



## Inculturation of Tahlilan Tradition In Lampung and Banten

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**Abstract** : *As a religious tradition, tahlilan cannot be put in isolation of debate among Indonesian Muslim society. On one side, it is believed as part of Islamic teachings which do not contradict the Shari'a, while the other considers it as a syncretistic practice that has no guidance in the Qur'an and Hadits. Apart from the controversy surrounding it, this study aims to examine how the actual process of inculturation between religious and cultural values in tahlilan is constructed and embedded so that it persists as a tradition constantly alive until today. As field research, this study explores data from two different areas, namely Lampung and Banten. As a result, this study would like to describe although the tahlilan tradition in both areas has the same essence and purpose, as al-adah muhakamah or customs, to recite the holy verses of the Qur'an, zikr, and pray to the spirit of someone who has died to gain God's forgiveness, the inculturation of both areas has its distinctions and peculiarities.*

**Keywords** : *Inculturation, Tahlilan Tradition, Lampung, Banten*

**Abstrak** : *Sebagai tradisi keagamaan, tahlilan tidak bisa dipisahkan dari perdebatan di kalangan umat Islam Indonesia. Di satu sisi diyakini sebagai bagian dari ajaran Islam yang tidak bertentangan dengan syariat, sementara di sisi lain dianggap sebagai praktik sinkretis yang tidak ada tuntunannya dalam al-Qur'an dan Hadits. Terlepas dari kontroversi yang melingkupinya, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bagaimana sebenarnya proses inkulturasi antara nilai-nilai agama dan*

*budaya dalam tahlilan dikonstruksi dan ditanamkan, sehingga tetap bertahan sebagai tradisi yang terus hidup hingga saat ini. Sebagai penelitian lapangan, penelitian ini menggali data dari dua daerah yang berbeda, yaitu Lampung dan Banten. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini ingin mendeskripsikan meskipun tradisi tahlilan di kedua daerah tersebut memiliki esensi dan tujuan yang sama, yaitu sebagai al-adah muhakamah atau kebiasaan membaca ayat-ayat suci al-Qur'an, dzikir, dan berdoa kepada ruh. seseorang yang meninggal dunia untuk mendapatkan ampunan Tuhan, inkulturasi kedua wilayah tersebut memiliki perbedaan dan kekhasan tersendiri.*

**Kata Kunci** : *Inkulturasi, Tradisi Tahlilan, Lampung, Banten*

## **A. Introduction**

There were multifaceted arguments related to when and how the process of Islam exactly came and spread in the Archipelago. Yet, most experts believed that the spread of Islam was carried out through peaceful ways, instead of war and confrontation. Since the beginning, Islamic preachers have realized that violent ways were inappropriate to introduce Islam. Instead, it was insisted to be able to adapt to the social and cultural backgrounds because religion was a part in parcel of the context where people lived.

In spreading Islam, Islamic and cultural values undoubtedly could influence and enrich each other. Such a process is called as inculturation. It can be observed through various rituals and traditions which sustainably preserve until today. One of those is *tahlilan*, a ritual or ceremony to pray together for a Muslim who has passed away to get God's forgiveness. It is usually conducted on the first, third, seventh, fortieth, hundredth, and thousandth day after the death. The steps of *tahlilan* are used to start with *tawasul*, reciting *Surah Yāsin*, dhikir, and sometimes followed by a religious sermon given by a preacher. Its purpose is not only to pray for the deceased but to remind also those who are still alive.

In this sense, inculturation in the term of *tahlilan* means that transcendently religious and profanely cultural values can combine and enrich one another by which both are perceived as a shared tradition perpetuated by the local community. It further constitutes a pattern between religious and cultural experiences in which in its process both entities do not exclude one another or favor one entity over another.

Instead, the inculturation of both can blend.<sup>1</sup> Such inculturation is mostly used and developed by Islamic preachers to teach Islamic teachings through which they combine cultural and religious virtues as the elements that complete each other.<sup>2</sup>

Ary Roest Crollius argues that inculturation is a conjuncture of two civilizations or more in which each of those interacts and influences, but not mutually diminishes.<sup>3</sup> According to Crollius, at least there are some steps of inculturation. *The first*, acculturation is an encounter of culture and tradition within which those reciprocally meet and negotiate. *The second*, assimilation is a continuation of acculturation in which the two entities (religion and culture) can co-exist and be accepted as shared values by a community. *The third*, transformation means that the virtues of religion and culture are persistently reinterpreted to constitute a new tradition that does not eliminate the uniqueness of each entity.<sup>4</sup>

The diversity of religious traditions maintained by local people proves that inculturation is taking place and *tahlilan* represents it. In this respect, Lampung and Banten are the regions whose people persistently hold *tahlilan*. Like another place, in both regions, *tahlilan* has been a tradition done by most people after their family was dead. However, related to how people's performance on *tahlilan* both regions have different perceptions and procedures.

Many studies have been done related to *tahlilan*. In the article "The Local Wisdom and Purpose of Tahlilan Tradition", Andi Warisno dan Z.A. Tabrani discusses how the perception of Lampung's people over the holding and understanding of *tahlilan*. Both writers point out that the practice of *tahlilan* in Lampung gains multiple responses. On one side, some accept it due to being considered in line with Islamic teaching, while, on the other side, some refuse it by the reason that it is a part of heresy

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<sup>1</sup> Martasudjita, E. P. D. "Proses Inkulturasi Liturgi Di Indonesia." *Studia Philosophica et Theologica*, Vol. 10, no. 1 (2010): 39-60.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Amri, Limyah, and Muhammad Haramain. "Akulturasi Islam Dalam Budaya Lokal." *Kuriositas: Media Komunikasi Sosial dan Keagamaan*, Vo. 10, no. 2 (2017): 87-100.

<sup>3</sup> Crollius, Ary A. Roest. "Inculturation and the Meaning of Culture." *Gregorianum*, Vol. 61, no. 2 (1980): 253-274.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 287

which has no guidance in the Qur'an and Hadist<sup>5</sup>. Meanwhile, Arif Rahman, in his research "*Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Islam dalam Pelaksanaan Tahlilan*" argues that *tahlilan* can be deemed as a valuable source of character education (*pendidikan akhlak*). In *tahlilan*, it occurs consciousness transmission to keep in mind death which is strongly cultivated in the self to always remind God and do righteous deeds.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, Muhammad Resan mentions that *tahlilan* is a medium for grounding the Qur'an. Reciting of certain verses of the Qur'an in *tahlilan* such as *surah al-Fatihah, Yaasiin, al-Ikhlash, al-Falaq, and An-Naas* followed by the dhikr has become the living phenomena (living Qur'an) and continuously practiced by most people both in Lampung and in Banten.<sup>7</sup> Rather different from Resan, Muhammad Shaleh examines the Book of *Futuh Al-Asrar Fi Fadhail At-Tahlil Wa Al-Adzkar* written by Syaikh 'Abdullah Bin 'Abd Al-Qahhar Al-Jawi Al-Bantani to explore and dig the virtues of *Tahlilan*. The result of Shaleh's research concludes that much virtue can be learned from *tahlilan* tradition, one of which can generate empathy and strengthen ties of brotherhood.<sup>8</sup>

However, apart from such studies as the above-mentioned, this article aims to further examine how the actual process of inculturation between religion and culture in *tahlilan* is constructed, so that it perpetually becomes a shared tradition. By taking cases of Lampung and Banten provinces as the sample, this article also intends to delve into the kinds of factors that currently shape and influence the inculturation of *tahlilan*. A result of this study shows that although in both regions the holding of *tahlilan* has similar substances and purposes to pray together for death, how people implement and percept it has their uniqueness and characteristics.

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<sup>5</sup> Warisno, Andi, and Z. A. Tabrani. "The Local Wisdom and Purpose of Tahlilan Tradition." *Advanced Science Letters*, Vol. 24, no. 10 (2018): 7082-7086.

<sup>6</sup> Rahman, Arif. "*Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Islam dalam Pelaksanaan Tahlilan*". Thesis: UIN Raden Intan Lampung (2018).

<sup>7</sup> Resan, Ahmad. *living Quran dalam Tradisi Tahlilan di Masyarakat Banten (Studi Terhadap Pelaksanaan Tahlilan di Kota Serang Banten)*. Dissertation. UIN SMH BANTEN (2019).

<sup>8</sup> Shoheh, Muhammad. "Futuh Al-asrar Fi Fadhail At-tahlil Wa Al-adzkar Karya Syaikh'Abdullah Bin'Abd Al-qahhar Al-jawi Al-bantani." *Al Qalam*, Vol. 28, no. 2 (2011): 279-318.

## B. *Tahlilan* Tradition as A Discourse

In the term of terminology, the word “*tahlil*” is categorized as *isim mashdar* from the word “*hallala-yuhallilu-tahlil*”, which means to say the utterance of “*lā ilāha illa Allāh*” (there is no God but Allah). Theologically speaking, the phrase *lā ilāha illa Allāh* is a confession to declare a belief in God’s oneness. Yet, in the local setting, the word *tahlilan* originates from the word “*tahlil*” which is then added to the suffix “an”. As a result, it brings about a slightly shifted meaning in which it is no longer limited to saying *lā ilāha illa Allāh*, but it also transforms to be a ritual to recite such words repeatedly by completing with other verses of the Qur’an, *shalawat*, *dhikr* (*tahlil*, *tasbih*, and *tahmid*) by an intention to give the reward (*pahala*) for the deceased.<sup>9</sup>

As a discourse, *tahlilan* certainly has gone through the dynamic of Indonesian life. Regarding how exactly *tahlilan* itself comes to be, there diverse opinions emerge. Some contend that *tahlilan* derived from the doctrines of Animism and Hinduism which believed when one has died, his soul would return to visit close relatives. If there is no crowd gathered to do sacred things such as burning incense, chanting mantras, and other rituals, the spirit of the deceased would be angry and disturb the family. To prevent it, therefore, relatives and neighbors are encouraged to recite mantras for the sake of calming the souls of the deceased.<sup>10</sup>

While in contrast others precisely consider that *tahlilan* is inherently an integral part of Islamic teaching. The proponents of such a view underlie their stance by referring to the Book *Majmu’ Fatawa* written by Syekh Ibnu Taimiyyah was asked, related to a group of people who conducted *dhikr*, recited the Qur’an, and then prayed to Muslims who have been alive or died. They also recite *tasbih*, *tahmid*, *tahlil*, *takbir*, *hauqalah* and *shalawat* to the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Then Ibnu Taimiyyah responded to such a fact by stating that “reciting *dzikir* together, listening Qur’an, and praying are good deeds”. This view was also in line with considerations of Imam Shafi’i and Imam Maliki who contended that praying and reciting the Qur’an and *dhikr* for the deceased are not

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<sup>9</sup> See. Ahmad Mas’ari dan Syamsuatir, “*Tradisi Tahlilan: Potret Akulturasi Agama dan Budaya Khas Nusantara*”.

<sup>10</sup> Basyarudin bin Nurdin Shalih Syuhaimin, *Membungkar Kesesatan...* 23.

forbidden. Imam Shafi'i even emphasized what reaches the deceased is not the Qur'an itself, but the prayer to hope for God's forgiveness.<sup>11</sup>

Such different points of view sometimes trigger sharp dissent outlooks in society whether *tahlilan* has a theological basis or not. Some groups argue that *tahlilan* is heresy (*bid'ah*) due to having no basis in the Qur'an and Hadits. They also believe the Prophet and his companions did not practice it so it has no theological and historical precedences. For them, *tahlilan* has mixed with the superstition that haphazardly combines religious and cultural virtues. However, on the contrary, the other groups deem *tahlilan* as a tradition that does not contradict the Qur'an and Hadits. Although the Prophet and his companions did not exactly carry out *tahlilan* as practiced by most Muslim today, this group sees *tahlilan* cannot be judged as *bid'ah dhalalah* (bad act), but it is supposed to be put as *bid'ah hasanah* (good deed)<sup>12</sup>.

Apart from the contradictory outlooks as explained above, *tahlilan*, however, has experienced complex acculturation through which it can be preserved as a shared tradition. Khairuddin Aljuneid argues that Islam initially accepted by people in Southeast Asia was much influenced by Sufistic nuances. In Indonesia, particularly in Java, Islamic teachings have mixed up with Sufi teachings which mostly came from India and Persia. The encounter among such civilizations became increasingly more dynamic and vibrant after meeting with the Hindu, Buddhist, and Animism traditions which have existed long before Islam arrived. However, in its development, Islam succeeded in coloring such various currents of civilizations. It was possibly propped by inclusive and tolerant characters played by Islamic preachers not to exclude local traditions, instead of giving a proper appreciation to them. It then enabled Islam to open other elements of belief, culture, and traditional wisdom from the outside<sup>13</sup>.

Such a fact, according to Mark Woodward, eventually paves the way for the productive encounter among the world religions and multiple local cultures through which those civilizations are more accommodative than confrontative. The encounter of those mutually enriches and bolsters

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<sup>11</sup> Ibnu Taimiyyah al-Harrani. *Majmu' Fatawa*. (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1984), 116

<sup>12</sup> Setejo Ibnu Pakar. *Tradisi Amaliyah Warga NU: Tahlilan, Hadiyuan, Dzikir, Yasinan, Ziarah Kubur*. (Cirebon: Kamu NU, 2015), 8-9

<sup>13</sup> Khairudin Aljuneid. *Muslim Cosmopolitanism: Southeast Asian Islam in Comparative Perspective*. (Germany: Edinburg University Press, 2017), 17-18

one another. As its precedence, Woodward exemplifies the *slametan* tradition in Yogyakarta Central Java as the sample. Woodward further explains that:

“The Slametan is a locally defined Muslim rite and that: (1) the criteria Geertz employs to distinguish Islam from animism are misleading; (2) the slametan is an example of a ritual complex that links blessing (A. barakah) and food and extends from Arabia to Southeast Asia; (3) that it is not primarily a village ritual; (4) that its religious and social goals are defined in terms of Islamic mystical teachings; (5) most of the modes of ritual action it employs are rooted in universalist texts including the Qur’an and Hadith; and (6) that elements of the slametan derived from pre-Islamic traditions are interpreted in Islamic terms.”<sup>14</sup>

Different from Clifford Geertz’s notions in regarding to Slematan in Javanese culture that considered it as part in parcel with Animism or Hinduism, while the existence of Islam was separated and absent within it<sup>15</sup>. Such a view, according to Woodward, is misleading. He argues that Geertz’s analysis seemingly ignored *slametan* from the textual view of Islam such as the Qur’an and Hadist. In contrast, for Woodward, the purpose of *slametan* as a tradition is always based on the spirit of Islamic virtues and local interpretations by which the Qur’an and Hadist invariably become the main reference in the practice of *slematen* for Javanese society.

In consonance with Woodward’s stance in viewing *slemetan*, this article also would like to strengthen it by examining *tahlilan* as the case. Unlike the conservative views, considering that *tahlilan* derives from Hinduism and Animism doctrines which are opposite to pure Islamic teachings, this article precisely puts *tahlilan* as an inherent part of Islam in which it has a base of standpoint from the Qur’an and Hadist. As a living religious tradition, *tahlilan* is not stagnant, but it is dynamic and always reinterpreted by people. In addition to going further to general assumes, *tahlilan* has passed an inculturation by which religious and cultural values are mutually combined and then transform to be a persistently preserved tradition until today. Thus, to observe how such inculturation takes place

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<sup>14</sup> Mark Woodward. *Java, Indonesia, and Islam*. (London and New York: Springer, 2011), 113

<sup>15</sup> See Clifford Geertz. *The Religion of Java*. (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), 310-311

would elaborate in the next part by seeing the practice of tahlilan in Lampung and Banten.

### C. Tahlilan and Inculturation Process: Lampung and Banten's Case

Geographically, Lampung and Banten are only separated by the Sunda Strait. Lampung province has an area of 35.376,50 km<sup>2</sup> and is located between 105°45'-103°48' East Longitude and 3°45'-6°45' South Latitude also consists of 15 districts/cities. Meanwhile, Banten province has an area of 9.160,70 km<sup>2</sup> and is located in 105°1'11<sup>2</sup> -106°7'12<sup>2</sup> East Longitude and 5°7'50<sup>2</sup>-7°1'1<sup>2</sup> South Latitude and also comprises 8 districts or cities.<sup>16</sup> When reobserving the history in past, both provinces actually have close relationships in many sectors. The proximity has brought huge impacts in the field of politics, economics, social culture, and religion as well. Since the Portuguese colonial period, Lampung has been introduced as the major supplier of pepper cinnamon to Banten. In addition, other evidence is the social-cultural close connection that still exists today when in Banten there is a village of Cikoneng Anyer as a Lampung village where people still use the Lampung language and norms there.<sup>17</sup> Even, because of their close relations, both provinces are frequently regarded as siblings.<sup>18</sup>

Askar, in the book *Mysterious Krakatoa Jejak-Jejak Peradaban Ulun Lapping Pewaris Kerajaan Api* (Mysterious Krakatoa Traces of Ulun Lapping Civilization as Heirs of the Fire Kingdom), assumes that there has been intimacy between people of Lampung and Banten since long time ago. Many Banten people have *huma* (farmland) in certain areas of Lampung, while, at the same time, the Lampungnesse always referred to Banten as a source or place to explore and develop Islamic teachings as well as a destination for learning religious studies. The inter-cultural and intra-religious encounters also helped to form a pattern of mutual influence among people in both regions. Moreover, sociologically speaking, both have similar contours as multicultural societies inhabited by many kinds of tribes, races, and religions that can live side by side.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.bantenprov.go.id/profil-provinsi/geografi>

<sup>17</sup> <https://dpk.bantenprov.go.id/Aktivitas/topic/277>

<sup>18</sup> <https://bantenhits.com/2013/09/15/sejarah-saudara-kandung-dalam-hubungan-banten-lampung/>



As commonly practiced by the local community in other places, most Muslims in Lampung and Banten also hold *tahlilan* as a ritual as well as a tradition conducted to pray to a Muslim who has passed away. Its implementation starts on the first, third, seventh, fortieth, hundredth, thousandth, and a year (*haul*) day after death. Although Lampung and Banten are different in terms of history and culture, both have similarities in understanding and carrying out *tahlilan* as a religious tradition or what the so-called “Islamicate culture” is.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, Muslims in Lampung and Banten have their uniqueness and peculiarities in the implementation of Tahlilan. Again, what is different is not the substance of the Tahlilan, but rather its theological and cultural interpretation.<sup>20</sup>

Whether Tahlilan is permissible or not, theologically most Muslims underlie it with the Qur'an and Hadist as the main source. Muslims are, for instance, advised to recite the Qur'an in the grave of those who have died. Imam Nawawi in *the Adzkar Book* mentioned that Imam Shafi'i contended the reward of reciting the Qur'an to reach the dead. At least, there are two pearls of wisdom (*hikmah*) in reciting Qur'an for the deceased. *First*, it is expected to obtain God's mercy and blessing for the dead. *Second*, it becomes a reminder for those who are still alive, that human life is not everlasting because each creature certainly will be died.<sup>21</sup>

While in the perspective of Islamic Jurisprudence (*Fiqh*), the *Usuliyyin* scholars have provided clear guidelines and provisions about *tahlilan*. In the book of *Usul al-Fiqh and Qawa'id Fiqh*, *tahlilan* is included as *al-'Urf wa al-'Adah* (traditions and habits). Although *'urf* by the *Usuliyyin* scholars is categorized as *mukkhtalif 'alaih* or arguments still being disputed among the scholars, however, those, especially Hanafiyah and Malikiyah scholars, allow it as a proposition with certain conditions. For Islamic Jurisprudence scholars, the *'Urf* can be divided into two parts, namely *the 'urf sahih and 'urf fasid*. The former means *tahlilan* as a human custom that does not (not to) justify something as *haram*. Meanwhile, the

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<sup>19</sup> Islamicate Culture is the cultural values which are much coloured by Islamic teachings by which it transforms to be a new shared-Islamic culture. There are many forms of Islamicate Culture persistently preserved in Muslim world. See Marshal G.S. Hudgson. *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in History of World Civilization*. (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1974).

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Zuhrai, in 23 April 2021.

<sup>21</sup> AN. Nuril Huda, *Aswaja*. 113-115

latter is also human's custom, but it enables the haram goods such as the practice of *riba* (borrowing from banks by receiving certain interests).

From the above explanation, it can be comprehended that *tahlilan* is comprised of the category of *the 'urf sahih* (good customs), not *the 'urf fasid* (bad customs). It obviously can be further analyzed from some argumentations. *The first*, *tahlilan* is a form of the *'urf sahih* (good customs). *The second*, albeit with no legal consideration to hold the *tahlilan*, however, there is no also argument to prohibit it. *Third*, in doing *tahlilan*, there is no prohibition toward something forbidden (*haram*) or the prohibition of *halal* goods. *Fourth*, the event of *tahlilan* does not contradict texts of the Qur'an or Hadith, even, it could be found in its theological basis as religious orders such as reciting and praying to people who have died. Thus, *tahlilan* is *the 'urf in fiqh* where elements of culture or religion are made use of argumentation because it does not come out of *maqashid al-syari'ah*. Though it is not a part of *shari'ah*, *tahlilan*, as a religious tradition, has been Islamized by *Walisongo* (Nine Saints) who then used it as a means of *da'wah* to spread Islam in Java.<sup>22</sup>

Generally, in most rural areas in Lampung *tahlilan* is often called *yasinan*, *takziyah*, or *istighasah* as well. The performance of *tahlilan* usually begins with *tawashul* such as reading *hadharah* then continued by reciting *Surah Yasiin*, followed by some verses of the Qur'an, *takbir*, *tahlil*, *tahmid*, *shalawat*, and closed with a prayer together. The sets of the events have the aim of praying for the soul of someone who has died.<sup>23</sup> The same objectives are also practiced by Muslims in Banten. Badruzzaman, one of the religious leaders in Banten, said that the implementation of *tahlilan* in Banten is started by *hadyu al-fatihah* (sending al-Fatihah) to certain religious figures (prophet Muhammad, his companion, family, and the ulama) as a form of reverence. Then it is continued by reciting *surah Yaasin* and followed by *dhikir* and closed by praying together. It aims to hope that the deceased can gain God's forgiveness.<sup>24</sup>

Related to the time of its performance, *tahlilan* is used to conduct at night after maghrib prayer. Mostly in certain villages both in Lampung

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<sup>22</sup> *Walisongo* is a term for preachers who spread Islamic teachings in Java, in which of whom are total nine guardians. See Ridin Sufyan, *Islamisasi di Jawa*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2000), 7

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Akromin, 26 November 2021

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Badruzzaman, 13 August 2021

and Banten, *tahlilan* is held without sending any invitations. When the neighbors know the host of the family has announced that there will be *Italian* after the deceased was buried, they spontaneously going to come. Yet, the host should determine whether *tahlilan* will be held for three or seven days. Before *tahlilan* begins, the guests are served drinks (coffee, tea, or water) and snacks. After the guests come, the representative of the family delivers a welcoming remark as a thankful utterance for those who have helped at the event. Then the event continues with *tawashul* or *hadyu al-Fatihah* (sending al-Fatihah), reciting *surah Yaasiin* and other verses of the Qur'an, *dhikir*, and ending by praying together<sup>25</sup>.

For most Muslims in Banten, the implementation of *tahlilan* is too urgent and close to an obligation. This perception arises because they believe that *tahlilan* is a way to pray for the souls of the dead.<sup>26</sup> In doing so, the need for *tahlilan* has also been firmly engraved in the lives of people in Lampung. *Tahlilan* has played a pivotal role for the Islamic community not only as a means to offer prayers for relatives who have passed away but also as a medium to strengthen friendships and empathy.<sup>27</sup> In this sense, this also describes that there are no significant differences in perception and assumption related to the implementation of *tahlilan* in both Lampung and Banten.

Interestingly, albeit diverse in the understanding of Islamic teachings, Muslims in Lampung and Banten do not contradict *tahlilan* as a tradition with Islamic teachings. Instead, they consider that it is in line with Islamic teachings. Despite no compulsion for a community to do *tahlilan*, they still keep to carry it out as a form of devotion to pray for the family who has passed away. In some Banten areas, people help each other to prepare all things required to hold *tahlilan*.<sup>28</sup> To do so, people in Lampung also have prepared all the necessities for *tahlilan*. This refutes the view that *tahlilan* can put a burden on the deceased's family.<sup>29</sup>

From such fact, it can be shed light that the sustainability of the inculturation process both in Lampung and in Banten is much supported

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<sup>25</sup> Sangkot Sirait. "Religious Attitudes of Theological Tradisionalist in The Modern Muslim Community: Study on tahlilan in Kota Gede". *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, Vol. 10, no. 02 (2016): 237-260

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Akromin, 14 August 2021

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Akromin, 26 November 2021

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Arif Fikri, 26 November 2021

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Agus Sertiawan, 05 Agustus 2021

by the social structure which is inclusive and tolerant. In Lampung, for instance, although Islam is the major religion embraced by people, as a transmigrant area, they have diverse cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. Similarly, in Banten, Islamic identity has been very attached, but differences in understanding, perspective, and perception toward Islamic teaching are certainly unavoidable. However, the potential for conflict and cleavage as an outcome of the diversity among communities in Lampung and Banten can be mitigated and anticipated with an inclusive and tolerant spirit. In other words, instead of differences in cultural and religious backgrounds, the Muslim community can interchangeably create mutual respect as reflected in *tahlilan* tradition.

The inculturation process which runs well in Lampung and Banten is also buttressed by the high appreciation for the existence of local culture which is treated as valuable social capital. Although people in both regions are well-known as devout Muslims, they do not completely ignore the existence of a culture that has become their identity as well. This situation makes it possible not to clash between religious and cultural values. Instead, both entities are complementary and enriching. In this respect, *tahlilan* tradition can be a precedent to see how religious and cultural elements can cooperate.

In addition, such inculturation in *tahlilan* tradition is a fully social ethic that can potentially strengthen solidarity. There is no penalty for those who do not attend *tahlilan* both in Lampung and Banten. Even if it is regarded as a profane event that has nothing to do with theological doctrines. At the same time, it also has no reward for those who join it. However, *tahlilan* insists people not arbitrarily skip it.<sup>30</sup> This fact shows that through *tahlilan* each member of the community is tied by a commitment to participate, although those members have differences of status and professions. Thus *tahlilan* can be a means to reinforce the ties of brotherhood.

Furthermore, essentially a tradition (*'urf*) could be persistently preserved when it does not contradict the Shari'ah. In this sense, not all traditions do not surely refer to Islamic law as the main source, but those cannot be palpably judged as heresy (*bid'ah dhalalah*). The tradition is not a shari'ah, but a branch (*furu'*) to address or even holistically develop

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<sup>30</sup> Sirait, Sangkot. "Religious Attitudes of Theological Traditionalist... 254-255

Islamic teachings. The tradition itself is an activity that is repeatedly carried out and later becomes a shared custom. In this context, the *ahlu sunnah wal jama'ah* realized combining local traditions with Islamic teachings such as *tahlilan* is a necessity because both are complementary.

#### D. Conclusion

The implementation of *tahlilan* in Lampung and Banten is relatively similar in terms of practices and objectives. As a religious tradition, *tahlilan* is put as *al-adah muhakamah* (the allowed custom) because its main purpose is to pray, *dhikir*, and recite certain verses of the holy Qur'an with which the reward (*pahala*) is for the deceased to obtain God's forgiveness. Although there are contradictions related to the implementation of *tahlilan*, considered as heresy due to no clear theological bases, Muslims in Lampung and Banten deem that *tahlilan* is not opposed to the Qur'an and Hadist. Even it has been regarded as inherently a part of Islamic teachings.

Most Muslims in Lampung and Banten hold *tahlilan* as a ritual as well as a tradition to pray for someone who has passed away. Its time usually starts on the first, third, seventh, fortieth, hundredth, thousandth, and a year (*haul*) day after the death. *Tahlilan* is also frequently recognized as *yasinan* or *tazkiyah* within which it is begun with *tawashul* or *hadyu al-fatihah* (sending al-Fatihah), referring to their predecessor's *ulama* (prophet Muhammad, his companion, family, and the *ulama*) as a form of reverence, and then continued by reciting *surah Yaasin*, followed by *dhikir*, and closed by praying together. All aim to gain God's forgiveness for the deceased.

Albeit diverse in the understanding of Islamic teachings, Muslims in Lampung and Banten interestingly do not contradict *tahlilan* as a tradition with Islamic teachings. Despite no compulsion for a community to do *tahlilan*, they still keep to carry it out as a form of devotion to pray for the family who has died. Through *tahlilan*, it represents how the inculturation takes place by which cultural and religious values can enrich each other. In the context of Lampung and Banten, such an inculturation process runs smoothly due to being supported by some factors, namely the structure of society which is inclusive and tolerant; the high appreciation on the existing of local culture treated as the valuable social capital; and

*tahlilan* positioned as a social ethic which can strengthen social solidarity.  
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