

# The Preservation of Ratib Saman in Palembang, 2000- 2019

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## The Preservation of Ratib Saman in Palembang, 2000-2019

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### Abstract

Ratib Saman is the most important dhikr that contains invocation. Ratib Saman was first introduced by Shaykh Abdul Samad al-Palimbani and was part of the teachings of the Sammaniyah order. The practice of Ratib Saman in Palembang had shifted because there were too few followers who read the Ratib Saman. However, over time, the Ratib Saman tradition began to be preserved by the people of Palembang, especially in old mosques. Ratib Saman is routinely practiced on twice a week. This research aims at determining the beginning of the practice of Ratib Saman in Palembang and the preservation of Ratib Saman in Palembang that are still being held. The historical method used to get factual explanations on the origin of Ratib Saman. The data collection was conducted by observation, documentation, and interview. In addition, the Ratib Saman tradition is also widely practiced by their selves on special occasions. Ratib Saman readings are attended either by young or old people. It had become a tradition of the people of Palembang, which can be seen from the practice of Ratib Saman that was held regularly and whose reading had a characteristic. Therefore, it should be preserved so that it does not get erased by time.

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### Introduction

Indonesia has a rich tradition that is still maintained and can be felt by its people to present-day. One of the most important aspects of maintaining culture is ensuring that it is not eroded by the time. Many people are beginning to show an indifferent attitude towards their previous ancestral culture as technology advances in this era. This is undoubtedly a significant challenge in terms of preserving existing cultural heritage (Priatna, 2017). The backgrounds of people's lives cannot be overlooked when discussing cultural heritage. As a result, management is required as a step in maintaining this culture (Puguh, 2017)

Culture evolves alongside human life. People in each region have different cultures. It is critical to introduce cultural heritage, including intangible cultural heritage, which includes language, rituals, social practices, craft traditions, local knowledge, performing arts, and oral traditions. It has something to do with human creativity and cultural differences (Stiawati, Yusuf, & Sair, 2018).

Culture is the result of people's past experiences that are unique in relation to the existence of their environment (Kismini, 2013). Culture is a part of a tradition that is passed down from generation to generation for the benefit of the next generation. Traditions are the accumulation of knowledge, cultural symbols and content, and small institutions passed down through generations that contribute to the formation of individual, organizational, and territorial identities. Tradition, according to Petruzzelli and Albino, is "the entire set of competencies, knowledge, values, and culture that characterizes a specific place, as well as region and age. One of which is Ratib Saman culture (Presenza, Messeni, & Sheehan, 2019).

Ratib Saman is associated with the establishment of the Samaniyah order, which was founded by Shaykh Muhammad bin Abdul Karim as-Samani al-Hasani al-Madani al-Qadiri al-Quraisyi, who was born in Medina in 1132 Hijriyah or 1718 AD and is of the Quraysh tribe (Helmina, 2016). Among his students and followers, the name Al-Samani or Muhammad Saman is well known. It was disseminated to Indonesia by Muhammad Saman's students who studied in the Middle East, one of whom was Shaykh Abdul Shamad Al-Palimbani (Jannah, 2017).

Shaykh Abdul Shamad al-Palimbani was a well-known student who helped disseminate the Samaniyah order in Indonesia. He was an Indonesian cleric and Sufi known for his broad intellectual insight, and he played an important role in the expansion of the Samaniyah order in Palembang (Ravico, 2018). The Ratib Saman is the most important aspect of the Samaniyah order. Ratib Saman expresses faith in the creator by requesting assistance or safety in this world and the next. Ratib Saman includes a number of dhikr (remembering Allah in the heart and mentioning Him by the tongue) that include prayers and tawassul (a religious practice in which a Muslim seeks nearness to God) (Marzuki, 2020).

The practice of Ratib Saman in Palembang had experienced a shift due to the fact that fewer people were reading the Ratib Saman. Previously, Ratib Saman was often held on the night of the wedding ceremony to ward off calamity. In the last 20 years, Ratib Saman in weddings has disappeared and is no longer used by the people of Palembang (Ahmad Fauzi, October 31, 2020, interview). The loss of Ratib Saman's use in weddings has influenced some people's decision to make Ratib Saman a routine for reading dhikr together. This can only be seen in a few mosques that still practice the Ratib Saman. As a result, research on Ratib Saman Cultural Preservation in Palembang was decided to be conducted. This research, of course, is not the first to raise this theme.

Study by Helmina entitled "The Existence of Ratib Saman as Local Wisdom in Influencing the Socio-Cultural Religiosity of the Tanjung Pauh Community in the Modern Era". This study found that the people of Tanjung Pauh only followed the Ratib Saman without knowing how Ratib Saman entered the village (Helmina, 2016). The second one is research by Raudatun Jannah entitled "The Role of the Samaniyah order in the Menteng War against the Dutch Colonial in Palembang", which found that the religious elite during the Palembang sultanate was able to nurture and guide their followers to the path of Allah. The figure is H. Zain who is the religious leader of

the Samaniyah order serving as a warlord in the fight against colonialism (Jannah, 2017).

The study by Kalsum entitled "Beratib Culture in Palembang: A Case Study of the Old Ratib Saman Manuscripts in the Present", which shows that the two Ratib Saman manuscripts entitled *Urwatu al-Wusqa and Silsilah and tawassul* were taken from an old manuscript that were then revised again by H. Andi Syarifudin as the Imam of the Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin I Jayowikramo Mosque, who is still preserving this tradition. This is considered an activity that has spiritual value and improves character, opens sustenance, and fends off misfortune for everyone (Kalsum, 2016). The title of The Preservation of Ratib Saman in Palembang from 2000-2019 was chosen because no one has raised the title yet. On this basis, special and in-depth research on Ratib Saman in Palembang is necessary. From the explanation of the background above, the problem can be formulated regarding the practice of Ratib Saman in Palembang begin and the preservation of Ratib Saman in Palembang from 2000-2019.

The purpose of this research was to determine the beginning of the practice of Ratib Saman in Palembang and the preservation of Ratib Saman in Palembang that is still being carried out. This research is expected to make a scientific contribution to the people of Palembang, especially in getting to know the local culture they have, and to provide knowledge and understanding about the values and history of Ratib Saman.

## Method

This research employed the historical research method. The historical method is a method of historical research and writing by using systematic methods, procedures, or techniques in accordance with the rules of historical science (Daliman, 2018: 24). According to Garraghan in Abdurrahman, the historical method is a systematic set of rules to collect sources effectively, evaluate critically, and synthesize the results obtained in written form (Abdurrahman, 1999: 43).

The steps in writing this research began with the heuristic stage (data collection). The heuristic stage is the initial stage in collecting references or sources that refer to the problem to be discussed (Sanusi, 2013: 137). Sources in the form of interviews with historical actors related to the problems studied, namely the leaders of the practice of Ratib Saman, had been collected. Then, supporting sources in the form of books, journals, and online news were also used. The instruments used were interviews and observations. The resource persons in this study were Ustaz Ahmad Fauzi, the leader of the Ratib Saman at the Sultan Agung Mosque, and Ustaz Kms. Andi Syarifuddin, the leader of Ratib Saman at the Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin Jayawikramo Mosque in Palembang.

After the heuristic stage, source criticism was carried out. This was done for validation or verification of historical sources that had been collected (Daliman, 2018: 58). Source criticism was also carried out on the results of interviews, journals, books, and online news to be compared to become valid sources.

Then, the historical sources found were synthesized and analyzed to interpret the facts and conclude them into a single unit (Irwanto and Alian, 2014:89). Next, the final

stage was historiography. Historiography is a compilation process that selects and analyzes sources that then become a form of historical writing (Sanusi, 2013: 137). At the end of the discussion, conclusions were drawn from the results of the discussion.

### **The Beginning of The Practice of Ratib Saman in Palembang**

The Samaniyah order is an order that has had a great influence and has developed in Indonesia, including in the socio-religious life of the Muslim community. To have a great influence, of course, the Samaniyah order was founded by a well-known Sufi figure, Shaykh Muhammad Saman. This order was founded in the Medina region and is widespread in Yemen, Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Southeast Asia (Zulkifli, 2001). Muhammad bin Abdul Karim al-Saman al-Madani, who is the founder of the Samaniyah order, in his book *al-Nafahat al-Illahiyat* quoted by his student Shaykh Abdul Shamad al-Palimbani, taught seven kinds of remembrance according to the seven levels of the soul that can be achieved by humans, including: first, *nafs al-Ammarah*, whose form of dhikr is *La Ilaha illa Allah*. Second, *Nafs al-Lawwamah*, whose form of dhikr is *Allah, Allah, Allah*. Third, *al-Mulhamah*, whose form of dhikr is *Hu, Hu, Hu*. Fourth, *al-Muthmainnah*, whose form of dhikr is *Haq, Haq, Haq*. Fifth, *al-Radliyah*, whose form of dhikr is *Hay, Hay, Hay*. Sixth, *al-Mardliyah*, whose form of dhikr is *Qayyum, Qayyum, Qayum*. Seventh, *al-Kamilah*, whose form of dhikr is *Qahhar, Qahhar, Qahhar* (Muvid & Kholis, 2020).

Ratib Saman is the most important dhikr in the Samaniyah order. Many Palembang scholars practiced and obtained Ratib Saman's diploma when they studied directly under Shaykh Muhammad Saman, among them were Shaykh Abdus Somad al-Palimbani (1737-1832), Shaykh Kemas Ahmad bin Abdullah (1735-1800), and others. The scholars preached and broadcast Ratib Saman to the public and the Palace. Therefore, the Sultan of Palembang received a diploma for practicing Ratib Saman (Oskandar, 2020).

Ratib Saman is a practice that has been used by previous scholars and passed on to the people of Indonesia. This practice is not only carried out by the people of Palembang, but also the people of Kalimantan, Bugis, Betawi, and Sumatra. In Palembang, Ratib Saman has been practiced for a long time, even by native Palembang people, especially in the Palembang Sultanate (Interview with Fauzi, October 31, 2020).

The practice of Ratib Saman in Palembang is known to have existed since the time of Shaykh Abdul Shamad Al-Palimbani and was passed on to his students until the next successors, so that it came to the time of K.H. Abdullah Zawawi Izhom who continued to practice it for the people of Palembang (Interview with Fauzi, October 31, 2020). Since the time of the Sultanate, the practice of Ratib Saman continues to this day and has become a wirid (dhikr that is read after prayer). Ratib Saman was not only worship but had become a tradition of the people. The practice of Ratib Saman itself spread in every village. In places that practiced Ratib Saman, there are old mosques, such as the Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin Jayowikromo Mosque and the Sultan Agung Mosque in 1 Ilir, Palembang (Interview with Andi Syarifuddin, November 4, 2020).

### The Preservation of Ratib Saman in Palembang, 2000-2019

In 2000, Ratib Saman was held only once or twice a week. In the past, Ratib Saman was performed every day. This is due to conditions and situations that are different from now. At the Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin Jayowikromo Mosque, the practice of Ratib Saman was led by Ustaz Kms. Andi Syarifuddin. Previously, there were many Ratib Saman leaders, including his father and K.H. Zen Shukri. Ratib Saman's practice itself is carried out after the Isha Prayer (Interview with Andi Syarifuddin, November 04, 2020).

At the Sultan Agung Mosque, 1 Ilir Village, there was also the practice of Ratib Saman led by Ustaz Ahmad Fauzi bin K.H. Abdullah Zawawi Izhom who continued his father's act. This mosque had a role in practicing Ratib Saman so that the Ratib Saman Sultan Agung dhikr assembly was formed. In addition to the Sultan Agung mosque, the Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin Jayowikromo mosque also carried out the Ratib Saman practice regularly once a week.



Figure 1. Ratib Saman was reading at the Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin Jayo Mosque.  
Source: Ratib Saman Palembang Facebook, uploaded December 6, 2017.

Before 2000s, Ratib Saman was practiced at weddings, usually performed on the night before the wedding day. This was meant to prevent bad things from happening to the bride and groom. However, in the last 20 years Ratib Saman has no longer been held at weddings (Interview with Ahmad Fauzi, October 31, 2020).

In the will of K.H. Abdullah Zawawi Izhom, he asked his successors to continue practicing Ratib Saman, especially at the Sultan Agung Mosque in 1 Ilir, Palembang. The practice was carried out every Friday night and Wednesday night or twice a week. In addition, they also did it by visiting the homes of the scholars and the Palembang Sultanate Traditional Palace to practice the Ratib Saman (Interview Ustadz Ahmad Fauzi, October 31, 2020).



Figure 2. Ratib Saman Dhikr Assembly was read by the Congregation of Sultan Agung Mosque, I Ilir, Palembang, at the Traditional Palace of the Palembang Sultanate.

Source: Palpres.com, January 20, 2020.

The practices of Ratib Saman carried out by the people of Palembang, especially at the Sultan Agung Mosque, 1 Ilir, were starting to be routinely carried out every Friday night and Wednesday night. This activity was certainly not only followed by the elderly, but also by the younger generation who was actively involved in carrying it out, especially those who had activities in an organization known as IRMA or the Mosque Youth Association. This shows that the contribution of Ratib Saman in Palembang was still maintained.

Ratib Saman had a characteristic in its reading. *Laa ilaha illallah* reading was read at least 300 times and it was read in a rhythmic way and with a strong tone of voice. The procedure for its implementation began with a rhythm that flowed and gradually got faster (Interview with Ustadz Ahmad Fauzi, October 31, 2020).

Ratib Saman contained dhikr to Allah, which was the basic idea of reading. The dhikr was recited aloud and with sounds at the same time. The dhikr had a special feature in the sentence *la ila ha illa Allah* which was then sung by changing it to *Hu Hu Hu* reading, which meant He (Allah) (Hasan, 2017). In the practice of Ratib Saman, the etiquette rules of dhikr were repenting to Allah, being pure from impurity and uncleanness, having the intention to obey Allah's commands, having a sincere heart, facing the Qibla, scenting clothes, reciting the dhikr physically and externally, and eating halal food and wearing clean clothes (Munir, 2016).

The readings practiced in the implementation of Ratib Saman from 2000 to 2019 were indeed quite a few compared to the era before the 2000s. However, this did not diminish the intention of the people of Palembang to continue to preserve it. Currently, Ratib Saman can still be found in several old mosques in Palembang. In its implementation, it is not only in mosques, but also in events at home, such as reading the Yasin. The people who come never forget to ask the leader who leads Ratib Saman to practice it together after the Yasin reading activity is over.

### Ratib Saman's Reading

Ratib Saman's reading was a manifestation of gratitude and remembering to Allah SWT. In addition, Ratib had great benefits, including: being very strong in giving impressions to the heart, purifying the heart and being able to improve temperament, opening the door of fortune, granting all desires, avoiding disturbances from evil spirits, and so on (Interview with KMS. Andi Syarifuddin, November 4, 2020).

Up until now, Ratib Saman is still often read by the public, especially in Palembang (such as at weddings, celebrations for new homes, vows, salvation, etc.). At the Great Mosque for example, Ratib Saman is held every Thursday night after the Isha Prayer (Interview with Ustadz Ahmad Fauzi, October 31, 2020).



Figure 3. The Ratib Saman Manuscript and the Palembang Palace  
Source: Archive collection by KMS. Andi Syarifuddin, 2020.

Ratib Saman's reading consists of several thoyyibah sentences, including: (1) Tawassul to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH; (2) Shalawat (sending prayers) to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH and to his family, companions, wives, and descendants; (3) Tawassul to Sheikh Muhammad Samman, then the saints of Allah from east to west of the earth; (4) Appeals to God; (5) Greetings to Shaykh Muhammad Samman; (6) Greetings to the the Prophet Muhammad PBUH; (7) Istighfar (seeking forgiveness from Allah); (8) Nafi-itsbat and Song; (9) Recitation of the Quran; (10) Prayers to the Prophet Muhammad; (11) Takbir (magnifying Allah); (12) Tawassul to the saints of Allah and the shaykhs of the order; (13) Tawassul to the murshid (religious teacher) council of the Sammaniyah order; (14) Praise.

### Conclusion

Ratib Saman in Palembang was brought by Shaykh Abdul Shamad al-Palimbani who studied directly under Shaykh Muhammad Saman. Ratib Saman used to be widely practiced in almost every village, but nowadays, there are only a few villages that carry



it out. Some of them are old Palembang villages, which are the Sultan Agung 1 Ilir mosque and the Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin Jayawikramo Mosque.

The Sultan Agung Mosque itself carried out Ratib Saman regularly on Wednesdays and Fridays after Isha prayers. Ratib Saman continued to be practiced by the people of the 1 Ilir village, led by Ustad Ahmad Fauzi who continued the teachings of his father, K.H. Zawawi Izhom and formed the Sultan Agung Ratib Saman Dhikr assembly. Not only carried out in mosques, the practice of Ratib Saman was also carried out by visiting the houses of the scholars and even to the Traditional Palace of the Palembang Sultanate. In addition, at the Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin Jayawikramo Mosque, Ratib Saman was held once a week after the Isha prayer. Ratib Saman in Palembang had become a custom and tradition that continued to be practiced by the community.

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