Cultural Communication from the Muhammadiyah Perspective

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Abstract

Kasepuhan Sinarresmi is a traditional village that practices rice management rituals that treat rice like humans. This ritual is part of the Kasepuhan customs, in general the ritual carried out is in the form of greetings and permission from the pungpuhunan when carrying out farming activities. Meanwhile, Muhammadiyah is a religious movement that seeks to purify Islam's teachings according to the Qur'an, Hadith and Sunnah, which is far from heresy, superstition and khurofat. This research aims to: 1) find out how the ritual processes for treating rice are carried out by the residents of Kasepuhan Sinarresmi, 2) find out how the officials of the Muhammadiyah Tarjih and Tajdid Council interpret the rituals for treating rice carried out by the residents of Kasepuhan Sinarresmi and 3) find out what is the communication strategy in purifying Islamic religious teachings carried out by Muhammadiyah towards ethnic community groups. The method used is qualitative research with a phenomenological approach. The results of this research are: 1) there are 38 rituals which can be classified into 11 activity groups, namely: rituals before planting rice, rituals for planting rice, rituals for growing rice, rituals for caring for growing rice, rituals for harvesting rice, the ritual of storing rice, the ritual of cooking the first rice harvest, the ritual of resting huma land, Seren Taun, the ritual of restarting farming activities, and rituals related to the Islamic calendar, 2) Muhammadiyah does not reject local culture and considers cultural diversity to be the nation's wealth, 3) the da'wah strategy for ethnic communities is carried out using a multicultural da'wah method where the purification of Islamic teachings is carried out flexibly according to cultural space.

Keywords: *Cultural Communication, Muhammadiyah Perspective.*

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A. INTRODUCTION

The belief that guests will come when a butterfly-type insect lands in the house or asking for prayers to obtain a position from a religious person who has died because it is believed that the Islamic scholar is his lover are examples of superstition and superstition that we still often encounter in everyday life. Then every month of Rabiul Awwal we always witness the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Furthermore, it is shirk, about two years ago, in April 2021, the news in various mass media and *online media* was shocked by the hoax of Mrs. Wati who accused her neighbor of practicing babi ngepet, because according to her, her neighbor did not have a job but was considered well off. This case ended with Ibu Wati being expelled from her hometown even though she had apologized[1]. The last is following someone/opinion without knowing the legal basis/proposition.

[1] https://news.detik.com/berita/d-5550529/digeruduk-warga-ibu-yang-curiga-tetangga-kaya-besar-babi-ngepet-minta-maaf

The above phenomenon describes the conditions of superstition, churofat, bid'ah, shirk and taqlid in non-ethnic Muslim communities in Indonesia, where purification efforts can be carried out using a persuasive da'wah approach (Rachmadhani, 2020) . Then what about ethnic community groups which are Indonesia's cultural wealth and have traditional values in their lives whose existence must be preserved. Like Kasepuhan Sinarresmi, which integrates sara (Islamic religion) and mokaha (customs) in treating rice into rituals starting from planting, harvesting to cooking the first harvest of rice. On the one hand, local wisdom is the identity of the Indonesian nation with its cultural diversity, so that Indonesia has the motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* which means cultural richness and uniqueness. On the other hand, Muhammadiyah as a religious movement seeks to purify Islamic teachings from superstition, heresy and khurafat. This Islamic movement is substantively imbued with the spirit of the Koran, Ali Imran verse 104. This movement, called Muhammadiyah, carries out the mission *of yad' u na ilal-khairi* (calling for virtue in virtue) , wa *ya`muruna bil-ma'r u fi* (commanding virtuous actions), and *wa yan-hauna 'anil-* munkar (prevent evil) . This is interesting to research, because with this research we will see a picture of the Muhammadiyah movement regarding the purification of Islamic teachings towards ethnic community groups.

In the last ten years, there have been several studies that discuss culture or customs based on the Muhammadiyah tajdid perspective. These studies discuss the culture or habits carried out by non-ethnic community groups, such as changes in students' understanding of aqidah towards the disease of monotheism (shirk, bid'ah, superstition, tawassul and khurafat) before and after studying the Kemuhammadiyahan I course (Choiriyah, 2013) . Then there are traditions carried out by the Boyolali community (Suyitno, 2022) and the Abangan Islamic community group (Surawan, 2019) when welcoming the month of Ramadan and the cultural dialectic of Sendang Selirang (Ghafur, 2017) . Furthermore, the fact that there are people who carry out grave pilgrimages was revealed in research on the tradition of pilgrimages to sacred graves (Mirdad et al., 2022) . Other research examines Tajdid from the thought (Faizi, 2022) and historical aspects of KH. Ahmad Dahlan in purifying religious teachings in Kauman Yogyakarta (Nawir et al., 2023) . Tarjih and tajdid are Muhammadiyah movements as a religion (Abdullah et al., 2023) , where in their movement, Muhammadiyah seeks to balance purification and modernization (Rachmadhani, 2020) . The similarities between previous research and the research that the researcher will carry out are the intersection of research topics regarding culture, superstition, churofat, bid'ah, shirk and taqlid. The difference is that this topic is researched by the field of religious education using descriptive approaches, ethnography and literature studies. Other research studied in the field of communication science examines the meaning of holiday greetings for religious organizations (Rahardjo et al., 2022) . The intersection with this research is the discussion of culture with the experience of the Islamic organization Muhammadiyah. The novelty of the research that will be carried out is examining

cultural communication in ethnic community groups from the perspective of Muhammadiyah's tarjih and tajdid. Based on the above, researchers are interested in exploring cultural communication from a Muhammadiyah perspective. The aims of the research are: 1) To find out how the ritual processes for treating rice are carried out by the residents of Kasepuhan Sinarresmi, 2) To find out how the officials of the Muhammadiyah Tarjih and Tajdid Council interpret the rituals for treating rice carried out by the residents of Kasepuhan Sinarresmi and 3)) To find out what the communication strategy is in purifying Islamic teachings carried out by Muhammadiyah towards ethnic community groups.

B. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Process of Rituals in Treating Rice Carried Out by the Residents of Kasepuhan Sinarresmi

Based on the results of field research, the ritual process for rice until it becomes rice consists of 38 (thirty eight) rituals which can be classified into 11 (ten) activity groups, namely: ritual before planting rice, ritual for planting rice, ritual for growing rice, ritual for caring for rice which is growing, the ritual of harvesting rice, the ritual of storing rice, the ritual of cooking the first rice harvest, the ritual of resting the huma land, Seren Taun, the ritual of restarting farming activities, and rituals related to the Islamic calendar.

According to Abah (Chairman of Kasepuhan), this ritual is an activity that must be carried out (dipupusti) not deified (dipigusti). Rice is treated like humans, if humans have a house then rice is also provided with a special place as a home when it is first planted which is called pungpuhunan. When it has become rice, a special room is provided in the houses called *pangdaringan/goah/pabeasan*. Rice in Kasepuhan Sinarresmi cannot be bought and sold because of *pamali*. This custom, which is an oral rule, means that not a single resident of Kasepuhan Sinarresmi dares to sell rice[2].

a. The ritual before planting rice is carried out by reading the Bintang Kerti and Bintang Kidang, the Bintang Kerti for instructions *"where the aya kerti geura descends the beusi"* or preparing tools/utensils, the Bintang Kidang for the instructions *"where the aya kidang geura descends the kujang"* or It's time for *Nibakeun Sri Ka Bumi* (planting rice seeds). Kerti stars and kidang stars are considered creatures created by God who have the role of teachers of prey (time). The Kasepuhan chairman and the kolot overtime gathered to observe natural signs, namely interpreting the appearance of the constellation Kerti and Kidang stars which could be seen clearly with the naked eye from 2.00 to 4.00 in the morning. These two constellations appear visible for 6 months and also disappear invisible for 6 months. The day for planting rice is held according to the birthday of the person planting rice. Kasepuhan Sinarresmi

[2] Abah Asep, Traditional Head of Kasepuhan Sinarresmi, interview (Sinarresmi Village, 6 February 2024, at: 19.30)

residents do not plant rice if the Kasepuhan Chairman has not planted it, Abah was the first person to plant rice.

b. The rice planting ritual consists of 5 (five) types of rituals, starting from *Nyacar* which takes the form of cleaning huma fields which will later be planted with rice seeds by cutting grass, clearing bushes, cutting small trees that grow wild, cutting branches and twigs so that later the land can be planted. get enough sunlight. After the huma land is clean, then move on to the *Ngahuru ritual*, namely the activity of burning grass, pieces of bushes and small pieces of trees, the *Ngahuru activity* perfected with a ritual in the form of *Salametan* which is believed to perfect the activity, because during the *Ngahuru activity*, there was a disturbed ecosystem such as ants, caterpillars, grasshoppers, dragonflies, butterflies, etc. *Salametan* aims to ask for sincerity and blessing from disturbed living creatures. Next is *Ngerukan*, a ritual of making offerings, with 6 holes, each hole containing one object, namely a comb, eunteung, seel, pacing, sulangkar and dadap. Then there are also 5 accompanying holes and 17 holes provided. Numbers 6, 7 and 17 represent the philosophy of the religion adhered to. 5 refers to the pillars of Islam, 6 refers to the pillars of Faith and 17 refers to the number of rakats of fardhu prayers. *Ngerukan* continues with the *Caruta carita ritual* in the form of asking permission from parents who are still there and also from parents who have died, as well as from karuhun (ancestors/ancestors). The final ritual of planting rice is *Ngaseuk*, namely planting rice seeds. Before planting rice, the community first makes a pungpuhunan which is a symbol of the place where the mother's rice was planted or called *Nibakeun Sri ka Bumi*. Abah plants 2 bunches of rice, 1 bunch is believed to be the woman's rice and the other bunch is believed to be rice. The man planting two bunches of rice is called *sakuren* (united).
c. The rice growing ritual is called *Salamet Sapangjadian*, which means the condition of newly grown rice. In the Kasepuhan language, it is called *ngabulu irung* . *The Salametan Sapangjadian* ritual invites neighbors to make marrow porridge. Within a month, the *Ngored activity is carried out* (cleaning plants such as grass that grows around the rice until *Pare Nyiram* (pregnant young) or the rice starts to grow rice seeds.
d. Ritual for caring for growing rice, to protect the rice from pests, the *Mager ritual is carried out*, which means guarding, Abah makes an agreement with the owner/creator of the pest, so that the pests do not disturb the growing rice. The ritual is carried out at the Abah's house (*imah gede*) and prayers are expressed to the owner of the pest so that the rice is safe.
e. The ritual of harvesting rice after the rice is 5/6 months old. The characteristics of rice that can be harvested are that the rice is golden yellow, then there is another characteristic that indicates that the rice is ready to be harvested, namely the shape of the rice leaves, which according to Abah is quite difficult to see, so this characteristic must be looked at carefully. If you can see the

characteristics of the harvest, then the *Mabay ritual is carried out*, namely proposing or asking permission from the rice, whether the rice is willing to be harvested or not, the *Mabay ritual* is full of Abah sensitivity, if you already feel in your heart that the rice can be harvested then the *Mipit ritual is carried out*. namely taking rice, in the form of a ritual at pungpuhunan where the mother rice is tied but not cut, the mother rice is cut when the other rice has finished being cut. The next ritual is *Ngalantaian*, namely drying the rice for 1 month, followed by the ritual of *gentos tali* (replacing the rice tying rope) and *mocong* (tying rice that has been dried in the sun). Then the rice that has been tied is carried out by the *Diunjal ritual*, namely carrying the rice to the Leuit (rice barn) using a pelvis called rengkong in groups. Before storing it in the rice barn, every resident is obliged to set aside 1 (one) bunch of rice or *Jekat* in Leuit Si Jimat (the biggest barn). Another term for Jekat is *Ngaluarkeun Heula* .

f. Rice Saving Ritual, this ritual consists of *Ngadiukeun* or storing rice in the leuit ritual always accompanied by jampe-jampe from Abah, the harvested rice is stored in the pandaringan (*Netepkeun*) for one week. After that, Salametan is performed in the afternoon before the *Nutu ritual* is carried out. *Nutu* is cleaning rice from the skin traditionally using a *lisung* tool.
g. The ritual of cooking rice from the harvest, this ritual is called *nyangu repeh*, meaning that when cooking the rice you are not allowed to speak or fast from speaking, because speaking when cooking the first rice from the harvest is an act of *pamali* . The next ritual is *the Ageung Ritual*, namely proving Abah sareng Ambu (proof of Abah and Ambu) by inviting residents to greet.
h. In the ritual of resting the land, residents of Kasepuhan Sinarresmi only plant once a year. Just like humans cannot get pregnant twice in one year, that is how the residents of Kasepuhan Sinarresmi treat rice like humans. This ritual consists of *Ponggokan*, namely deliberation for no rice planting activities.
i. Seren Taun, is a ceremonial ritual of the harvest, as an expression of gratitude for the harvest obtained, in the process there is a ritual of *Carita Balik Incu Putu*, namely Kasepuhan residents come to the Abah to tell stories and ask for prayers for safety and an entertainment event for the residents by inviting community leaders, government, academics, security forces and more. Then it continues with three days *of greetings*, namely happy Monday, happy Tuesday and happy Wednesday.
j. The ritual of restarting land cultivation. This ritual is called *Turun Nyambut*, which is a *greeting activity* (thanksgiving) for the start of cultivating huma land. Greetings are held at the same time as *salamet tilu peuting*.
k. Another ritual related to the Sundanese calendar, namely *Sidekah Ruwah*, is carried out in the month of Ruwah. The activity carried out is *nyangu repeh*. Then *Sidekah Mulud by carrying out the Nyimur Mulud* traditional ceremony, then *Prah-Prahan* in the month of Safar, then there is also the greeting ritual on the Hijriyah date every 14th of the full moon. On this date the people make food in the form of pasung cakes, awug cakes and papais cakes.

The rituals of planting and harvesting rice have philosophical meaning for the Kasepuhan Sinarresmi people. Treating rice like humans means preventing the destruction of nature. By pairing rice with humans who cannot get pregnant twice a year, it means that humans give huma land the opportunity to restore its soil fertility for 6 months before it can be ready to plant again. The ritual carried out has succeeded in realizing food security, high quality, organic rice and has never been affected by rising rice prices.

2. The Interpretation of the Officials of the Tarjih and Tajdid Muhammadiyah Councils Regarding the Rituals in Treating Rice Performed by Residents of Kasepuhan Sinarresmi.

Muhammadiyah as a religious movement seeks to purify Islamic teachings from superstition, heresy and khurafat. This Islamic movement is substantively imbued with the spirit of the Koran, Ali Imran's letter, verse 104. This movement, called Muhammadiyah, carries out the mission of *yad' u na ilal-khairi* (calling for virtue), wa *ya`muruna bil-ma'rufi* (commanding virtuous actions), and *wa yan-hauna 'anil-* munkar (prevent evil). Pure Islamic teachings according to Fachrudin in his book Muhammmadiyah Towards the Future states that true Islam is far from heresy, superstition and khurofat. That pure Islam is one that originates from the Qur'an, hadith and Sunnah, free from things called heresy, superstition and khurofat. So Muhammadiyah gives the impression that the traditions or customs of ethnic communities, such as those of Kasepuhan Sinarresmi, must be purified by Islamic teachings.

This impression is not entirely true, because one of the institutions within Muhammadiyah, the Tarjih and Tajdid Council, discusses religious problems that arise in society to find solutions, solutions or answers. The Tarjih Muhammadiyah decision more or less shows the desire to accommodate local culture with the decision that is implemented (Mursalin, 2019). Muhammadiyah does not reject local culture, Muhammadiyah views the ritual practice of respecting nature, such as the treatment of rice in Kasepuhan Sinarresmi, as ecological conservation. For Muhammadiyah, one of the concerns regarding the contamination of Islamic teachings is following customs that do not consider their relevance in the progress of people's lives. If there are traditions that bring harm then that is what Muhammadiyah should pay attention to in order to carry out a movement to purify Islamic teachings. Muhammadiyah carried out studies carefully and thoroughly, in seeing which local cultures constitute the practice of khurafat or shirk. Apart from that, basically the purification of Islamic teachings by Muhammadiyah is related to aqidah and worship.[3]

As stated by the informant, Muhammadiyah has Manhaj Tarjih which is a methodology and approach which contains elements of the spirit of ijtihad in general in understanding the teachings of the Islamic religion, both sourced from the

[3]https://muhammadiyah.or.id/2023/07/islam-yang-warni-dan-setrue-besarnya-apa-maksudnya-1/

Al-Qur'an and Al-Hadith as well as from the opinions of the ulama. in the form of ijma and qiyas. In the Muhammadiyah framework of thought which is referred to as Manhaj Tarjih, matters or themes outside of faith and worship are actually more flexible, including those involving matters of customs [4]. Susanto's study (Susanto & Karimullah, 2017) states that Muhammadiyah adheres to the more moderate Wahhabi ideology and is relatively able to adapt to the culture and developments of the times. Furthermore, the informant said that how humans fulfill their daily needs is included in the worldly field of mu'amalah, including in this case customs, politics, economics, and so on. In this case, Muhammadiyah tends to be loose, meaning flexible, and in many ways it is adaptive. However, it must be within 3 corridors, namely not containing polytheism, not leading to immorality and not containing tabzir or waste [5]. Muhammadiyah views the tradition of treating rice like humans as a way to communicate with the environment [6]. Nature was created by Allah not only to be admired for its beauty, but as a trust that must be guarded and maintained to be utilized to support life (Muhammadiyah Central Leadership, 2018) , in line with Cox's statement, that environmental communication is a pragmatic and constitutive medium for providing understanding about the environment to the public (Cox, 2010) . By maintaining traditions and customs, the balance of the ecosystem can be maintained, as stated by Abah Asep, the earth is like a mother's womb, it is impossible for a mother to conceive twice a year[7], so the people of Kasepuhan only plant rice once a year, this method protects the elements soil nutrients where rice is planted. Pragmatically, the customs of planting rice in Kasepuhan Sinarresmi have two functions: to educate, remind, persuade, mobilize the residents of Kasepuhan Sinarresmi and help solve environmental problems regarding land exploitation. Meanwhile, constitutively, Abah Asep acts as a representative of nature to provide understanding to his citizens about how rice should be planted. These two functions are able to maintain food security, especially rice as a staple food, which is characterized by the availability of rice which is not affected by crisis conditions such as weather or the economy caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The existence of local wisdom in indigenous communities is able to preserve and sustain the environment, which in environmental communication is manifested symbolically (et al., 2023) . Din al-Islam as a concept is structured on the basis of three main components, namely the inner component which is the essence of monotheism, the symbolic component which is a form of ritual worship and the muamalah component which is an expression of din al-Islam. These three

[4] Dr. Endang, Deputy Secretary of the Muhammadiyang Central Leadership for Tarjih and Tajdid Council, interview (UMB, 11 May 2024, Time: 19.17)

[5] Dr. Endang, Deputy Secretary of the Muhammadiyang Central Leadership for Tarjih and Tajdid Council, interview (UMB, 11 May 2024, Time: 19.28)

[6] Dr. Endang, Deputy Secretary of the Muhammadiyang Central Leadership for Tarjih and Tajdid Council, interview (UMB, 11 May 2024, Time: 20.01)

[7] Abah Asep, Traditional Head of Kasepuhan Sinarresmi, interview (Sinarresmi Village, 5 February 2024, 10.30)

components are a unity that cannot be separated in the life of a Muslim, because they refer to the existence of a level system of Islamic culture that must be prepared (Central Leadership of Muhammadiyah, 2018) .

3. Communication Strategy in Purifying Islamic Teachings Carried Out by Muhammadiyah Against Ethnic Community Groups

Indonesia is a country with many islands and various ethnicities, of course each ethnic group has a different way of thinking and lifestyle, as well as the communication practices and behavior of individuals within an ethnic group will certainly be different (Bajari & Saragih, 2011), because between different ethnicities with others carrying out different values, customs and traditions (culture) Samovar calls these cultural differences between individuals a multicultural society (Samovar et al., 2014)s. The communication approach in the context of the Islamic religion is carried out by means of dakwah. Ahmad & Herawan's (2017) study states that the dakwah strategy uses an intercultural communication approach, where dakwah can be carried out using personal, educational, discussion, offer, mission and correspondence methods. This dakwah method was carried out by the Prophet Muhammad SAW (Anas & Adinugraha, 2017). Muhammadiyah already has a dakwah guide with a cultural dakwah approach. The cultural dakwah approach is a way of preaching by understanding the framework of the community's beliefs or customs that apply there, so that the language used is not a judgmental language, because the preacher's language is an embracing language [8].

Cultural Dakwah is carried out by Muhammadiyah as a strategy for gradual social change so that the purification of Islamic teachings seems more open and can be accepted rationally by various groups of society. In other words, the cultural dakwah method makes it possible to purify teachings that do not feel stiff, rigid and exclusive (Hidayat, 2004). The same thing was conveyed in Tahir's research, Muhammadiyah moves in the midst of Indonesian society which has various cultures through the cultural da'wah movement, this da'wah moves in harmony with the cultural space (Tahir & L, 2022)s. Multicultural dakwah seeks to reach a meeting point between diversity and tolerance in differences (Marfu'ah, 2018). Muhammadiyah has an LDK (Community Dakwah Institute) which is a special da'wah institution, part of the team goes into the community. LDK is under the coordination and responsibility of the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership Tabligh Mosque [9].

An important part of cultural dakwah is who the preacher or communicator is, referring to the Islamic communication model that the communicator must be someone who can be trusted (*trustworthiness/al-Amin*) and who has competence

[8] Dr. Endang, Deputy Secretary of the Muhammadiyang Central Leadership for Tarjih and Tajdid Council, interview (UMB, 11 May 2024, Time: 20.15)

[9] Dr. Endang, Deputy Secretary of the Muhammadiyang Central Leadership for Tarjih and Tajdid Council, interview (UMB, 11 May 2024, Time: 20.25)

(*expertise*). *Trustworthiness* is obtained through the communicator's noble character and *physical attraction*. Meanwhile, the competencies that must be possessed are mastery of the message, understanding who the communicant is and delivering it in an Islamic way that can touch the hearts of the communicant, namely the principles of *qaulan saddidan, baligha, kharimah, masyura, layyinan and ma'rufa* (Kriyantono, 2019) A preacher who studies and understands the character of the communicant and then takes the communicant to heart can convey the message of da'wah effectively (Nahara & Nurcholis, 2021). Apart from Da'i, method factors are also important, educators (lecturers) within Muhammadiyah can be more effective through research and service activities, because with the results of their research lecturers know what language to use, and what kind of approach[10]. Rosidi (Ahyar et al., 2022) mentions 3 approaches to multicultural da'wah, namely: cultural and language approach, da'wah and education approach and psychological approach.

C. CONCLUSION

The rituals carried out by Kasepuhan Sinaresmi in managing rice from planting until it is harvested and consumed are a must to carry out, however this necessity (Mokaha) does not mean deifying, in terms of the beliefs of the people of Kasepuhan Sinarresmi adhere to the Islamic religion (sara), apart from that the community Sinarresmi Kesepuhan still follows local regional regulations (Nagara). The philosophy of *Sara*, *Nagara* and *Mokaha* is harmoniously constructive collective resilience of indigenous communities in responding to crisis situations. *Sara* is the religion adhered to by the people of Kasepuhan Sinarresmi and is made into a law or rule in worship, while *Nagara* is the regional government system where Kasepuhan Sinarresmi is located, the meaning of nagara means that Kasepuhan Sinarresmi residents obey the existing government system, and *Mokaha* is the customs of Kasepuhan Sinarresmi in which there is safety and prosperity.

Muhammadiyah views cultural diversity as national wealth whose preservation must be preserved. As for the purification of Islamic teachings, Muhammadiyah has Manhaj Tarjih where matters or themes outside of creed and worship are carried out more flexibly, including those involving customs. Rituals towards nature are interpreted as a way for humans to communicate with the environment where they obtain life from it. Apart from that, Muhammadiyah views that rituals of respect for nature are society's efforts to maintain the balance of the ecosystem which is disturbed due to rice planting. As long as it does not violate the 3 things in muamalah, namely polytheism, immorality and tabzir, then Muhammadiyah can accept the customs of a culture.

Muhammadiyah's da'wah strategy for indigenous communities is carried out by means of multicultural da'wah implemented by the Community Da'wah Institute of the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership Tabligh Council. The multicultural

[10] Dr. Endang, Deputy Secretary of the Muhammadiyang Central Leadership for Tarjih and Tajdid Council, interview (UMB, 11 May 2024, Time: 20.30)

da'wah approach is adapted to the cultural space, so that it does not seem rigid and can be accepted by society.

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