

An Anthropological Study Using Van Gennep's Rites of Passage

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ABSTRACT:

Background: Religious traditions that have developed within Indonesian society reflect the integration of local cultural values with Islamic teachings. One such tradition is the house cleansing ritual in Beringin Jaya Village, Baebunta Selatan Sub-district, Luwu Utara Regency, which is understood as a spiritual means to ward off misfortune, dispel negative energy, and seek blessings. This phenomenon demonstrates how the Qur'an is brought to life in daily practices, making it relevant to be examined through the Living Qur'an approach.

Aims: This study aims to analyze the process of traditional house cleaning based on Arnold Van Gennep's rites of passage theory and describe the community's perceptions of the meaning and function of this tradition in their spiritual and social lives.

Methods: The study employs a qualitative method with a *field research* design. Primary data was collected through observation, interviews with six key informants, and documentation, while secondary data was obtained from relevant literature. Data validity was ensured through triangulation techniques, and analysis was conducted using a descriptive-analytical approach, linking the findings to Van Gennep's theory.

Result: The results of the study indicate that the traditional house cleansing ritual is divided into three stages: separation, transition, and incorporation. Reciting verses from the Qur'an, such as Surah al-Fāṭīḥah, Ayat al-Kursi, Surah Al-Falaq, and An-Nas, serves as a means of purifying the house, warding off evil, and calming the soul. The community's perception of this tradition is very positive, as it is believed to revitalize the house, strengthen social bonds, and foster spiritual peace.

Conclusion: The results of the study indicate that the traditional house cleansing ritual is divided into three stages, namely separation, transition, and *incorporation*. Reciting verses from the Qur'an, such as Surah al-Fāṭīḥah, Ayat al-Kursi, Surah Al-Falaq, and An-Nas, serves as a means of purifying the house, warding off evil, and calming the soul. The community's perception of this tradition is very positive, as it is believed to revitalize the house, strengthen social bonds, and foster spiritual peace.

Keywords: Tradition, House Cleaning, Living Qur'an, Zikir, Rites of Passage

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INTRODUCTION

Research on religious traditions in Indonesian society is always interesting to study because it shows how local culture and religious teachings interact in everyday life (Mangunsong & Fitria, 2019; Otta, 2015; Prayogi & Rizqi, 2022; Susanto et al., 2020) . One tradition that is still practiced by the community of Beringin Jaya Village, Baebunta Selatan Sub-district, Luwu Utara Regency, is the house cleansing ritual. This tradition is not merely understood as a physical activity of cleaning the living space but is also believed to have spiritual significance, including efforts to ward off misfortune, drive away negative energy, and seek blessings from Allah SWT (Widyanti & Yasin, 2023) . In this context, the Qur'an is not merely treated as a text to be read, but is truly brought to life in religious practices, thereby reflecting the concept of the Living Qur'an, which is the primary focus of this study.

Previous studies have shown that the practice of zikir, which is at the core of the house cleansing tradition, plays a significant role in strengthening spirituality and calming the soul (Afief, 2023; Niswah et al., 2025; Nurfadilah & Roziah, 2024; Sajidah et al., 2024; Yunata, 2024) . For example, according to Al-Ghazali, zikir can influence a person's psychology to be more calm and less easily distracted (Maftuhin & Yazid, 2025; Septrianto & Taqwa, 2024; Waluyo, 2023) . Meanwhile, Ahmad Asmuni's research shows that zikir contributes to improving a person's quality of life and happiness. On the other hand, research on the Antama Balla tradition in Bugis Makassar describes how the ritual of cleansing a new house is carried out with barzanji as a form of actualizing Islamic teachings. Although these studies touch on aspects of zikir and rituals, specific research highlighting the connection between house cleansing and the Living Qur'an and linking it to Van Gennep's anthropological theory remains scarce, thereby opening up opportunities for new research (Gazit, 2019; Hochner, 2018; Thomassen, 2013) .

The research gap is becoming increasingly apparent because most previous studies have focused more on the psychological effects of zikir or on other rituals such as circumcision and death ceremonies (Sartini, 2021; Thaib, 2018) , while the tradition of house cleansing has not been widely studied within a broader conceptual framework. There has been no in-depth analysis of how the community interprets the verses of the Qur'an through the processes of separation, transition, and reunion as described in Arnold Van Gennep's theory of rites of passage (Hamsah, 2020; Purnomo, 2007) . Such research is important because it can demonstrate that communities have unique ways of bringing sacred texts to life in the social and cultural sphere, while also highlighting the relevance of the Qur'an in addressing the spiritual needs of the community.

This urgency forms the rational basis for this study. The tradition of house cleaning in Beringin Jaya Village is not merely a customary practice but also reflects the integration of Islamic teachings and local values. Van Gennep's anthropological approach, which divides rituals into stages of separation, transition, and reintegration, offers a new perspective for understanding this tradition, where the Qur'an is not merely a text but a living energy guiding community behavior. Thus, this study not only enriches contemporary exegetical studies but also offers an interdisciplinary understanding that connects religious texts, social phenomena, and local culture.

The purpose of this study is to describe in detail the traditional house cleaning process carried out by the people of Beringin Jaya Village, as well as to analyze their perceptions of this tradition. Furthermore, this study aims to reveal the symbolic meaning of each stage of the house cleaning process based on Arnold Van Gennep's theory of rites of passage and relate it to the concept of the Living Qur'an. By examining these two aspects, this study's is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of exegesis, religious anthropology, and religious social studies, while also providing practical benefits for the community to better understand the relevance of the traditions they practice in the context of their spiritual life.

Based on this framework, this study proposes the initial hypothesis that the tradition of cleaning the house not only functions as a form of social and cultural ritual, but also has a strong religious meaning because it is based on a belief in the power of prayer and recitation of the Qur'an. This tradition is believed to be a form of actualization of the Living Qur'an at the community level, which, through stages of separation, transition, and reintegration, is able to provide spiritual experiences, foster optimism, and strengthen social cohesion within the community. Thus, the results of this study are expected to demonstrate that the Qur'an is truly alive in the daily practices of the community, not merely as a text to be read, but as a real-life guide in maintaining inner peace and harmony within the household.

Theoretically, this research contributes to enriching the study of the Living Qur'an and religious anthropology by presenting an empirical analysis of how sacred texts are brought to life through socio-cultural practices. Its practical contribution is to provide a deeper understanding for the community regarding the spiritual and social values of the tradition of house cleansing, so that it can continue to be preserved while also serving as an example of the actualization of the teachings of the Qur'an in everyday life.

METHOD

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative research design with a field research approach, in which the researcher directly visits the location to explore data on the tradition of house cleaning in Beringin Jaya Village. This approach was chosen because it provides a more in-depth and holistic picture of the Living Qur'an phenomenon in the daily practices of the community. Specifically, this study is descriptive-analytical in nature, meaning it describes the reality in the field based on empirical data, then analyzes it using Arnold Van Gennep's rites of passage theory to uncover the religious and social meanings behind the ritual processes performed.

Participant

The participants in this study were members of the Beringin Jaya community who had been directly involved in the house cleaning tradition, either as practitioners or recipients of the tradition. They consisted of homeowners, leaders of the Majelis Zikir Bersama (Joint Zikir Council), local religious leaders such as the village imam, and congregants who participated in the activity. The selection of participants was based on their direct involvement in the practice, enabling them to provide valid and authentic information about the implementation and community perceptions of the tradition.

Population and sampling methods Instrumentation

The research population included all members of the Beringin Jaya community who were familiar with or had participated in the house cleaning tradition. From this population, the researchers selected a sample using *purposive sampling*, which involved choosing informants who were considered to have the best understanding of the research phenomenon. A total of six participants were interviewed in depth, including religious leaders, homeowners, and members of the Majelis Zikir Bersama (Joint Zikir Council). The interview instrument included a structured list of questions about the ritual process, the recitation of the Qur'an used, and the community's perceptions of the meaning of the tradition. The validity of the instruments was ensured through triangulation techniques, which involved combining observation, interviews, and documentation, thereby ensuring the reliability of the data. The reliability of the data was strengthened through repeated verification of information from the same sources at different times to ensure consistency in responses.

Instruments

In this qualitative study, the primary instrument is the researcher himself, who functions as data collector, analyst, and interpreter of information. Additional instruments are used to support the data collection process, such as structured interview guidelines, field notes, voice recorders, and cameras or other visual documentation tools. The use of these instruments is intended to ensure that the data obtained is not only verbal narratives but also visual evidence that reinforces the description of how the house cleaning tradition is carried out.

Procedures and Time Frame

The research process was conducted in several stages. First, the pre-field stage consisted of initial observations to identify traditional house cleaning practices still carried out by the community. Second, the data collection stage involved direct observation of ritual activities, in-depth interviews with six key informants, and documentation in the form of photos, videos, and related archives. Third, the data verification stage through triangulation techniques, ensuring the data obtained has high validity. This research was conducted from March to June 2024, aligning with the schedule of the tradition, which is typically performed after Isya prayer on specific evenings.

Analysis plan

Data analysis was conducted using a qualitative analysis model consisting of four main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, theoretical analysis, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by sorting important information from observations, interviews, and documentation relevant to the research focus. Next, the reduced data was presented in the form of descriptive narratives to facilitate understanding. The analysis is then deepened using Arnold Van Gennep's rites of passage theory to classify the traditional house cleansing process into stages of separation, transition, and incorporation. The final stage is to draw conclusions about the religious, social, and spiritual meanings of the tradition as a manifestation of the actualization of the Living Qur'an in the community.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Table 1. The Procession of the House Cleaning Tradition in Beringin Jaya Village

Stages (Rites of Passage)	Activities Performed	Religious and Social Meaning
Separation	The homeowner invites the Majelis Zikir Bersama (Zikir Assembly), prepares food, and recites Surah al-Fātiḥah as an opening.	Symbolizes the separation of the house from negative influences and spiritual impurities.
Transition	Collective zikir, recitation of protective verses (Al-Falaq, An-Nas, Ayat Kursi), and collective prayers in a solemn atmosphere.	The process of transitioning the house to a new state of cleanliness, safety, and peace.
Incorporation (Reintegration)	Closing prayers for the blessings of the home, a shared meal with all attendees, and expressions of gratitude.	The reunification of the community with their homes, which are considered sacred, peaceful, and full of blessings.

Research findings indicate that the house-cleaning tradition in Beringin Jaya Village is carried out in three main stages, as analyzed through Arnold Van Gennep's theory of rites of passage. The first stage, separation, is marked by the convening of the Majelis Zikir " " gathering, preparation of food, and the recitation of Surah al-Fātiḥah. This activity is interpreted as a symbol of separating the

house from its old, unclean state to a new atmosphere ready to be purified. For the local community, this stage also highlights the importance of spiritual preparation before the zikir procession begins.

The second stage is transition, where the congregation performs collective zikir and recites verses of protection, such as Surah Al-Falaq, An-Nas, and Ayat Kursi. At this moment, a quiet and solemn atmosphere is created, often performed in low light at night. The community believes that reciting zikir in this state helps purify the home from unseen disturbances while bringing peace to the homeowner and its inhabitants. This underscores that the practice of zikir is not merely a personal act of worship but also has a collective dimension in maintaining social harmony.

The third stage is incorporation, which is carried out with a closing prayer to ask for blessings and a communal meal as a form of celebration and gratitude. This process demonstrates that the tradition of house cleansing is not merely a spiritual ritual but also a means of strengthening social bonds among community members. The community interprets the shared meal as a symbol of unity and social recognition that the house has once again become a spiritually suitable place to live. Thus, this final stage serves as a reintegration of the community into a new, blessed state.

Overall, the research findings demonstrate that the house-cleaning tradition in Beringin Jaya Village is a tangible manifestation of the Living Qur'an concept. The verses of the Qur'an are not merely read as text but are brought to life through daily practices in the community. This tradition is believed to bring inner peace, strengthen social bonds, and affirm that a house cleaned through prayer and remembrance of God will be protected from negative influences. As such, this tradition remains highly relevant today, both in religious and socio-cultural aspects.

Discussion

This study not only confirms Van Gennep's three stages of rites of passage separation, transition, and incorporation but also reveals a new contextualization in the form of Qur'anic recitations that accompany each stage. Previous studies on dhikr (Auliyah et al., 2024; Erfan et al., 2025; Ghoni & Saloom, 2021; Ni'mah, 2022) have emphasized its psychological and spiritual impacts, yet they rarely link the practice to the structural process of ritual transformation as outlined by Van Gennep. The novelty of this research lies in showing how Qur'anic verses are systematically integrated into each stage of a communal ritual, thereby transforming the house not merely as a physical entity but as a sacred social space. This demonstrates a unique synergy between Islamic texts and local culture, which has not been explicitly highlighted in earlier works. Thus, the implication is that the Qur'an is not confined to mosques or formal places of worship but is integrated into the cultural practices and daily lives of the people of Beringin Jaya Village (Imansyah et al., 2025; Kaltsum, 2020; 2020; Yanti et al., 2023).

Socially, the tradition reinforces solidarity through collective participation, shared meals, and collective dhikr, thereby strengthening communal bonds and affirming the role of religion as a unifying force. Theologically, it demonstrates that the Qur'an is not restricted to individual piety but serves as a guiding framework for collective rituals that sustain community identity and resilience. When compared with similar traditions in other regions, such as the Antama Balla house-cleansing ritual in Bugis-Makassar or the Doa Bele Kampung in Malay communities, the Beringin Jaya practice displays both similarities and differences. While these traditions share the use of Qur'anic recitations for protection and blessing, the emphasis on Van Gennep's threefold stages in Beringin Jaya highlights a more structured and symbolic ritual process. This suggests that Indonesian Muslim communities creatively adapt Islamic texts into local traditions, producing diverse yet interconnected models of Living Qur'an practices. Therefore, this study contributes not only to the theoretical confirmation of Van Gennep's rites of passage but also to a broader understanding of how sacred texts shape social life. It highlights the dynamic interaction between local culture and Islamic teachings, offering insights into the adaptability of the Qur'an as a living guide in different cultural contexts.

Although this study has revealed important dimensions of the house cleaning tradition, there are several limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the number of informants was relatively limited, namely six people, so the results of the study may not represent the full range of views of the Beringin Jaya community. Second, this study only focused on one particular village, so the scope for generalizing to other communities with similar traditions remains open for further research.

Third, this study focuses on qualitative analysis using phenomenological and anthropological approaches, thus not touching on psychological aspects empirically, such as through measurements of mental calmness before and after the ritual. This limitation is important to note so that future studies can enrich the results with a multidisciplinary approach.

Based on these results and limitations, several suggestions can be made. First, for the community of Beringin Jaya Village, the tradition of house cleaning should be preserved because it not only brings spiritual peace but also strengthens social bonds among residents. Second, for future researchers, this study could be expanded by examining other villages with similar traditions to identify differences and similarities in how the Qur'an is integrated into their respective cultural spaces. Third, quantitative research measuring the psychological and social aspects of collective zikir practices could complement the qualitative findings, resulting in a more comprehensive understanding. Fourth, Islamic educational institutions can use this research as teaching material to show that the Qur'an is not only understood textually but must also be brought to life through concrete actions that benefit individuals and society. Thus, the tradition of house cleaning can serve as a concrete example of how Qur'anic values are practiced in a modern context without losing their traditional meaning.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the house cleaning tradition in Beringin Jaya Village, Baebunta Selatan Sub-district, Luwu Utara Regency, is a tangible manifestation of the concept of the Living Qur'an in the social-religious practices of the community. The ritual process, which consists of the stages of separation, transition, and incorporation, demonstrates a deep understanding of the home as a spiritual space that must be purified from negative influences through the recitation of Surah al-Fātiḥah, the Ayat al-Kursi, Surah Al-Falaq, and Surah An-Nas. The community views this tradition not merely as a means to ward off misfortune but also as a way to soothe the soul, strengthen religious faith, and foster optimism in daily life. Thus, the Qur'an is brought to life not only in formal places of worship but also in everyday activities rich in local cultural and spiritual values.

In addition, this study shows that the tradition of cleaning the house has an important contribution in strengthening social cohesion, as it embodies the values of togetherness, friendship, and gratitude, which are manifested through communal prayer and communal meals. From an academic perspective, this study contributes to the development of contemporary exegesis and religious anthropology by demonstrating the relevance of Van Gennep's rites of passage theory for analyzing religious practices among Muslim communities in Indonesia. Despite its limitations in terms of the number of informants and geographical scope, the findings provide a comprehensive overview of how the Qur'an is practiced in local traditions, while also opening up opportunities for further research with broader and more multidisciplinary approaches.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

MN played a major role in designing the research, collecting field data, and drafting the initial manuscript. SR contributed to the development of the theoretical framework and data analysis, while SP provided methodological guidance, critical review, and final refinement of the research manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript before submission for publication.

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