

## Religious Values In Mapak Dance In Baturaja Village Empat Lawang

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### ABSTRACT

Mapak Dance is a traditional welcoming dance from Baturaja Village, Tebing Tinggi District, Empat Lawang Regency, South Sumatra. The dance was inaugurated in 2007 and first performed at the inauguration of Empat Lawang Regency. The dance features movements adapted from various districts, a procession of giving betel leaves, and traditional clothing with songket motifs. The term "mapak" means to welcome with full respect. This study examines how religious values are expressed and internalized through Mapak Dance in the community of Baturaja Village. The study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive ethnographic case study design. Data were collected through limited participatory observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and documentation conducted for approximately one month (February–March 2026). Findings show that Mapak Dance is consistently performed in traditional activities such as the welcoming of distinguished guests, wedding ceremonies, and official village events. The dance follows structured and hereditary procedures. Religious values embedded in the dance are reflected in the sembah (prayer) gesture through sincerity, respect, humility, and good intention. Discipline during performance is expressed through adherence to rhythm and position. Courtesy is reinforced during the betel leaf offering. Shared responsibility supports the preservation of the tradition. The study concludes that Mapak Dance functions as a social practice that strengthens religious character and social cohesion amidst modernization and globalization.



## Introduction

Mapak Dance is a cultural heritage from Baturaja Village, Tebing Tinggi District, Empat Lawang Regency, South Sumatra. The dance contains meanings closely related to the identity and life of the local community. Movement, rhythm, and symbolism in Mapak Dance express local wisdom that has been woven into community life for centuries (AZIS 2021)

Globalization creates challenges for traditional arts, including the weakening of

understanding and interest among younger generations. Modernization and information technology introduce compelling external cultures and reduce attention to local arts. Limited support from local government and the absence of sustained cultural preservation programs increase the risk that Mapak Dance may be forgotten by the community. (Rosala et al. 2021)

Religious values within Mapak Dance appear through practices of respect, hospitality, and solidarity. These values remain highly relevant to contemporary society. The government has recognized the importance of cultural preservation through Law Number 5 of 2017 concerning the Advancement of Culture. Implementation still requires detailed empirical research to explain how these values operate in everyday community practices. (Wijayanti 2019). This study aims to: analyze the implementation of Mapak Dance in the lives of the people of Baturaja Village, Tebing Tinggi District, Empat Lawang Regency; explore the religious values contained in Mapak Dance and how the values are applied within Baturaja Village community life. (Hadi 2018)

Traditional dance in Indonesia has long served as a medium for transmitting cultural values, social norms, and spiritual teachings across generations. Communities in various regions of South Sumatra have maintained distinct dance traditions that reflect their unique historical experiences and religious orientations. The integration of Islamic values into local dance forms represents a creative synthesis that characterizes the cultural identity of Muslim communities in the region. Mapak Dance from Baturaja Village exemplifies this synthesis by encoding religious principles within its choreographic structure, costumes, and ceremonial procedures. Understanding how traditional dance functions as a vehicle for religious value transmission is therefore essential to appreciating the full significance of Mapak Dance within its community context.

Baturaja Village is situated in Tebing Tinggi District, Empat Lawang Regency, South Sumatra, a region with a rich heritage of traditional performing arts rooted in Malay and Islamic cultural traditions. The community of Baturaja Village has historically expressed its collective identity through ceremonial practices that blend aesthetic performance with moral and spiritual instruction. Mapak Dance was officially inaugurated in 2007 and first performed at the inauguration ceremony of Empat Lawang Regency, immediately establishing its role as a marker of regional cultural identity. The dance draws its movement vocabulary from various districts within the regency, creating a choreographic form that symbolizes inter-district unity and shared cultural heritage. The historical origin of Mapak Dance within a context of regional inauguration underscores its function as a cultural statement of communal identity and shared values.

The tepak sirih, or betel leaf offering ceremony, constitutes one of the most symbolically significant elements of Mapak Dance and functions as a ritualized expression of hospitality and respect. Offering betel leaves to honored guests is a practice deeply embedded in Malay cultural tradition and carries associations of sincerity, generosity, and the welcoming of positive social bonds. Within the Islamic framework of the Baturaja community, the tepak sirih ceremony is understood as an act of honoring others that reflects the Quranic injunction to treat guests with generosity and dignity. The careful preparation and presentation of the tepak sirih during Mapak Dance performances reinforces communal awareness of the religious dimensions of everyday social practices. Examining the tepak sirih ceremony within the broader context of Mapak Dance illuminates the ways in which Islamic values are embedded within material cultural practices in the Baturaja Village community.

The sembah gesture, performed as the opening movement of Mapak Dance, represents a direct visual expression of the Islamic values of humility, reverence, and sincere devotion. The downward gaze and slightly bowed posture assumed during the sembah

communicate an attitude of submission before God and respect toward others that aligns closely with Islamic ethical teachings. Dancers who perform the sembah are taught to approach the gesture not as a mere choreographic instruction but as a moral and spiritual practice that requires genuine inner intention. The cultural significance of the sembah extends beyond the dance itself, serving as a reminder to all community members that humility and reverence should characterize their social interactions in everyday life. Studying the sembah gesture within Mapak Dance provides important insights into how embodied practices function as sites of religious formation in Muslim communities of South Sumatra.

Previous research on traditional dance in the context of Indonesian Muslim communities has established that performing arts frequently serve as vehicles for the internalization and public expression of religious values. Scholars have demonstrated that the preservation of traditional dance forms is closely linked to the vitality of community identity and the transmission of moral frameworks across generations. Studies focusing on South Sumatran dance traditions have highlighted the importance of examining both the formal choreographic elements and the social contexts in which dances are performed. However, research specifically addressing the religious values embedded within Mapak Dance of Baturaja Village remains limited, creating a gap in the scholarly literature that the present study seeks to address. Filling this gap through empirical ethnographic research will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how Islamic values are expressed and preserved through traditional performing arts in Indonesian Muslim communities.

## Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive ethnographic study design. This approach is selected because the research seeks to understand how religious values are implemented and interpreted by the community through Mapak Dance. The study requires deep understanding of philosophical and social meanings of each dance movement and the social processes behind dance implementation. (Kusumaningsih, Mahrany, and Bahri 2024). The research was conducted in Baturaja Village, Tebing Tinggi District, Empat Lawang Regency, South Sumatra, for approximately one month (February–March 2026). Informants were selected purposively, consisting of traditional leaders (Mr. Samsudin), village heads or representatives (Mrs. Kartini), active dancers (Celsi Olivia, Andara Saputri, Serliana), and community members. (Mr. Arifin).

Data collection techniques included: (1) limited participatory observation of Mapak Dance practices and performances; (2) in-depth semi-structured interviews lasting 30–80 minutes per informant; and (3) documentation in the form of village archives, activity photos, and dance history records. Data validity was verified through triangulation of sources and techniques, extended observation time, and confirmability. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. (Senangsa 2023)

## Results and Discussion

### 1. Implementation of Mapak Dance in Community Life

Mapak Dance is performed consistently and in a structured manner across the major traditional and social events in Baturaja Village. The implementation of the dance follows a carefully maintained sequence of stages that have been inherited across generations of practitioners. Preparation, performance, and closing constitute the three primary stages of a Mapak Dance event, each governed by cultural norms and procedural expectations.

Traditional leaders, village government representatives, dancers, musicians, and community members all have defined roles within this structured process. The structured implementation of the dance ensures that it retains its cultural coherence and symbolic integrity from one performance to the next. Village head representative Mrs. Kartini affirmed in an interview on February 11, 2026, that every major event in Baturaja Village strives to include Mapak Dance as an expression of communal respect and cultural pride. The structured nature of Mapak Dance performance reflects the community's broader commitment to maintaining orderly social practices grounded in tradition. Consistent adherence to the established implementation procedures communicates to guests and observers that the community takes its cultural heritage with the utmost seriousness. (Lattu 2019)

The preparation stage of Mapak Dance is a communal undertaking that mobilizes the collective resources and energies of Baturaja Village. Coordination among traditional leaders, the village government, dancers, and general community members begins well in advance of the performance date. (Haryanto 2013) Dancers prepare their traditional attire, including the distinctively patterned songket garments and accompanying accessories, with careful attention to both aesthetic and symbolic appropriateness. Equipment for the tepak sirih ceremony is prepared and arranged according to traditional specifications that have been preserved across generations. Musicians responsible for accompanying the dance rehearse the traditional music to ensure synchronization with the choreography during the actual performance. The preparation stage embodies the spirit of mutual cooperation, or gotong royong, that is one of the foundational social values of Baturaja Village community life. Community members who are not directly involved in performing still contribute to the preparation process through logistical support, food preparation, and venue arrangement. The collaborative nature of preparation reinforces the sense of shared ownership over the dance as a cultural expression that belongs to the entire community rather than any individual. (Kusumastuti n.d.)

The performance stage of Mapak Dance proceeds according to a choreographic structure that begins with the opening sembah movement and concludes with the tepak sirih handover ceremony. The opening movement performed by the dancers immediately establishes the tone of the event as one of reverence, humility, and genuine welcome. All core movements are executed in unison, requiring precise coordination among the dancers to achieve the visual harmony that is the hallmark of a well-performed Mapak Dance. The accompanying traditional music provides the rhythmic framework within which the dancers execute their movements, and the synchronization between music and movement is essential to the overall aesthetic effect. Dancer Adik Andara Saputri emphasized in an interview on February 15, 2026, that discipline is paramount because each movement has its own rhythm and position that demands concentrated attention. Deviation from the established choreographic pattern is noticed immediately by experienced observers and is understood as a disruption of the ceremonial integrity. The audience for Mapak Dance performances includes not only the welcomed guests but also community members of all ages, making each performance an occasion for intergenerational cultural transmission. The performance stage culminates in the tepak sirih handover, which transforms the abstract values communicated through movement into a concrete act of cultural exchange between host and guest. (Senangsa 2023)

Mapak Dance is performed across a variety of social contexts within Baturaja Village, each of which highlights different dimensions of the dance's cultural significance. Welcoming distinguished guests, including government officials and representatives from outside the community, is the most formal context in which the dance is performed. Traditional wedding ceremonies provide another major context, in which Mapak Dance

serves the dual function of welcoming the bride and groom and entertaining the assembled guests. Official village events, including commemoration ceremonies and community celebrations, regularly feature Mapak Dance as a marker of cultural identity and communal pride. (Aprilia, Wardiah, and Hera 2020) affirmed that Mapak Dance is fundamentally a welcoming dance that expresses hospitality, respect, and the cultural identity of the performing community. The diversity of performance contexts ensures that Mapak Dance remains integrated into the living social fabric of Baturaja Village rather than becoming a museum artifact performed only on rare occasions. Each social context in which the dance appears reinforces slightly different aspects of its symbolic content, from the emphasis on formal respect in guest-welcoming ceremonies to the celebratory joy of wedding performances. The adaptability of Mapak Dance across these varied contexts demonstrates the resilience and relevance of the tradition within the contemporary life of Baturaja Village. (Sulastianto 2016)

Wedding ceremonies represent one of the most emotionally significant contexts in which Mapak Dance is performed, and the dance plays a distinctive role in shaping the cultural atmosphere of these occasions. The performance of Mapak Dance at a wedding serves as a ceremonial welcome for the bride and groom as they enter the formal celebration of their union. The values of respect, elegance, and sincere hospitality communicated through the dance align naturally with the moral and spiritual aspirations associated with marriage in the Islamic tradition. Community members who attend the wedding receive the dance not merely as entertainment but as a reinforcement of the cultural and religious values that should guide family life. The tepak sirih ceremony within the dance takes on additional significance at weddings, symbolizing the community's collective blessing and welcome extended to the newly joined families. Female dancers who perform the *menyu* and *sembah* movements at weddings are seen as embodying the ideal qualities of grace, respect, and dignity that the community associates with honorable womanhood. Musicians who accompany the dance at weddings select musical arrangements that complement the celebratory atmosphere while preserving the traditional character of the performance. Wedding performances of Mapak Dance serve as a site where cultural tradition, religious values, and social celebration converge in a unified expression of communal identity. (Tari et al. 2009)

The involvement of younger generations in Mapak Dance performances is a deliberate strategy employed by traditional leaders and the village government to ensure the continuity of the cultural heritage. Knowledge about the dance is transferred through direct participation, observation, and mentorship from experienced practitioners rather than through formal written instruction. Younger dancers learn not only the technical aspects of the movements but also the philosophical and religious meanings that give each gesture its cultural weight. Traditional leaders encourage young community members to participate in every performance opportunity as a form of immersive cultural education that no classroom-based instruction can replicate. (Rosala et al. 2021) emphasized that learning traditional dance within its natural community context is the most effective method for transmitting local cultural values to younger generations. The informal mentorship relationships that develop between experienced practitioners and younger dancers create bonds of cultural solidarity that extend beyond the dance itself. Parents in Baturaja Village regard their children's participation in Mapak Dance as an important dimension of their moral and cultural formation, complementing religious education received within the family and community. The ongoing involvement of youth in Mapak Dance performance is the most reliable guarantee of the dance's survival and vitality across coming generations.

The role of traditional leaders in the implementation of Mapak Dance is indispensable

to the preservation of its cultural integrity and community significance. Traditional leaders such as Mr. Samsudin serve as the primary custodians of knowledge about the dance's history, meanings, and procedural requirements. Their authority within the community ensures that decisions about how and when the dance is performed are made in accordance with the cultural norms and values that have governed its practice across generations. Traditional leaders provide guidance during rehearsals, reminding dancers of the spiritual and philosophical dimensions of each movement so that performers approach their roles with appropriate seriousness and intention. The presence of traditional leaders at performances lends the event a ceremonial gravitas that reinforces the community's awareness of the dance's cultural importance. Succession planning for cultural leadership is an informal but recognized process in Baturaja Village, ensuring that younger community members are gradually prepared to assume responsibility for cultural stewardship. Traditional leaders also serve as advocates for Mapak Dance within broader regional and governmental contexts, supporting efforts to gain official recognition and documentation of the dance as an intangible cultural heritage asset. The sustained commitment of traditional leaders to Mapak Dance is one of the most important factors in its continued vitality as a living cultural practice. (Lindita 2022)

The closing stage of a Mapak Dance performance marks the transition from the formal ceremonial space created by the dance back to ordinary social interaction. The tepak sirih handover ceremony that serves as the climax of the performance is followed by a structured closing sequence in which dancers return to their designated positions and formally conclude their roles. Traditional music accompanies the closing movements, signaling to the audience that the ceremonial space is being respectfully dissolved. Community members who have participated in the preparation and execution of the performance gather briefly after the closing to reflect collectively on the success of the event and to express mutual appreciation. The closing stage reinforces the communal character of Mapak Dance by ensuring that individual contributions to the performance are acknowledged within a shared expression of collective achievement. (Permata Sari, Desfiarni, and Asriati 2014) Traditional leaders offer words of affirmation and cultural instruction during the post-performance gathering, taking the opportunity to deepen the community's understanding of the values that have just been expressed through the dance. The closing stage also serves as a moment of intergenerational dialogue in which younger participants can ask questions and receive guidance from experienced practitioners. Each well-executed closing reinforces the community's sense of cultural competence and collective pride in their ability to perform and preserve this important tradition.

The documentation and formal recognition of Mapak Dance represent important dimensions of its preservation that complement the community-based transmission practices of Baturaja Village. Village archives, activity photographs, and historical records of the dance have been compiled and maintained by the village government as a resource for future generations and external researchers. The ethnographic research conducted in February and March 2026 contributed to this documentation effort by producing a detailed academic account of the dance's meanings, procedures, and social functions. Academic publication of research findings about Mapak Dance situates the tradition within the broader scholarly literature on Indonesian traditional performing arts, enhancing its visibility and legitimacy. Law Number 5 of 2017 concerning the Advancement of Culture provides a legal framework that supports community-based cultural preservation efforts of the kind that sustain Mapak Dance in Baturaja Village. Wijayanti (2019) noted that legal and institutional support for cultural preservation must be grounded in detailed empirical research that demonstrates how cultural values operate

within specific community contexts. The combination of community-based transmission and formal documentation creates a dual preservation strategy that is more resilient than either approach alone. Continued investment in both informal cultural transmission and formal documentation will be essential to ensuring that Mapak Dance survives the accelerating cultural changes brought by modernization and globalization. (Nugroho 2012)

Challenges to the continued implementation of Mapak Dance in Baturaja Village are real but are being actively managed through community awareness and collective commitment. Modernization introduces competing cultural attractions that reduce the time and attention available to younger community members for traditional dance practice. Limited support from local government for sustained rehearsal programs means that formal training opportunities are irregular and dependent on the initiative of traditional leaders and volunteer practitioners. (Verdinata 2025) The personal schedules of dancers, who have professional and family obligations outside their cultural roles, constrain the frequency of rehearsals and require flexible planning on the part of organizers. Despite these constraints, the community reconvenes reliably when important events arise, demonstrating a deep-seated commitment to the tradition that persists even in the absence of regular formal rehearsal. Social solidarity within Baturaja Village, reinforced by the shared ownership of Mapak Dance as a cultural asset, provides the motivational foundation for this resilient commitment. Traditional leaders play a crucial role in sustaining community motivation by regularly communicating the cultural and religious significance of the dance and calling the community to renewed engagement. The challenges facing Mapak Dance implementation are not unique to Baturaja Village but reflect the broader tensions between traditional cultural practice and contemporary social change that communities across Indonesia are navigating.

## **2. Religious Values in Mapak Dance**

Mapak Dance carries profound religious values that have been embedded in the cultural life of Baturaja Village for generations. Each movement performed in the dance reflects a deep spiritual awareness rooted in Islamic teachings practiced by the local community. The *sembah* gesture, performed at the opening of the dance, embodies sincere devotion and reverence toward God before engaging in any communal activity. (Warsana, Nafsika, and Undiana 2021) Spiritual consciousness expressed through the dance reinforces the community's belief that all human actions must begin with gratitude and acknowledgment of divine grace. Elders in the community regard the dance as a living expression of faith that transcends mere aesthetic performance. Religious teachings in Islam emphasize humility, sincerity, and gratitude as core virtues, all of which are visually encoded in the dance movements. Mapak Dance serves as a reminder that cultural practices and religious values are inseparable in the lives of the Baturaja people. Preserving the dance means preserving the spiritual foundations upon which the community's social and moral life is built.

Respect toward others stands as one of the most prominent religious values expressed in Mapak Dance. Islam places great importance on *ta'dhim*, the act of honoring and revering other people, particularly elders, guests, and those in authority. The *sembah* gesture directed toward welcomed guests communicates this principle of *ta'dhim* in a visible and culturally meaningful manner. (Yulanda and Iqbal 2025) Interviews with traditional leader Mr. Samsudin confirmed that the welcoming posture in the dance is a gesture of respect that carries religious significance beyond cultural formality. Dancers are trained from a young age to understand that performing the *sembah* is not merely a choreographic instruction but a moral and spiritual practice. Religious education in the community reinforces this understanding through informal teachings within the family

and traditional gatherings. Every performance thus becomes an opportunity to renew and express the community's commitment to treating others with dignity and honor. Respect embedded in the dance movements reflects the Islamic principle that honoring a guest is equivalent to honoring God.

Sincerity, known in Islamic ethics as *ikhlas*, permeates every dimension of Mapak Dance performance and preparation. Dancers devote their time, energy, and focus to rehearsal and performance without seeking personal recognition or material reward. The betel leaf offering ceremony, as a central ritual within the dance, is carried out with deliberate care and sincerity as a form of respect given freely to the welcomed guests. Community members who assist in preparing the dance venue and costumes also demonstrate *ikhlas* through their voluntary contributions. (Wijayanti 2019) Religious scholars in the community teach that acts performed without sincerity lose their spiritual merit, and this teaching is reflected in the attitude of performers before and during the dance. Sincerity in Mapak Dance is not only a personal virtue but a collective one, shared by all participants who contribute to the event. The *ikhlas* principle embedded in the dance encourages performers to focus on the quality and meaning of their movements rather than on external recognition. Observations during research confirmed that dancers approach their roles with a sense of spiritual duty rather than mere theatrical obligation. (Aprilia et al. 2020)

Humility is a religious value deeply inscribed in the physical vocabulary of Mapak Dance. The downward gaze and the slightly bowed posture assumed during the *sembah* movement communicate *tawadhu'*, the Islamic virtue of lowering oneself before others as an act of spiritual submission. Humility in performance is understood by the Baturaja community not as weakness but as a sign of strength grounded in faith. Dancer Adik Celsi Olivia noted during an interview that lowering the gaze while performing the *sembah* is taught as an act of reverence modeled on Islamic conduct in prayer. Religious values transmitted through the dance reinforce the community's understanding that arrogance is contrary to the teachings of Islam. Costumes worn in Mapak Dance, while visually elaborate, are intended to honor the guests rather than glorify the dancers, reflecting the same spirit of humility. The principle of *tawadhu'* also appears in the way dancers yield to the lead of traditional figures during the ceremony. Humility demonstrated in Mapak Dance shapes the social character of the Baturaja community by encouraging deference and modesty in everyday interactions. (Raje et al. 2024)

Hospitality, expressed through the concept of *dermawan* or generous giving, forms a central pillar of the religious values in Mapak Dance. The betel leaf handover ceremony that concludes the dance represents the highest expression of communal generosity and warmth toward those being welcomed. Islamic teachings consistently emphasize *karamudh-dhuyuf*, the honoring of guests, as a hallmark of a believer's character and moral standing. Village head representative Mrs. Kartini stated that every important event in Baturaja Village strives to perform the dance as an act of communal respect and cultural pride. Preparing the *tepak sirih* and offering it to guests requires deliberate effort and coordination among community members, reinforcing the spirit of generous hospitality. Hospitality expressed through the dance is understood as an act of worship, since honoring a guest is considered a form of devotion in Islamic practice. The generosity embedded in the dance ceremony creates an atmosphere of warmth and mutual regard that strengthens social bonds within the community. Religious values related to hospitality in Mapak Dance extend beyond the performance itself, shaping how community members treat visitors and strangers in their daily lives. (Lattu 2019)

Discipline constitutes a religious value visibly demonstrated through the precision and coordination required in Mapak Dance. Islamic teachings emphasize *istiqamah*, the

principle of consistency and steadfastness in performing one's obligations, and this principle is vividly embodied in the structured choreography of the dance. Each dancer must adhere strictly to the prescribed rhythm, tempo, and spatial positioning throughout the performance. Dancer Adik Andara Saputri emphasized that high discipline is required because each movement carries its own rhythm and position, demanding concentrated attention from every performer. Deviation from the established pattern is seen not merely as a choreographic error but as a failure to honor the collective commitment made to tradition and community. Discipline practiced in Mapak Dance trains performers to carry the same steadfastness into other areas of religious and social life. Consistency in rehearsal and performance mirrors the Islamic ideal of performing religious duties with regularity and full attention. Religious formation through Mapak Dance thus contributes to building individuals who approach both worship and community responsibility with diligence and care. (Kusumastuti n.d.)

Solidarity among community members, known in Islamic social ethics as *ukhuwwah* or brotherhood, is powerfully enacted through the collective nature of Mapak Dance. No single dancer performs in isolation; the entire group moves in harmony, making the dance a living symbol of communal unity grounded in shared faith and identity. Islamic teachings hold that the bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood among believers are sacred obligations that strengthen the fabric of the *ummah*, or community of faith. Dancer Adik Serliana affirmed that togetherness and cooperation are essential because every movement must be performed simultaneously for the dance to appear harmonious. Solidarity expressed in the dance extends to the preparation process, where community members from different social positions contribute equally to the success of the event. Religious values related to solidarity discourage individualism and promote a culture of mutual support that transcends personal interests. Mapak Dance thus functions as a ritual of social cohesion in which the boundaries between individuals dissolve into a shared act of communal devotion. Solidarity cultivated through performance becomes a moral resource that the community draws upon when facing challenges related to modernization and cultural change. (Agustin, Lestari, and Sunarto 2022)

Patience and perseverance, expressed through the Islamic concept of *sabar*, are religious values clearly reflected in the *songket* weaving gesture within Mapak Dance. The *songket* motif depicted in the attire and movement symbolizes the painstaking process of traditional weaving that demands sustained effort, attention, and endurance. *Sabar* is regarded in Islamic teaching as a virtue that enables believers to face hardship, maintain consistency in worship, and persist in acts of goodness without losing hope. Mastering the movements of Mapak Dance requires months of dedicated practice, and the discipline of rehearsal itself becomes a form of religious character training. Patience demonstrated during rehearsals teaches dancers to manage frustration and to persevere toward collective excellence rather than abandoning the effort when difficulties arise. The *songket* weaving gesture carries a philosophical message that great cultural and spiritual achievements are always the product of sustained patience and sincere labor. Community members who witness the dance receive this message implicitly, reinforcing a shared cultural appreciation for diligence and perseverance in all aspects of life. *Sabar* embodied in Mapak Dance thus serves as a spiritual model for how the Baturaja community approaches both religious practice and the challenges of everyday existence. (Candrasari et al. 2023)

Responsibility in the preservation and transmission of Mapak Dance reflects the Islamic concept of *amanah*, the faithful discharge of one's duties and obligations to God, community, and future generations. Traditional leaders, dancers, and community members all carry a shared responsibility to ensure that the dance continues to be

performed accurately and meaningfully across generations. Amanah in the context of cultural heritage means that no individual or generation has the right to abandon or distort a practice that carries communal spiritual significance. Observations during fieldwork showed that dancers take their role seriously and regard their participation as a duty to the community rather than a personal choice. Religious consciousness motivates members of the community to invest time and effort in rehearsals even when personal schedules create obstacles. Knowledge about the dance's religious meanings is passed down through informal mentorship, ensuring that spiritual understanding accompanies the technical transmission of movements. Responsibility for cultural preservation is discussed openly in community gatherings, and religious leaders support the practice by affirming its alignment with Islamic values of trust and stewardship. Amanah expressed through Mapak Dance reinforces the moral fabric of the Baturaja community and ensures that cultural identity and religious character are preserved as a living inheritance. (Zulkifli and Azhari 2018)

Good intention, expressed through the Islamic concept of *niyyah*, underlies every dimension of Mapak Dance performance and ensures that the activity carries genuine religious merit. Islamic teaching holds that the value of any act is determined by the intention behind it, and a culturally significant act performed with a pure intention becomes an act of worship. Performers who approach Mapak Dance with the intention to honor guests, strengthen communal bonds, and preserve ancestral wisdom are engaging in a spiritually meaningful practice regardless of its outward form. Good intention is cultivated through pre-performance guidance from traditional leaders who remind dancers of the spiritual significance of their roles. *Niyyah* shapes the attitude of all participants, from the dancers who practice diligently to the community members who prepare the ceremonial equipment. Religious formation through Mapak Dance teaches young participants that the quality of their inner intention determines the spiritual weight of their actions in all aspects of life. Good intention also manifests in the care taken to perform the dance according to its traditional form, ensuring that the inherited spiritual meanings are not diluted or distorted. Mapak Dance, sustained by sincere intention across generations, continues to function as a meaningful religious practice that unifies cultural expression and spiritual devotion in the life of Baturaja Village community.

## Conclusion

Mapak Dance is the cultural heritage of Baturaja Village, Tebing Tinggi District, Empat Lawang Regency, South Sumatra, which is consistently carried out in various traditional and social community activities such as welcoming guests of honor, wedding ceremonies, and village official events through three structured stages, namely preparation, implementation, and closing that are inherited from generation to generation. This dance is not just an art performance, but functions as a medium for internalizing Islamic religious values that are reflected in each movement, including the value of sincerity (*sincerity*) in the implementation of the betel nut ceremony, respect and humility (*tawadhu'*) through worship movements, discipline and *istikamah* in harmony of movement and rhythm, solidarity (*ukhuwwah*) through the cohesiveness of dancers, and responsibility (*trust*) in the preservation of traditions across generations, so that Mapak Dance plays an important role as a social practice that strengthens religious character while maintaining social cohesion in the midst of modernization and globalization.

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