



Hadith Criticism of Rain-Shaman Practices in Muslim Community Wedding Traditions

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Abstract

Rain-shaman practices remain embedded in certain Muslim community wedding traditions in Indonesia. These practices warrant scholarly examination as they reflect the intersection of local cultural traditions, communal religious understanding, and the principle of tawhid in Islamic teachings. This study aims to analyze the forms of rain-shaman practices within wedding ceremonies and to evaluate their conformity with Islamic hadith through the methodological framework of *sanad* and *matan* criticism. Employing a qualitative field research design, data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving rain-shamans, religious leaders, cultural figures, and community members. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, encompassing data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing, reinforced by hadith criticism. Findings reveal diverse practices: some involve supplications directed to Allah, which may be interpreted as religious efforts (*ikhtiar*), while others employ symbolic media such as chili, salt, nails, and offerings, accompanied by beliefs in the shaman's special powers elements lacking strong hadith foundations and potentially conflicting with the principle of tawhid. The study concludes that hadith criticism provides a normative framework for proportionally evaluating local religious practices, balancing cultural heritage with Islamic orthodoxy.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of rainmaking is one of the traditional practices still found in Indonesian society, particularly in rural communities that continue to uphold local traditions in various social activities. This practice is generally carried out when communities hold celebrations, weddings, family events, or religious activities that require smooth execution in open spaces. In one Muslim community in Indonesia, the practice of rainmaking is still known and used by some members of the community as a way to ensure rain falls. Local residents believe that rainmakers possess certain abilities to hold back, divert, or move the rain so that events can proceed smoothly. In practice, this ritual involves not only the recitation of prayers but may also include the use of specific materials, such as water, salt, chili peppers, and other objects believed to hold symbolic meaning (Chamimudin, 2023; Yuliana, 2020).

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The existence of rainmaking practices demonstrates that local traditions still hold an important place in people's social lives. For some communities, rainmakers are not only seen as people to turn to for help when the weather is unfavorable, but also as part of a system of local knowledge passed down from generation to generation. Similar phenomena are also found in various regions of the Indonesian archipelago, such as in the rain-warding traditions of Javanese communities. In this context, elders or certain individuals are often believed to possess special abilities to help divert rain during major events. This indicates that the practice of rainmaking is not an isolated phenomenon but rather part of Indonesian tradition, shaped by the long-standing interplay between local beliefs, social needs, and religious practices (Aini, 2021; Khotimah, 2020).

In community life, the practice of rainmaking is often understood as an effort to ensure the smooth running of events. Communities organizing celebrations typically want the event to proceed without a hitch, especially since rain can deter guests from attending, damage tents, disrupt traditional ceremonies, and cause financial losses. Therefore, hiring a rainmaker is viewed as a practical, proactive measure. However, this practice can raise issues when viewed through the lens of Islamic teachings, particularly if there is a belief that rainmakers possess special powers to control rain on their own. This issue is significant because, in Islamic teachings, rain is part of Allah's power, which cannot be absolutely controlled by humans. All forms of supplication and hope should be directed toward Allah SWT as the sole being who holds power over the universe (Yuliana, 2020).

From an Islamic perspective, prayer is a legitimate means of seeking help from Allah, the Almighty, including when facing natural phenomena such as rain. However, prayer must remain within the framework of tawhid the belief that absolute power belongs solely to Allah SWT. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized that anyone who attributes the falling of rain to the mercy of Allah is among the believers, whereas those who attribute it to anything other than Allah have fallen into a form of doctrinal deviation. This hadith indicates that the issue of rain is not merely a natural phenomenon but is also related to how humans understand Allah's power in life. Thus, the practice of rainmaking must be carefully examined to distinguish between efforts that remain consistent with Islamic teachings and practices that potentially contradict the principle of tawhid (Muslim, 1998).

A number of previous studies have examined the practice of rainmaking from various perspectives. Some studies view this practice as part of local traditions that serve a social function in community life. Other studies frame it as a form of acculturation between Islam and local culture, particularly in communities that still preserve their ancestral heritage. From a sociocultural perspective, practices such as rainmaking are often understood as a means of maintaining social harmony, providing a sense of security to event organizers, and preserving the community's cultural identity. Studies on the syncretism of Islam and traditional beliefs also indicate that people's religious practices do not always take a purely normative form but often interact with local symbols, rituals, and customs that are deeply rooted in social life (Nurhayati, 2020).

Other studies, which have not been widely utilized in this research, indicate that the practices of rainmakers at ceremonial events vary across different regions. In a study on rain-warding rituals at weddings in Binjai, the community views rainmakers as individuals with the expertise to hold back or divert rain so that the wedding celebration is not disrupted (Rizky &

[Nazaruddin, 2022](#)). A similar phenomenon was also observed in the rain-stopping tradition in Mulyoagung Village, Tuban, which is performed when the community holds major celebrations such as weddings, circumcisions, and village purification ceremonies, and is led by a rainmaker shaman believed to be capable of preventing rain from falling ([Nirmala & Sukarman, 2022](#)). Meanwhile, in the tradition of rain control using verses from the Quran in Jangkat Village, this practice involves reciting Surah Al-Ikhlâs, Surah Yâsin, and the final verse of Surah Al-Baqarah, as well as using materials such as salt and pebbles, although the community still believes in the rain master's ability to control the rain ([Humayrah, 2023](#)).

Beyond the context of local celebrations, the practice of rainmaking is also part of contemporary public discourse. The appearance of rainmakers at the 2022 Mandalika MotoGP event sparked a variety of responses from netizens, ranging from appreciation for local culture to critical comments about the practice ([Setyowati et al., 2022](#)). A semiotic analysis of the 2022 MotoGP rainmaker meme also shows that the mythical and mystical elements of this practice are often represented satirically because they are considered irrational by some members of the digital community ([Amalia & Firmonasari, 2022](#)). From a normative Islamic perspective, research on the “nyaran ojen” tradition in Tanjung Pura indicates that the use of rainmakers' services during ceremonies is viewed as problematic by the Langkat branch of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) because it involves belief in the rainmaker's abilities and has the potential to deviate from Islamic doctrine ([Husna et al., 2023](#)). In the Mandailing context, the “*manyarang hujan*” tradition also involves the use of specific objects and the recitation of incantations in rituals to stop the rain, further underscoring the need for a critical assessment of rainmaker practices through the perspectives of hadith and tawhid ([Afifah, 2024](#)).

Nevertheless, studies that specifically analyze the practice of rainmaking through a hadith-critical approach remain relatively limited. Most previous research has emphasized anthropological, sociological, or cultural aspects, while the normative dimension of hadith has not yet been widely adopted as the primary analytical framework. In fact, the practice of rainmaking is directly related to issues of prayer, human effort, belief in the unseen, and the potential for deviation from monotheism. Therefore, a hadith-critical approach is essential to assess whether this practice is grounded in the teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) or, conversely, contains elements that warrant critical scrutiny. In this study, hadith criticism is used not only to assess the quality of the hadith's isnad and matn but also to understand the relevance of the hadith in evaluating local religious practices that are alive within the community.

This gap forms the crucial basis of this study. The practice of rainmaking should not be understood merely as a cultural tradition, for it contains a theological dimension related to the community's understanding of the power of Allah the Almighty. If this practice consists solely of prayer to Allah and is not accompanied by belief in powers other than Him, then it can be understood as a form of religious endeavor. Conversely, if the practice involves the use of offerings, specific objects, or the belief that rainmakers possess special supernatural abilities, then it must be critically examined from the perspective of tawhid. Thus, this study plays a vital role in bridging the gap between local cultural studies and normative Islamic studies, particularly in the field of hadith studies.

Recent studies show that the practice of rainmaking remains a living phenomenon in various Muslim communities in Indonesia, although its forms

and meanings vary. In the tradition of *nyarang hujan* among the Muslim community in Banten, this practice is carried out in the context of ceremonial events and is understood by some members of the community as an effort to hold back or divert rain. However, public acceptance of this practice is not uniform, as some view it as a form of human effort, while others consider it problematic from a religious perspective (Purwanti, 2013). A similar phenomenon is also evident in Indonesian society more broadly, where belief in the effectiveness of rainmakers persists, while religious responses to this practice vary ranging from acceptance as a cultural heritage to rejection on the grounds that it deviates from religious principles (Kusumaningtyas, 2023). In the contemporary context, rainmaker rituals are also viewed as part of the local wisdom recognized in various regions of Indonesia, although they continue to spark debate between cultural preservation and religious judgment (Suroyo et al., 2025).

Furthermore, several studies indicate that rainmaking practices do not always take the form of a single shamanic ritual, but can involve symbolic practices intertwined with prayers, local symbols, and the community's hopes. The use of chili peppers and taro leaves in the Kahakan Barabai community, for example, is interpreted as a symbol to ward off rain based on the nature of these plants which are hot and do not easily absorb water and the process is accompanied by the recitation of the *basmalah*, *shalawat*, and prayers (Mardiana et al., 2024). On the other hand, the tradition of rainmaking in local culture remains a subject of debate because some members of the community view it as serving the common good, while others consider the practice to be contrary to the principles of the Quran and Islamic doctrine (Ramadhan, 2023). These various findings indicate that the practice of rainmaking needs to be examined more carefully not merely as a cultural tradition, but also as a socio-religious practice that requires normative evaluation through the *hadith*, particularly regarding the aspects of prayer, human effort, *tawhid*, and the potential for doctrinal deviation.

The selection of a particular Muslim community in Indonesia as the research site was based on several academic considerations. First, the community in that region still maintains the practice of rainmakers during ceremonial events, making it relevant to examine the relationship between local traditions and Islamic teachings. Second, specific studies on the practice of rainmakers in the context of the local community remain limited, giving this research novelty in terms of field data. Third, the presence of informants such as rainmakers, religious leaders, traditional leaders, and community members allows this study to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the form of the practice, its meaning, and the community's understanding of rainmaking. Thus, this research location serves as an important empirical space for understanding how Muslim communities negotiate local traditions with religious principles.

Based on the above discussion, this study aims to analyze the practice of rainmaking in the ceremonial traditions of Muslim communities through a critical *hadith* approach. Specifically, this study seeks to identify the various forms of rainmaking practices, understand public perceptions of these practices, and assess their compatibility with Islamic teachings particularly regarding prayer, human effort, *tawhid*, and potential deviations from Islamic doctrine. The contribution of this study lies in its effort to link empirical data on local religious practices with a critical *hadith* analysis, thereby providing a more balanced assessment of community traditions. Through this approach, this study is expected to enrich the study of *hadith* within the context of local

socio-religious life and provide an academic foundation for strengthening the understanding of tawhid in the lives of Muslim communities.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative method, specifically a descriptive-analytical field study. This method was chosen because the study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the practices of rainmakers in the community's ceremonial traditions in Aek Torop Hamlet, Km. 6, Torgamba Subdistrict, South Labuhanbatu Regency, North Sumatra, Indonesia. In addition to describing the forms of these practices as they have developed within the community, this study also employs a normative approach through hadith criticism to assess the compatibility of these practices with Islamic teachings, particularly those related to prayer, human effort (*ikhtiar*), monotheism (*tauhid*), and potential deviations from Islamic doctrine. The research data sources consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through observation and in-depth interviews with informants selected using purposive sampling. There were five informants in this study: one rainmaker, one religious leader, and three local residents who were aware of or had been involved in hiring rainmakers for ceremonial events. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from hadith collections, commentaries on hadith, books, journal articles, theses, and other scholarly works relevant to the research topic (Anidar et al., 2026; Bungin, 2020; Efendi et al., 2026; Engkizar et al., 2025; Engkizar et al., 2026; 2026; Putri et al., 2025).

Data collection techniques included observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The primary research instrument was the researcher, aided by observation guidelines, interview guidelines, and documentation notes. To ensure data validity, this study employed source triangulation and methodological triangulation (Sugiyono & Sudaryono, 2021). The collected data were analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana interactive model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Miles et al., 2019). Data reduction was carried out by selecting data relevant to the research focus, particularly regarding the forms of rainmaker practices, community understanding, and religious perspectives on these practices. Data presentation was conducted in the form of descriptive narratives, followed by conclusions drawn based on the relationship between field findings and normative analysis. In addition, this study applied sanad criticism and matn criticism to hadiths related to the prohibition against visiting shamans, prayers to divert rain, and the prohibition against attributing rainfall to anyone other than Allah SWT. The results of the hadith analysis were used as a basis for evaluating rainmaking practices proportionately from the perspective of Islamic teachings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Description and Procedures for Rainmaking Rituals

Rainmaking rituals in the tradition of Muslim community celebrations are a form of local tradition that remains an integral part of social life. In the context of local communities, these celebrations are understood not only as family events but also as social gatherings involving relatives, neighbors, traditional leaders, and the surrounding community. Therefore, ensuring the smooth running of the event is a top priority for the organizers. One of the disruptions frequently feared during such celebrations is rain, especially when the event is held outdoors or under a tent. It is in these situations that the rainmaking ritual is seen as serving a social function as a communal effort to ensure the event

proceeds smoothly. These findings demonstrate that the rainmaking ritual is inextricably linked to the community's practical need to cope with weather uncertainty, as well as to a local belief system that has been passed down through generations.

Linguistically, the term "rainmaker" consists of two words: "handler" and "rain." "handler" refers to a person believed to possess special abilities, while "rain" refers to droplets of water falling from the air as a result of the condensation process (Indonesian Language Dictionary Team, 2009). Among the residents of Aek Torop Hamlet, Km. 6, a rainmaker is understood as someone believed to be capable of helping to hold back, divert, or move the rain so that it does not fall on the site of a ceremonial event. This understanding indicates that the community views the rainmaker not only as a ritual practitioner but also as a figure who plays a specific role in addressing practical problems faced by the community. This perspective aligns with findings from previous research indicating that the practice of rainmakers in Indonesian society is often positioned as a local tradition that serves social, psychological, and symbolic functions in the conduct of community events (Arifinsyah et al., 2020; Chamimudin, 2023).

The interview results show that the ability to be a rainmaker is not understood by the community as a skill acquired through ordinary means. Some informants mentioned that this ability can be acquired through a process of learning from someone who is already known as a rainmaker. Others view this ability as a hereditary trait passed down through families. In fact, some community members believe that certain requirements must be met before someone is considered capable of performing this practice, such as fasting for a specific period of time (Nurhayati, 2020). However, this account was not fully confirmed by the rainmakers themselves, who served as the primary informants. These differing explanations indicate that the community's understanding of rainmakers is not always uniform but is shaped by stories, experiences, observations, and beliefs that evolve within social life. From an anthropological perspective, traditions passed down through generations are often preserved not only through practice but also through social narratives that live on in the collective memory of the community (Koentjaraningrat, 2009).

The procedure for performing rainmaking rituals in Aek Torop Hamlet, Km. 6, also shows some variation. According to the rainmaker who served as the primary informant the practice places greater emphasis on prayers to Allah SWT. The process begins by preparing a clean, dry pot or pan, which is then placed in a corner of the kitchen facing the qibla. After that, the rainmaker recites the salawat three times and offers a prayer in Arabic with the intention of diverting the rain to another location, such as toward the sea. In the rainmaker's understanding, the pot is not regarded as a source of power, but rather as a symbol of human effort. He emphasized that the essence of this practice is a supplication to Allah the Almighty, not a belief in the independent power of objects or humans. To a certain extent, this prayer-centered practice can be understood as a form of supplication, as long as it is not accompanied by the belief that humans or specific objects possess absolute power over the rain.

The practice of praying to address issues related to rain is rooted in the hadith tradition. According to one account, when it rained continuously and caused hardship for the people of Medina, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) prayed:

اللَّهُمَّ حَوَالَيْنَا وَلَا عَلَيْنَا

Meaning: O Allah, send rain around us and not upon us (Al-Bukhari, n.d.; Muslim, n.d.).

This hadith indicates that the request to divert rain is a form of supplication grounded in Islamic teachings. However, the essential message of this hadith does not lie in humanity's ability to control the rain, but rather in our complete reliance on Allah, the Exalted, as the Ruler of the universe. Thus, if the practice of rainmaking is understood solely as a prayer to Allah and is not accompanied by belief in supernatural powers other than Him, then such a practice can still be understood as a form of religious endeavor. However, if such a prayer is mixed with a belief in the rainmaker's absolute special abilities, then the practice must be critically examined from the perspective of tawhid (Al-Qaradawi, 1994; Al-Zuhaili, 1985).

In addition to practices that emphasize prayer, field findings also indicate the existence of other forms of ritual that utilize specific materials. Some communities mention that in rainmaking rituals, red chili peppers, salt, and nails are used, and in some cases, offerings such as chicken, glutinous rice, eggs, coffee, chili peppers, and onions are also included. These items are placed at specific locations, such as around the house, the event tent, the roof of the house, or the vicinity where the event takes place. Salt is placed in a bowl with the stipulation that it must not come into contact with water, while nails are scattered around the event site. This sequence demonstrates that rainmaking practices exist not only in the form of prayer but also as symbolic rituals that incorporate elements of local beliefs. In cultural studies, the use of such symbolic objects can be understood as part of a community's system of meaning; however, in Islamic studies, these practices must be evaluated based on Sharia principles and the accompanying beliefs (Aini, 2021; Khotimah, 2020).

Practices involving certain objects become problematic when people believe that these objects possess special powers to hold back or move rain. In Islamic teachings, rain is part of the power of Allah SWT. The Quran affirms that it is Allah who moves the winds, spreads the clouds, and sends down rain according to His will. This is mentioned in Surah ar-Rum [30]: 48:

اللَّهُ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيَّاحَ فَتَنِيْرُ سَحَابًا فَيَبْسُطُهُ فِي السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ وَيَجْعَلُهُ كِسْفًا فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَالِهِ

Meaning: *It is Allah who sends the winds, and they stir the clouds and spread them in the sky however He wills, and He makes them fragments so you see the rain emerge from within them. And when He causes it to fall upon whom He wills of His servants, immediately they rejoice* (QS. Ar-Rum: 48).

This verse indicates that the process of rainfall is under the control of Allah SWT, not within the power of humans or specific objects (Az-Zuhaili, 2010). From a social perspective, the existence of these varied practices demonstrates that the rainmakers in Aek Torop Hamlet, Km. 6, occupy a point where local traditions and religious understanding intersect. Some members of the community view it as a normal custom because it has been practiced for a long time. Others have begun to view these practices more critically, especially when they involve offerings and specific objects. This difference is evident in the discrepancies in accounts between the rainmakers, the community, and religious leaders. The rainmakers emphasize that their practices focus on prayer to Allah, while some community members mention the use of additional paraphernalia and specific taboos. Local religious leaders maintain that the use of offerings and specific objects lacks a clear basis in Islamic teachings and should therefore be avoided if they involve belief in powers other than Allah SWT.

Thus, the description and procedures for performing rainmaking rituals in Aek Torop Hamlet, Km. 6, indicate that this practice is not uniform. Some

forms of the practice can still be understood as an effort through prayer to Allah the Almighty, but there are also forms that are intertwined with symbols, media, taboos, and offerings. This finding is significant because it demonstrates that assessments of rainmakers cannot be made in general terms. Practices based on prayer must be distinguished from those involving belief in specific objects or special powers. From the perspective of hadith and tawhid, the primary boundary that must be upheld is that all forms of supplication are directed solely to Allah SWT, while humans merely make efforts without believing in the existence of independent powers outside of His authority. This subsection demonstrates that rainmaker practices constitute a complex socio-religious phenomenon, necessitating further analysis through an understanding of the community and hadith criticism in the following subsection.

Community Understanding of Rainmaking Practices

The understanding of the community in Aek Torop Hamlet, Km. 6, regarding rainmaker practices reveals a rather complex relationship between local traditions, social needs, and religious beliefs. Based on interview results, rainmaker practices are not viewed in isolation by the community. Some community members understand them as long-standing traditions, particularly in the context of ceremonies, weddings, and family events. This practice is regarded as a custom passed down from generation to generation, so its presence is not always questioned in social life. One informant stated that the use of rainmakers has become a very normal part of life because it has been practiced since the time of their parents and ancestors. This statement indicates that the practice of rainmaking has become ingrained in the community's collective memory and is maintained as part of local tradition. From an anthropological perspective, traditions passed down through generations tend to endure because they serve to shape social identity, maintain cultural continuity, and foster a sense of community connection to ancestral heritage (Dadze-Arthur, 2017; Koentjaraningrat, 2019).

People who accept the services of rainmakers generally do not always have a deep understanding of the process, the incantations, or the religious basis used by rainmakers. They tend to view these practices primarily in terms of their immediate benefits namely, ensuring that events run smoothly and are not disrupted by rain. From this perspective, the rainmaker is seen as someone who can help alleviate the concerns of event organizers. One informant stated that what matters most to the community is asking the rainmaker for help to divert the rain or prevent it from falling at the event location. This statement indicates that some members of the community prioritize the outcome over the process. From a sociology of religion perspective, this way of thinking can be understood as a form of functional interpretation of religious practices or traditions that is, when a practice is accepted because it is believed to provide practical benefits in daily life (Yusuf, 2020). Thus, the rainmaker practice functions not only as a ritual but also as a social mechanism that helps the community cope with weather uncertainty.

In addition to being tied to tradition, the public's perception of rainmakers is also influenced by psychological factors. Hosting such a celebration typically involves significant costs, involves many people, and requires extensive preparation. Rain falling during the event can lead to losses, such as a decrease in the number of guests, damage to event equipment, disruption of traditional rituals, or spoilage of the prepared food. For this reason, some people hire rainmakers as a precautionary measure and to seek peace of mind. One informant stated that without a rainmaker, he feared it would rain, guests would not show up, and the family would suffer financial losses. These findings indicate

that the practice of employing rainmakers is not driven solely by spiritual beliefs but also by an emotional need to feel secure. In this context, rainmakers serve as a symbol of control over social anxiety when communities face situations they cannot fully control.

However, public understanding of rainmaking practices is not entirely uniform. Some members of the public have begun to view these practices more critically, especially when they involve specific objects, offerings, or a belief in an individual's special ability to control the rain. The more critical segment of society believes that prayers should be directed solely to Allah, not to humans or specific objects. One informant, a religious leader, stated that if someone prays to Allah, there is no issue; however, if the prayer is directed to anyone other than Allah, it could lead to shirk. This perspective reflects a religious awareness that the primary criterion for evaluating rainmaker practices lies in the object of belief and the direction of the supplication. If a rainmaker is understood merely as a social intermediary who assists in prayer, then such a practice can still be viewed as a legitimate effort. However, if a rainmaker is believed to possess independent power to bring about rain, then this understanding contradicts the principle of tawhid.

In Islamic teachings, all forms of supplication and dependence must be directed toward Allah SWT. The Quran emphasizes Allah's closeness to His servants and the command to pray directly to Him in Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 186:

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۖ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ

Meaning: *And when My servants ask you, [O Muhammad], concerning Me - indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me [by obedience] and believe in Me that they may be [rightly] guided* (QS. Al-Baqarah: 186)

This verse affirms that Islam allows people to pray directly to Allah SWT without placing their faith in any power other than Him (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019). In the context of rainmaking practices, this verse serves as the basis for the understanding that requests to divert rain are justified only if they are framed as prayers to Allah, not as a form of reliance on rainmakers, objects, offerings, or specific symbols.

This understanding is further reinforced by a hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) narrated by Ibn Abbas. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said:

إِذَا سَأَلْتَ فَاسْأَلِ اللَّهَ، وَإِذَا اسْتَعَنْتْ فَاسْتَعِنْ بِاللَّهِ

Meaning: *"If you ask for something, ask Allah. If you seek help, seek help from Allah"* (Narrated by Al-Tirmidhi)

This hadith establishes the fundamental principle that requests and assistance must be directed to Allah the Almighty (Al-Trimidzi, 2001). In social practice, a person may seek help from fellow human beings in matters of a worldly nature that fall within human capacity. However, in matters pertaining to Allah's absolute power such as the falling of rain, the diversion of rain, and the ordering of nature faith must remain directed toward Allah SWT. Therefore, a rainmaker should not be understood as a party possessing power over the rain, but rather simply as a human being who prays and makes an effort. This distinction is crucial to prevent people from falling into beliefs that contradict the principle of tawhid (Al-Nawawi, 2000).

From the rainmaker's own perspective, the practice is understood as an effort that remains dependent on Allah SWT. The rainmaker, as the primary informant, states that he merely prays to Allah to divert the rain elsewhere. This statement shows that the practitioner does not always view himself as possessing

absolute power, but rather as someone who prays. This understanding is acceptable as long as it is not accompanied by claims of supernatural abilities, the use of objects believed to possess certain powers, or rituals lacking a basis in Islamic law. In Islam, human effort (*ikhtiar*) remains permissible, but it must not supplant the belief that the final outcome lies entirely in the will of Allah SWT. Thus, rainmaker practices that consist solely of prayer to Allah can be viewed as a form of religious effort, whereas practices accompanied by a belief in the power of objects or the rainmaker's special abilities require theological scrutiny.

These differing perspectives within society reflect a tension between cultural values and religious norms. On the one hand, people maintain the practice of rainmakers because it is seen as a tradition that offers practical benefits and a sense of security. On the other hand, Islamic teachings set normative boundaries to ensure that traditions do not violate the principle of tawhid. In such situations, the necessary approach is not simply to reject the tradition in its entirety, but to distinguish between elements that are still acceptable and those that must be abandoned. Traditions that involve prayer and hope in Allah, and are not accompanied by belief in powers other than Allah, can be redirected into religious practices more in line with Islamic teachings. Conversely, elements such as offerings, belief in specific objects, and the deification of the rainmaker's abilities must be critically examined, as they have the potential to obscure the purity of tawhid.

This public understanding is also evident in direct quotes from several informants, which indicate that the practice of rainmaking is understood primarily through social experience and its practical benefits. Some members of the community consider this practice to be normal because it has been carried out for a long time; as one informant stated, the use of rainmakers has become "very normal" and "has been passed down from generation to generation by our ancestors". In the context of celebrations, the community also places greater emphasis on the outcome rather than the ritual process itself, as reflected in the statement that "the important thing is that we ask him for help" because rain is considered "something that can be moved". A similar perspective is evident in the community's concern about potential losses if it rains during the event, as expressed in the statement: "If we don't hire a rainmaker, we're afraid it will rain, people won't come, and we'll end up losing money". These quotes demonstrate that the practice of employing a rainmaker is maintained not only for reasons of belief but also because of its social and psychological functions in providing a sense of security to event organizers.

Thus, the understanding of the community in Aek Torop Hamlet, Km. 6, regarding the practice of rainmaking can be classified into several forms. First, the traditional understanding, in which the community views rainmaking as a time-honored custom that is naturally performed during celebrations. Second, the functional understanding, in which the community employs rainmakers because they are believed to help ensure the smooth running of events and reduce anxiety. Third, a religious-critical understanding, in which the community evaluates the practice based on the principle of tawhid and the limits of prayer in Islam. This classification demonstrates that the practice of rainmaking cannot be assessed simplistically, as it involves a blend of tradition, social needs, community psychology, and religious understanding. Therefore, a critical analysis of hadith becomes essential to provide a more balanced assessment of this practice, particularly in distinguishing between legitimate efforts and practices that contain elements of doctrinal deviation.

Hadith Criticism of Rainmaking Practices

Criticism of rainmaking practices in the hadith is a crucial part of this study

because these practices are not only related to local traditions but also touch on issues of faith, prayer, human effort, and the limits of belief regarding the supernatural. Based on field findings, rainmaking practices in Aek Torop Hamlet, Km. 6, cannot be assessed simplistically because they take various forms. Some practices emphasize prayer to Allah the Almighty, while others involve the use of specific items such as chili peppers, salt, nails, offerings, as well as a belief in the rainmaker's special abilities. This diversity indicates that a normative approach is needed to distinguish between practices that remain within the bounds of religious effort and those that have the potential to deviate from the principle of tawhid. It is in this context that hadith criticism is used as an analytical tool to assess the compatibility of rainmaker practices with the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

The first relevant hadith in evaluating rainmaker practices is the hadith regarding the prohibition against consulting fortune-tellers or soothsayers. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said:

مَنْ أَتَى عَرَّافًا فَسَأَلَهُ عَنْ شَيْءٍ لَمْ تُقْبَلْ لَهُ صَلَاةُ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً

Meaning: *"Whoever visits a fortune-teller and asks him about something, his prayers will not be accepted for forty nights"* (Narrated by Muslim).

This hadith indicates a strict prohibition against seeking knowledge or assistance from those who claim to possess supernatural abilities (Muslim, n.d.). In hadith scholarship, this narration holds a strong status because it was transmitted by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim. In terms of its chain of transmission (*sanad*), this hadith can be used as evidence because it is found in a hadith collection of the highest authority. In terms of its text (*matan*), its content is also consistent with the fundamental principle of Islam that knowledge of the unseen is the exclusive right of Allah, not that of humans, shamans, fortune-tellers, or any particular party claiming to possess special abilities.

This prohibition is reinforced by another hadith which states:

مَنْ أَتَى كَاهِنًا أَوْ عَرَّافًا فَصَدَّقَهُ بِمَا يَقُولُ فَقَدْ كَفَرَ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Meaning: *"Whoever consults a shaman or fortune-teller and then believes what they say has committed disbelief in the revelation sent down to Muhammad"* (Narrated by Ahmad ibn Hanbal).

This hadith provides a stronger affirmation that the main issue lies not merely in the act of consulting someone believed to possess supernatural abilities, but in affirming those claims (Hanbal, 2004). If someone believes that a rainmaker possesses independent, special powers to control the rain, then that belief can lead to doctrinal deviation. However, if a rainmaker is understood merely as someone who prays to Allah, without the belief that he possesses supernatural powers, then this practice cannot be equated absolutely with the practice of sorcery (Al-Mubarakfuri, 1990). Thus, the criticism in the hadith does not serve to reject all forms of rainmaking practices in general, but rather to evaluate the accompanying elements of belief.

In the Quran, the principle that matters of the unseen are known only to Allah is affirmed in Surah an-Naml [27]: 65:

قُلْ لَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ فِي السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ الْغَيْبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

Meaning: *"Say, 'There is nothing in the heavens or on earth that knows the unseen except Allah'"* (Quran 27:65)

This verse serves as the theological basis for the principle that humans must not place their faith in anyone who claims to know or control matters beyond human capacity (Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2019). In the context of rainmakers, this verse affirms that rainmakers must not be regarded as possessing power over the rain. If the community believes that a rainmaker

can direct the rain through his own power, a specific object, or the aid of supernatural forces, then such a belief contradicts the principle of tawhid (Taimiyah, n.d.).

The second relevant hadith is the hadith regarding the prayer to divert rain. In one narration, it is mentioned that when it rained continuously and caused hardship for the people of Medina, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) prayed:

اللَّهُمَّ حَوَالَيْنَا وَلَا عَلَيْنَا

Meaning: “O Allah, send rain around us and not upon us” (Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

This hadith is important because it shows that asking for rain to be diverted is not prohibited in Islam as long as the request is directed to Allah SWT. The Prophet (peace be upon him) Muslim, (1998) himself taught a prayer asking that rain not cause harm to people. However, this hadith also indicates that the diversion of rain occurs because Allah answers the prayer, not because of human ability to control nature. Therefore, the practice of rainmaking which consists solely of prayer to Allah can still be understood as a form of religious effort. Conversely, practices involving offerings, specific objects, and belief in the power of the rainmaker have no basis in this hadith.

From the perspective of *matan* criticism, the hadith regarding prayers to divert rain aligns with the Qur’anic principle that Allah is the regulator of natural phenomena. Surah ar-Rum [30]: 48 explains:

اللَّهُ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابًا فَيَبْسُطُهُ فِي السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ

Meaning: “It is Allah who sends the winds, and the winds stir up the clouds, and Allah spreads them out in the sky as He wills” (Quran 30:48).

This verse affirms that natural processes such as wind, clouds, and rain are entirely subject to Allah’s will. Thus, prayer in Islam is not intended as a means for humans to control nature, but as an act of submission and supplication to Allah. If this principle is properly understood, then people can distinguish between legitimate prayer and rituals that lack a sharia basis.

The third hadith that forms the basis of the criticism is the hadith regarding the prohibition against attributing rain to anyone other than Allah. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said that Allah stated:

مَنْ قَالَ مُطِرْنَا بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَرَحْمَتِهِ فَذَلِكَ مُؤْمِنٌ بِي كَافِرٌ بِالْكَوْكَبِ، وَمَنْ قَالَ مُطِرْنَا بِنَوْءِ كَذَا وَكَذَا فَذَلِكَ كَافِرٌ بِي مُؤْمِنٌ بِالْكَوْكَبِ

Meaning: “Whoever says, ‘We are given rain by the grace and mercy of Allah,’ believes in Me and does not believe in the stars. As for the one who says, ‘We are given rain because of this or that star,’ he disbelieves in Me and believes in the stars” (Narrated by Muslim)

This hadith is highly relevant in evaluating the practice of rainmaking, as the central issue is the attribution of cause. Islam does not prohibit people from making efforts, but it does prohibit them from attributing absolute power to anyone other than Allah (Muslim, 1998). In the context of the community of Aek Torop Hamlet, Km. 6, if the success in preventing rain is attributed to the mercy of Allah, then this understanding is still in line with tawhid. However, if that success is attributed to the rainmaker’s ability, certain objects, offerings, or specific taboos, then this contradicts the meaning of the hadith.

Furthermore, there is a hadith that provides a general principle regarding prayer and seeking help. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

إِذَا سَأَلْتَ فَاسْأَلِ اللَّهَ، وَإِذَا اسْتَعَنْتَ فَاسْتَعِنْ بِاللَّهِ

Meaning: “If you ask, then ask of Allah. If you seek help, then seek help from Allah” (Al-

Tirmidhi, n.d.).

This hadith clarifies the theological limits of rainmaking practices. Requests to divert rain must always be directed to Allah. People may help one another within the limits of human capability, but they must not be believed to have power over matters that are the absolute prerogative of Allah. Therefore, a rainmaker must not be positioned as a figure who determines whether or not it will rain, but rather simply as a human being who prays (Rajab, 2001).

Based on the criticism of the *isnad* and *matan* of these hadiths, the practice of rainmaking can be categorized into three groups. First, practices that align with Islamic teachings namely, those that consist solely of supplication to Allah, do not involve offerings, do not ascribe power to objects, and do not regard the rainmaker as possessing independent power. Second, problematic practices those that still invoke Allah's name but are mixed with symbolic elements lacking a clear basis in the hadith. Third, practices that deviate from the principle of tawhid those involving offerings, belief in supernatural powers, or attributing success to the rainmaker or specific objects.

Thus, the hadith's critique of rainmaking practices shows that the main issue is not merely the existence or absence of a tradition, but how that tradition is understood and carried out. Islam allows for prayer and human effort, but rejects any form of belief that shifts human dependence from Allah to anything other than Him. Therefore, the rainmaking practices in Aek Torop Hamlet, Km. 6, need to be guided so that the elements that still consist of prayers to Allah are understood as human effort, while the elements of offerings, symbolic objects, and claims of special abilities must be critically examined and abandoned. This analysis demonstrates that hadith criticism can serve as a proportionate normative framework for evaluating local religious practices without disregarding the social realities of the community (Matondang, 2017).

Classification of Rainmaker Practices and Their Implications for Strengthening the Community's Belief in Tawhid

Based on the discussion in the previous subsection, rainmaking practices in Aek Torop Hamlet, Km. 6, cannot be assessed in isolation. These practices take on diverse forms, meanings, and religious orientations. Some community members view them as a time-honored tradition, some see them as an effort to ensure the smooth running of ceremonies, while others are beginning to question their compatibility with Islamic teachings. This diversity indicates that the assessment of rainmaking practices must be conducted proportionately neither by unconditionally accepting all elements of the tradition nor by rejecting it outright without examining the actual nature of the practice. In this context, a critical approach to hadith helps establish normative boundaries between practices that remain acceptable as prayer and human effort and those that contain elements of doctrinal deviation.

The first classification involves rainmaking practices that are consistent with Islamic teachings. This form of practice is characterized by direct supplication to Allah SWT, without involving offerings, objects believed to possess magical powers, or claims of special abilities on the part of the rainmaker. In this category, the rainmaker is not positioned as someone who has power over the rain, but rather simply as a person who is asked to pray. This kind of practice can be understood as a form of religious effort as long as the community's faith remains directed toward Allah SWT. In Islam, humans are commanded to pray and seek help only from Allah. The Quran affirms:

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ

Meaning: "Your Lord says, Pray to Me, and I will grant your request" (QS. Gafir: 60).

This verse indicates that prayer is a legitimate and recommended form of

worship. Therefore, if a request to prevent rain from disrupting a celebration is made through prayer to Allah, then such a practice can still be considered a permissible form of effort.

The second classification involves practices that are problematic. This category includes rain-making rituals that still invoke Allah's name or incorporate prayer, yet simultaneously involve specific materials such as chili peppers, salt, nails, pots, or specific taboos that lack a clear basis in the hadith. Such practices become problematic because they blend prayer to Allah with local symbols, which can potentially lead to misunderstandings. If these objects are understood merely as cultural symbols without any belief in their power, then the issue lies within the realm of tradition that needs to be clarified. However, if these objects are believed to possess supernatural influence over the onset or movement of rain, then the practice begins to shift from a mere effort toward a belief that is inconsistent with tawhid. This is consistent with studies on the acculturation of Islam and local culture, which show that community traditions are often formed through the intersection of religious teachings and local symbols passed down from generation to generation (Aini, 2021; Khotimah, 2020).

The third category consists of practices that deviate from the principle of tawhid. These practices are evident when a rainmaker is believed to possess special abilities to control rain on his own, or when rituals are performed with offerings and a belief in the assistance of supernatural powers. From the perspective of the hadith, such beliefs are closely related to shamanism because they place hope in entities believed to have access to supernatural powers. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) issued a stern warning:

مَنْ أَتَى عَرَّافًا فَسَأَلَهُ عَنْ شَيْءٍ لَمْ تُقْبَلْ لَهُ صَلَاةُ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً

Meaning: "Whoever visits a fortune-teller and asks him about something, his prayers will not be accepted for forty nights" (Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, n.d.).

This hadith not only prohibits the practice of visiting fortune-tellers but also emphasizes the importance of safeguarding one's faith from supernatural claims that lack a sharia basis. In the context of rainmakers, this hadith serves as the basis for rejecting practices that portray rainmakers as figures who supposedly possess special power over rain. This is because, in Islamic teachings, rain is part of the power of Allah, not the result of human power, objects, or specific offerings.

The Quran also affirms that knowledge of and control over the unseen lie within Allah's authority. Allah the Almighty says:

وَعِنْدَهُ ۖ مَفَاتِيحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ

Meaning: "With Him are the keys to all that is unseen; none knows them except Him" (Quran 6:59).

This verse reinforces the theological foundation that humans do not possess absolute power over natural phenomena. Therefore, any form of belief that attributes the success of rainmaking to a rainmaker, an object, or a power other than Allah must be critically examined. From a monotheistic perspective, the main issue lies not merely in the existence of the tradition, but in the beliefs associated with it. If people's beliefs shift from Allah to created beings, then the tradition is no longer merely a cultural practice; rather, it has become a matter of faith.

The implication of this classification is the need for an educational religious approach in addressing the practice of rainmaking. Local traditions need not be outright abolished, but should be guided to align with Islamic teachings. Elements involving prayer to Allah can be retained as a form of effort,

while elements such as offerings, belief in objects, and the deification of the rainmaker's abilities must be abandoned. In this regard, religious leaders play a crucial role in helping the community understand that prayer and human effort must remain within the framework of tawhid. Religious explanations delivered wisely will be more readily accepted by the community than an approach that directly condemns tradition. This is important because traditions are deeply ingrained in social life and are often understood as part of the community's identity (Koentjaraningrat, 2009).

Furthermore, this study offers academic implications for the development of hadith studies. Hadith criticism can not only be used to assess the quality of the *isnad* and *matan* but can also serve as a framework for analyzing contemporary socio-religious phenomena. With this approach, the hadith is not merely a normative text but functions as a tool for evaluating religious practices in society in a more objective manner. This study demonstrates that the integration of field data and hadith criticism can help clarify the boundaries between tradition, human initiative, and doctrinal deviation. Therefore, hadith studies hold strong relevance in addressing ongoing local religious issues within society.

Thus, the practices of rainmakers in Aek Torop Hamlet, Km. 6, can be understood through three main categories: practices that align with Islamic teachings, problematic practices, and practices that deviate from the principle of tawhid. Practices that consist solely of prayers to Allah can be accepted as religious endeavors, whereas practices involving offerings, belief in the power of objects, or claims of special abilities on the part of the rainmaker need to be critically examined and abandoned. This study emphasizes that local traditions must be viewed in proportion: they should be respected as cultural realities, yet guided so as not to conflict with the fundamental principles of Islam. In this way, the community can preserve the social values of these traditions without neglecting the purity of tawhid as the primary foundation of Islamic teachings.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the practice of rainmaking in the ceremonial traditions of Muslim communities is a socio-religious phenomenon that cannot be assessed in isolation, as it encompasses elements of local tradition, the practical needs of the community, religious understanding, and belief in the power of Allah SWT. New findings from this study reveal that rainmaking practices can be classified into three categories: practices consistent with Islamic teachings, practices that are problematic, and practices that deviate from the principle of tawhid. Practices that consist solely of prayers and supplications to Allah SWT can be understood as a form of religious endeavor that remains consistent with Islamic teachings, whereas practices involving specific objects such as chili peppers, salt, nails, pots, offerings, as well as a belief in the special abilities of rainmakers, need to be critically examined because they lack a strong basis in the hadith and have the potential to contradict the purity of tawhid. The value of this article lies in its contribution to providing a balanced framework for evaluating local religious practices, so that community traditions can be appreciated as cultural realities while still being guided to ensure they do not deviate from Islamic teachings. The novelty of this article lies in its use of a hadith-critical approach to analyze the practice of rainmaking as a socio-religious phenomenon rather than merely as a cultural tradition thereby allowing hadith criticism to serve as a normative framework for evaluating local traditions in a contextual and educational manner, while remaining grounded in the principle of tawhid.

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