amalia Dewi Muniroh, 2022). This tension reflects a common dilemma in the transformation of religious rituals in the modern era, where the preservation of values and social adaptation occur simultaneously.

Despite changes in form, festivalization does not entirely sever the ritual from its theological basis. Field data show that gratitude continues to be understood as a fundamental Qur'anic value to be enacted through tangible actions. In Sedayulawas, this theological understanding is articulated through core ritual practices, such as the annual pilgrimage to Mount Menjuluk, communal consumption of ketupat and lepet, and the tradition of mutual forgiveness, which the community perceives as concrete manifestations of the Qur'anic teaching on gratitude (Maitsun Al Azzah, 2024). Thus, even within the festival framework, the ritual is not reduced to a mere cultural event but remains positioned as an expression of lived Islamic values.

From the perspective of the sociology of religion, festivalization can be understood as a form of re-embedding religion into the modern public sphere. Rather than becoming privatized or marginalized, religious practices are renegotiated within the logic of the state, market, and popular culture. Religion does not disappear; rather, it is mediated through institutionalization, public representation, and economic interests (Gauthier, 2016; Taylor & Casanova, 2020). In this context, the Kupatan festival becomes an arena where Qur'anic values of gratitude interact with village governance, cultural tourism, and the local economy.

The Living Qur'an framework helps explain how Qur'anic values operate within this new field shaped by festivalization. The Qur'an is no longer primarily presented through

explicit textual citation but is “lived” through socially legitimized praxis maintained in a new format. Gratitude is mediated through collective action, public organization, and communal identity narratives on display. This process demonstrates that Qur’anic reception is dynamic and selective, negotiated in accordance with changing social contexts without necessarily leading to secularization of meaning (Calis, 2022; Kaltsum & Amin, 2024; Rozi & Zubir, 2024).

These findings further underscore that Qur’anic authority in festivalized rituals does not rely solely on textual fidelity but on its capacity to maintain social cohesion and sustain collective memory. Gratitude is not passively inherited but reinterpreted to align with local cultural logic and contemporary socio-economic demands. In this way, festivalization functions as a site of contestation and compromise, where Qur’anic ethics, local culture, and public interests interact.

Overall, the case of Kupatan Mungguh Gunung Menjuluk demonstrates that local Islamic rituals possess adaptive capacity to engage with modernity without losing their Qur’anic ethical foundation, provided that such transformations are reflectively negotiated by the community. This finding confirms that the Living Qur’an operates not only within traditional practices but also within the institutional and representational dynamics of contemporary Muslim societies.

4. Ritual as Social Pedagogy of Qur’anic Values

The Kupatan ritual functions as an effective medium for moral education, through which values such as gratitude, humility, and solidarity are transmitted to younger generations via direct engagement in collective practices. This pattern is significant because learning values through physical experience and social participation enables deeper and more sustainable internalization compared to verbal or purely doctrinal instruction. By providing a non-formal learning space, the ritual integrates abstract values into concrete actions, making them easier to understand and embody (Frishkopf, 2023; Kapitány & Nielsen, 2019). Evidence of this pattern is seen in children’s active roles in preparing ketupat and lepet, which are not merely practical tasks but symbolic lessons on self-reflection, errors, and moral purification. Furthermore, their participation in the pilgrimage procession to Mount Menjuluk and the tradition of mutual forgiveness serves as direct practice for internalizing solidarity and reconciliation. The annual repetition of the ritual reinforces this learning cycle, as repetition in community practices constitutes the core of social pedagogy that stabilizes collective norms and identity (Sudirman et al., 2025), a process also observed in Islamic value education through similar traditions in Malay communities (Rahmah et al., 2023). Thus, the Kupatan ritual establishes a systematic

pedagogical pattern in which Qur'anic values are transmitted through the active involvement of younger generations in the entire structure and sequence of ritual actions.

The pedagogical function of the Kupatan ritual demonstrates that non-formal learning spaces within religious practices serve as vital means for the preservation and regeneration of ethical values. This is particularly relevant in rapidly changing societies, where formal educational institutions often focus on the transmission of cognitive knowledge and may be less effective in cultivating attitudes and character (Hadi, 2019). In contrast, religious rituals provide spaces where values are learned holistically through direct experience, the exemplary behavior of elders, and social participation that fosters a sense of belonging. The effectiveness of this form of pedagogy is supported by research showing that engagement in structured religious practices offers holistic benefits. For instance, Qur'anic recitation has been found to support both mental and physical well-being, providing a psychological foundation for effective value learning (Hasim et al., 2023). In the context of Kupatan, children learn gratitude not by listening to lectures, but by directly experiencing the blessings of the harvest and sharing their provisions with others. The role modeling of religious and community leaders in leading the ritual serves as a "living model" that is observed and emulated, a process referred to as "religious enculturation," which is essential for the sustainability of the tradition (Sa'idah & Nursaid, 2024). Therefore, this reflection emphasizes that rituals function as a living school of values, complementing and deepening character education beyond the formal classroom.

Within the framework of the Living Qur'an, the Kupatan ritual can be interpreted as a form of social pedagogy that instills Qur'anic ethics through praxis, while Karl Mannheim's theory provides a lens to explain the mechanisms of religious knowledge reproduction within it. This perspective allows for a deeper understanding of how sacred texts "come alive" and are transformed into stable social behaviors, moving beyond merely descriptive approaches (Hidayat & Khaq, 2024). Mannheim's sociology of knowledge enables an analysis of how the objective meaning of rituals, the subjective experiences of participants, and the inheritance of cultural documents intersect in the process of value education. Qur'anic texts, particularly in their enacted and ritualized forms, are closely intertwined with local cosmology, mystical theology, and protective traditions (Abidin et al., 2023; Afsaruddin, 2002). At the objective level, the fixed structure and sequence of the ritual create a stable framework for these values; at the expressive level, participants' intentions and religious engagement during the ritual constitute subjective experiences that reinforce values, foster collective emotional bonds, and consolidate beliefs (Hasan, 2025); and at the documentary level, symbols such as ketupat and cultural narratives function as "documents" that archive and transmit ethical knowledge across

generations, embedding it within social structures. By integrating the Living Qur'an framework with Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, it becomes evident that value pedagogy in the ritual is a complex process of producing and reproducing meaning, institutionalized through repeated social practices.

Findings on the pedagogical function of the Kupatan ritual underscore the broad potential of local Islamic rituals as an effective alternative for Qur'anic value education outside formal institutions. This generalization is particularly relevant in diverse, tradition-based Muslim societies, where overly standardized and textual approaches to value education often fail to resonate with local socio-cultural realities (Darwis et al., 2024). Deeply rooted local rituals provide authentic and contextual channels for transmitting Islamic ethics in ways that are more adaptive and meaningful. This potential is evident in the Kupatan practices in Sedayulawas, where Qur'anic values are internalized through culturally shared mechanisms. Similar patterns have been observed in Muslim communities in Southeast Asia and Latin America, where rituals serve as primary avenues for the social embedding of religious ethics (Safi'i, 2021). The resilience of this pedagogical model to social change, including festivalization, has been documented in studies on the adaptation of Islamic traditions in the modern era (Bin Zakaria et al., 2025), and is further supported by arguments that community-based pedagogy is more robust in the face of disruption (Popielarz, 2024). Therefore, local Islamic rituals merit recognition and support as vital subsystems of value education, capable of significantly contributing to character formation and social cohesion in contemporary pluralistic Muslim societies.

E. Rethinking the Living Qur'an beyond Descriptive Approaches

The findings demonstrate that Kupatan rituals extend far beyond mere symbolic representation of religious motifs; they constitute complex and dynamic processes of meaning-making. Within these enacted spaces, Qur'anic values are actively interpreted, negotiated, and embedded into the social and cultural fabric of the community. Participants do not simply follow ritual scripts; instead, they engage in practices that mediate between sacred teachings and lived experience, allowing values such as gratitude, solidarity, and humility to become integral to communal life. This active participation highlights the agency of community members in shaping and sustaining religious understanding. By embedding Qur'anic ethics into tangible practices—such as the preparation and distribution of ketupat, communal pilgrimages, and mutual forgiveness—Kupatan rituals illustrate how sacred texts are “lived” and

operationalized in culturally specific ways, making them both socially meaningful and morally instructive (Hidayat & Khaq, 2024; Abidin et al., 2023).

Overreliance on descriptive approaches in Living Qur'an studies risks reducing rituals to mere cultural artifacts, detaching them from the social and epistemic processes that generate and sustain meaning. Descriptive accounts often overlook how participants internalize, reinterpret, and institutionalize Qur'anic values within their everyday interactions and communal structures. Without attention to these dynamics, scholars may fail to capture how lived religious practices actively shape ethical behavior and community cohesion. Rituals are not static; they are sites where values are continuously negotiated, contested, and reaffirmed through embodied practice. Ignoring these dimensions can lead to partial or superficial understandings of the Living Qur'an, neglecting the ways in which ethical norms are socially embedded, culturally mediated, and experientially reinforced within Muslim communities (Frishkopf, 2023).

Applying Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge provides a multi-layered analytical framework to examine the reception and enactment of Qur'anic teachings in ritual contexts. This perspective moves beyond description to reveal how religious meanings are produced, negotiated, and institutionalized across different social levels. Scholars can examine the interplay between the objective structure of rituals, the subjective experiences of participants, and the documentary-cultural legacies that frame communal understanding. By doing so, the analysis exposes the mechanisms through which Qur'anic values are continuously reproduced, adapted, and sustained within the community. Rituals thus function as living repositories of ethical and spiritual knowledge, dynamically integrating theological principles with local practices, social norms, and cultural memory, demonstrating the active negotiation between sacred authority and lived experience (Mannheim, 1964; Gauthier, 2016).

The study ultimately provides a critical and theoretically informed model for advancing Living Qur'an research that is applicable across diverse Muslim contexts. By foregrounding the dynamic, negotiated, and institutionalized nature of Qur'anic practice, this framework enables scholars to understand how sacred texts "come alive" in social, cultural, and economic arenas. It emphasizes the active processes through which communities reproduce and reinterpret values, showing that religious authority is not merely textual but socially enacted and experientially grounded. This model encourages moving beyond descriptive accounts toward analytical and comparative studies, allowing for a nuanced understanding of how Qur'anic ethics are maintained, adapted, and transmitted across time and space in ways that are culturally resonant and socially embedded (Safi'i, 2021; Darwis et al., 2024).

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that the Kupatan ritual in Sedayulawas functions as a living medium for Qur'anic value education, rather than merely representing religious symbols or cultural artifacts. Through active participation in ritual practices—such as preparing ketupat and lepet, pilgrimage to Mount Menjuluk, and traditions of mutual forgiveness—values such as gratitude, solidarity, and humility are internalized holistically by younger generations. The transformation of the ritual through festivalization further illustrates its flexibility and adaptive capacity, balancing Qur'anic authority, local cultural identity, and socio-economic demands, thereby maintaining relevance and meaning in contemporary contexts.

This study contributes both theoretically and methodologically to Living Qur'an research. By integrating Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge with a multi-level analysis of ritual practices, it highlights how Qur'anic values are produced, negotiated, and institutionalized within social and cultural contexts. The analytical model developed offers a framework to understand the Qur'an as a "living" text, wherein ritual enactments, participants' subjective experiences, and cultural documentation interact to sustain ethical continuity and social cohesion. These findings also expand the understanding of how local Islamic rituals adapt to modernity without losing their Qur'anic ethical foundation.

Despite its significant insights, this study has limitations, including its focus on a single community and one type of ritual, which restricts generalization across contexts. Future research could adopt comparative studies across different regions or ritual types to examine the consistency of findings and variations in practice. Additionally, further exploration of the impact of festivalization on perceptions of Qur'anic values and its interaction with the creative economy could enrich understanding of the dynamics of the Living Qur'an in contemporary Muslim societies.

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