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Amulet Installation and Incense Burning Ritual in Sumenep Noble Society Residence

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ABSTRACT

Health is the very basic needs for every human being. Traditional health system is widely focused on treatment (curative), although there are other efforts, such as prevention (preventive), before treatment effort is done. Regarding the improvement of the public health status, this effort has a very strategic position, as it is cheaper in financing and easy in execution. This research was conducted to analyze the behavioral health concept of traditional cultures found in amulet installation and incense burning ritual in the residence. This research used qualitative method called phenomenology approach, whereas the research data were obtained using literature studeis and indepth interview. The result showed that amulet installation and incense burning ritual on the residence had the meaning to control lust for avoiding impulse behavior that was able to suffer the human life, regarding the fact that health was not only observed in physical aspects. However, if it was reviewed from the modern health science point of view, this behavior had to do with health and/or disease occurrence. Factors that influenced health were from internal factor within the body, such as lust control and external factor, such as the environmental condition around the human being, whereas sickness was influenced by behavior, spells, environment, and destiny factors. The prevention efforts to stay healthy was with the natural human behavior and human capability in controlling lust.

Keywords: behavior; traditional; lust; health sick concept

INTRODUCTION

Health is a basic need for every human being in various orders and levels of life without separating gender, age, class or tribe. When the condition of person experiences disorder, it will become sickness which has consequences to be unable to work and is justified as the reason for leaving the job, that ultimately results in a productivity decrease and earnings for a person or a company⁽¹⁾.

Health understanding has multi definitions, though there is already a health concept according to guidelines of World Health Organization the (WHO) in 1981: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity ", or it could be said as the state of physically, spiritually and socially on a person, besides spared from the disease and flaws⁽²⁾.

The health concept stated by WHO was adopted by Indonesia in UU No. 36/2009 with the following modification: Health is a state of well-being of the body, soul, and social life that allows everyone lives in productive way socially and economically. This proves that health is a holistic nature aimed as the purpose of the public health.⁽³⁾

The health concept understanding is subjective, wherease it is based on the knowledge of each person, specific ethnic community groups, particular social status. This subjective character will able to be used as a reference for the Government for maintaining particular health program, which often does not match with the community will. Society that still upholds ideas, values, and cultural norms in the fulfillment of needs as daily activities, in other words culture and customs are able to maintain and give directions to mankind who surely will influence the behaviour in maintaining health of individuals, families, communities.⁽⁴⁾

Based on the results of *Riset Kesehatan Dasar* (Riskesdas) in 2010, 59.12% residents of all age groups, male and female, both in rural and urban areas used herbal medicine, which was a product of native traditional medicine in Indonesia. This percentage went up in 2013 until 95.60% and 61.02% of it had felt its benefits.⁽⁵⁾

Based on the results of the *Survei Sosial Ekonomi Nasional* (National Socio-Economic Survey) the utilization of traditional medicine for the treatment (self care) were increasingly growing in 2014, reaching 61.05%.⁽⁶⁾

Leach (2013) mentioned that the majority of the population in developed countries, including Australia, Canada (59-60%), United States (62%), Singapore (76%) and Japan (50%) used complementary alternative and traditional medicine for at least one time in a year. Even in the Southern Asian country, 80% of the population regularly used traditional, alternative and complementary medicine.⁽⁷⁾

Traditional health system was well known for the new focus on treatments (curative), as well as another effort, which was prevention (preventative) before treatment effort done. Regarding the status of public health improvement, those efforts had a very strategic position, as they had cheaper price and easily executed.⁽⁸⁾

Health, illness and disease were part of the humsn environment needed response. Attempts to obtain health care was a form of human reactions to the environment. This reaction could vary depending on the perception and knowledge of people regarding th occurrence causes of illness and disease. The way to obtain health could also be diversed, as one person with others could be different or the same.⁽⁹⁾

Reality based on the preliminary studies conducted by Asyim (2017), the noble society in Sumenep became the personal reference for society in general were related to the health practice conducted by them still upholds ideas, values, and cultural norms in Sumenep Madura for fulfilling the daily life needs, which was in other words, maintaining the culture and customs direction that would affect the traditional health behavior.⁽¹⁰⁾

Human was defined based on Sumenep Madura cultural theory from physical and spiritual or body and soul, which was practically in further condition had three main elements, such as minds, hearts (taste), and physical. These elements were certainly not separated from the human interests in life or life demanded norm that still upheld the institution rules for achieving harmony between individual and environment.⁽¹¹⁾

House as a residence, shelter, and rest (sleep) place, became one of the symbols in the life grammar to the inhabitants. There was a presumption that between home, land, and its inhabitant that they were one inseparable unity, having the function of aesthetic, social, and health. Traditional society in house establishment had certain considerations which were mystically sufficient reasoning for the sake of the inner peace.⁽¹²⁾

Based on the preliminary studies (2017), supported with literature studies conducted, this research had purpose to unveil the traditional concept of maintaining health behavior found in amulet installment and incense burning ritual in the residence.⁽¹³⁾

This tracing and documentating the traditional culture for maintaining health through a research is vitally important to uncover the local cultural environment and the local culture as well as preserving the community resources in health field.

Purpose of this study is analyze the traditional way of mantaning health behavior presented on amulet installation and incense burning ritual in Sumenep noble society residence.

METHODS

This study applies qualitative method with phenomenological approach. This is due to the researcher's interest in analyzing the traditional health behaviors in detail and thoroughly. The study was conducted in Kepanjin, Sumenep District, East Java, with reason that most of the Sumenep nobility live in that area, which is known as "*loteng*" ("loft") as well as becoming the informant in this research for the Sumenep nobility serves as the "*personal referene*" to the general community regarding traditional health practices. The time of the study was conducted in August 2017.

The data collection was conducted through literature study which aims to complete the reference and serve as the guide as well as provision which is useful either before or after research, with implementation in the field, the primary data collection was conducted through in-depth interview, which is the main technique used to obtain more complete and detailed information about amulet installation and incense burning ritual in the residence.

RESULT

Culture and customs maintain and guide direction to human beings on the society life. Perfectly built residence may not necessarily be left well enough alone, as it should be installed a special amule on top of the main door, presenting at the back, thus acquiring the tranquility and escaping from the disease coming from the lust and satan.

Residence control against jin and satan disturbance, which affected to the residence owner, such as unable to maintain the lust, is presented on the amulet photo installed above the main door in one of the informant houses below:



Figure 1. The picture of amulet taken from personal documentation as the residence control against jin dan satan influence to reach perfection in life

The amulet shape is clearly presented on the pictures below:



Figure 2. Amulet shape

Above pictures were kinds of amulet shape that were often found and used (see fig. 2), showing the amulet installed in one of informant residence (the right side figure) (see also fig. 1). Amulet was made from cow, goat, or camel dried skin, even clear glass as the base layer based on personal taste. The most important part of the amulet scratched a positive meaning, which was Ayah Kursi designed in a good shape using colored ink as follows:

“Allaahu laa ilaaha illaa huwal hayyul qayyuum. Laa ta’khudzuhuu sinatuw wa laa naumu. Lahuu maa fissaawaati wa maa fil-ardhi man dzalladzii yasyfa’u ‘indahuu illaa bi-idznih. Ya’lamu maa baina aidiihim wa maa khalfahum wa laa yuhiithuuna bisyai-im min ‘ilmihii illaa bimaa syaa-a wa si’a kursiyuhussamaawaati wal-ardha walaa ya-uuduhuu hizhuhumaa wa huwal-‘aliyyul-‘azhiim”.

(Translation: Allah, There is no God but He, the living, eternal, self-subsisting, ever sustaining. Neither does somnolence affect Him nor sleep. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth, who can intercede with Allah except by His leave? Allah know all that is present in front and behind them, and they have no idea from Allah knowledge, except He will. His seat extends over heavens and earth, Allah never tires protecting them, and Allah is all high and supreme).

Amulet making should be done on Special Friday evening on the beginning of Asyura’ month (1 Muharram), while the making process was done after 3 months and the maker should keep wudlu during the making process.

Apart from the role of amulet, there was a special ritual performed in order to avoid inhabited residence from the influence of Jinn and satan. Incense burning ritual was performed on every Special Friday evening, which was applied on each corner of the residence building before adzan maghrib. Incense burning ritual in the residence is presented on figures below:

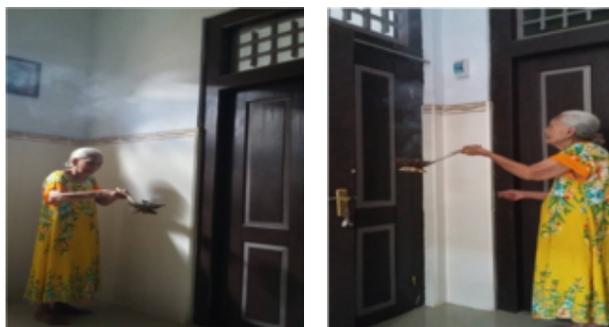


Figure 3. The pictures of incense burning ritual taken from the personal documentation as the residence control against jin and satan disturbance to reach perfection in life

Special Friday evening incense was different from types of incense used for body fragrances or women clothes, besides having a distinctive fragrance, while in terms of price was also much more expensive, because it had more the seasoning/potion. The shape of incense and the charcoal used for burning are presented on the following figures:



Figure 4. The shape of incense



Figure 5. Charcoal for burning the incense

The basic ingredients of incense was made from Agarwood that was cut in small shape and mixed with special spice that had been grinded, such as Gebang Palm, Kasturi Musk, *onem*, honey oil, Aromatic Ginger, lime leaves, brown sugar. All ingredients are cooked and dried.

Every Special Friday evening, the noble society always performs the ritual of burning incense. An incense material to perform in this ritual is always available at their residences, as part of the traditional custom that they should keep.

DISCUSSION

Noble society are traditional society in Sumenep that hereditary still hold the cultural mores from their ancestor in everyday life. They believed that unless caused by a physical sign, health could also be caused by things non physical and unseen. In response to the causes of the health disorder occurrence, every community could have variations in terms of the way to resolve and undertake the preventive efforts.

The same reasons could also be imposed on spiritual health aspect, the community understanding on the nature was not only limited to the real one (world), but also including the unseen world. The unseen world had contributions on manifesting health rights on the body as the embodiment of real nature. Amulet installation

and incense burning ritual in the residence was the manifestation of natural and supernatural interaction, which impacted on keeping health and hindering various health disorders.

In addition feeling a threat from the spirits, amulet installation could fortify the residence inhabitants and remind them to always recite Ayah Kursi contained in the amulet as Moslems, making their hearts and minds feel calm. The ritual of burning incense was undertaken for obtaining a serenity of the fragrance produced. Burning incense would give calm, pleased, or happy feeling as well as increasing endorphin hormone production, which could relieve pain by blocking opioid receptors on nerve cells, leading to the disruption of pain signal conduction, affecting brain cells to help improve memory and concentration, triggering the formation of natural killer cell as the part of the immune system, thus making it not easier to get sick or attacked by the disease.

Health science as modern science discipline had different attention with traditional health sciences, though the goal was the same, that was achieving a healthy life. Modern health science certainly did not know or incorporate with the traditional elements in analyzing a cause of the disease onset (etiology). Modern health science would not come to the conclusion that the unseen world of the Jinn and Satan were participated as the cause of the health disorder occurrence. Traditional health science in understanding the nature was not only limited to the real world, but also including the unseen world.

Sofora (1982: 26) stated that good health according to traditional nationality in the world was a harmony relationship between all things existing around humankind, with God, seen, and unseen creatures.

Humans were originated from physical and soul or spiritual, having three main elements, such as *minds, hearts and thoughts (taste)*, and *physical* which were certainly not separated with the human interests in living. The human five senses were equipped as a place to receive all the stimuli from the outside of the body into the human body. Humans were also equipped with lust, consisting *alutamah, amarah, supiah, and mutmainah* lust, whereas more subtle lust including *mardiyah, rodiyah, latifatus siri, and latifatus sabaiyah* lust.

Lust or will was the impetus affecting human to perform activities or stimuli originated from the outside of human body and received by five senses. It needed an effort to control the lust included in determining the guidelines of a simple life, in excessive in fulfilling the living needs as well as wishful thinking that had an impact on the sad hearts and minds which eventually brought misery in the inner self.

It is important to realize things concerning the "spiritual" matter that is invisible, as all secrecy are known by Allah. Therefore, the first secured matter in humankind is "spirit/soul", which is the origin of life occurrence in human, hoping to always behave well and not causing a misery.

To understand the origins of spirit, it needs to look thoroughly that only one source of life that is the source of life, that is Allah *Subhanahu Wata'ala* (The God Almighty), of which there is only one that turn and move the whole life in this world. The essence of Allah (the Almighty) blew/relegated to the world to enter the human body, becoming a life that had previously testified against Allah. The lust control inside the human can be explained as follows:

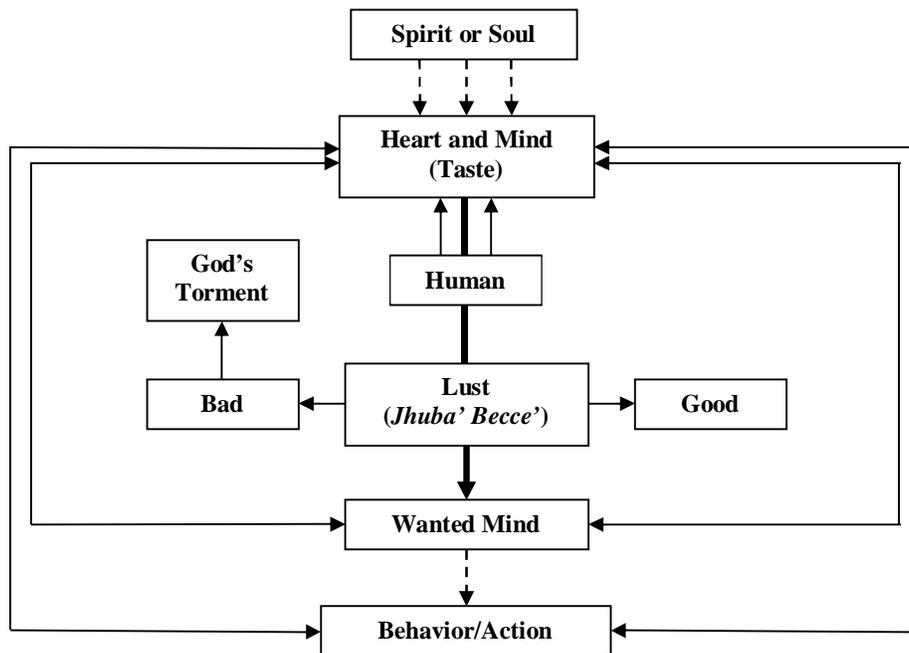


Figure 5. The lust control inside the human

Based on the observations of this research, the formation of fetus as the entry place of this spirit, it was all originated from the affection relationship of men and women who continued with the agreement to conduct a marriage. After marriage, as a manifestation of compassion, there was an intimated relationship between men and women (sex), resulting in the merging of sperm (male) and egg (female) called by the fertilization.

Women would be given the sign of paused menstruation, as it was called as pregnancy, which was considered began at the age of 1 month, 3 months and growing precisely at a time. When the age of pregnancy reached at 3 months 10 days, spirit breathed into the embryo. This was in line with the modern opinion from Suwono in Physiology Obstetrics (2009), who stated that at the age of 3 months, fetal life began to have a fetal heart rate, showing a sign of life. This gestational age was usually celebrated by the community called "salameddhan" of 3 months and 10 days life, meaning the life inclusion, sustenance, and already expected as beginning to have a human life. Pregnancy was developed in the next 7 months and the community celebrated that age as the physical perfection called "salameddhan peret kandung". When pregnancy reached at the age of approximately 9 months 10 days, giving birth was happening at this moment.

CONCLUSION

The concept of traditional health disruption in Sumenep noble society that was represented as amulet installation and incense burning ritual in the residensi to reach perfection in life was conducted to control the lust possessed by the residence owner. Based on the the modern health science point of view, this behavior had to do with health and/or disease occurrence, as there was no contradiction and even had the same purpose for achieving the highest health degree.

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