



The Sufi Values of *Tapa Bisu* in the *Kirab Malam Satu Suro* at Surakarta Palace

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Abstract

The *tapa bisu* ritual, practiced during the *Kirab Malam Satu Suro* at the Surakarta Palace, is a spiritual tradition passed down through generations. However, its meaning has shifted, with public focus turning toward the albino buffalo as a material symbol, overshadowing the practice's spiritual essence. This study aims to rediscover the Sufi values embedded in *tapa bisu* by exploring the inner experiences of its practitioners. Using a qualitative field research approach, the study applies Edmund Husserl's phenomenology to explore lived experiences and Max Scheler's value hierarchy to categorize the spiritual values found. Data were gathered through observations, in-depth interviews with cultural figures and practitioners, and literature analysis. The findings reveal that *tapa bisu* cultivates core Sufi values, *muhasabah* (self-reflection), *zuhud* (detachment), *tawakal* (trust in God), *sabar* (patience), and *syukur* (gratitude). These values, rooted in inner discipline and divine connection, show the esoteric intersection between Javanese tradition and Sufism. The practice's emphasis on self-restraint and introspection also offers contemporary relevance, particularly in addressing modern issues such as hate speech, cyberbullying, and identity crises through spiritual resilience. This study offers a new perspective on local Sufism and fills a gap in the study of the *kirab malam satu suro*, which has often overlooked the spiritual dimension of *tapa bisu* and instead focused on the albino buffalo as a material symbol.

Keywords: *Tapa Bisu*; Sufism; Javanese Tradition; Phenomenology; *Kirab Malam Satu Suro*.

Abstrak

Praktik *tapa bisu* yang dijalankan dalam tradisi *Kirab Malam Satu Suro* di Keraton Surakarta merupakan praktik spiritual yang diwariskan secara turun-temurun. Namun, makna spiritualnya mengalami pergeseran, ketika perhatian publik lebih tertuju pada simbol material berupa kerbau albino yang diyakini membawa berkah, sehingga esensi spiritual *tapa bisu* semakin terabaikan. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengungkap nilai-nilai tasawuf yang terkandung dalam *tapa bisu* melalui eksplorasi pengalaman batin para pelakunya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan lapangan dengan jenis kualitatif, penelitian dengan mengaplikasikan fenomenologi Edmund Husserl untuk memahami pengalaman hidup pelaku, serta teori hierarki nilai Max Scheler untuk mengkategorikan nilai-nilai spiritual yang muncul. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam dengan tokoh budaya dan pelaku tradisi, serta kajian pustaka tentang spiritualitas dan tasawuf. Hasil temuan menunjukkan bahwa *tapa bisu* memuat nilai-nilai inti tasawuf seperti *muhasabah* (refleksi diri), *zuhud* (melepaskan diri dari keinginan duniawi), *tawakal* (percaya penuh kepada Tuhan), *sabar* (kesabaran), dan *syukur* (rasa syukur). Nilai-nilai ini berakar pada kedisiplinan batin dan hubungan spiritual dengan Tuhan, menunjukkan titik temu antara tradisi Jawa dan tasawuf terletak pada dimensi esoterisnya. Penekanan pada pengendalian diri dan refleksi dalam *tapa bisu* juga relevan untuk menjawab persoalan kontemporer seperti ujaran kebencian, perundungan daring, dan krisis identitas melalui ketangguhan spiritual. Penelitian ini menawarkan perspektif baru tentang sufisme lokal dan mengisi kekosongan dalam kajian *kirab malam satu suro* yang lebih fokus menyoroti kerbau albino sebagai simbol material.

Kata Kunci: *Tapa Bisu; Sufisme; Tradisi Jawa; Fenomenologi; Kirab Malam Satu Suro.*

1. Introduction

The spread of Islam in the Nusantara, particularly since the 13th century, was significantly influenced by Sufi missionaries who emphasized acculturation rather than confrontation with local beliefs, as noted by AH John (Patmawati, 2019). In Java, this syncretism formed a distinctive religious identity, visible since the Islamic Sultanates of Demak, Pajang, and Mataram. One example is the adaptation of the Islamic lunar calendar into the Javanese calendar system, still used in traditional rituals such as *malam satu suro*, the Javanese New Year that aligns with 1 Muharram in the Hijri calendar. The integration of Islamic teachings with local culture also gave rise to distinct forms of spiritual practice, one of which is asceticism influenced by Sufi values.

In the Surakarta Palace, the *kirab malam satu suro* procession remains a key cultural-religious ritual. Central to this is the practice of *tapa bisu*, a silent, meditative walk symbolizing self-restraint and spiritual reflection. However, in recent years, the focus has shifted to the presence of Kyai Slamet, the sacred albino buffalo believed to bring blessings, indicating a move from spiritual practice toward symbolic-material fascination (Rudianto et al., 2020).

Islamic spirituality emphasizes inner purification and closeness to God through disciplines such as *tasawuf*. *Tapa bisu*, when viewed through a Sufi lens, reflects this effort of self-purification and spiritual introspection. For this study, sufistic values are defined as teachings or behaviors that align with the ethical-spiritual path of Sufism, which can be practically observed in daily actions, as noted by Naan (Fadilah, 2014). This approach allows us to explore how spiritual values are embedded in *tapa bisu*. This study argues that the practice of *tapa bisu* within the *kirab malam satu suro* ritual contains deeply embedded Sufi values. These values, such as self-discipline, silence, and inward reflection are essential components of the Sufi path and remain meaningful in today's search for spiritual authenticity in Javanese society.

Several studies have explored the *Kirab Malam Satu Suro* tradition at the Surakarta Palace, primarily from cultural, symbolic, and historical perspectives. Azis examined the spiritual meaning of the *kirab* in the context of Javanese-Islamic syncretism, focusing on Sultan Agung's effort to align the Javanese and Islamic calendars (Azis, 2023). Paramesti, Sudiarna, and Suarsana analyzed the symbolic and structural functions of the heirloom procession, emphasizing its role in seeking divine blessing and prosperity for the palace and the nation (Paramesti et al., 2023). Rudianto, Widaningrum, Widiyahseno studied the perception of the albino buffalo (*Kyai Slamet*) as both a sacred object and a means of Islamic propagation in Ponorogo (Rudianto et al., 2020). Safitri, Sohiebussafa'ah, and Arlin explored students' perceptions of the ritual, revealing popular beliefs in the mystical power of the buffalo and interpretations of the procession as both spiritual and touristic (Safitri et al., 2019).

While these studies touch upon certain spiritual dimensions, none has specifically addressed *tapa bisu* as a focused spiritual practice through a Sufi lens.

This study fills that gap by exploring how Sufi values such as patience, silence, surrender, and asceticism are embodied in the *tapa bisu* procession. Using a phenomenological approach, this research analyzes the lived spiritual experiences of practitioners and how these reflect a dynamic synthesis of Islamic spirituality and Javanese court tradition.

2. Method

This research uses a qualitative field research design, applying a transcendental phenomenology to understand the subjective experiences of individuals participating in the *tapa bisu* tradition during the *kirab malam satu suro*. The study adopts the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, which emphasizes the essence of lived experience through processes of intuition and reflection (Rorong, 2020). This approach is employed to uncover how participants interpret and internalize the spiritual dimensions of the ritual, especially the sufistic values within *tapa bisu*.

Data collection was conducted through participatory observation and in-depth interviews with eight *tapa bisu* practitioners of diverse backgrounds. The interviews were conducted over an extended period from July to December 2024. The participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their active involvement in the *tapa bisu* ritual during the *kirab malam satu suro* at the Surakarta Palace. Selection criteria included age variation, socio-cultural background, and level of participation, to ensure a diverse representation of experiences. The eight participants ranged in age from 20 to 63 years old and included retired civil servants, royal family members, students, and workers. This diversity enriched the study by providing a broad perspective on the inner spiritual dimensions of *tapa bisu*.

The data were then analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's model, which involves familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, identifying and reviewing themes, and interpreting them (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These experiential themes were interpreted using Max Scheler's theory of value hierarchy, which distinguishes between sensory, vital, spiritual, and religious values (Scheler, 1973). Ethical consideration were strictly observed. All participants were informed about the purpose and scope of the study and provided informed consent before participating. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured through the use of pseudonyms and secure data handling.

Through this framework, the study reveals how the practice of *tapa bisu* reflects an integration of sufistic values and Javanese cultural spirituality. By focusing on participants' lived experiences, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the relationship between Islamic spirituality and local cultural practices, as well as to reintroduce the authentic spiritual meaning of *tapa bisu* in the contemporary context of the Surakarta Palace tradition.

3. Result and Discussion

Values serve as enduring standards of behavior, justice, and beauty that are passed down through generations. In this study, the values observed in the *tapa bisu*

practice during the *kirab malam satu suro* are analyzed using Max Scheler's hierarchy of values, which classifies values into four levels: sensory, vital, spiritual, and religious. According to Scheler, individuals tend to prioritize higher values by sacrificing lower ones (K. Azizah & Putra, 2024). This framework helps identify the sufistic values reflected in participants' experiences.

3.1. Hierarchy of Values in *Tapa Bisu*

Scheler's hierarchy of values consists of four levels: pleasure values, vital values, spiritual values, and holy values (Scheler, 1973). In the context of *tapa bisu* during the *kirab malam satu suro* at the Surakarta Palace, these values manifest in the lived experiences of the eight participants (P1–P8, personal interviews, July–December 2024).

At the lowest level are pleasure values, which pertain to physical comfort. *Tapa bisu* practitioners consciously walk barefoot and refrain from eating, drinking, and speaking as a form of bodily discipline (P1, P2, P3). Instead of seeking physical ease, they deliberately transcend these pleasures in pursuit of deeper spiritual purposes.

Beyond physical discomfort, practitioners also relinquish vital values, which include health, strength, and basic needs. Their acts of *laku prihatin*, such as abstaining from food, drink, and social interaction, reflect an intentional transition from preserving vitality to embracing hardship for spiritual aims (P3, P5, P6). Several participants described the experience as comparable to fasting, not only in terms of abstaining from food and drink but also in controlling emotions and desires (P2, P6).

This leads into the realm of spiritual values, which, according to Scheler, can only be accessed after transcending pleasure and vital values. These include inner virtues such as patience, empathy, and a connection to nature. Many practitioners stated that silence and self-restraint during *tapa bisu* cultivated patience and emotional sensitivity (P5, P6). They restrained anger, avoided speech, and experienced collective stillness that fostered compassion and solidarity (P2, P5, P6). Walking barefoot was also interpreted not merely as a ritual act but as a means of reconnecting with nature and deepening ecological and spiritual awareness (P2, P5, P8). Some described the act as dissolving the boundaries between self and environment, inviting humility and introspection (P5, P8).

This phenomenological depth, where lived experience meets inner meaning resonates with Husserl's concept of *noesis* and *noema*. Participants reported a heightened existential awareness, a sharper perception of personal shortcomings, and a sense of connection with something greater than themselves (P2, P5, P8).

At the top of Scheler's hierarchy are holy values, which are grounded in the sacred and relate to the divine-human relationship. In *tapa bisu*, these values are expressed through spiritual surrender, simplicity, and ascetic practice. Participants described silence as a form of *tawakal*, or complete submission to the will of God (P1, P3, P8). They wore traditional modest clothing and avoided idle speech or indulgences, reflecting inner purity. For many, *tapa bisu* became a form of *tirakat* or ascetic discipline, performed to welcome the Islamic New Year with spiritual

readiness (P3, P5, P6, P8). Their restraint became an inner offering, a way to draw nearer to the Divine.

Gratitude also emerged as a central theme. Participants expressed thankfulness for health, community, and the opportunity to take part in such a sacred procession (P3, P5, P6, P8). The silence of *tapa bisu* became more than abstention, it transforms into a space for inner dialogue and deepened spiritual awareness. Some reported feeling watched over or guided, interpreting this as evidence of divine presence (P1, P3, P8).

The spiritual experiences felt by the eight *tapa bisu* practitioners align with those of the researcher during the *kirab malam satu suro*. The classification of these experiences draws on John Calvin's concept of spirituality, defined as internalizing and living out faith amidst the complexities of life. Calvin sees spirituality as both personal and social (Banawiratma, 2017). While spiritual values may not always culminate in full spirituality, holy values always point toward the Sacred (Scheler, 1973). In *tapa bisu*, values like patience, surrender, and ascetic practice reflect a striving toward the Divine, blending both Sufi and cultural dimensions into a deep expression of faith.

The attainment of closeness to God illustrates the relationship between humans and the Divine. Surrender reflects a deep internalization of faith and total devotion to God, while patience, sensitivity to nature, simplicity, ascetic practice, and gratitude serve as ways to express faith in worldly life. Javanese cultural figure, Budayaningrat states that Javanese society believes in the presence of God within the human self. A *tapa bisu* practitioner, identified as P1, experienced an inner dialogue, indicating a state of transcendence and unity with God referred to as *manunggaling kawula Gusti*, the ultimate feeling of divine presence within oneself.

Manunggaling Kawula Gusti is a Javanese concept that signifies the union between humans and God, though not in a literal sense. The term "*manunggal*" means unity, derived from "*tunggal*," which means "one." (Nugroho, 2020). "*Kawula*" refers to the servant or subject (Hidayat et al., 2023). "*Gusti*," meaning God, is derived from "*Bagusing Ati*," symbolizing the goodness of the heart (Endraswara, 2012). This union is a spiritual immersion, where the human experience a profound connection with God, aligning their actions and thoughts with His will. However, the concept is often misunderstood due to the term "*Gusti*" being associated with a personification of God, leading some to believe that humans and God become indistinguishable. This misinterpretation could suggest pantheism or monism, but *manunggaling kawula Gusti* is not related to either (Sidqi, 2017). Instead, it represents a profound spiritual experience where the servant of God perceives everything around them as a manifestation of the Divine. In Javanese culture, this is considered the highest level of spirituality (Nugroho, 2020).

3.2. Sufi Values in *Tapa Bisu*

According to Hamka, Sufism is the purification of the soul and an effort to avoid desires that lead to harm and suffering (N. Azizah & Jannah, 2022). In his *tasawuf modern*, Hamka asserts that Sufism is not a flight from the world, but a way of

purifying the soul in the midst of worldly life (Amrullah, 2023), a goal that aligns with the essence of *tapa bisu* in the *kirab malam satu suro* at the Surakarta Palace. *Tapa bisu* aims to foster true happiness through self-discipline and awareness of God, self, others, and nature, reflecting the presence of spiritual values. These values, such as patience, humanity, sensitivity to nature, surrender, simplicity, asceticism (*tirakat*), and gratitude align with Calvin's concept of spirituality.

In identifying these Sufi values, the study draws on a definition offered by Naan, a mind healing therapist, who describes Sufi values as teachings, advice, and concepts rooted in the classical and contemporary traditions of Sufism. This definition provides a practical lens for interpreting the Sufi dimensions of *tapa bisu* through the lived experiences of its practitioners.

To broaden the theoretical framework and enrich the reading of these values, the thoughts of classical Sufi figures are also included. For instance, Junaid Al-Baghdadi's concept of *fana*, the annihilation of the ego in divine presence (Pratama, 2024), resonates with the self-effacing silence and *tirakat* observed in *tapa bisu*. Rabia'ah al-Adawiyyah's teaching of unconditional divine love (*Mahabah*) is echoed in the motivation to perform *tapa bisu* as a sincere act of devotion, not driven by reward or fear (Hajar et al., 2021). Meanwhile, Ibn Arabi's doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud* (the unity of being) finds expression in the experiences of some participants, who described a sense of oneness with the divine during the procession.

Thus, while this study centers on Hamka's perspective as a locally grounded and contextually relevant voice, the integration of classical Sufi thinkers and the practical definition by Naan expands and strengthens the interpretive framework. It allows for a deeper understanding of *tapa bisu* as a living expression of Sufi values embedded in Javanese cultural tradition.

3.2.1. *Zuhud in Tapa Bisu*

The attitude of *zuhud* in the *tapa bisu* practice during the *kirab malam satu suro* at the Surakarta Palace is reflected in the simplicity of participants' clothing. Male participants wear *Jawi Jangkep*, including batik, a head covering, black traditional attire, and a *keris*, which symbolizes masculinity (Rudyanto, 2015). Female participants wear black *kebaya* and a hair bun (*sanggul*), the latter required during *wilujengan* and the *haul* of Pakubuwono X. According to cultural figure, Budayaningrat (personal interview, July 1, 2024), the black attire represents serenity. A participant (P5) remarked that walking barefoot in simple attire, such as *jarik* and *kebaya*, reflects sincerity in drawing closer to God. This simplicity signifies the presence of *zuhud* values in *tapa bisu*.

Hamka states that *zuhud* does not mean hating the world. *Zuhud* does not make a person weak. According to Hamka, a *zuhud* individual does not mind living in poverty, nor do they mind living in wealth. A person who practices *zuhud* is not concerned about possessing great wealth or becoming a millionaire. Whether they have wealth or not, they do not forget Allah or neglect their religious duties (Amrullah, 2023). The attitude of *zuhud* in the practice of *tapa bisu* is reflected in the simplicity of the clothing worn. This simplicity signifies that participants of the *kirab malam satu suro* are not attached to worldly possessions. Furthermore, this simplicity indicates that the individual's focus is on drawing closer to God, rather than seeking attention or fixating on material concerns. *Zuhud* in sufism aligns with *wicaksono*, which is regarded as a superhuman level of spiritual wisdom in *kebatinan*.

(Javanese mysticism). Those who deeply embrace *kejawen* (Javanese spiritual teachings) often attain *wicaksono*, or wisdom, and adopt the principle of *mungkur ing kadonyan*, which means renouncing worldly desires in favor of spiritual fulfillment (Fadilah, 2014). Thus, it can be concluded that *tapa bisu* in the *kirab malam satu suro* tradition embodies *sufi values*, particularly *zuhud*, which is demonstrated through the practice of wearing simple clothing.

3.2.2. *Muhasabah in Tapa Bisu*

Silence in *tapa bisu* makes the process of *muhasabah* (self-reflection) easier. In *Kejawen*, silence holds a deep meaning. Surakarta Palace court servant stated that silence in *tapa bisu* serves as a medium for introspection and as a form of spiritual practice (*tirakat*) that sharpens inner awareness and enhances spirituality (Lebdodipuro, personal interview, July 1, 2024). In Islam, silence is also considered a noble act. It is a fundamental step that helps individuals avoid actions that could harm themselves or others (Puniman, 2018). Silence offers many benefits, including serving as a tool for introspection, training self-control, reducing stress, fostering wisdom, and demonstrating humility. These various benefits show that practicing silence for *muhasabah* can significantly improve a person's quality of life.

The term *muhasabah* is derived from the Arabic root *hasaba-yuhsibu*, which means "to calculate" or "to evaluate." *Muhasabah* refers to self-examination or self-reflection. Al-Ghazali defines *muhasabah* as the process of reviewing both past and future actions in detail (Ahmad, 2018). It serves as a means to eliminate negative traits within oneself. *Muhasabah* is carried out by identifying and correcting one's shortcomings to improve moral and spiritual character (Kahfi et al., 2023). *Tapa bisu* encourages individuals to reflect on and evaluate their past and future actions. This practice, performed during the *kirab malam satu suro* at Surakarta Palace, is part of the Javanese New Year commemoration. As a Javanese tradition, *tapa bisu* serves as a medium for self-introspection. The purpose of *tapa bisu* aligns with that of *muhasabah* both aim to purify the soul and deepen spiritual awareness. Through *tapa bisu*, individuals can develop several key realizations, including awareness of oneself and one's past mistakes, awareness of the responsibility to protect nature, awareness of the importance of maintaining good relationships with others. Thus, *tapa bisu* embodies the essence of *muhasabah*, guiding individuals toward self-purification and heightened spiritual consciousness.

Muhasabah aligns with the Javanese spiritual concept of *sangkan paraning dumadi*, which also emphasizes awareness. *Sangkan paraning dumadi* encourages individuals to remain conscious of their origin (*Sangkan*) and ultimate purpose (*Paran*) in life. Introspection serves as a means to understand *sangkan paraning dumadi* by reflecting on one's actions, intentions, and life purpose. The *tapa bisu* practice during the *kirab malam satu suro* at Surakarta Palace supports awareness of *sangkan paraning dumadi* by emphasizing the importance of self-introspection and self-discipline in an individual's spiritual journey (Putra & Widodo, 2024). Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the internalization of *sufi values* in the form of *muhasabah* within *tapa bisu* is manifested through self-reflection in

silence. The spiritual awareness gained from this reflection encourages individuals to draw closer to God.

3.2.3. *Tawakal in Tapa Bisu*

According to Hamka, *tawakal* means surrendering all matters and decisions to Allah, but only after making an *ikhtiar* or effort (Abdul Rouf & Yusoff, 2013). He emphasizes that true reliance on God should always be preceded by human effort. Several symbols in the *tapa bisu* practice reflect the element of surrender during the *kirab malam satu suro*. An *abdi dalem* (royal servant) of Surakarta Palace stated that the use of incense and frankincense in the *kirab malam satu suro* aligns with the Prophet Muhammad's sunnah, which encourages the use of fragrances (Lebdodipuro, personal interview, July 1, 2024). The Prophet preferred fragrant places and clothing, which is why many mosques have a pleasant scent. In Javanese culture, traditional ceremonies incorporate incense and frankincense as a source of fragrance (Sulistyorini, 2021). A cultural and traditional figure, Wandansari (personal interview, July 12, 2024), mentioned that during incense burning rituals in Surakarta Palace, the officiant is required to recite *salawat* (prayers for the Prophet) three times. The rising smoke from the incense symbolizes prayers ascending to God, spreading a pleasant fragrance as a spiritual offering. As the incense burns, it gradually diminishes, symbolizing the impermanence of human life. This aspect serves as a reminder to *tapa bisu* participants that life is temporary (*fana*). The act of burning incense also represents a form of supplication, where people acknowledge their weaknesses and seek God's protection and guidance (Syaripulloh et al., 2024). One of the key prayers offered during *kirab malam satu suro* is a plea for safety and well-being. This act of supplication signifies human dependence on divine help, reinforcing the essence of *tawakal*, where individuals recognize their limitations and entrust their fate to God's will.

A symbol of supplication is also reflected in the presence of *janur* at Surakarta Palace during the *kirab malam satu suro* tradition. According to cultural and traditional figures, *janur* found around the Surakarta Palace symbolizes a plea for divine light or guidance from Allah. The word *janur* is an abbreviation of *sejatining nur*, meaning "the essence of light" (Wandansari, personal interview, July 12, 2024). Another interpretation suggests that *janur* is derived from the Arabic phrase *Ja'a Nur*, which means "a beam of light has arrived" (Tsany & Zakiyah, 2023). Regardless of the interpretation, both perspectives share the same essence *janur* serves as a symbol of supplication for divine guidance from Allah SWT. This act of seeking guidance reflects human limitations and the need to surrender to God's will. However, this surrender is not passive, rather, it is accompanied by effort (*ikhtiar*), as demonstrated in the practice of *tapa bisu*. Through self-discipline and introspection, participants seek to control their desires, reflect on their sins, and deepen their spiritual awareness.

The journey in *kirab malam satu suro*, carried out through *tapa bisu*, holds a deep meaning. Cultural and traditional figures state that this journey symbolizes surrender and acceptance of whatever fate God has destined for a person (Budayaningrat, personal interview, July 1, 2024). This journey of submission gives

rise to the attitude of *sumeleh*, which means letting go or surrendering. *Sumeleh* represents the ultimate level of surrender after making efforts and is considered the highest stage of moral maturity. It can be achieved by individuals who are emotionally mature, free from personal attachments, and capable of detaching from worldly concerns. This attitude is embraced by those who acknowledge their weakness and seek divine protection and guidance (Yoachim & Suryanti, 2020).

The *kirab malam satu suro* at the Surakarta Palace is not only a symbol of surrender and hope for safety but also represents the spiritual journey of humans toward God. Every step, along with its challenges, must be taken to reach the ultimate goal. This journey also reflects the path of a sufi toward God. Behind the various prayers offered to Allah through symbols such as incense, frankincense, and palm leaves, *tapa bisu* in the *kirab malam satu suro* can be seen as an act of surrender symbolized by the journey itself. However, this surrender is accompanied by effort. This is evident in one of the prayers during *tapa bisu*, which is a plea for safety, expressed through the act of carrying weapons such as keris and spears (*pusaka*) throughout the procession.

3.2.4. Sabar in Tapa Bisu

Hamka believes that patience (*sabar*) and trust in God (*tawakal*) are two interconnected and inseparable concepts. According to Hamka, patience is an attitude that reflects the greatness and discipline of the soul. It is achieved through self-control, perseverance in facing trials, and gratitude to Allah while upholding piety (Hadi, 2018). Patience is a crucial element in an individual's spiritual journey. It means enduring hardships with resilience, without resentment or surrender (Ardiyani, 2018). *Tapa bisu* in the *kirab malam satu suro* encourages individuals to cultivate patience by exercising self-control, restraining desires, and enduring discomfort. The self-discipline practiced in *tapa bisu* is not only related to resisting temptations but also to maintaining composure and handling various challenges throughout the procession.

A *tapa bisu* practitioner, identified as P5, stated, "There are definitely challenges sometimes from fellow participants, sometimes from the surrounding audience. For example, being invited to talk, or offered drinks, and so on. This happens because not everyone understands the true essence of *tapa bisu* itself" (Personal interview with P5, July 1, 2024). This statement from practitioner P5 highlights that self-control in *tapa bisu* goes beyond resisting basic desires such as eating and drinking. It also involves maintaining respectful interactions with the surrounding community and practicing patience when faced with various distractions and challenges. These aspects align with Hamka's concept of patience, which is developed through trials, self-restraint, and endurance in facing discomfort.

One form of patience (*sabar*) in Javanese culture is *lila*. An individual who possesses patience will adopt an attitude of *lila*, which means accepting everything sincerely and without complaint. In *Serat wedhatama*, *lila* signifies a willingness (*rela*) that embodies sincerity without regret. *Rela*, as described in *serat wedhatama*, does not only mean accepting loss but also enduring humiliation without resentment (Nugroho, 2020). A cultural figure, Budayaningrat (personal interview, July 1, 2024),

stated that *tapa bisu* teaches self-control by discouraging retaliation against wrongdoing. For example, when someone is insulted, *tapa bisu* teaches individuals to remain silent rather than retaliate. A person who is treated poorly yet does not respond with hostility holds a higher spiritual status. This is reflected in the Javanese proverb "*Wani ngalah luhur wekasane*", which means *those who are willing to yield will be elevated by God*. Thus, *lila* can be understood as an expression of patience in Javanese society, which can be cultivated through the practice of *tapa bisu*. This reinforces the idea that *tapa bisu* in the *kirab malam satu suro* instills self-control, particularly in the form of patience and sincerity when facing mockery from others, by restraining oneself from responding with negativity.

3.2.5. Syukur in Tapa Bisu

Hamka interprets gratitude (*syukur*) as a symbol of thankfulness to Allah. Gratitude is not only expressed through words but is also reflected in actions (Wibisana & Rha'in, 2024). This sense of gratitude is experienced by practitioners of *tapa bisu* during the *kirab malam satu suro*. Similar to *tapa bisu* in other traditions, the procession is carried out barefoot (Dewi, 2018). Walking without footwear is a form of gratitude to God for the blessing of feet that can step and feel the textures of the earth (Thoriq et al., n.d.). Beyond being an expression of thankfulness for God's blessings, this journey also symbolizes unity with nature, surrender, and humility before God. Lebodipuro, an *abdi dalem* (royal servant) of the Surakarta Palace (personal interview, July, 1, 2024), stated that unity with nature is believed to facilitate the fulfillment of prayers. Walking barefoot carries the deeper meaning that humans must go through life with patience and perseverance just as participants endure discomfort while stepping on the earth without footwear during the procession.

The discomfort experienced by practitioners during the journey reflects their sincerity in seeking closeness to God. In Javanese society, this sincere effort to draw near to God is known as *tirakat* or *laku prihatin*. In Sufism, a similar concept involving physical discipline is called *riyāḍah*, which means spiritual training or exercise. *Riyāḍah* is practiced as a form of *mujāhadah*, or struggle an intense effort to free oneself from desires and seek Allah's help in overcoming temptations and distractions. Linguistically, *riyāḍah* means "teaching and training" (Kahfi et al., 2023). In Sufi teachings, it refers to spiritual exercises such as *zikr* (remembrance of God) or periods of solitude dedicated to worship and contemplation. It is a continuous practice aimed at suppressing worldly desires and strengthening spiritual discipline (Hermawan, 2021). *Tapa bisu* is a form of *tirakat* or *riyāḍah*, serving as a means to purify the soul, aligning with the concept of *laku prihatin* in Javanese culture.

In addition to being a form of self-restraint, walking barefoot during *tapa bisu* embodies a deeper sense of gratitude by allowing participants to directly experience the blessings of life with full awareness in every step. This journey, as an expression of gratitude and surrender, reflects the attitude of *narima*, as taught by Sultan Agung in *tri prakara*. *Narima* means "to accept." In Javanese, it is associated with the adjective *nriman*, which describes a person who sincerely accepts their circumstances (Nugroho, 2020). Someone with the *nriman* attitude wholeheartedly

embraces everything in life with gratitude, accepting whatever God has ordained. *Nriman* carries the meaning of remaining grateful even in times of hardship or difficulty (Yoachim & Suryanti, 2020).

Tapa bisu in the *kirab malam satu suro* is not merely a tradition aimed at preserving Javanese culture. It also contains Sufi values. The silence in *tapa bisu* serves as a means to achieve self-awareness through introspection. This practice incorporates *zuhud* (asceticism) by embracing simplicity, training individuals to detach themselves from worldly attachment. The challenges faced during *tapa bisu* symbolize the patience (*sabar*) required by seekers (*salik*) to attain closeness to God. Participants also practice *tawakal* (trust in God) by fully surrendering themselves to Him. Additionally, *tapa bisu* encourages human awareness of gratitude (*syukur*) toward God. The peak of the spiritual experience in *tapa bisu* is a profound sense of closeness to God, which varies among individuals. Some may feel the presence of God within themselves, symbolizing a sense of union with the Divine. From this explanation, it can be concluded that *tapa bisu* in the *kirab malam satu suro* embodies sufi values such as *zuhud*, *muhasabah* (self-reflection), *tawakal*, *sabar*, and *syukur*. The intersection between *tapa bisu* and Sufism lies in their esoteric dimension, which emphasizes spiritual depth through self-discipline, soul purification, and an inner connection with God. This idea is reinforced by Harini's view that the esoteric nature of Sufism allows it to intersect and merge with other traditions, including Javanese traditions, which are deeply rooted in inner spirituality (Harini, 2019).

In addition, the practice of *tapa bisu*, which is rich in symbolic elements such as silence, the use of incense, and the procession around the palace while carrying heirlooms, can elicit critical responses from scripturalist-oriented Islamic groups. For some Salafi or Wahhabi groups, such symbols are considered to lack foundation in the pure teachings of Islam based solely on the Qur'an and Sunnah. They tend to view practices like *tapa bisu* as more reflective of cultural syncretism than legitimate acts of worship in accordance with Islamic law.

However, referring to Marshall G. S. Hodgson's concept of the Islamicate, *tapa bisu* can still be understood as part of the cultural expressions that emerge and develop within Islamic civilization, even though it may not directly originate from formal Islamic doctrine (Hodgson, 1977). The Islamicate encompasses everything inspired by Islamic civilization, including art, customs, spiritual practices, and local traditions that may not be normatively *shar'i*, yet still reflect a profound Islamic ethos.

Through this lens, *tapa bisu* can be seen not only as a preservation of Javanese culture but also as part of the distinctive legacy of Islam Nusantara. It embodies universal Sufi values such as *muhasabah* (self-reflection), *zuhud* (asceticism), *tawakal* (trust in God), *sabar* (patience), and *syukur* (gratitude), while also demonstrating an integration between Islamic spirituality and local wisdom.

4. Conclusion

Based on this research, it can be conclude that the *tapa bisu* practice in the *kirab malam satu suro* at the Surakarta Palace contains both *spiritual values* and *holy*

values, as categorized by Max Scheler's value hierarchy. These include patience, humanity, sensitivity to nature, surrender to God, simplicity, ascetic practice (*tirakat/laku*), and gratitude. In particular, the act of surrender to God reflects a deep sense of faith and total devotion to the Divine, while other values represent concrete ways to live out spirituality in the midst of worldly life.

This study finds that *tapa bisu* embodies Sufi values, *muhasabah* (self-reflection), *zuhud* (asceticism), *tawakal* (trust in God), *sabar* (patience), and *syukur* (gratitude), which are often regarded as central to the Sufi path. These values are not only theoretical but are experientially enacted by *tapa bisu* participants. This reveals an active and living expression of Sufism within Javanese ritual practice, especially one that has often been overlooked or reduced to symbolic-material spectacle.

The main contribution of this research lies in identifying the esoteric intersection between *tapa bisu* and sufism. By using a phenomenological lens and Scheler's value theory, the study articulates how inner discipline, Silence, and spiritual detachment practiced in *tapa bisu* reflect a Sufi orientation toward purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*). This supports Harini's view that Sufism's esoteric character allows it to merge harmoniously with local traditions. Thus, this research broadens the discourse on local Sufism by showing how Javanese rituals like *tapa bisu* serve as indigenous expressions of Sufi Spirituality, rooted in personal transformation rather than formal dogma.

5. Bibliography

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